

Circus allows tryout

Being clown is week-long ambition

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

Whether or not he makes it as a clown, Stu Cassell of Troy will always be a bit of a nut.

"For some people, being a clown is their life-long ambition," he said. "I think I've wanted to be a clown since Sunday."

Last Thursday, he acted on his thought when he took center ring in an audition for the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus' clown school. Nervous, excited, but

with nothing to lose, Cassell loved the audition, if not the career. "I'd seen stories about the auditions and ads. I'd been toying with the idea, but I wasn't sure I would do it. "The fact is," he added, "I've always been a clown. I just never got paid for it."

BURNING HIS 28 years, Cassell has owned an art gallery, picked up a degree in sociology en route to law school. "I'd don't get in, they were taking only the cream of the crop and I was the

only one who was a clown since Sunday." "I've always had a desire to entertain," he said. "But thus far it has had dormant."

Sort of. Throughout his life, Cassell has been the man with the one liner, the kid who cracked up entire classrooms, the guy on the job who made everyone else laugh. Although he tempered his humor by playing it straight, he eventually cut up.

SUCH WAS the case in school, where Cassell always laid back until the end of the semester and then let loose. "I always wanted the teachers to know that, at least academically, I was playing with a full deck."

If he should pursue the clown or the stand-up comic career, Cassell has no qualms about being a late starter in the business. "The pattern of my life has been that I am a slow starter. I always start well below everyone, but after a certain period I ultimately push ahead."

He uses the high school track team as an example. "I couldn't do the 100 but I was great at the 200."

Whenever he starts and regardless of how people view him and his humor, "There have been times when employers didn't enjoy my sense of humor," Cassell does enjoy living.

"I have a great time," he said. "If I have a job and a good woman, my life would be complete."

IT BEGINS, reiterated Cassell, with eight weeks in clown schools. If a clown makes the grade there, a three year apprenticeship begins. "You can't just jump into clowning," said Cassell.

Then there's the pay \$150 a week the first year, \$180 the second, \$225 the third, after that it's negotiable.

"At that point some of the glamour wore off," he said. "I also realized that the majority of people who are clowns are clowns because they love the work."

Admittedly, it is not Cassell's life-long dream. "If I can't be a clown, I'll be a brain surgeon. I'm good with my hands." But the audition itself was fun.

He first approached it with a bad case of nerves. "I was sitting there waiting and I said I really want to go home." But once he stepped into the ring his inhibitions disappeared.

"I was thinking, I'm not the least bit nervous and I'm having a lot of fun."

If Cassell should fail at clowning around,

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