

# TOPICAL TIDBITS



May/June 2013

Volume 2 Issue 3

## THE CIRCUS

Come one, come all! Here comes the philatelic circus!! Experience the spectacle and excitement of the circus as you explore these pages.

Circuses have been delighting audiences of all ages for centuries. Circus type shows have been around since the days of the Romans. Traveling circuses existed during the Middle Ages of Europe. The circus, as we know it today, originated in England.

The stamps and covers illustrating various aspects of the modern circus, as seen on these pages, are some of the most colorful collectible items in philately. Later, you may want to start your own collection of circus stamps and covers. Mount your favorites on the special album page included in this unit.

As the circus train comes to town, watch the wagons being unloaded. Enter the Big Top with its three action-filled rings. Swing with trapeze artists, be entertained by the clowns, walk the tightrope, juggle swords and fire torches, ride bareback on a horse, take in the animal parade, and eat a bag of popcorn. Enjoy this philatelic circus celebration!!

When you have completed your tour of the circus (and these pages), try your hand at creating a cachet for the first day of issue of the U.S. clown stamp or try designing a cancel for a circus coming to your town. Send your finished project by June 30, 2013, to receive a philatelic gift. Include your name, mailing address, age, and collecting interests. Everyone entering will receive a gift. Send to:

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# HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS

“Ladies and gentlemen, children of all ages! Welcome to the most exciting show on Earth!” Those were the traditional words that welcomed people to the circus.

The circus as we know it today got its start in England in 1768, with the invention of the circus ring. It was discovered that if a horse cantered at a steady speed in a circle, it was easier for riders to do tricks on the backs of the animals. The word *circus* comes from the Latin word for *ring*.

In 1775, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had the first American circus which consisted of a riding show with a clown performing between the riding acts. Only a few years later in 1793, acrobat acts were added to the shows. Even President George Washington attended and enjoyed one of the earliest circuses in our country.

In 1825, large tents (Big Tops) were used. This made it easier for the circus to travel from place to place and set up in small towns across our country. It was not too long before the one circus ring became three rings and more new acts were added. Imagine the thrill for young people to see exotic animals, trapeze artists, and other daring acts.

As circuses became more expensive to run and operate, they joined together with each other to form bigger and better circuses. The Ringling Brothers Circus bought the Barnum & Bailey Circus in 1907. Over the years, other circuses merged.

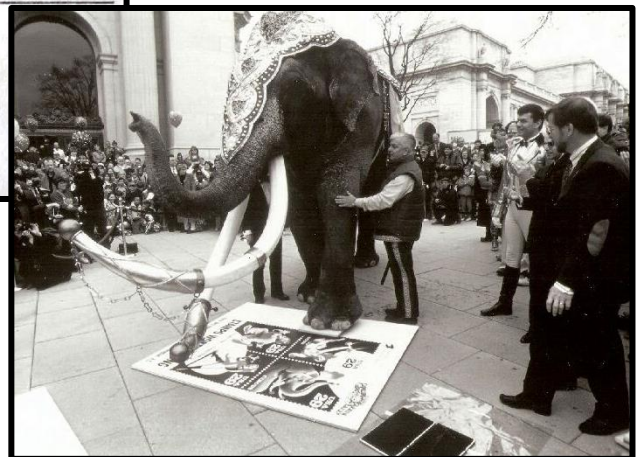
Today some circuses perform only in buildings, but there are still circuses that travel from town to town and perform in large tents.

Enjoy your trip through this philatelic circus!



