

We're actors—we're the opposite of people!
Tom Stoppard

JULY 2012

The Newsletter
of the
Heritage Hunt
Little Theater



Play Time

Come play with us!

—Calendar—

July General Meeting

Thursday, July 19, 7pm
Craft Room

Improv Skits & Refreshments

August General Meeting

Thursday, August 16, 7pm
Craft Room

September

Annual Potluck Picnic TBA

Fall Production Dates

October 23-25

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ATTENTION!!

A new feature has been added to *PlayTime*.

You now can click on any **BLUE WORD** or blue symbol (▲) to move you to other pages or websites.

Fall Production

by M.J. Brickach,
Director

The cast for *Love, Loss and What I Wore* (scheduled for October 23, 24 and 25) has been selected and the first rehearsals have gone very well. Everyone seems excited about their lines. And why shouldn't they? Nora Ephron wrote them!

Our leading ladies are Sharon Ferguson, Sandy Mills, Joey Wagner, Kathryn Schmiel, Tina Mullins, Helen Esposito, Mary Glascock, Lynne Block, Pat Boggs, Joyce Mancini, Ina Mayer, Arlene Maroney, Joanne Smith and new member Kathy Carrico.

My right arm, otherwise known as Producer Denny Cumber, is faced with illness in her family and is needed in St. Louis. She will have worked countless hours before her departure date and I am going to try to carry the ball from there.

Bets Knepley is handling photo publicity and posters and the program. Sandy Iasiello and Pat Dews have agreed to work on make-up and costumes and I am still looking for two stage managers since our stage is in two different places. How about it, gentlemen????????????????????

More details about set and props will be forthcoming. I also hope to have an understudy. Thank you to all who have volunteered. More are needed.

We are going to advertise this production "For Mature Audiences Only" and "Not Recommended for Those Under 18."

The Play's the Thing! ▲



Producer
Denny
Cumber

Director
M.J.
Brickach

Local Theaters: XI

by Bets Knepley

I haven't been to a "dinner theater" in years except for HHLT's. I define a dinner theater as one where you first have dinner and then — see the play. There are several in the DC area—in Virginia, there are the Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, (Woodbridge), the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theatre (Wytheville) and Riverside Dinner Theater (Fredericksburg)—in Maryland, Toby's Dinner Theatre (Columbia).

I'm going to discuss Wohlfahrt Haus because it's a bit different from the others. Since I've never been there, I'm using the info on their internet site (www.wohlfahrtHaus.com), but I hope to see one of their productions soon.

Performances are: Friday and Saturday evenings (dinner 6pm/show 8); Thursday Matinee (lunch Noon/show 2); and Sunday Matinee (lunch 1pm/show 3). Dinner & Show ticket price is \$42 for adults and \$40 for seniors (55+). Menus can be found online. Vegetarian meals are also available.

WHDT states that their theatre is a state-of-the-art German-themed one, nestled in the Appalachian mountains of southwest Virginia, and is Virginia's only ALL musical theater, ALL the time! A four course dinner, prepared by their in-house chef, is served—not a buffet.

The remainder of their season is: *The Motown Sound* (7/5-9/2); *CATS!* (9/6-10/28); *Country Christmas Celebration* (11/1-12/31). Also on October 2 & 3, there will be four shows of Stephen Freeman's *Echoes of a Legend* (think Elvis!)

Sounds like an interesting place, don't you think? ▲

Play Review: *The Trusty Keg*

by Bets Knepley

Kudos to Joey Wagner for writing last month's review about Winchester Little Theatre's *The Porch*. Great review, Joey and a big thanks to you. If anyone else would like to write a review, please email me.

To the left, I've discussed dinner theaters. This review will discuss a western, *The Trusty Keg*, which I saw at Trummer's on Main in Clifton, VA. This was not a "dinner theater" because the play was performed while brunch was served and eaten. I would describe it as an interactive-murder-mystery brunch!!

The last time I went to an interactive-murder-mystery event, it was a dinner at the Blair House Mansion in Silver Spring. I didn't really like it then—so you may wonder why I decided to try again? Well, hope springs eternal, doesn't it?

The Trusty Keg was staged in the upstairs room at Trummer's. It was a large airy well-lit room. But it was a sold-out event and filled to capacity. This made it somewhat difficult for the actors to move about. Tables, chairs and/or waiters at times curtailed their movements. I wish I could tell you what the plot was, but I couldn't follow it. I had a difficult time hearing because of the loud music and audience chatter. I



also didn't think much of the acting. I believe that HHLT could have done much better. (But then I am biased.)

