

Tumbling Times

News from the Circus Day Foundation

Issue No. 4 - May 2004

Letter from the Artistic/Executive Director

Those who have followed my circus career in St. Louis know that I started *everydaycircus* in 1989 (the same year I started the *St. Louis Arches*!) with my two dogs, Keisha and Sara. At *City Museum*, I expanded our canine troupe to include Rosie and Tulip. These dogs were part of my family and they were my circus partners. I'm very sorry to report that in December I lost two of these great friends. Tulip, the little black and white dog and the youngest of the troupe, lost her valiant struggle with GME (a sort of canine MS, only much worse). Sara, our scruffy, senior citizen at 17, was deaf, blind, frail and with an advanced case of a canine Alzheimer's. Tulip was a talented little dog who jumped rope and flew through hoops. I used to introduce Sara as "The Flying Dog". Then, in our show, she was the clown who went under all the children instead of flying over them. We all fly in our own ways to get to the other side. In the words of my children: "They were life-changing dogs... they were special, funny, great and courageous." Tulip and Sara brought a lot of joy to a lot of children and adults. As is often the case in life, bad and good come together. The day after Tulip died, I had a meeting with a local developer who is interested in helping us build an actual *Circus Day Center*. Their passing marks the end of a big chapter of my life and the construction of the *Center* will be the beginning of another major chapter. Tulip and Sara's kindness, gentleness, humor and love were an inspiration. I miss them more than I can put into words. They are gone, but they are forever a part of me and the work that I do.

This has been a really incredible year for the *Circus Day Foundation*. I look at the fantastic experiences we have had with our youth circus performers and I look at the great press coverage and personal responses we have received. It is amazing and wonderful that we have accomplished so much in three short years. Each child who takes one of our classes has their own story of what brought them to the circus and what they learn about themselves and life while they are learning circus arts. There are so many small but important personal successes and so many large and inspiring culture-crossing connections that have been made through *Circus Day's* work. The past 6 months have seen the construction of our *Reach for the Stars Bleachers*, the tremendous success of *Far East Meets Midwest II*, the *Arches'* appearance on national TV and two awesome shows by our newest members, the *Patchwork Circus: Peace Through Pyramids* and *Practice Makes Pyramids*. Join us in this newsletter, as we share some of our accomplishments over the past 6 months. We also hope, if you haven't already, you will see the importance of the work we do using circus arts to teach children to fly— physically, emotionally and socially. We hope you will add your financial support to help us show more people how to fly.

Circusfully, Jessica Hentoff - Artistic/Executive Director



Circus Harmony

Circus Harmony is a confluence of tumbling, juggling, balancing, aerial artistry and clowning performed by children and set to a medley of melodies played by different musicians from various cultures. *Circus Harmony* is acts from *Circus Day Foundation's* youth circus artists performing to live Middle Eastern, Asian and Western music. It is a creative combination of children and adults with a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities who come together to present a totally unique, incredibly diverse and broadly appealing presentation that will inspire and delight all who witness it.

Our main long-term goal from our inception, was the formation of a full St. Louis Youth Circus. Our new project, *Circus*

Harmony, is the next step on that path with the wonderful addition of multi-cultural music!

In 2003, as part of their production of *Far East Meets Midwest*, *Circus Day* was proud to present, for the first time anywhere, St. Louis youth performing Chinese hoop diving to the accompaniment of live Japanese Taiko drummers. It was a truly marvelous combination! At that point, (Continued Pg.2)

Steve Harvey's Big Time

Hope you caught the *Arches* in their national television debut on WB TV's *Steve Harvey's Big Time*. Our talented troupe was flown out to Los Angeles where they were chauffeured around in stretch limousines and put up at a Hilton hotel. They were also given passes to Universal City Theme Park.

The *Arches* wowed Steve and his crew in addition to thrilling the studio audience of 1500 people. We've also received job offers from people who saw the show in Chicago and Atlanta. If you missed it the first time, keep an eye out for the reruns! And would someone please write *Oprah* and *Jay Leno* and suggest they invite us to their shows?





Circus Harmony–(from Pg.1)

the seed was planted that has sprouted into **Circus Harmony**. Instead of just playing popular music for our young circus performers (as many professional circuses do these days), or limiting ourselves to traditional circus music (even though we think it is great music), we are expanding our musical horizons! Once again, **Circus Day** is building bridges between cultures. In addition to the classic circus gallops, marches and waltzes, we are adding a multi-cultural, musical component! As our circus acts are performed by children from different backgrounds, so our circus score will consist of music from different cultures.