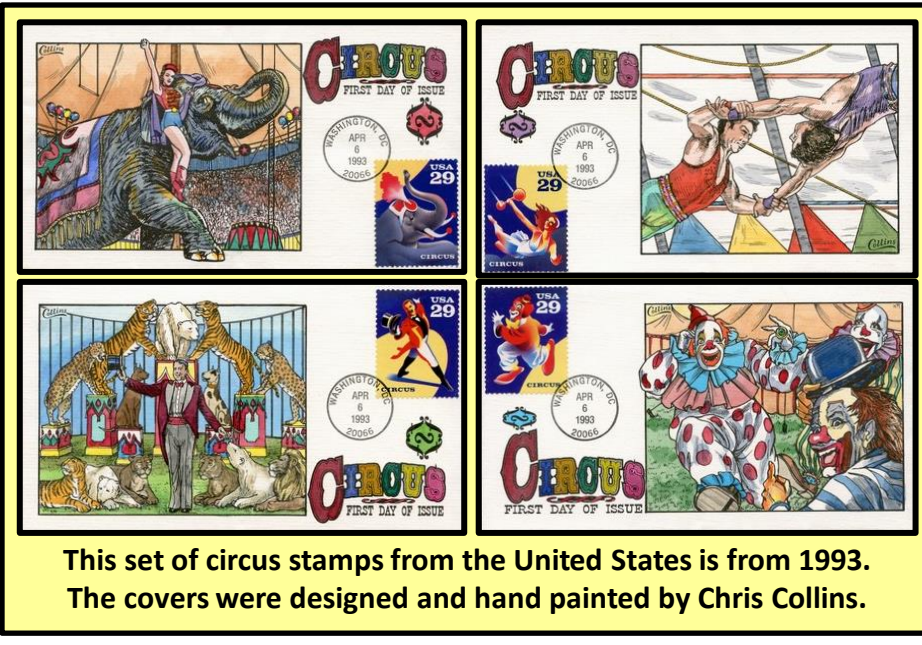
Left: This advertising cover is from the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus' office in Chicago, Illinois. The clown stamps were issued in Delavan, Wisconsin on May 2, 1966.

Right: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus' King Tusk placed his “stamp of approval” on an oversized replica of four commemorative U.S. postage stamps celebrating 200 years of Circus in America. The First Day Dedication took place on April 6, 1993, in front of the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.





# CIRCUS SETS



This set of circus stamps from the United States is from 1993. The covers were designed and hand painted by Chris Collins.

Sometimes stamps are issued in sets. This means that there are two or more stamps with a single theme that are usually issued at the same time. There have been many beautiful circus sets issued. Cachet artists will usually design a different cover for each stamp in the set.



These are the stamps used on the covers at the top of the page. Color the stamps below to match them or you can pick your own colors!



These seven stamps were issued by Monaco in 1974 to publicize the first Monte-Carlo International Circus Festival.

