



STAFF PHOTO/GREG FRANCIS

Brandon Werner, with the help of Kallie Pickering, picks out a balloon from Billy Martin prior to the start of Billy Martin's Cole All-Star Circus last Thursday.

## Old Man Winter puts freeze on circus

◇ Enthusiasm, but not attendance, was high for Billy Martin's Cole All-Star Circus.

By Amy Cavalier  
Messenger Post Staff

Shiny, inflated plastic balloons shaped like Spiderman, Powder Puff Girls, and Scooby Doo characters — and the smell of popcorn — greeted people at the door. Children with their hearts set on a souvenir, tugged on their parent's arms and jackets as they entered the AD Oliver Middle School gymnasium.

The circus had come to town.

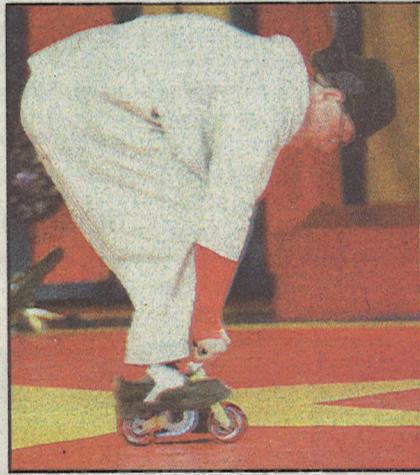
For the past 15 years, Billy Martin's Cole All-Star Circus has packed the AD Oliver Middle School gymnasium.

This year, however, Mother Nature froze out the spectators. An estimated 375 people attended the Brockport boys basketball program fund-raiser last Thursday night.

"In past years, we've seen 1,200 people," said Charles Hage, coach of the Brockport boys basketball team. "We usually pack the place, but this is the first year we've had bad weather."

The weather couldn't dampen the crowd's enthusiasm though, as the Billy Martin's booming, yet smooth voice opened the show.

The first act featured slinko man, although the bright colored, slinky-like costume with huge, springy arms and legs showed no signs of the man inside. Slinko man gyrated and



STAFF PHOTO/GREG FRANCIS

Performer Brett Marshall rides a miniature bicycle during last week's circus.

Up next, JoAnne and her Broadway poodles wowed the audience with their fancy canine tricks, jumping through hoops and racing around the ring. Only three of the "Broadway poodles" were actually poodles. The remaining members of JoAnne's entourage were smaller mixed breeds, though all pulled off tricks equally impressive.

There was the face painter, the snake act, the BMX rider, trampoline man, and of course, the clown. That was the one thing 12-year-old, Brockport middle schooler, Lisa Hruby said she didn't care to see.

Lisa, her mother Carol Hruby, and grandmother Ida Neubert didn't just get to see the clown. In their second-row seats, the three got a mouthful of water when the clown's trick glasses streamed "tears" into the audience. After it was said and done, Lisa said the clown, "wasn't so bad."

Circus owner Billy Martin said "This year's show featured some of the most requested acts over the past 10 years, including Alvito's favorite." Martin called it, "The Best is Back Tour."

Despite the smaller than normal turnout, Hage said most of the money raised will help the boys basketball program.

"This sponsors summer basketball leagues, tournaments, spring leagues, off-season events, and any T-shirts or supplies we may need to buy," he said.

Money from the concession stand, which is staffed by the Brockport Boosters Club, will

the concession stand."

Mike Melfi, a member of the ninth-grade team, said, "This does take time, but it's worth it because it makes basketball camp in the summer cheaper." Jordan Diaz, a sophomore

on the junior varsity team, disagreed. "This isn't work," he said. "I'm doing this for fun."

Despite the low turnout this year, Hage is confident the circus fund-raiser raised at least a few hundred dollars for the

program.

"It's not all about the money, though," he said.

"The best part about this event is the fun and excitement it provides for the kids in the community," he said.

## Circus

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candy, the junior varsity team cleans up, and parents work