

White Tops Editors report for 2015-2016

by Mardi and John Wells

For the past 10 years, this report has been a summary of what the White Tops editors have done to improve the content and reduce the costs to produce our association's bi-monthly magazine. As was last year's, this report will be brief.

At the end of April 2015, the *White Tops* completed the fourth year of a three year contract with our "new" printer, which originally locked in pricing for three years. We have since negotiated another three year contact with Modern Litho Printing. The result continues to reduce costs, improve the publication, shortened deadlines and, most importantly, allow us to stay within our projected budget. The only costs which we are not able to control are the postal rates. Postage went up in January, 2015. But surprise! It reverted April 24, 2016, due to the agreement the PO made with the U.S. Congress when the 2015 increase was allowed. So lower rates...for now.

The *White Tops* produced five, sixty-four page issues plus wrapper and the 104 page Christmas issue (delivered in a plastic bag) this year for a total of 444 pages. Member and commercial advertising in the Christmas issue remained about the same as last year as did the advertising in the other five issues in spite of a declining business environment and the closing of a major and several minor shows.

We have been fortunate once again in attracting new authors and photographers who have added variety to our magazine: Katie Harmke, Steve Hyde, David Johnson, Rick Purdue and Sebastian Tauriainen among others. This has resulted in an unusual problem. We now receive more material than we can possibly print in our reduced five, 68 page issues plus the Christmas issue. As problems go, this is a nice one to have!

Our next challenge is to educate many of our contributors to the difference in resolution between printing and Internet photos when sending and/or shooting photos for submission to *White Tops*. We are also working hard to train our contributors to make their submissions via the White Tops upload site.

It is appropriate again to recognize two CFA members who have done yeomen's work covering the circuses: the team of Pete Adams and Richard Czina. Gail Peer Czina and Maxine House have joined their ranks! This spring there were so many events to cover in Florida that Gail and Richard Czina had to split up in order to get coverage to *White Tops*. We also want to thank the many contributors who have gone beyond the call of duty to make the *White Tops* the quality magazine that is is: Jack Belles, Jim Cole, Sarah Conley, Leelia and Tom Cornell, Don Covington, Cheryl Deptula, Mort Gamble, Sara Gordon, Deborah Grosmark, Paul Gutheil, Bill Hall, Doug Kruest, Matthew "Phineas" Lish, Mike McKinney, Barbara Moore, Gary Payne, Dave SaLoutos, Robin Schuricht, Jan and Ken Sopelak, Dan Stapleton, Mike Straka and Dan Weaver. We thank Maxine House for continuing to improve the commercial advertising and Barbara Moore who handles the member advertising.

The important matter we must address is not just keeping the White Tops costs in line with incoming dollars, but increasing the sources of revenue so we can keep the CFA and *White Tops* as they are and continue to improve them in the future. This means we must vigilantly address the decline in our membership and make strides to reverse it. Membership provides the dollars we need to survive as an organization!