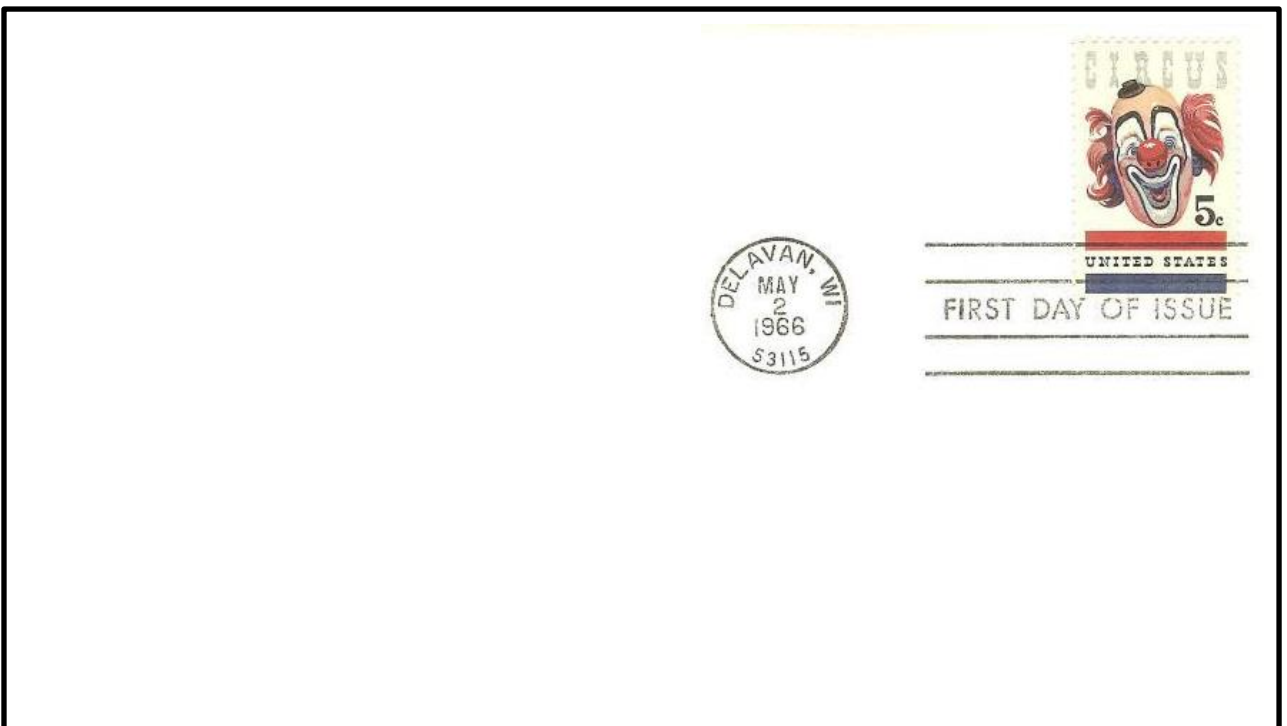
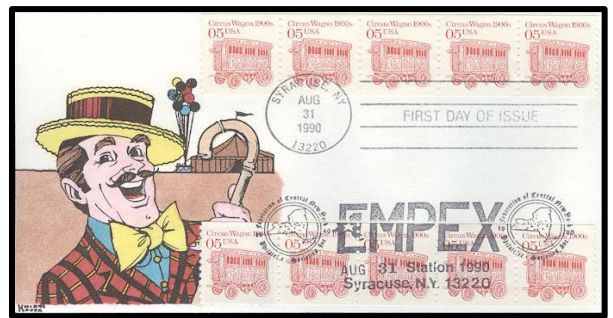
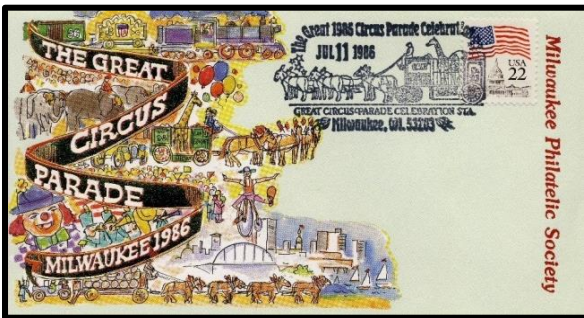
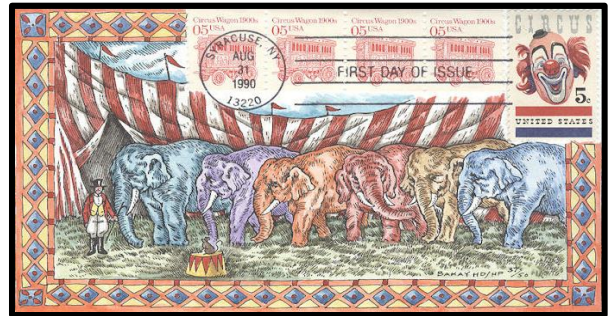
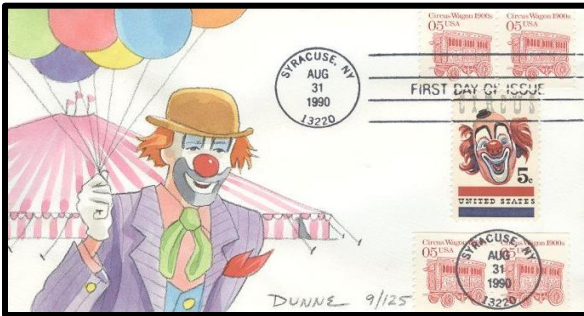




# CIRCUS COVERS



Cachet-makers are people who like to design a picture on an envelope that ties in with the stamp. Some use paint, colored pencils, and even their computers. Even stickers and pictures from magazines can be used. Look over these cachets and then design your own cover below.



