

Circus Captivates Crowd



Everyone was a kid the day the circus came to town — including the performers themselves!

It was hard to remember during the spectacular entertainment provided by the Lewis and Clark Youth Circus that the fearless flying and fire-eating folks were just normal school children. Traveling from Astoria to dazzle the Warm Springs community April 29, the circus troupe left many people wondering — can our school do that?

Take an average junior high school, add a dedicated coach or two and a lot of hard work and cooperation and you may end up with just such a show. Borrowed money and the assistance of the Clackamas High School Circus coach helped get Lewis and Clark's circus off the ground about five years ago. Now with grants and support from the school district, the circus is well established and coach Max Bigby notes that the performance has grown from ten to over twenty acts.

With the training and performing help of several circus alumni, the kids presented a variety of displays, all in a surprisingly professional manner.



FLAMES — The kids played with fire, and got away with it, when they juggled flaming torches and, to the amazement of the crowd, swallowed flames with apparent relish.

THRILLS — The Community Center gym was transformed into a jungle of ladders, trapezes, and ropes suspended from the ceiling. The stiff-necked audience witnessed a dizzying display of talent and raw guts as performers spun, flipped, dangled and sailed without nets.

SPILLS — It was their first performance of the year and therefore did not go without the quota of spills, none serious. A dropped juggling ball, a wobbly unicycle or a tumble from the balance board was greeted with friendly encouragement from the audience and a smiling shrug from the performer.



LAUGHS — Down on the floor, clowns boxed, juggled, and otherwise cavorted to the amusement of kids and adults. A boy on high stilts was propped up and mingled with the crowd, and some "little people" with oversized heads danced and collided.

WHEELS — A bicycle built for seven circled the ring picking up riders in various combinations, making pyramids and towers of balancing bodies. Teams of unicycles wheeled in formation.



AND BEYOND THE SAWDUST — At a powwow held in their honor the night before, the circus kids from Astoria discovered the collected talent of the Warm Springs youth, who war danced, owl danced and butterfly danced for the visitors. The graceful and poised circus performers were not immune to giggles as they attempted to dance the unfamiliar steps with the locals. But one Astoria boy won himself an Indian record for his performance in a war dance contest at the powwow emceed by Nathan Jim, Sr.

