The circus comes to town

By Amy S. Gorin

An estimated 200 people crowded the corners of Massachusetts Avenue and Vassar Street on Tuesday night to watch the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus move its animals from the circus train to the Boston Garden.

The animals arrived in Cambridge by train Tuesday afternoon along with the rest of the troupe. The train, in which the performers are housed, will stay on the Conrail track near Vassar Street while the show is in Boston. The animals are being housed at the Garden itself.

The circus train usually stays at North Station, but a fire at that site earlier this year forced a change of plans.

The first animals to be moved were the tigers, whose cages were towed off a railroad flatcar and down Vassar Street shortly before 6 pm.

The procession briefly blocked traffic on Massachusetts Avenue while the cages were moved across the street, and caused further delays as drivers slowed their cars to get a better look at the animals, despite the pleas of police at the scene.

The elephants, for which most of the crowd was waiting, were expected to walk to the Garden at 6 pm. They did not leave the train until almost 2 hours later. None of the spectators gave up and went home.

Shortly after dark, the elephants, the horses, a camel, a llama, and their handlers began the walk. Their spectators-lined route took them through Kendall Square and across the Longfellow Bridge.

Behind the scenes