

WORLD OF WONDERS: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIMMY AND DENA KATZ

It's showtime! See weird, wonderful, wild and bizarre. The strangest show on earth: the Headless Woman, four-legged dancers, pygmies, Spider Girl, the Girl Who Changes Into a Gorilla, sword swallows, the Human Blockhead, and they are all ready to meet you. Bring your kids, bring your grandparents, bring your inlaws, bring your outlaws, bring your parole officer, bring everybody inside. If you're in line then you're in time!

-Tommy



1. *World Of Wonders Banners, Florida, 2007*



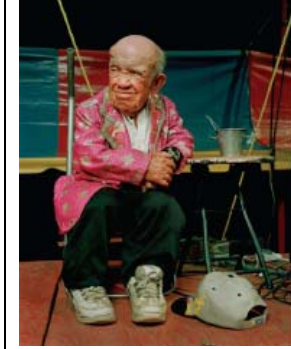
2. *Jimmy Long at Ticket Booth, Florida, 2007*



3. *Ward Hall with Banners, Florida, 2007*

My name is Ward Hall. I was born in 1930 in Trenton, Nebraska in a little farming community. I left as soon as I found out there was another place. From a small child on I wanted to be a circus performer, but could never do anything athletic. So, I learned to do some magic and eat fire and when I was 14 years old, I had my first job as a prop boy in the circus.

	<p>I started in the sideshow business in 1946 when I was 15. I stayed with it because the people in the sideshow were so fascinating to be with and they treated me so good. Also, I saw the prospects of making some money in the sideshow business. I bought my first sideshow in 1951 and I've been going ever since then.</p>
	<p>4. <i>Chris Christ with Three Knives, Florida, 2007</i></p> <p>I'm 59 and I'm from Buffalo. I've wanted to do this since I was four. Some kids want to be firemen, some kids want to be policemen; I always knew this is what I wanted to do. I have no idea why. I have no family linkage, no lineage. It's really strange. I've never figured it out. I worked for one summer on kiddie rides at a carnival. My folks thought I'd do it for two weeks and come home. They had a directory of show operators. I wrote to all of them. When I got out of school, I had some money and Ward had run short. In November, 1966, we made a deal: we became partners. I was 18.</p>
	<p>5. <i>Sideshow Arts Banner, Florida, 2007</i></p>
	<p>6. <i>"The Old Pro" with Birds, Florida, 2007</i></p>

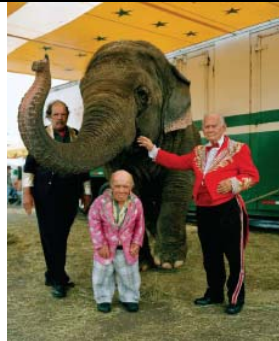


7. *Poobah on Bally,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*



8. *Tommy Breen Swallowing Sword,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

I'm from Little Falls, New Jersey. I've always been kind of shy. After I graduated college, I wanted to join a sideshow, rather than just be some guy with a job who could swallow swords in his living room. The sideshow is dangerous, scary, and impossible. You're going to scream and laugh. I mean, what do you want for \$2?



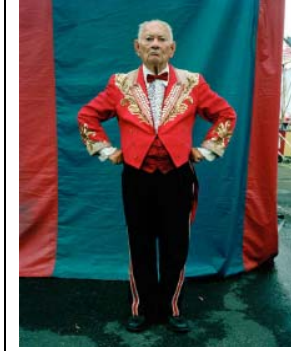
9. *Chris, Poobah, Ward, and Elephant,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

In its heyday, around 1950, there were 104 traveling sideshows touring in America. Today, The World of Wonders is the only one left and it's a shame because this is an American institution.



10. *Man Eating Gorilla,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

 A photograph of a person in a black outfit and a mask, holding a flaming object, standing in front of a red and blue tent.	<p>11. <i>Chelsea Eating Fire,</i> <i>Pennsylvania, 2006</i></p>
 A photograph of a man in a green vest and white shirt, holding a razor blade, standing in front of a tent.	<p>12. <i>Elton with Razor Blades,</i> <i>Pennsylvania, 2006</i></p> <p>It's a kids' show for the whole family. For one moment those people are nine years old again.</p>
 A photograph of a person in a black outfit, standing in front of a red and blue tent.	<p>13. <i>Firefly in Tent,</i> <i>Florida, 2007</i></p>
 A photograph of a banner for 'ELECTRICIA' featuring a woman in a red and white outfit, with the word 'ALIVE' below.	<p>14. <i>Electricia Banner,</i> <i>Florida, 2007</i></p>
 A photograph of a man in a black vest, holding a large, glowing fireball, standing in front of a tent.	<p>15. <i>John Johnson Breathing Fire,</i> <i>Florida, 2007</i></p> <p>When you're home, driving down the highway and breathing diesel fumes, it makes you remember the scent of the carnival and makes you really miss it.</p>



16. *Ward Hall Standing with Tent,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

Sure, I'm a professional liar. I seem to have a natural talent for that. You heard me talk the front of the show. Do you believe you are going to see a real two-headed woman? It is my job to convince these people that they are going to see these things. I could take a Volkswagen and make you believe it is a Rolls-Royce. If I had another life I'd like to be a trial lawyer or perhaps an evangelical TV minister.



