

SAY IT AIN'T SO... WHERE DID IT GO?

So many things to consider. So many situations to ponder. Too many choices to be decided. Far too many conflicts to avoid. Life is too often, at least seemingly, complicated. Suppose I move in the wrong direction or move in the wrong way toward the right direction? What if I do nothing at all? Does too fast really halt progress just as quickly as too slow? I've heard the cry "Stop the World, I want to Get Off," but I can no more get off of it, than anyone can make it stop. But I'm not trapped. I'm not cornered without an exit. If I can just wait a bit longer. Keep my wits about me. Bid my time. Solace will come and I'll find refuge, if not pure and effective escape.

I know it's on its way because it is perpetually on its way and always certain to arrive and when it does show up I will have regained my youth, my innocence, my childlike trust. I'll be able to envelope myself in the unbridled joy found in the sights, sounds, and smells. A place that will transport any of us away from the cares of this life if only for the few hours that feel like an eternity.

Listen! Can you hear it? Can you feel it? Hush, he is announcing its arrival...

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Children of ALL Ages. Welcome to the Greatest Show on Earth. The Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey CIRCUS!"

Yes, the circus where we revert back to childhood. If only for a little while. The roar of the lions and growls of the tigers that will soon come under the control of the Lion Tamer with only a whip and a chair.

Whoa, he put his head in the lions mouth! But wait, look up, there he is The Amazing Young Man on the Flying Trapeze! Gracefully flying through the air and with the "greatest of ease."

But I don't want to miss anything especially the jugglers tossing rings, pins and of course flaming fire sticks up, up, up into the air. First one, then two, the ten and goodness even more. Over in the next ring are the CLOWNS. Never could figure out how they get so many of them in and out of that tiny little car. No two clowns are the same and they're always funny.

Do I have my bag of peanuts and popcorn. What about some cotton candy mom? But here they come. Hurry up. Look everybody. The ELEPHANTS! Twelve of them dancing, prancing, standing up on their hind legs. Turning in circles, sitting down and then doing elephant hand stands. They are magnificent, majestic and awe inspiring but, but, but... Wait. They are no more.

The first to go was the Side Show where you could get a glimpse of the Bearded Lady, the Dog Faced Boy, Snake Man, the Tiniest human alive, the man who could swallow swords and the lady who can actually breath fire. Something about taking advantage of the disabled and abnormal. Other aspects of the circus slowly began to disappear and then went the elephants a few years ago and last week I received news that the circus was being disbanded and ended forever. Something about video games, and cell phones, digital virtual reality goggles. Television and, get this “shortened attention spans of young people today” also contributed to low ticket sales. Geez!

It was founded in 1871 and will end May 2017. This and the next generation will never ever know or understand what the circus once meant to America, especially rural America. So where will I now find the place of my childhood escape from all of the cares of this life?

I guess it will be in my memories of the circus. It was truly The Greatest Show on Earth.