Currently committed to **Circus Harmony**, we have the heart-pounding sound of *St. Louis Osuwa Taiko Drummers*, the incredible Persian/Latin jazz of *Farshid Soltanshahi's Farshid etniko*, the unique Klezmer/bluegrass sound of *Sandy Weltman's Hebrew Hillbillies*, the lovely Zheng (Chinese harp) virtuosity of *Xiaoyu Yan* and, of course, our own, wonderful *St. Louis Community Circus Band*.

This is only the beginning of what will be an ongoing project. In the future, we hope to add African drums, German polka music, classical music and other musical genres!

Circus Harmony is about crossing cultural boundaries musically, artistically and socially. In addition to physical benefits like improved strength, flexibility and hand-eye coordination, learning circus skills builds character in the individual participants, as they develop life skills like goal setting, persistence and focus. Learning circus with others teaches trust, responsibility and teamwork. When the others come from different backgrounds, everyone's sense of community is expanded to include these new partners. Our youth circus troupes embody our mission statement as these young circus artists "defy gravity, soar with confidence and leap over social barriers all at the same time!" In **Circus Harmony**, they do all this to music from every corner of the world, proving that people and art forms can come together and create symphonies of sensational performance art to inspire all of us.

Casa Volando Circus

Watch for the summer debut of our newest youth circus troupe, the **Casa Volando Circus**. The name is derived from the Spanish words for "home" and "flying" since this troupe is made up entirely of homeschoolers!

There's still a part for you in our multi-generational circus band! Come play the circus tunes that the **River Front Times** called "so unique in their form and structure, that they summon deep-seated memories and feelings every time you hear them." Rehearsals are Tuesdays at **everydaycircus** from 6:30 PM - 8 PM.

Mark Your Calendars!

A Taste of **Circus Harmony** will be presented at our annual **Youth Circus Showcase/ Donor Appreciation Party** on July 17, 2004 at *City Museum*. For this event, we will perform select youth circus acts accompanied by samples of the various musical groups involved in this project. The full scale **Circus Harmony** will be presented at *City Museum* for two shows on February 26, 2005.

Donor Appreciation Party

This is our popular, yearly event where you and your family are invited to be our guests at **City Museum**, enjoy food and fellowship with other **Circus Day** supporters and– most wonderful of all– have the opportunity to see where your donations are going! You will be able to see all our Flying Children in **Circus Day's Annual Youth Circus Showcase!** Use the form on Page 5 and join now, so you don't miss the party and so you can help us build character in individuals and build bridges between communities using circus arts. As we said in the title of the **Patchwork Circus' Holiday show: *Peace through Pyramids!***

Watch Out for Flying Children

Children come out and the audience says "Awwwww," which turns to AWE as the young performers juggle, turn somersaults and complete other tricks. Something more happens– the audience feels good about *themselves*. It is as if the fact that children from different backgrounds can work together and accomplish these extraordinary feats somehow makes the world a better place, as if the children's potential and accomplishments mirror the world's– a place where wonderful things can happen. Come see for yourself on Saturday, July 17! There will be performances by the **St. Louis Arches, Patchwork Circus, Casa Volando Circus, CircusWorks** and the **CAPkids Circus** at our **Second Annual Youth Circus Showcase** from 11 AM – 3 PM, coinciding with our **Donor Appreciation Party**. Become a donor NOW and come join us!



St. Louis Arches 15-Year Reunion

It all started in 1989 when Jessica Hentoff and a group of other performers from **Circus Flora** took some students from **Brenda Payne's** Jefferson Elementary School tumbling team. These young athletes became the core of the **St. Louis Arches**. Well, that was 15 years ago! Join us for the first ever **Arches' reunion** during our **Youth Circus Showcase & Donor Appreciation Party** on July 17 at **City Museum**. We may even see if we can teach an old **Arch** some new flips!



St. Louis Arches 1989- Science Center

Ringling Visit & Exchange

When **Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus** came to town in November, we made an exchange with them. We gave the kids on their show a special visit and tour of **City Museum** and they reciprocated by inviting the **Arches** to visit them. The **Ringling** kids loved **City Museum**. Our kids gave them a grand tour and they enjoyed a performance by **Dangerous Donald**. The **Arches** were treated to a backstage tour at **Ringling** that included an up-close look at the inside of the alligator truck and its inhabitants. **Ringling** star, Jon Weiss, even had some of the **Arches** perform center ring. **Lemond** flipped so fast, his shoes flew off! Special thanks to **Tim Holst** and **Peggy Williams** for our **Ringling** tickets!

