

Barnumesque Budgies

By ETHEL ATKINS, Grand Rapids, Michigan

WITH THE CIRCUS writing finale to "white top" tradition, Tony Bielskas and his Budgies won't be bothered. That there's "no business like show business" Tony's proving . . . yet no roustabouts are needed, no transportation tie-ups give him trouble, no weather-man's caprices halt the show. Only miniature rigging enters the picture—only a table is needed for the stage.

Grand Rapids, Michigan's ex-vaudeville and circus veteran Tony Bielskas is presently engaged in getting into print a book he's written. Dealing with stunts he's personally taught his birds, tricks he's done and seen performed by other actors, the book promises to delight the many older and lonely folks, veterans in hospitals, handicapped persons and shut-ins, as well as children and adults who are Parrakeet fans.

"I compiled it with step-by-step procedures I employ in training the birds," says Tony. "I had an artist acquaintance do the drawings, showing construction of 'props' and illustrating the birds performing the act. I've been several months getting the book together, and now that it's completed, I can relax. I don't know just how soon it'll be published, but the sooner it's on the

market, the sooner others can do the same routines with their birds."

Asked how long it takes training a bird, he says, "It doesn't take too long, but you've got to start 'em young. Like humans, some learn faster than others, and, like humans, some never learn. But most birds cooperate if you work with 'em a while, although you've got to work at it every day. And the birds enjoy the tricks, once you've taught 'em."

Birds Perform With Circus Props

The birds perform on such props as the perch pole, tight wire, horizontal bars, revolving ladder, whirling aerial perch, trapeze and many others, routines he himself took part in when he was with the Tony Bendow Trio in the early 1900's.

Having left the stage in 1911 because of failing eyesight, Tony's never gotten "show business" out of his blood. It's what prompted him to start his Budgies performing. Although he's now past 70, he's a genial, alert and lively man for his age. Often visiting with ex-show people, reminiscing about the circus, vaudeville, booking agents and acts, his youthful enthusiasm belies his years . . . he gets a lot o' livin—livin' with his Budgies!

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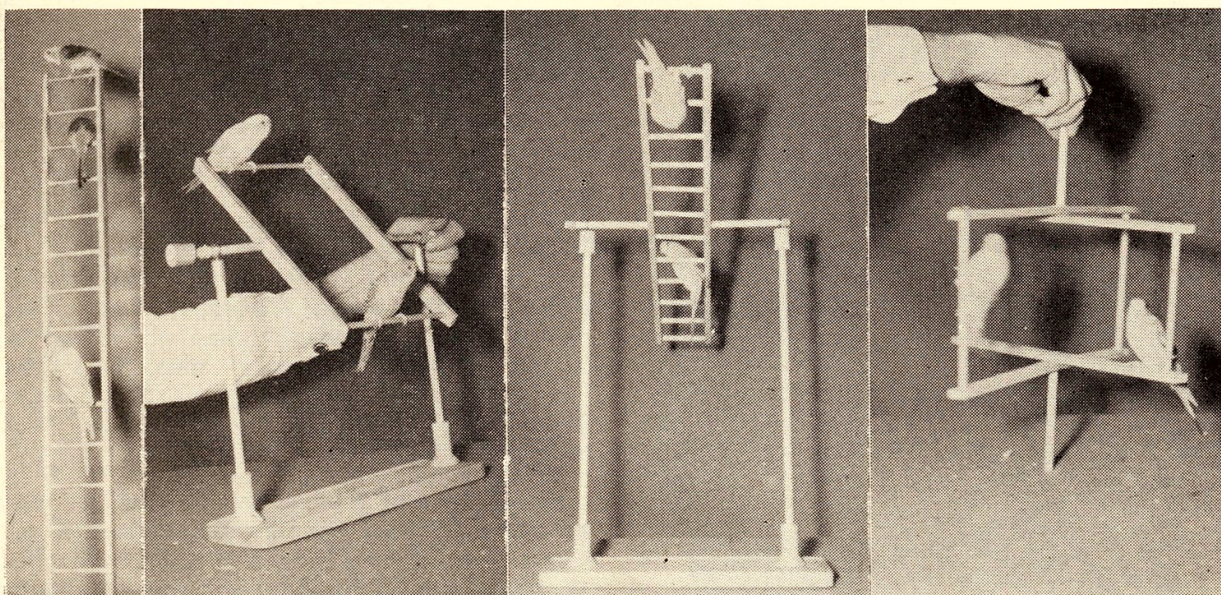
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TONY with three of his birds and some of the props used in his acts.

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LEFT TO RIGHT: Tony Bielskas' birds parading up the upright ladder; on the revolving frame; on the revolving ladder; two of the birds on the merry-go-round.

ADDITIONAL SHOW WINNERS

There was an omission of a portion of the winners at the Oakland International Roller Canary Club Show in our February, 1956 issue. We are giving them here as follows:

Master Breeder—Harry and Bea Barton, 1st Club Single (62), 1st Club Team (237); John and Gladys Urban, 1st Open Single (64), 1st Open Team (248).

Champion—Fain and Lucille Whittle, 1st Club and Open Single (60), 1st Open and Club Team (233).

Amateur—Haig Sarkisian, 1st Open Single (62), 1st Open Team (243).

Novice—Harold and Joanne Moorhead, 1st Single (57), 1st Team (179), Club and Open.

SHOW AND PET FAIR

Budgie and Cage Bird Society of Oregon, Inc., formerly Parrakeet Breeders Assn. of Oregon, will sponsor their second annual judging show, Pet Fair, and fifth annual Exhibition. Show dates are October 19th, 20th and 21st, to be held at the South Wing of the Auditorium in Portland, Oregon.

Mr. Vern Davidson of Victoria Canada will be the judge of the show.

The exhibition section will consist of any type birds, tropical fish or animals that an individual would like to exhibit.

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