The only highlight was when my husband, Ed, was chosen to be in the cancan dance line. Too bad I didn't whip out my cell phone and take a few snaps for posterity.

The play was produced by Entree Act, a traveling theatre troupe, which specializes in interactive-dinner-murder-mysteries. You can visit their website at www.entreeact.com

Although this is not a food review, I will say a few words about the food. I had read many good reviews about Trummer's on Main, but sad to say, it did not live up to them. None of us (four) liked the brunch menu. Trummer's website is www.trummersonmain.com

HHLT did produce a play that I would classify as a murder-mystery dinner. It was *Trouble at the Tropicabanna*, a spoof of the *I Love Lucy* TV show. It was somewhat interactive in that there was an audience conga line during the play and, in the end, the audience got to vote for the person they thought was the murderer.

Will I ever see another interactive-dinner-murder-mystery event? Probably. ▲

The Prez Sez...

Little Women

That's not the title of our all female cast Fall production. M. J. Brickach will be directing *Love, Loss and What I Wore*, written by sisters Nora and Delia Ephron. It is a series of 28 solo and group scenes. M.J. has cast 15 members to play the women, who span the ages of 49-75. Several women play multiple roles. The play is scheduled for October 23-25. Renowned playwright Nora Ephron passed away on June 26.

A Few Good Men

That's what the Little Theater needs. In addition to actors, we need men to construct, move, erect, and strike sets. Think about potential members from your circle of friends and neighbors. Invite them to a meeting or refer them to Membership Chair Betty Hitchcock. Betty has brought in six new members, this year.

Forever After

That play ran on Broadway for nine months. Our current budget took almost that long to finalize. However, it will last only five and a half months. A new one will be struck shortly after the election. The budget will be presented to you at the July 19th meeting.

On Borrowed Time

Speaking of elections, the terms of Sandy Mills, Betty Hitchcock and Ed Prendergast expire this year, and we have to find some equally high-caliber talent to fill their shoes. VP Kathryn Schmiel is in the process of forming the Nominating Committee. If you would like to serve on the committee or be considered for nomination, speak to Kathryn at the meeting, call her at 1305, or drop her an email at geneofva@gmail.com.

One of the Family

At the last meeting, Membership Chair Betty Hitchcock, introduced our newest member, Nancy Mahevich. Welcome, Nancy.

The Big Show

No, not M.J.'s production, but rather the one Art Moscatello and YOU are putting on after the meeting, on Thursday. Art has selected a series of two-person situations for improvisation. It will be a short meeting. Come prepared to have a lot of fun.

Sweet Charity

Four HH performing groups, including HHLT, will be participating in a fundraiser for Prince William Hospital, on June 30, 2013, at 2:30 and 7:00 p.m. Each group will perform for 20 minutes. More details coming.

Picnic

We're going to have one of those, in September. Art will discuss initial plans at the meeting. ▲

Walt

2012 HHLT BOD

President

Walt Meyer (2011-13)

Vice President

Kathryn Schmiel (2011-13)

Secretary

Sandy Mills (2010-12)

Treasurer

Mary Glascock (2011-13)

Activities

Art Moscatello (2011-13)

Membership

Betty Hitchcock (2010-12)

Member-at-Large

Ed Prendergast (2010-12)

Do You Know...

by Bets Knepley

...what the following theater terms mean?

Antagonist

Apron

Aside

Beat

Blocking

Downstage

Dramaturge

Fourth Wall

French Scene

Proscenium Stage

Protagonist

Racked Stage

Stage Left

Stage Right

Tabs

Theater

Theatre

Theatre in the round

Thrust Stage

Upstage

Wings

Answers can be found on page 4. ▲

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A Play Synopsis: *First Things First*

by Kathryn Schmiel, VP

First Things First by English actor and playwright Derek Benfield is a fast-paced play filled with puns, double entendres and witty asides in the time-honored tradition of the drawing room comedy. In the play best friends Pete and George desperately attempt to hide an embarrassing and illegal situation by telling one lie after another, each more hilarious and outrageous than the last. Eventually they find themselves in such an utterly preposterous position that their only alternative is the truth which turns out to be far stranger than the fiction they created.

The comedy revolves around newlyweds Sarah, a romantic and naïve woman with a suspicious mother, and Sarah's husband Pete, a man thrilled to have found happiness after losing his first wife. Pete is curious when George asks to meet with him alone. Never in his wildest imagination does Pete suspect that with George will be Jessica, the wife he presumed to have died in a hiking accident. When Sarah and her mother arrive unexpectedly, Pete and George frantically invent increasingly implausible stories to conceal the identities of the women.