17. *Red Stewart Swallowing Sword,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

I was born in 1951 on an army camp in New Jersey. I was put up for adoption and raised in orphanages and foster homes in the Philadelphia region. I've been swallowing swords for over 43 years. I'm a three time Guinness World Record holder for sword swallowing. When I teach people how to swallow swords, I tell them one rule of thumb: do not have any doubt or fear, do not hesitate. Just do it.



18. *Veva with World's Smallest Horse,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*



19. *Poobah with Fire,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*



20. *Chris, Poobah, and Ward in front of Tent, New Jersey, 2008*

We have the only classic sideshow left in the business and we don't try to modernize it. When this one closes I don't think there will be another one. It's the end of the era.



21. *Chelsea with Mike Vitka, New Jersey, 2008*

Before World of Wonders I was working at a Starbucks in a shopping mall and I had to suppress myself a lot.



22. *Ward and Dog inside Trailer, Pennsylvania, 2006*

I went to school for about six weeks, but they weren't teaching me what I wanted to learn, like how to tie a half-hitch on a guy-rope around a tent stake.



23. *Chelsea and Natalie before the Show, New Jersey, 2008*



24. *Elton Shaving, Florida, 2007*



25. *James on Bed of Nails,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

I hope some young person who has the ambition and energy to do this business will take it over.



26. *Elena with Juggling Clubs,*  
*Florida, 2007*



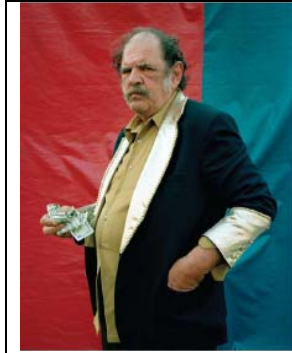
27. *Metamorphosis Banner,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*



28. *April with Snake,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*

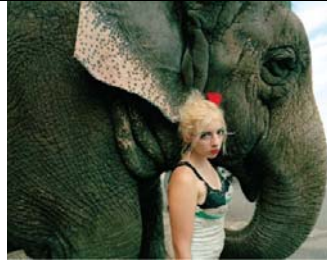


29. *Chelsea and Natalie with Snake,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*



30. *Chris with Money,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

We never argue over money; whether there was money or whether there wasn't. We never argue about anything important. I doubt I'd continue doing this without Ward. I wouldn't go out and face this much grief.



31. *Natalie and Elephant,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

On a fairground, a pretty girl out front is essential. Sword swallowing, fire eating, and a pretty girl. That combination works. Without the front, you'd have no back.



32. *Red Stewart with Nail in Nose,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*



33. *Chelsea in Electric Chair,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*



34. *Rain in Trailer,*  
*Florida, 2007*



35. *Firefly Showing Tattoo,*  
*Florida, 2007*



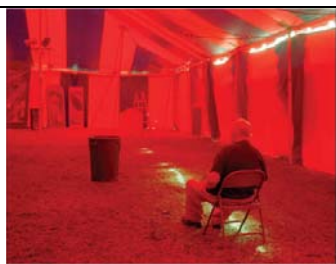
36. *Ward and Red Holding Snake,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*

Life out here isn't easy: it's long hours.  
It is a hard life, but all life is hard.



37. *Ward under Umbrella,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*

Ward is the last of the great showmen in the  
world. I love the man like he's my own father.  
He's the best there ever was.



38. *Jimmy Long Sitting in Tent,*  
*Florida, 2007*

I just want to be remembered for being fair  
and decent to people, and putting in my time.



39. *Ward Walking Away,*  
*Pennsylvania, 2006*

There is no fool like an old fool and when you get to be my age, I know damn well I'm an old fool. I'm a fool to be out there, to go through all this misery operating a show like this, putting up with the heat and the thunderstorms to have just a few moments on the stage. I have a wonderful memory. A wonderful memory is wonderful, but it is also a curse...because I remember all the bad things that I wish I could forget.



40. *Fairground at Night,*  
*New Jersey, 2008*