

# Garden Bros. circus carries on tradition

by Bettyanne Wellstead

Garden is a famous Canadian name. For three generations the Garden family has entertained throughout North America and since 1938, it has been heralded on posters from coast-to-coast advertising Garden Bros. Circus.

Second generation, Ian Garden resides on Travalgar Road. Carrying on in the tradition of his father before him, Garden today takes his show on the road close to 20 weeks a year, largely entertaining audiences in Ontario, Quebec, and northern States. While the circus does not tour as extensively as it did in the old days,

## Trafalgar Road Garden keeps show on road

there are new stages for entertainment and he is actively involved in the world of television.

Garden Bros. is a pioneer of the indoor circus business in Canada. After emigrating from Scotland and a stint in vaudeville, William Garden, Ian's father, presented the first edition of Garden Bros. Circus in 1938 in the C.N.E. Coliseum, under the sponsorship of The Toronto Firefighters. In four years, the circus will observe its 50th Anniversary as the only major Canadian-owned and operated circus.

In their vaudeville days, the senior Gardens were billed as "Garden & Shaw, the Aristocrats of Comedy". William, or "Bill" as he was known everywhere died in 1954 and his widow, Jean is retired and living with family members in Sarasota, Florida.

Garden says that he recruits most of his circus performers in the United States from families who originated and trained in Europe. He is also an entertainer. He has some performing dogs and ponies at his farm and at the moment, he is enjoying training a new horse in dressage. He also acts as ringmaster for the circus. His wife is a professional singer and participates in the big production numbers.

The third generation of the family to entertain is scattered around North America. Ian, Junior is in the United States with an animal act and son, Ricky has joined a flying act in Mexico. A daughter, Jean lives in Tennessee and is the only non-performing member of the family at the present time. Garden's three brothers and a sister also reside in Sarasota where the brothers are successful in the entertainment field but are no longer connected with the circus.

Ian Garden's partner in the circus is B. Elliott Abells. They spend 10 months of the year booking and promoting their entertainment and are responsible for creating and co-ordinating the talent for the program "Circus" on the CTV television network. Today their performing season runs February through May, and July through September, appearing at Ontario Place in Toronto, London Fair, Maple Leaf Gardens, Montreal, and smaller centres which they have visited for many years.

The circus has a long history. It goes back to the days of the Roman Empire. The Grand Entry or parade of the performers and animals around the arena is a reminder of the great processions which escorted the Emperor and his retinue to the Roman circus. Since that time, the circus has been a permanent fixture in many European cities. The circus tent was

(Continued on Page 4)

## You're invited: **PIONEER DAYS** **DG** <sup>50¢</sup> **The Great Arthur!** perform on a tightrope — high over Main Street daily: 12 noon, 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m. **\* PROGRAM \***

### THURSDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Sidewalk Sale opening specials  
Antique Band Organ music
- 12:00 Noon Highwire Performance  
McGibbon Patio Beer Garden
- 4:00 p.m. Highwire Performance  
FREE "Shin plasters" to spend  
Georgetown Girls' Pipe Band
- 7:15 p.m. **PARADE** — Main Street featuring Tachmen  
Car Club, Carlsberg Championship  
Team & Wagon
- 7:30 p.m. Highwire Performance  
Program: with The Pioneer Four, Yovanna  
Youth Choir, special presentation  
McGibbon Patio entertainment

### FRIDAY

- 9:00 a.m. Sidewalk Sale opening specials  
Antique Band Organ music  
W.I. Bake Sale, Free popcorn
- 12:00 Noon Highwire Performance  
McGibbon Patio Beer Garden
- 4:00 p.m. Highwire Performance
- 7:00 p.m. Muscieworks — Bodybuilding Exhibition
- 7:30 p.m. Highwire Performance

#### STREET DANCE

featuring Jeff Barry Band Pine Valley Square Dancers  
Fun for the family! Everybody welcome!

### SATURDAY

- 8:00 a.m. Lions Club Flapjack Breakfast - Main St.
- 9:00 a.m. Sidewalk Sale opening specials
- 10:00 a.m. Kiwanis Flea Market  
Dr. Bandoli's Travelling Goodtime Show  
for kids  
Children's Pony Rides  
Handicraft Sale —  
Church St., Bets Signs Phil Sorathy  
Library Book Sale
- 12:00 Noon Highwire Performance  
McGibbon Patio Beer Garden
- 1:00 p.m. Horticultural Society  
Flower Shop & Strawberry Social  
Knox Church
- 1:15 p.m. Kids' Costume & Bike Parade — Recreation  
Dept. — James St.-Main St.
- 1:30 p.m. Historical Walking Tour  
with J. McDonald, Knox Church
- 3:00 p.m. Program & Entertainment  
Beard-Growing Competition  
Pioneer Costume Competition
- 4:00 p.m. Highwire Performance Entertainment
- 7:30 p.m. Highwire Performance  
McGibbon Patio entertainment

Great Sidewalk Sale  
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#### Exhibits

See the P.D.M. Museum mobile and the  
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Church Street.

Antique Displays.

Robert Beaman exhibition open at Cultural  
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**Friday, June 22**

**Saturday, June 23**

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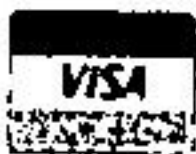
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