

Life's like a play; it's not the length but the excellence of the acting that matters.

November 2011

The Newsletter  
of the  
Heritage Hunt  
Little Theater



# Play Time

Come play with us!

## Calendar

**November General Meeting**  
Thurs Nov 17—7pm—Craft Room  
**Elections & More!**

**Thanksgiving Dinner**  
Sun Nov 20—3pm  
Call Joyce for more info

**Classic Movie Night**  
Sat Dec 3—7pm  
Joyce Mancini's Home

**December**  
*No General Meeting*

**January General Meeting**  
Thurs Jan 19—7pm—Craft Room



## Inside

Local Theaters .....	Pg 2
Looking Ahead .....	Pg 2
Prez Sez .....	Pg 3
The Spotlight .....	Pg 4
Election Slate .....	Pg 4
HHLT Thanksgiving Event .....	Pg4
Classic Movie Nite .....	Pg 4
May2012 Production .....	Pg 4
Board .....	Pg 5
Do You Know? .....	Pg 5
Oct Minutes .....	Pg 5
Play Review .....	Pg 5

## Wrap-Up: AFGY

by Ina Mayer & Bill Harrison

When we first read *A Few Good Years*, we knew it would be a perfect play for our Heritage Hunt actors and playgoers. We were right! Although there were a few glitches along the way, (Aren't there always some?) the fantastic cast outdid themselves. They bonded together as speaking actors and silent mimes, working hard to learn lines, remember entrances and exits, scenery changes, and to adapt to simple costume changes. Groups of them often spent numerous hours practicing apart from the scheduled rehearsals. We as directors only had to "tweak" the fine points. Support from our production crew made our job as directors so much easier. It thrilled us as everything began to come together. Now we all can rest on our laurels knowing that the Heritage Hunt Little Theater has once again proved that there is a lot of talent among us! Thanks to all of you. ▲



HHLT - A Few Good Years - Nov. 9-11

## A Few Good Years: A Review

by Mary Winsky

Perhaps all of us here at Heritage Hunt are hoping to be granted *A Few Good Years* to enjoy this chapter of our lives. So how fortuitous that the Heritage Hunt Little Theater offered us just that in its fall production November 9, 10 and 11.

From the moment M. J. Brickach stepped forward with regal dignity, a face painted white and body clothed in black in classic mime tradition, we knew we were in for an eclectic evening of entertainment. In rhymed verse that began, "What is life? Why are we here?" we were posed the challenge of answering profound questions with the promptings of good theater.

Immediately we are hooked by two conniving daughters

*Continued on page 3*

## Local Theaters: III

by Bets Knepley

Vpstart Crow Productions, Inc. is one of the Prince William County little theaters that operates out of the Hylton Center.

Founded in 1994, Vpstart Crow (pronounced "upstart") is a non-Equity and nonprofit professional theatre company dedicated to performing the works of William Shakespeare and other theatre classics. Its mission is to produce live theatre as a vital, accessible and exciting part of community life. Employing a resident company of local professional actors and artists of the highest caliber, Vpstart Crow is dedicated to breaking down the barriers between audience and actors in a performance style that is lively, thought-provoking and altogether vpstartling.

The term "vpstart crow" comes from one of Shakespeare's rival English playwrights, Robert Greene. In his 1592 pamphlet, *Groats-Worth of Wit Bought With A Million of Repentance*, Greene criticizes Shakespeare: "...for there is an vpstart crow...is in his owne conceit the onely 'Shakespeare' in a country."

Vpstart Crow's season started with *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie. To get into a holiday mood, see *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (December). *Romeo and Juliet* (March 2012) and *Six Degrees of Separation* (May 2012) follow.

Visit their website at <http://www.vpstartcrow.com> Tickets (Senior-\$15) can be purchased on line.

Reston Community Players are next. ▲

## Looking Ahead to 2012

In November 2008, I produced and directed the all-male cast in *Twelve Angry Men* for HHLT. It had taken me a whole year to get permission to move the pool tables and build a stage in the clubhouse Billiards Room and run the play for five nights and one Sunday matinee. We charged \$10 per ticket and took in over \$4,000.



With the addition of the courthouse bailiff, the cast was actually thirteen. Very few members felt that thirteen men would be available or interested; a number of women members asked me to substitute some females in male roles. I didn't agree to this because I felt the play was so well-known from television and from film as an all male cast the way the author intended. Also, that would be what the audience expected. I felt bad saying "NO" and said that someday I would direct an all-female cast in an equally good play.

I still plan to do that! I have been researching plays for the past year. I have rejected quite a few for the following reasons: many are for women in their 20's and early 30's; many are for small casts of 2 to 5; many are about famous women in history that end up being rather boring monologues; others are about women not so famous who have an angry ultra-feminist, male-bashing attitude; and others are simply lacking in good comedic or dramatic content with too much "talking" and not enough "acting." Several are written without any movement or action or stage directions at all.

