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Learn the secret to strapping Scotty!



# KID NEWS

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on a limb**  
Pining for  
cookies?  
Make these  
standup trees. Page 7.

Chicago Tribune Tuesday, December 17, 1996

Learning circus tricks is quite a stunt. These kids did it and they're...

## FLYING FIRST CLASS

By Claire Weinberger  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome to the greatest class on Earth! The Circus Arts class doesn't begin with a bellowing ringmaster, but it does feature heart-pounding aerial tricks that would make the Flying Zamboni Brothers proud.

Every week, a dozen circus artists-to-be come from miles around to the Circus Arts class of the Actors Gymnasium at Evanston's Noyes Cultural Art Center. The kids warm up with a series of backward somersaults, dive rolls and cartwheels. Then, the class turns into a three-ring circus, with the 8- to 16-year-olds flying on the high trapeze, vaulting each other through the air from the teeterboard, spinning 15 feet off the floor in the Spanish Web, marching on stilts and juggling everything from bean bags to bowling pins.

Though the thought of dangling upside down 20 feet in the air may cause you to lose your lunch, these kids have passed the weak-stomach stage.

"The trapeze can be scary because it's so high up," Samantha A., 11, of Evanston confesses, "but as scary as it is, I have fun doing it."

Katie R., 13, of Evanston says with a laugh, "To do the trapeze, you need arm muscles and control — you don't need to be Superman."

Plus, you need training, instructor Sylvia Hernandez explains.



These students have their acts together. From left: Lisa F. wheels, Katie R. dangles and J.P.W. juggles.



These photos by James F. Quinn

the dizzying Spanish Web: You climb a 15-foot rope (eek), slip your hand or foot into a small loop (yikes) and twist and turn (argh) your body in graceful (hahaha) motions.

Impossible? Lisa F., 11, of Highland Park insists, "All you need is a little bit of upper-arm strength and flexibility."

Juggler Zach H., 11, of Highland Park is so skilled, he performs for pay at parties. Zach juggles balls, rings and toilet bowl plungers. He has even tried juggling fire. "Let's just say my mom wasn't too thrilled about the fire thing." (And don't try that at home, kiddo!)

The young performers obviously have a great time. Sylvia says with a smile, "For me, the best part of this class is to watch kids leave with the confidence in knowing that they can do something that no one else can."

*If you want to learn to do something that no one else can, call the School of the Actors Gymnasium at 847-328-2795 and ask about its circus classes. Prices range from \$90 to \$122 for a 10-week session.*

"Each student comes to me with a certain level of ability, and we work on skills until we both feel comfortable enough to move on to the next level — even if it is 20 feet off the ground."

The teeterboard works like this: You sit on one end. Your partner runs across the gym, leaps in the air and lands with both feet on the opposite end. You're suddenly 10 feet off the floor and expected to land (A) on someone's shoulders or (B) on your own two feet.

"There's nothing else like it!" says Mary P., 12, of Evanston.

We'll take her word for it.

And now,



### GRAB 'GRINCH' CD

It wouldn't be December without Dr. Seuss' classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." Now it's a CD (\$12, PolyGram Records). The first track is the story narrated by Boris Karloff (he narrates the show you love). And you get the hilarious insult-fest "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch."

► Weird CDs? You heard it here! Page 2.

### RIPS & RAVES

We just saw "Beavis and Butt-head Do America" (PG-13; opti