

## From the Director John Gatt

The Heritage Hunt Little Theatre returned to the main ballroom of the Clubhouse June 16, 17, and 18, and dazzled over 500 residents and guests with the fun-filled unpredictable story of two sweet little old ladies named Millie and Gertie Peabody who discover how easy it is to turn their trips to Las Vegas casinos into a very profitable adventure. Each of the three nights, the audience responded to the many twists and turns of the plot with unabashed laughter and applause. Every time the door bell rang, especially in the final scene, a ripple of anticipation was heard as the audience tried to guess who would be coming through the door this time. And the loudest laughs were generated as the actors came and went across the stage with perfect timing without running into one another.

The cast that brought this story to life featured an excellent balance of experienced actors and relative newcomers. In the first group were Dot Schuetze as Millie and Arlene Maroney as sister Gertie, the two innocent minded casino robbers with a set of their own illogical rules. Tom Taggart was spectacular as their nephew Harold who had to find a balance between working with his aunts and his slightly eccentric Uncle Charlie the pirate played in rousing fashion by Charles Breder. His dashes across the stage, sword a blazing, voice a ringing were moments of true genius.

Gene Schmiel played Mordred, a consummate bad guy that even his aunts couldn't love. As his sidekick Lester, Sil Zinicola brought down the house with his over the top antics. Betty Hitchcock was Harold's confused and angry fiancée while Ina Mayer appeared as the prim and proper proprietor of the sanitarium. Nanette Ross broke up the audience in her own hilarious version of Nurse Widget. Jim Burwell oozed nothing but southern charm as Judge Taylor.

In the relative newcomer group were Don Jewell and Jack Merelman as the cool and collected FBI agents Klick and Klack. Walter Meyer and Ed Prendergast nailed their roles as the local policemen McNealy and Larson. Walt doubled up as Dr. Pretorious and made the harried doctor a character the audience will always remember. In his first ever appearance, Joe Ganey delivered as the somewhat stressed out taxi cab driver. Another first timer was Sandy Thompson who worked behind the scenes as a stage manager

Special recognition goes to Kathryn Schmiel for her solid support across the board. Whatever needed to be done from getting props to setting up the rehearsal rooms, Kathryn did it. She filled in as a prompter many nights and offered several suggestions to help the cast develop their characters.

Key to the success of the cast was the fantastic set designed by Joey Wagner as she and her crew recreated the warm ambiance of an old fashioned living room. The original costumes were created by Pat Dews, and Sandy Iasiello headed up the make-up team. Joyce Mancini deserves credit for the fantastic turnout because of her single handed publicity effort. Elena Portoles and Sandy Mills smoothly handled the reservations.

Again, this production of *Larceny and Old Lace* demonstrated just how talented the members of the Heritage Hunt Little Theatre actually are. Most residents are anxiously awaiting the next show scheduled for the fall.