I know I will find the right play for the women of HHLT. A large cast with a great script, great characters, and great interactions with each other is my goal! Also, it would help if the author is known and the content is stimulatingly awesome! I want to use both the stage and the floor of the ballroom for the set and that's going to cause a problem now that we have to open on Tuesday nights rather than Wednesdays.

Also, I expect that the men of HHLT will turn out in full force to help with construction, painting, transporting, publicizing, finding props and costumes, ticket taking and greeting at the door, and any other backstage jobs that need doing. They could even help with make-up if needed. That could be fun!

So stay tuned. The search is still on! I hope to have some good news after January.

Sincerely,  
M.J. Brickach ▲

## The Prez Sez...

**A Few Good Years! – A Great Success!** It was a real pleasure to play a small part in our latest success, *A Few Good Years*. Ina and Bill, and their team were magnificent as they created a heartwarming tale of love at any age, complete with lots of chuckles and farce along the way. Well done!

**Leadership Transitions:** The next general meeting will be the last one for four board members: Ina Mayer, Goldie Grandy, Treva Whyte, and yours truly. It has been a great pleasure for all of us to lead the hardest-working and best group in Heritage Hunt!

**Elections:** At our November meeting we will elect the four board members to take the place of those noted above. Please be sure to be at the meeting so you can vote! The new board will take office next January, and will meet with the outgoing board next month to ensure a smooth transition.

**Looking Ahead:** One of this board's objectives was to ensure that decisions on future performances were made well in advance, and we have succeeded for 2012. In mid-May, Kathryn and I will be co-directing a humorous play about retired actors entitled *Old Hams*; and in November, MJ Brickach will be directing.

**Limitations on Performance Days?** There is a strong possibility that in the future we will be limited to having performances only on Tuesdays through Thursdays because of the desires of BCG to leave Fridays open for public events. I will discuss this at the general meeting.

**Storage of HHLT Inventory:** We are still looking for volunteers for storage of our inventory. The inventory is growing, as is the need to get it stored. We will pay!! ▲

Gene Schmiel

*Continued from page 1*

into their plot to maneuver their widowed mother and father into romance. Grace, played by Gayle Chisholm, the daughter of Libbi, Dot Schuetze, widowed for seven years, is eager for her to connect with Dolores's, Mary Glascock's, widower father Larry, Jack Merelman. Everyone in the audience of course hopes this works. When we soon realize the action will be helped along by intervening mimes, we sit forward, hopes high. But though busy mimes Goldie Grandy, Helen Esposito and Jean Gentry dance, hand, open and shut convenience before our unsuspecting hero and heroine, the plot thickens.

When Libbi gets cold feet, the desperate daughters hire Harold, played by Gene Schmiel and Gretchen, Joyce Mancini, two bungling community theater actors to scare Libbi into needing Larry's protection. Daughter Grace writes them a check for \$600 of her husband Don's, played by Walt Meyer's, money. This splits their marriage when discovered and Don moves out. Whoops. Even consolation by his friend and Dolores's husband Steve, played by Don Jewel, doesn't help.

So Libbi does need Larry. Just when she is finally willing though, he turns doubtful. This romance is HARD work! Now the good-guy actors confess their part in the burglary, Larry and Libby and even Don reconsider, and FINALLY love conquers all. As the curtain call brought all twelve wonderful thespians forward, I felt like I had really participated in interactive theater. What had I just experienced? A morality play? A comedy? Tragedy? The mixture was great, but could I name it? I didn't have to. Joyce Mancini called it "Dramady." Isn't that perfect?

But perfection doesn't come easy. Behind the many scene changes and artistic signs that announced them, sparse black set design, great props, sound and lights, costumes and makeup were Joey Wagner, Bill Whyte, Sandy Thompson, Sandy Mills, Sandy Iasiello, Treva Whyte, Jean Herr, Margaret Gorzka, Phyllis Schrader and Kathryn Schmiel. Then of course there were the ticket sales by Treva Whyte, the advertising and publicity by Joyce Mancini and Goldie Grandy, the posters by Ed and Bets Knepley, the tri-fold programs by Bill Harrison, and even a videographer, Alan Skerker.

And who directed all this to its very fine finish? Why the co-directors Ina Mayer and Bill Harrison. And who produced *A Few Good Years* for our fall theatrical renewal? Why the ever-smiling Denny Cumber. For their many and on-going gifts to this community and for the contributions and talents of every single person involved, we thank you for this gift of time, hope and entertainment. ▲



## The Spotlight is on Sandy Thompson

by Bets Knepley

Sandy was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a town noted for its great flood of 1889. I only mention this flood because of the fact that it was the first major disaster relief effort handled by the American Red Cross and the fact that Sandy retired from the American Red Cross after 11 years. Previous to that, she worked 18 years at INOVA Hospital System.

She's a graduate of the University of State of New York. Her two children live nearby—Ashburn and Purcellville. Before moving to HH, Sandy lived in Alexandria, Virginia for around 40 years.

Sandy states that her move to Heritage Hunt was the best move she could possibly have made. She says HH is an attractive community with just the right mix of amenities.