# CIRCUS CANCELS

There are many kinds of cancels used to commemorate special events like the circus. As you can see from the examples below, these often are very creative and eye-catching. Some of the cancels tell the event name, but not all of them do. Most tell the place or country and they all include a date.



Clown cancels are a popular choice for many countries. Which is your favorite?

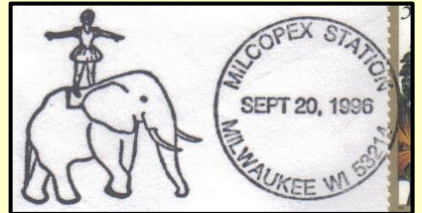
Pretend the circus is coming to your town. You're in charge of designing a cancel. Be sure to include the city, state, and date.



Circus-related items make nice-looking cancels. Pictured are 3 tents and a wagon.



Animals, like seals and elephants, always make nice cancels. What's your favorite circus animal?



# JOKES

What happened to the elephant that ran away with the circus?  
*The police made him bring it back.*

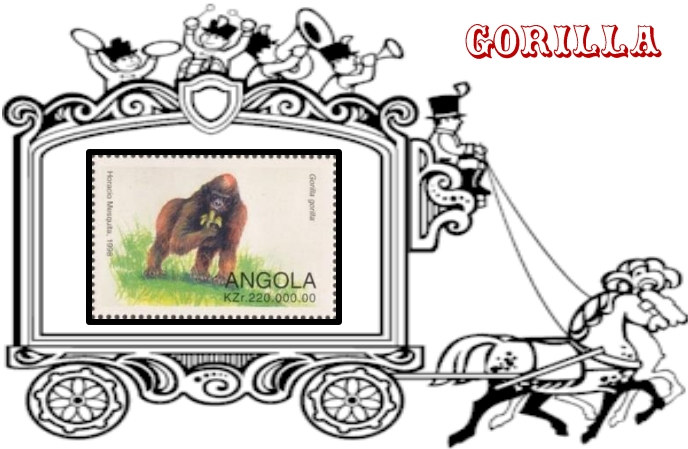
What happened when the lion ate the clown?  
*He felt funny.*



# THE CIRCUS PARADE

The circus parade has come to town, but the wagons have gotten all mixed up. Cut the cards out along the lines and help the animals get back in the right ABC order. (There are more cards on the next page.)