Arches On the Road

The **St. Louis Arches** have had a very busy year! In addition to all their shows at **City Museum**, their national TV appearance and their trip to the **American Youth Circus Organization Festival**, the **Arches** have also performed at a number of special events around town. We hope you caught them at *Laumeier Sculpture Park's Art Fair*, the *Rotary Club*, the *Jewish Federation*, *St. Elizabeth's School* in St. Charles, *Central Reform Congregation* in St. Louis or one of their other shows. They will be performing with **Circus Flora** here in St. Louis for the month of June. The **Arches** can also entertain and inspire at YOUR next special event! Just call 314-436-7676 to bring the excitement of the circus to you!



Far East Meets Midwest II

Far East Meets Midwest (FEMM II) was an even bigger success than in its first year. The undertaking was a truly collaborative effort between a number of talented local artists of all ages and cultures.

For this project, the **St. Louis Arches** continued to expand their knowledge of Chinese circus arts. There were also several exciting collaborations formed for this show.

The highlight of the collaborations was the act we created with the **St. Louis Osuwa Taiko Drummers**. They taught the **St. Louis Arches** authentic Japanese Taiko drumming and we taught their members tumbling, mini-trampoline and partner acrobatics. Then we put an act together with Arches drumming and Taikos tumbling, all at the same time. We titled the act *Tumble Drum*. The combination of 16 people from America, Japan, China, India and



the Philippines seamlessly moving from music to circus in different combinations and without missing a beat was awesome and then some!

Japanese master top spinner, **Hiroshi Tada**, was, once again, a part of our show. We also added the clowning of the **Brothers Kaputnik**. Though not Asian themselves, these two clowns have studied with some of the finest clowns from China. They presented their version of the classic Chinese Cook act in addition to performing as one of the Chinese Lions and offering other comical interludes. Due to a scheduling conflict, **Ray Amanat's Team Respect** karate group was not able to perform this year with FEMM II. In their place, we were honored to have members from **Three Rivers Aikido**.

Furthering the concept of collaboration, the fantastic musician, **Farshid Soltanshahi**, of **Farshid etniKo**, accompanied the **Three Rivers** act. Another thrilling musical collaboration occurred when we asked the phenomenal Zheng (Chinese harp) virtuoso, **Xiaoyu Yan** to be part of FEMM II. In addition to playing solo as part of the performance, this talented teen also accompanied three of the

Arches as they performed a complex triple trapeze act. The result was a truly magical and totally unique combination of aerial artistry and musical mastery.

FEMM II certainly served to expand the connections made between local Midwestern and Asian arts, artists and their audiences. It clearly demonstrated how **Circus Day** builds innovative bridges between communities using circus arts.

Rest Your Weary...

With thanks to **Laurence Hillman** (the *Dumbledore of Ladue*), and a cast of carpenters, we have our new and wonderful *Reach for the Stars Bleacher Seating System*. This added a lot to the ambience of the space and also increased our seating and storage capacity! Thanks go out to: Laurence Hillman, Warren Bacon, Tony Eckstein, Donny Shy, Mike McVeigh, Bob Wilmott, Mike Killian, Steve & Audrey Levit, Glenda Buchheit, Sonja Furiya, Patty Viverito, Donald Hughes, Richard Kennison, Christopher Ross, Joshua Routh, Michael Hagerstrom, Robert Killian, Tim Kaemmerer, Sean & Sebastian Deken, Patrick McDermott, Nathan & Lily Tarbell, Carrie Vlastos, Patty Vinyard, the Spellazza Family, Michelle Barker & David, Elliana Hentoff-Killian, Keaton Hentoff-Killian, Kellin Hentoff-Killian, Janese Henry & Cummel's Café, Kathy McDermott, Keith Gaylord, O'Neil Lumber, Lowe's (Lindbergh & I-44), Home Depot Stores (Brentwood, South County & Sunset Hills), Emily Schmidt, Emilie Rosanvallon, City Museum Workers and City Museum.

We also have some wonderful, cushy chairs for our ticketed events that were donated through the efforts of one of our tireless board members.

Cover Stories

The **Circus Day Foundation** was fortunate to be chosen as a featured, cover photo, non-profit organization for both **St. Louis Post-Dispatch's** Spring 2004 *Community Matters* and the first **St. Louis Business Journal's** December 2003 *Giver's Guide to Philanthropy*. Both publications serve to educate the public about worthy non-profits in our community. Circus Day was honored to be so prominently recognized by both guides.



Summer Circus Intensives and Master Classes

Hot time! Circus in the city! Join us for our *Summer Circus Intensives*: three 1-week courses starting July 26, Aug. 2 and Aug. 9. Learn a variety of circus arts including tumbling, juggling, trapeze, rolling globe, wire walking, clowning and more! There are both morning and afternoon sessions available.

