

Thursday, March 05, 2009

Circus workers arrested at La Porte bar

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LA PORTE - Four circus workers along with a Westville man were arrested early Wednesday following a physical altercation at a downtown La Porte bar.

One of the employees of the George Carden Circus International was taken to La Porte Hospital with injuries sustained in the attack.

According to La Porte Police, officers responded about 3 a.m. to the Avenue Bar at 617 Michigan Ave. on a report of a fight. Upon arrival, Officer Vincent Bowman said he observed several men yelling and screaming in front of the bar entrance facing Lincolnway.

One of the circus workers, Ramon Ciccirelli, 22, was shoved to the ground, police said.

According to police, the investigation shows a bartender escorted Douglas Dickerson, 45, out of the bar for being too loud. Another circus worker, Dennis Hicks, 33, came out of the restroom as Dickerson was being led outside. Hicks was approached by a customer at the bar, Donald Martin, who allegedly uttered a racial slur about Dickerson, who's also a member of the circus crew. Martin, 29, Westville, punched Hicks in the mouth and threw him against a wall then landed a punch to the nose of Hicks, who was also bitten.

According to police, Hicks was transported to the hospital by ambulance with a bloody mouth and nose along with a bite mark on his ear.

Ciccirelli sustained a swollen right eye but refused medical attention.

Police arrested Hicks, Dickerson, Ciccirelli and Alan Compton, 45, another circus worker, and charged them with public intoxication.

Martin was charged with disorderly conduct, police said.

Gary Merten, a spokesman for the circus, said he was not sure how the four men arrested were involved with the circus but felt none of them were performers.

"I think they're just part of the crew," Merten said.

The four circus workers arrested listed the same address from Springfield, Missouri.

The George Carden Circus International is based in Springfield, Mo., and plays 455 shows a year, Merten said.

The circus performances Tuesday and Wednesday at the La Porte Civic Auditorium were an Orak Shrine annual fundraiser.