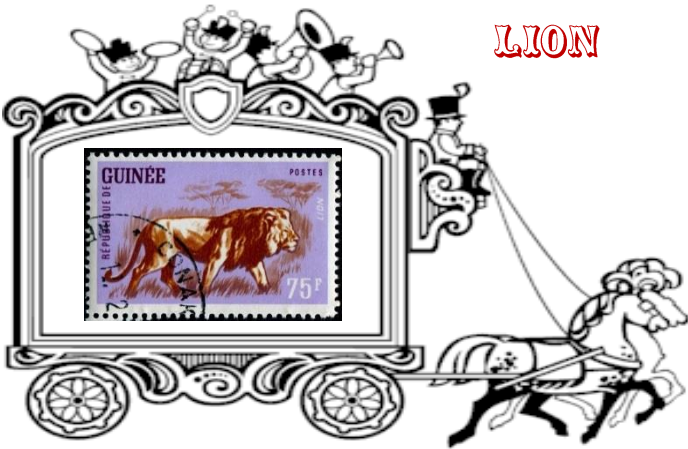
**GORILLA**



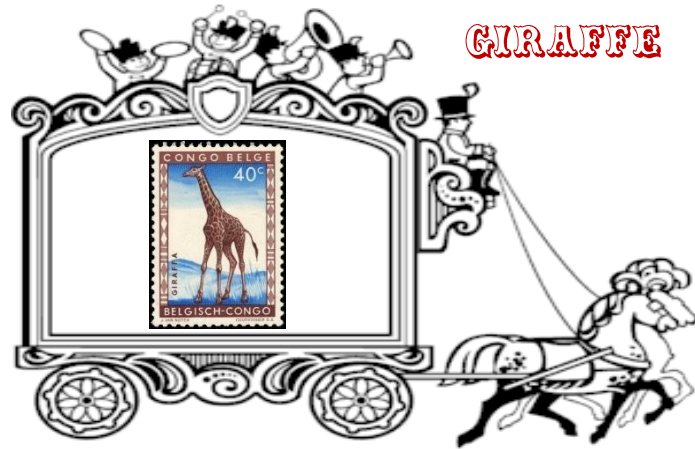
**ZEBRA**



**LION**



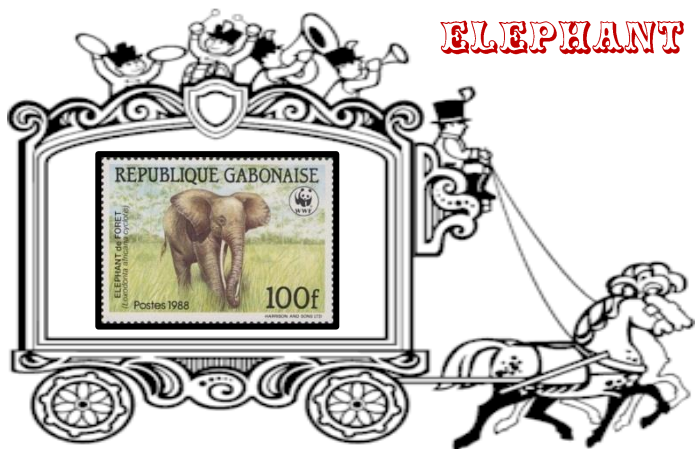
**GIRAFFE**



**CAMEL**



**ELEPHANT**

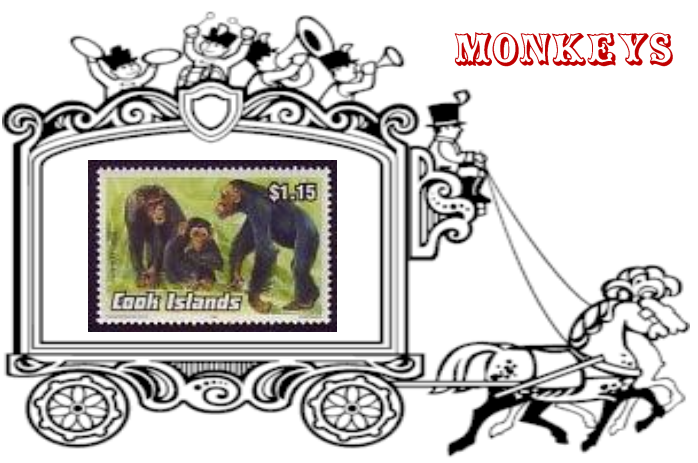




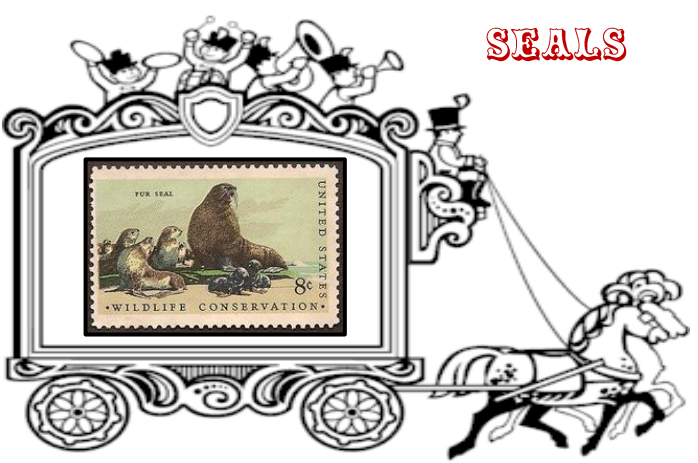
**BEAR**



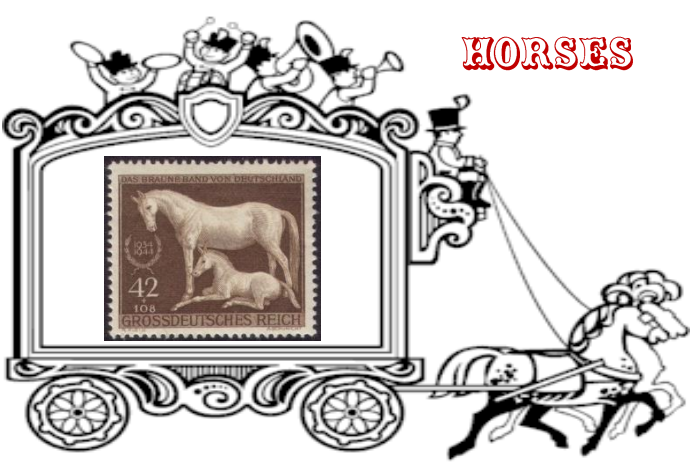