Master Classes are being offered the month of July! Take one class or take them all! Classes are offered in Aerial Artistry, Jazzy Juggling, Comedic Clowning, Amazing Acrobatics and Dazzling Diabolo. See the enclosed flyer for more information or by visiting our website at www.circusday.org.

AYCO Board

Our artistic/executive director, **Jessica Hentoff**, has been asked to serve on the Board of Directors of the **American Youth Circus Organization** (see their website at www.americanyouthcircus.org for more information on this dynamic group). This prestigious position recognizes her caring and contribution to the future of Youth Circus programs in America. As stated on www.circusnews.com: "Jessica is one of the pillars of the youth circus community."

The position also carries a lot of responsibility as this young organization tries to chart a course and develop standards for youth circus training in this country. It is very exciting to be at the forefront of this growing movement!

AYCO 2005

The next **American Youth Circus Organization Festival** will be held in San Francisco at the end of August 2005. The **2003**

AYCO Festival in St. Paul was a tremendous experience for the **Arches**. We are already starting to figure out how to raise the funds to get the **Arches** out to San Francisco next year. One suggestion is that people can donate their frequent flyer miles to us. We are also looking to see if we can find an airline to sponsor our Flying Children. Seems like a natural connection (and could make a great commercial).

Anyone out there know any airline industry executives?



Coast to Coast to Canada!

Circus Day Foundation is very happy to announce that we have been awarded grants by three prestigious organizations from outside the St. Louis area: *Cirque Du Soleil* from Montreal, *Carlos Santana's Milagro Foundation* from San Francisco and the *Alan Slika Foundation* from New York. It is nice to be recognized outside our neighborhood!

As always, we are extremely grateful for our local support. We gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the support of our donors including: *Cardinals Care, Regional Arts Commission, Missouri Arts Council, DCA Family Foundation, City Museum, Arts and Education Council, May Foundation, AmerenUE, St. Louis Magazine, Banana Bike Brigade, South Side Clothing Outlet, and YOU!*

We are also (like all non-profits) always looking for more support. Please pass our information along to anyone in the private or corporate sector that you think might be interested in building character in individuals and building bridges between communities using circus arts!

City Circus Cabaret

Where else in St. Louis can you find Aerialists, Jugglers, Acrobats, Sideshow Performers, Tap Dancers and a Human Calculator all in the same place? The Answer: nowhere else but at the *City Circus Cabaret* in the *everydaycircus* ring on the third floor of *City Museum*. This unique, late-night entertainment venue presents unusual variety acts in a circus cabaret setting. Each night is different! The show is the brainchild of *Circus Day* juggling instructor *Richard Kennison*. Many shows feature teachers and students from *Circus Day Foundation!* *City Circus Cabaret* occurs the second Friday of each month. *City Museum* is open Fridays until 1 AM so come early and stay late to enjoy the ambience of *City Museum* after dark. Traditional circus fare is offered at this engaging exhibition of eccentric entertainment. For more information, go to www.everydaycircus.net.

Circus Kaput & the Circus Apprentice Program



The Brothers Kaputnik

Circus Kaput is a clown-based circus that will thrill your senses with acrobatics, juggling, contortion and more. It made its debut this March to critical acclaim. The show is unconventional and sweet, and the clowns are actually funny. *Kaput* brings intimacy to an art form that often relies on overwhelming spectacle and overblown production values to entertain. Each performance is a benefit for the *Circus Apprentice Program*. The *Circus Apprentice Program (C.A.P.)* is dedicated to enriching the lives of at-risk young people in the family court, foster care, and other youth related systems. *C.A.P.* seeks to provide a healthy alternative to negative behaviors through circus arts. Apprentices in the program will have an opportunity to learn circus arts from nationally renowned circus performers. *C.A.P.* is a six-month term, beginning in April. Currently, *C.A.P.* is working with youth from *Epworth Children and Family Services*. Each term they will be invited to help with the creation and performance of the *Circus Kaput* shows. These new programs were conceived and directed by our Head Clown, *Joshua Routh* and his clown partner, *Michael Hagerstrom*. They are also known as *Tchotchke & Sebastian Kaputnik!*

Photos (clockwise from top) Richard the Little Lion posing on Josh & Michael the Big Lion; St. Louis Arches styling on the Chinese Poles; Nathan & Matthew juggle around Lion Lemond.



Arches' Asian Appreciation

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article was titled *St. Louis Arches Take the Asian Way!* It has certainly seemed like that this year. They've learned the demanding Chinese Vertical Pole act and some of them actually attended the *St. Louis Modern Chinese School* to learn Lion Dancing!



