

Shrine Circus is moving to Westland location

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Shrine Circus tradition that started 97 years ago in Detroit will move to Westland in May, bringing clowns, parades, animal acts, trapeze artists and, organizers hope, a renewed interest in big top festivities. Muslim Shriners of Detroit will bring their one-ring circus to the west-end parking lot of Westland Shopping Center May 14-18, following productive talks with mall officials and city leaders.

By drawing crowds from Livonia, Garden City, Redford, Canton, Plymouth and other communities, the five-day circus also could provide an economic boost — albeit a temporary one — to Westland's core shopping district, some say.

"I personally think this is the best thing that has ever happened for the city of Westland," local volunteer Sam Corrado said.

Two-hour shows will accommodate as many as 1,600 people. A longtime circus family, the Hannefords, will arrange for acts and events that Shriners representatives say will be sure to entertain patrons of all ages.

"There's even one act where pigeons ride cats while the cats are riding dogs," Shrine Circus co-chairman Dick Frembes, a Farmington Hills resident, said.

The Shriners hosted the first Shrine Circus in Detroit in 1906, and it mushroomed into a three-ring affair that found a home at the Michigan State Fairgrounds in Detroit. Last year, the event moved to the Pontiac Silverdome, but now organizers hope to settle in Westland.

"We hope Westland is going to be our base from now on," circus co-chairman William Wagar said.

Ticket prices will range from \$15 to \$25, and some circus enthusiasts already have started placing orders on a Web site, www.shrinecircus.net.

Organizers hope to start selling tickets inside Westland mall, near the east end, by mid-March.

Many details remain sketchy. Frembes and Wagar said they still aren't sure, for example, whether the circus will feature elephants.

They did, however, divulge what they could Tuesday during an interview in the Observer offices. Consider:

■ Weeks before the circus, clowns are expected to promote the event by handing out fliers inside the mall, and Corrado said booklets will be distributed in restaurants, hair salons and other places that have large customer bases.

■ A parade inside the mall is expected for 1 p.m. Sunday, May 4, with clowns, Shriners, a bagpipe band and a brass instrument group, among others, amid hopes of stirring interest in the circus.

■ Another parade, tentatively slated for May 12, is expected to include animals and circus performers out-

side the mall, possibly along a major road, such as Wayne or Warren.

■ The latter parade will culminate with a tent-raising in the mall parking lot, near the J.C. Penney store.

■ Shows starting at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. are slated for May 14-18, and showtimes for the remaining three days will be 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

■ Corrado has initiated plans to involve Westland businesses in the circus. Closer to the event, drawings inside the mall will be held for prizes, such as limousine rides to the show and post-performance dinners.

Business caps, shirts, aprons and even coupons also will be handed out, and Corrado will promote the event in his shopper newspaper, *Act Cent*. Corrado predicted the event will bring together the city's business, political and social communities.

"This whole project is just a natural for Westland," he said.

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Wooddale students reach for the stars

Ninety-four students at Wooddale Elementary in Farmington Hills participated in the "Reach for the Stars" Read-a-thon presented by Usborne Books, earning \$402.30 in pledges.

The program invites students to ask family and friends to pledge money for reading a minimum of 300 minutes over a ten-day period. Seventy percent of the money went to the students in the form of new Usborne Books and the other thirty percent was donated to the PTA for field trips.

Students were allowed to read anything they chose during the allotted time. "Reach for the Stars" is a reading incentive program designed to motivate children to read, keep them reading and reward them for reading. Individual students reaching specific levels were eligible for prizes.

Grand prize winners were Jeff Liebowitz, who collected \$200 and Tony McCracken, who read 1,150 minutes. Mrs. Thompson's 1st grade class won for highest participation.

Other prize winning students were: Kindergarten — Bailey Duos, Leslie, Ryan, Christian Quiroz.

First Grade — Christian Englin, Kyle Gray, Meghan Hurley. Second Grade — Elizabeth Buchanan, Katie George, Chuharu Ina.

Third Grade — Audrey Amann, Nathaniel Hedgecock. Fourth Grade — Rebecca Deschner, Andrew Fletcher, Vanessa George, Sara Holcomb, Kyra Johnson.

Fifth Grade — Spencer Amann, Zachary Buchanan, Desiree Johnson, Jacob McGladdery.

For information regarding "Reach for the Stars," please contact Brenda Duos at (248) 324-2555 or visit www.ubah.com/v0238.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Jacokes makes move
Jacokes Communications, L.L.C., the creative services and strategic communications agency headquartered in Farmington Hills, recently relocated to a new 4,500 square foot facility. The new site is located at 36520 Grand River Avenue between Drake and Halsted.

Cook named president
William Cook of Bill Cook Imported Cars in Farmington Hills, was recently elected president of the Detroit Auto Dealers Association for 2003.

RCI makes changes
RCI Electric Company in Farmington Hills recently promoted

Robin Wojtowicz to the position of bookkeeper/account manager and hired on Walter Denike as residential construction division manager.

Teacher gets recognition
Marvin Weingarden, a Farmington Hills resident and associate professor of mathematics at Madonna University, was awarded the Faculty Award from the Graduating Seniors. All graduating seniors were sent nomination forms and asked to identify faculty members who best personify the mission of Madonna University. Weingarden started at the University in 1994 as an adjunct faculty member and became a full-time member of the mathematics department in 1996.

ICA promotion
William Poland has been promoted to Director of Operations at ICA - Cinetic Automation Corporation in Farmington Hills. Poland advances from manager of manufacturing, a position he held after moving from manager of product validation.

New University Director
Kim Coleman has been named Director of Sales at University Business Interiors in Farmington Hills. UBI is a leading provider of products and service for office interiors.

In this position, Coleman will be responsible for strategic direction of the sales organization, sales leadership

and customer relationships. In addition, she will be responsible for staff development and vendor relations.

Friedman makes big deal
LNR Property Corporation recently awarded Friedman Real Estate Group of Farmington Hills the exclusive leasing and management contract for the 1.8 million square foot Penobscot and First National Buildings in downtown Detroit. These two historic buildings are landmark buildings in downtown Detroit. Steven Eisenstahl, vice president at Friedman, has been appointed the primary leasing agent for these downtown buildings.

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