Asked why she joined HHLT, Sandy said that she had a good friend who did a lot of little theater work and it always sounded like such fun. After she moved here and read an HHLT Horn article, she thought it was time to give it a try. She states, "Working with HHLT has been fun and I have learned so much from everyone I have worked with." Each of the four plays she's participated in have been so different, that she has no favorite.

Sandy also belongs to the HHWO and, outside our gates, the Lifelong Learning Institute. When you see Sandy, be sure to ask her about that flood!!! ▲



### Election Slate

The slate is: Mary Glascock, Arlene Maroney, Walt Meyer, Art Moscatello and Kathryn Schmiel.

Elections will be held at the November General Meeting. Absentee ballots are available. ▲

### Early Thanksgiving with HHLT

by Bets Knepley

Joyce Mancini is inviting members to HHLT's annual Thanksgiving feast at her home (13278 Fieldstone Way) on Sunday, November 20 at 3pm. She will cook the turkey and the participants will bring the side dishes and desserts. If you plan to participate, contact Joyce IMMEDIATELY at 703-743-1622. Don't miss out on this fabulous fun filled day! ▲

### Classic Movie Night

by Bets Knepley

Joyce Mancini has hosted these monthly evenings of academy award winning musicals for quite some time.

Please join this fun group which meets the first Saturday of each month at 7pm at Joyce's home (13278 Fieldstone Way). Contact Joyce for more info. ▲

### May 2012 Production

by Bets Knepley

HHLT doesn't let grass grow under its feet. Tentative plans have been made for the May production, *Old Hams*, which will be co-directed by Kathryn and Gene Schmiel. (Wow! We've never had a couple co-direct before!)

Production dates are May 16-18 and auditions are tentatively scheduled for February. There is a cast of 4 men and 6 women plus extras. It is a two hour comedy about retired actors, musicians and singers who live in the Ophelia L. Davis Home. The cast includes two sisters, a leading man who could never remember his lines, a man of 999 faces and a mystic who hasn't had a correct vision in years! And you haven't even heard the plot yet!! ▲

## HHLT BOD

### President

Gene Schmiel

### Vice President

Ina Mayer

### Secretary

Sandy Mills

### Treasurer

Treva Whyte

### Activities

Betty Hitchcock

### Membership

Ed Prendergast

### Member-at-Large

Goldie Grandy

Treasurer Treva Whyte reported a balance of \$10, 072.53 in the treasury. The Wayside Theatre donation was sent and a lovely thank-you note was received.

**A Few Good Years**—Treva stated that to-date, 163 tickets have been sold. Co-Director Ina Mayer reported that the play is going well.

Betty Hitchcock was congratulated and thanked for hosting a great picnic.

Denny Cumber stated that the Dunfries Food Pantry had to close because of lack of food and suggested that HHLT make a donation. After discussion, the membership voted to donate \$500 to ACTS. It was also suggested that we collect nonperishable food at the show.

Ina reported that there are five members who have agreed to run for election: Mary Glasscock, Arlene Maroney, Art Moscatello, Walt Meyer and Kathryn Schmiel. ▲



## Highlights of the October Minutes

## Do You Know?

by Bets Knepley

Do you know which HHLT production sold the most tickets?

Do you know which HHLT production netted the highest profit?

Do you know which HHLT play had the largest cast?

Do you know which HHLT production had the highest cost?

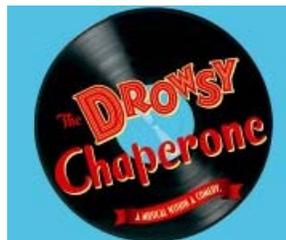
Do you know how many plays HHLT has produced?

Do you know which HHLT production had the longest run?

Do you even care?

If you would like to know the answers, please read the December *PlayTime*.

Data was provided to me by our Treasurer Treva Whyte and I did the analysis!! ▲



## The Drowsy Chaperone: A Review

by Bets Knepley

Last month my husband Ed and I saw *The Drowsy Chaperone* by the Reston Community Players. When I first saw their 2011-12 season, I thought “Oh no! Too many musicals!” However *The Drowsy Chaperone* proved to be a fantastic production. It is a “musical within a comedy.” Complicated? You bet!

We both enjoyed it tremendously. It was so different from the typical musical. What other play can you see that includes blindfolded roller skating, smoking feet, airplanes falling from the sky, tap dancing and some of the fastest costume changes witnessed on stage?

A plot summary: The narrator is a die-hard musical theater fan who plays his favorite cast album (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) and speaks directly to the audience as the musical literally bursts to life in his living room. He often joins in the musical numbers. *The Drowsy Chaperone* revolves around a super talented star (who not only can dance, sing, juggle, somersault, baton twirl but more!!) who is about to get married and to retire from the stage. Her manager doesn't want that to happen and tries to thwart the upcoming wedding through several devious plans. However, multiple weddings is the surprising result and all live happily ever after.

This play is a 2006 Tony Award winner for Best Book of a Musical and Best Score. ▲

Newsletter is edited & published  
by Bets Knepley

HHLT Website

<http://hhlittletheater.wordpress.com/>