

inside

Dear Readers:

We had a lot of fun putting this week's issue together. We relived childhood memories as we took in the sights under the Big Top, and hope that we can share a little bit of that excitement and electricity that is unique to the circus with you in this week's At Ease.

In our main story, we relate the circus experience through the eyes of an adult. As grownups (almost) we tend to notice the little peculiarities about the circus that we overlooked in wide-eyed innocence as children. For example, instead of worrying that the lion tamer was going to lose his head when he stuck it in the lion's mouth, we worried about the beastly breath that the poor man was subjecting himself to.

We also paid more attention to the behind-the-scenes workers who were bringing the circus magic to life. We visited the rodeo grounds as the Big Top was being raised and chatted with those who do all the work but get little of the glory. Some of these people literally ran away and joined the circus — and have few regrets.

Then we focused on two types of circus entertainers who spend the majority of their time under the spotlight — the colorful clowns and the regal ringmaster. Would you believe one of the clowns we talked to has been clowning around for almost 40 years? Or that the man who has served as Circus Vargas' ringmaster for the past six years previously was a high school English teacher?

Finally, we talked to other students about their circus experiences, posing the question, "Do you think the circus is just for kids?" The answer: a resounding "NO!"

We debated whether or not to devote an issue of At Ease to the circus after it had already left town. But we decided that if we could approach it with a unique angle and capture a little of the circus mystique, then it would be worth your time and our space. We hope we've succeeded in this pursuit, and have been able to touch a little bit of the child in us all.

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The circus adventure _____ 8

At Ease is pleased to present "A Night at the Circus" for your entertainment pleasure. In ring one you'll find the actual Big Top experience, through the eyes of a wide-eyed child but the perceptions of a seasoned adult. Sit with us on the rickety wooden bleachers as we experience the excitement that is the circus.

Behind-the-scene stars _____ 6

Have you ever dreamed of running away and joining the circus? Would you want to work behind the scenes, travelling from city to city with an assortment of laborers from all walks of life? You know, *they* are the real stars of the show, yet they work in the shadow of the Big Top and it's sequined performers. But without the circus crews, the show wouldn't go on. In ring 2 we take a look at these dedicated workers.

In the spotlight _____ 10

He wears tails and they wear polka-dots, but together the ringmaster and the clowns combine to form the heart of the circus. In ring 3 you'll discover profiles of Joe Pon, the English teacher turned ringmaster, and his clowning counterparts.

Aggienizing Answers _____ 7

While we were at the circus, we decided to look in the bleachers around us to gauge student reaction to the show. The students we talked to said the circus definitely isn't just for kids.

Movie reviews _____ 4

"Baby Boom" is not the booming success the critics are claiming, says Tom. Too many themes could cause more confusion than clarity. Also, Karen takes a look at "Less Than Zero," which opens tomorrow. She says the movie is not mindless entertainment, but that it offers a serious lesson to be learned. Read on to find out more.