**TIGER**



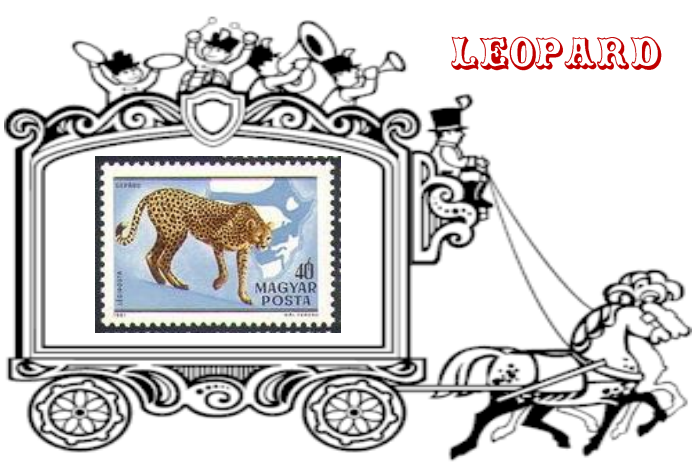
**MONKEYS**



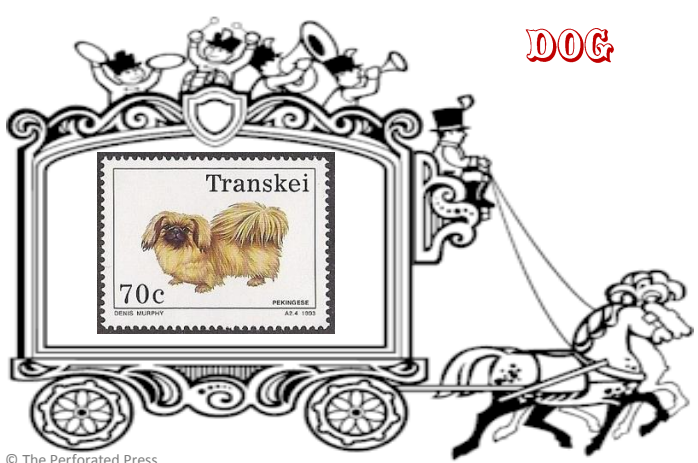
**SEALS**



**HORSES**



**LEOPARD**



**DOG**

**ANSWERS:**

1. Bear
2. Camel
3. Dog
4. Elephant
5. Giraffe
6. Gorilla
7. Horses
8. Leopard
9. Lion
10. Monkeys
11. Seals
12. Tiger
13. Zebra

# The Circus

