

## He Flies Through the Air

What am I doing 50 feet above the ground swinging on a trapeze in the circus? It looked so easy watching Burt Lancaster in the film "Trapeze" but I was finding it hard work. It all started at the Circus School for Performing Artists in Florida. I had gone there to try my skill on the flying trapeze, something I had always wanted to do.

The first thing I had to do was get up to the platform where the action would begin. This was accomplished by climbing up a 50' rope ladder that had rungs about 10" wide. The ladder had a mind of it's own and swung all over the place. I was about half way up the ladder when I realized that I was scared. How do I get out of this? It was a daunting task to carry on but even worse to try backing down. I carried on and finally reached the platform. The platform was about 1 foot square and there was a gorgeous girl standing on it. Unexpectedly, I was more interested in the platform than the girl. How do you manoeuvre on such a small piece of real estate?

The girl explained the first thing that I was to do. Just hang on to the trapeze bar, swing out, come back, swing out again, come back and land on the platform. It sounded quite easy. I grabbed the bar, took a deep breath and swung out. I was immediately surprised at how difficult it was to hang on. Chin-ups were never my strong suit in gym class and this was like doing chin-ups in motion. I swung out once, then out a second time and back on the platform as directed. My first performance was finished to thunderous applause. Judy can really clap loud.

Then came the next set of instructions. Swing out on the bar once and come back for a second swing out. On the second swing when you reach the end of the arc push your knees up to your chest and push back to do a backward somersault. As you start the backward somersault let go of the bar and fall into the net below. Yeh! Right!

Then she told me the most important part. If all goes well you will fall down to the net and land on your back. As soon as you hit the net you must grab hold of the net with both hands. If you don't you are going to bounce high into the air and if you are near the edge of the net you may bounce over the side and crash on to the concrete floor and that's not a pretty sight. I was trying to remember all these instructions but I kept repeating over to myself, "Grab the net. Grab the net". Then it was show time. I swung out once and came back. On the second time out I tucked my knees up to my chest and did a backward somersault and let go. Amazingly, I landed on my back on the net and grabbed the net for dear life. Once again there was thunderous applause. Keep it up Judy.

The last part of my act was to lie on my stomach and grasp the edge of the net with both hands. Then do a forward somersault over the edge of the net landing on my feet on the floor below. Mission accomplished. After giving this marvellous performance I thought that someone would rush up to me with a contract to join the circus full time but nobody appeared. I guess they thought that I wouldn't look so good in a pair of tights.



♪ He flies through the air with the greatest of ease,<sup>♯</sup>  
Bradley is up on the flying trapeze. ♪  
♪ He holds the bar tightly and swings in to space,  
There's a net down below just in case. ♯

*Bradley*

**Brad McInnes**  
**YMASC President 1970 - 1971**



