



Circus will perform 18 shows in Houston

By WALTER SMITH
Co-editor

JUST AS CARTOONS AREN'T JUST for kids, neither are circuses. Young and old alike can thrill to the action and spectacles of the center ring, because the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus arrives in Houston this month.

"The Greatest Show On Earth" will perform at the Summit from July 16 to July 28 for 18 exciting performances. This season's show commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Ringling Brothers Circus. It will feature two and a half hours of traditional favorites as well as new attractions.

But getting this gigantic show to the Summit won't be an easy task. About 200 circus animals and 16 tons of equipment will be unloaded by 300 workers from the mile-long circus train at the intersection of Edloe Street and Highway 59 South at 7:30 p.m. on July 15. From there, the entire entourage will march through the streets of Houston to the coliseum.

Once they arrive, the work crews will launch into action. Although they won't have to set up any big-top tents in the Summit, they will have to install about 14 miles of rope, wire and cable that will hold the show together.

These riggings have to be secure to hold the aerial artists as they celebrate the 125th year of the flying trapeze. And to help celebrate, the circus will feature Miguel Vazquez, the only person ever to complete a quadruple mid-air somersault. Mark David will display his prowess on the single trapeze when he performs daring stunts like the "heel catch." The Survivors will be making their North American debut as the four-member team dive into mid-air and perform flips, pirouettes and somersaults before being caught from below.

WHAT CIRCUS WOULD BE COMPLETE without animal trainers? This show will feature rare white tigers from Burma as well as an Olympic salute by Bulgarian bears. Axel Gautier and family will direct their 21 beasts in a show called "Elephants — Country Style."

Hosts of clowns, exotic dancers, contortionists, acrobatics and high-wire artists will round out the show.

If all these feats and attractions have you excited, then go get your tickets at any Ticketron location or at the Summit box office. But if you still want more even after you've seen the show, then go back to the Summit at 4:30 p.m. on July 26. At that time, the circus will be holding admissions interviews for its clown college and auditions for female dancers. □

Dr. Seuss pens new book for adults

Associated Press

LA JOLLA, Calif. — In the same cluttered office where he created such children's classics as "The Cat in the Hat" and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," Theodore Seuss Geisel is putting the finishing touches on his first book for adults in almost 50 years.

"It's an adult book in a child's format," Geisel says. It will include the same type of comical illustrations and verse that have delighted young readers for decades.

Known to millions by his pen

name, Dr. Seuss, the 81-year-old Geisel says he works as hard today as ever. His only thought of retirement is when he encounters writer's block.

"But then I wonder what I'd do," he says, "and give up (the thought)."

Geisel, a 35-year resident of this beach town north of San Diego, lives and works in a converted observation tower overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

His work day starts at 9 a.m.

"I can sleep later than most people because my office is within 15 feet of my bed," he says, adding that he sits at the drawing board for the rest

of the day "whether anything happens or not."

The 50 illustrations and the words that go with the new book, to be published by Random House, are tacked in sequence on his office wall, an editing trick Geisel learned in his highly successful Hollywood days.

"If you stick up the pictures and words on the wall," he says, "you can see the whole flow of the story. It's the best way to edit the material."

He won Academy Awards for documentary films in 1946 for "Hitler Lives" and again in 1947 for "Design for Death," a history of Japanese peo-

ple. His third Oscar came in 1951 for the animated cartoon, "Gerald McBoing-Boing."

Geisel describes his latest book as a satire, but that's all he'll say.

"It would be silly for me to talk about it. It hasn't been published," says Geisel, who does about 10 versions of each story before settling on the finished product.

He hopes to have the new book published March 2 — his 82nd birthday. Geisel's most recent children's work, a parable about the nuclear arms race titled the "The Butter Battle Book," was published on his 80th birthday and became a best seller. □

from cartoon p. 1

through his hands and feet and turn into a high-performance, turbo-charged red sedan. Naturally he speaks via the car radio. His archfoe seems to be some other vehicle named Dark Rider. Dark Rider, Darth Vader — see the point?

So what we have here is "teen becomes machine." Let us hope, at least, for fuel efficiency.

What's really wrong with much of this Saturday morning fare? Except for Pryor and Keeshan, there are few live, talented hosts to add occa-

sional wit and spontaneity. Remember Shari Lewis? Buffalo Bob Smith? Sandy Becker? Mr. Wizard? The other thing most Saturday programming lacks is what cartoons had in abundance 25 years ago — laughs.

CBS still runs 25 and 30-year-old cartoons every Saturday morning on the "Bugs Bunny-Road Runner Show." A recent program began with an absolutely hilarious Bugs Bunny-Elmer Fudd take-off of the opera "The Barber of Seville." There are belly laughs here for young and old viewers.

Compare that to "Smurfs," one of

the more harmless, if emotionally neutered, current animated programs. Smurfs, for the uninitiated, are little elves reminiscent of the Seven Dwarfs — complete with names like Clumsy, Jokey and Briny.

Some things never change, of course. What would Saturday morning be without an endless stream of commercials for Cookie Crisp, Cocoa Pebbles, OJ's, Bubble Yum and Big League Chew? The names may have changed a bit, but these are still the same ultrasugary confections that have helped generations

of dentists cover the rising costs of their children's college tuition.

In fairness, the networks have in recent years tried to put in an occasional good word for sound nutrition. ABC, for instance, ran a public service message in the midst of "Turbo Teen" exhorting youngsters to drink plenty of water. The jingle called it "the best no-calorie drink in all the world."

Well, it's something. But the "drink water" message is no doubt drowned out by the ads for Popsicles and Apple Jacks that inevitably follow within seconds. □