

# Pesky pachyderm leads police on merry chase

By KATHY HAND  
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COVINGTON—As one might expect after last night's episode with a loose elephant in the Covington area, the town is buzzing with elephant jokes today.

Even last night, although the business of capturing the elephant was serious, the radio traffic and comments along the way were somewhat hilarious.

The escapade began when "Hoxie," a male elephant, apparently backed into a 440-volt circuit breaker as he was being loaded into the circus truck after the elephant act which concluded Hoxie Bros. Circus performances at about 9:30 p. m. Wednesday.

Police Chief Norman Swartz said he had just driven up near the site and was sitting in the cruiser when he saw the elephant "take off running" and alerted several other police officers on the elementary school grounds where the circus took place.

Police personnel's main concern was that some of the small circus-goers leaving the grounds might be trampled by the animal.

Circus workers' comments indicated it is not unusual for an elephant to wander off. "They won't hurt anyone. They just don't like to be caught," said a concession stand worker.

The latter comment would seem to be an understatement, but one many law enforcement agents would attest to this morning.

The chase after Hoxie through country fields, down the railroad track and in the community park lasted three hours.

It wasn't until 12:30 a. m. today that the animal finally was coaxed by circus people with bananas and feed from Miller's Pond, just north of Covington on S. R. 48.

Pt. Tom Manson was the only person injured, receiving what was termed a "sympathy wound" to his hand when he tripped "running to get back to my truck."

The elephant made his way across U. S. 36 (Broadway Street) through the Sohigro Service Co. lot and down the railroad tracks to Rakestraw Road.

The three female elephants in the act were taken out to try to coax Hoxie back, and they, too, got loose but were quickly caught. The first one was captured at Owens Drive and was walked back up Broadway to the circus. The other two were chained in yards along Mc-

Make Road.  
June Fisher, corner of Mc-Maken and U. S. 36, said she was out feeding the dog when she saw police cars and a couple other cars at the nearby railroad track and wondered if there had been an accident.

"About then I looked up and saw an elephant running down the railroad track," Fisher reported. "Pen I saw three more." One of the female elephants, "Irene," was given water and chained to the basketball post in Fishers' backyard until about 1:15 a. m. today. The other was chained to a "big tree in a yard on McMaken Road, south of Ingle Road.

Hoxie walked through fields mostly between Ingle Road and Rakestraw Roads, then ran down through town on the railroad track, down the railroad embankment into the park.

"I bet he ran 20 miles all night long," Manson said. Through fields, the elephant "walked a lot," he said. "On the railroad he was going a pretty good clip. You had to jog to keep up with him." Manson said personnel "always had a pretty good idea" of the elephant's location.

The patrolman said Mark Humphrey and Sgt. Joe Mahan of the Miami County Sheriff's department "were right on his tail every step of the way."

Humphrey was driving through Covington as the episode began and was alerted to the problem by the police chief.

Manson reported Humphrey jumped out of his car, saying he'd get the elephant. "Pretty soon here he (Humphrey)

came running down the railroad with the elephant after him," Manson said. "He (Humphrey) ran through the river in uniform," he was a mess," the patrolman added.

At the park, the elephant was cornered behind the backstop at the little baseball diamond. The trainer was calling commands when a camera clicked and "he just charged," Manson said.

He ran through a cable fraying it, then down through the other baseball diamond and into Stillwater River. The animal went under the railroad track at the park and headed north, where it came up out of the river and waded into Miller's pond.

At one point police considered using a tranquilizer gun to capture the elephant. The circus left Covington at about 6 a. m. today for its next performance in Delphos.

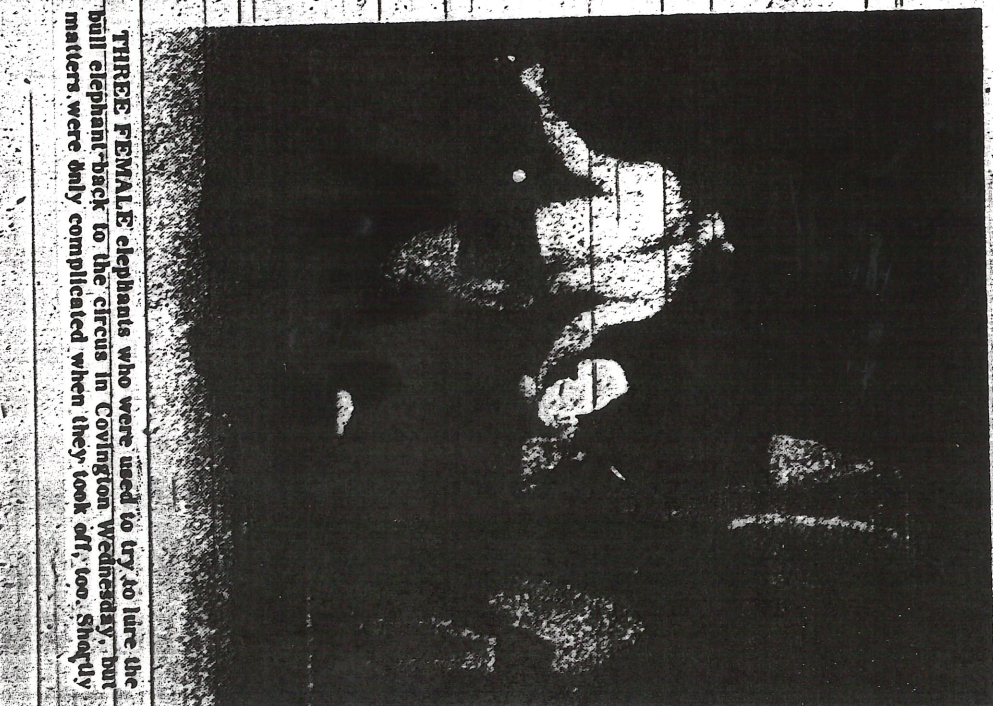
charter requires the general contractor, but there has been no advertisement for bids.

Patrizio said the city's bond attorneys will attend the meeting Tuesday to answer legal questions about the arrangement.

Because of the questions discussed at the meeting with hospital officials, city commissioners were about an hour late for their joint session with the Piquan Improvement Corporation at the Chamber of Commerce office. Commissioners and PIG members agreed on the names of 25 persons to serve on the Small Business Administration's Loan program board of directors. Patrizio said he has to contact those persons named to see whether they want to serve before the appointments can be made. Of the 25, eight persons will serve on the board of trustees.

Patrizio said it is hoped the loan program will be ready to make loans by the end of the year.

THREE FEMALE elephants who were used to try to lure the bull elephant back to the circus in Covington Wednesday, but matters were only complicated when they took off, too. Shaggy



6/9/82