They also improved their Chinese Hoop Diving and Chinese Yo-Yo (diabolo) acts. The *Arches* were the featured performers at the *Families with Children from China Annual Banquet* and they were once again honored to be the only non-Asian act to appear at the *St. Louis Chinese Association's Chinese New Year Celebration*. The *Arches* were also proud to have been featured numerous times in the *St. Louis Chinese American News*. You can check out these articles by searching under *St. Louis Arches* at www.scanews.com.



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YES! I want to run away and join the circus without leaving home!

Sign me up for the **Circus Day Foundation!** Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

- Roustabout \$25-\$49
- Clown \$50-\$99
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- Acrobat \$250-\$499
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- Ringmaster \$5,000+

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- My check for the full membership is enclosed.
- I'd like to make my contribution with monthly/quarterly payments of \$_____ for my \$_____ annual pledge.

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- I would love to volunteer! Please contact me!

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Circus Day Foundation
 3340 Oxford Avenue
 St. Louis, Missouri 63143
www.circusday.org
314 / 436-7676

St. Louis ArtWorks

Circus Day has been named one of only two performing arts troupes to serve as one of the teaching organizations for **St. Louis ArtWorks**. This is a unique summer employment program for St. Louis area young adults (ages 14 to 21) where they are apprenticed to professional working artists as a six-week summer job. You can visit www.stlartworks.org to learn more. We will be working with 10 apprentices who will put together a show called *CircusWorks!* They will be performing several times over the summer at **City Museum** and at **Adams Park Community Center**.

We are thrilled to announce the teachers for the **St. Louis ArtWorks** program will be our own **Arch** alumnus **Christopher Ross** and master teacher, performer, rigger, former human cannonball (among other circus acts) **Warren Bacon**. Warren was the first circus teacher of our Director, **Jessica Hentoff**, over 25 years ago! He currently owns and operates **Which Way Is Up? Consultants**, a rigging company in Florida that builds much of **Circus Day's** trapezes and other circus equipment. While he is in St. Louis, **Warren** will also conduct master classes in Tumbling and Aerial Artistry. He is an amazing addition to our faculty!

Warren Bacon teaching a toe-hang. >

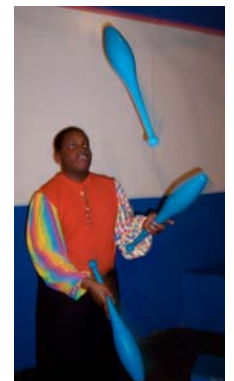


Patchwork Circus

One of the first programs **Circus Day Foundation** started was its *Circus Partnership Program* where we brought together children from different backgrounds who would not normally get to know each other. We gave them a common language (circus) and a common goal (to put on a show). Our first *Circus Partnership* was between Jewish and Muslim children. They did a wonderful show for two years called *Circus Salaam Shalom*. We also did a *Circus Partnership* last year between home-schoolers and children at the **Adams Park Community Center** that resulted in the *Adams Park Community Center Circus*. Then, last year, we combined the youth circus troupes that had developed through our *Circus Partnership Programs* into one *Open Partnership* called the *Patchwork Circus*. The name "Patchwork" was chosen because the participants are like the pieces of a quilt— each different piece with its own history— coming together to form a beautiful and unique work of art.



Patchwork Circus is currently comprised of Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Chinese, Hispanic, African-American, Filipino, Caucasian, urban and suburban children. We call *Patchwork Circus* our beginner troupe although some of the performers are actually quite accomplished. At this point, participants range in age from 4 to 14 years old. They premiered at last year's **First Annual Youth Circus Showcase**. In December, they presented an inspirational holiday show called *Peace Through Pyramids* and then in May they presented *Practice Make Pyramids*. They are working on new acts for this year's **Youth Circus Showcase**. Please call us or visit our website for information on how your child can join this innovative troupe!





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Wish List

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent flyer miles | <input type="checkbox"/> Help making Circus Harmony CD & DVD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tumbling mats | <input type="checkbox"/> New make-up (especially body glitter) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costumes (new and used) | <input type="checkbox"/> Juggling Props & Unicycles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stamps | <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage trunks | <input type="checkbox"/> Acrobatic Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office supplies (Computer discs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Van/Equipment Truck |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stilts | <input type="checkbox"/> Your Support! |

Our Mission Statement: *The Circus Day Foundation teaches the art of life through circus education. We work to build character and expand community for youth of all ages, cultures, abilities and backgrounds. Through teaching and performance of circus skills, we help people defy gravity, soar with confidence and leap over social barriers, all at the same time.*