First Things First, which is on the list of HHLT approved plays, is packed full of short, snappy lines and quick retorts. Complications abound when Pete tells Jessica that George is married to Sarah and tells Sarah that Jessica is engaged to George. Frequent entrances and exits allow Pete to maintain the charade to the perplexed horror of George and to the confusion and suspicion of the women. The situation is eventually resolved to the satisfaction of all with the arrival of a sixth character. An example of the dialogue:

George: Ah! So I'm not *really* living here?

Pete: Of course, you're not, you fool! That's only the situation as it appears to Jessica. Do try to remember the plot. When you're speaking to Jessica, this is *your* house. Right? But when you're speaking to Sarah and her mother, it's *my* house.

George, it's perfectly simple.

This light comedy's characters range in age from mid-30s to middle-aged to senior, but could realistically be played by the older actors. *First Things First* relies on precise timing, expressive gestures and broad comedic abilities. It's a play sure to amuse and entertain audiences.

Answers for Theater Terminology

Antagonist-a character that hinders the protagonist from achieving his goals

Apron-the stage area in front of the proscenium arch

Aside-a dramatic technique in which a line is said by an actor to him/herself or to the audience

Beat-the smallest division of action in a play or a very short pause

Blocking-an actor's movement around the set

Downstage-the front of the stage; in the direction of the audience

Dramaturge-a theatrical scholar who is responsible for historical accuracy and conformance to the playwright's vision

Fourth Wall-an imaginary surface at the edge of the stage through which the audience watches a performance

French Scene-a section of a play between any entrance or exit of any character

Proscenium Stage-a "picture frame" stage; the audience directly faces the stage, which is typically raised (HHLT's stage)

Protagonist-the main character; the hero or heroine

Racked Stage-a stage at an incline, usually with the rear side being higher (hence upstage)

Stage Left-the side of the stage on the actor's left when facing the audience

Stage Right-the side of the stage on the actor's right when facing the audience

Tabs-curtains separating the stage from the audience

Theater-building where acting takes place...??...this term is debatable

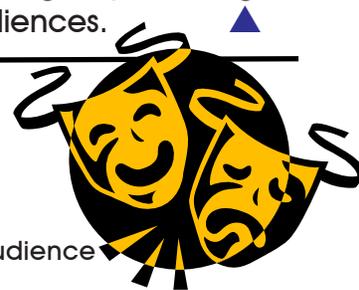
Theatre-the world of acting in general; the art itself...??...this term is debatable

Theater in the round-any theater where the audience is seated on every side of the stage

Thrust Stage-a stage that extends out into the audience, so that the audience is seated on three sides of it

Upstage-towards the back of the stage; the part of the stage that is farthest from the audience

Wings-the "backstage" or parts of a stage off to the left and right not seen by the audience



Playwright Profiles

by Bets Knepley

I thought that occasionally having short profiles of some of the playwrights that HHLT has produced may be of interest to our members. Let me know...especially if there's one you'd like to learn about. Thanks.

Nora Ephron

Let's start with Nora Ephron, who with her sister, Delia, have written our October play, *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*. Nora was born in Manhattan on May 19, 1941 and died on June 26, 2012. Her parents were both screenwriters born and raised on the east coast. She was the eldest of four daughters. When she was four, the family moved to Beverly Hills, CA where she remained until her graduation from Beverly Hills High. Nora then moved back east to attend Wellesley College in Massachusetts, graduating in 1962 as a political science major.

She held many jobs, starting as a White House intern for President John F. Kennedy. Next she worked as a "mail girl" at Newsweek for a year. Later she was a reporter for the New York Post before becoming a screenwriter, playwright and author.

Her first screenwriting success was *When Harry Met Sally* (1989). Next came *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) which was also co-written with her younger sister, Delia. A followup film, *Mixed Nuts* (1994), was a commercial disappointment. But *Michael* (1996) and *You've Got Mail* (1998) were solid successes. In the following years, Nora pursued a wide variety of projects. She wrote the play, *Imaginary Friends* (2002) and co-authored (with Delia again) *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*. In 2006, her collection of essays, *I Feel Bad About My Neck; And Other Reflections on Being a Woman* was number one on *The New York Times* Best Seller list. Her 2009 film *Julie & Julia* was about one of her favorite subjects—food.

She was married three times—to Dan Greenburg (ending in divorce after nine years); to Carl Bernstein with whom she had two sons, Jacob and Max; to screenwriter Nicholas Pileggi for more than 20 years until her death. She died from pneumonia, a complication resulting from acute myeloid leukemia, a condition with which she was diagnosed in 2006.

Nora was nominated for many awards. In 1990, she won a BAFTA Award and Golden Globes. In 1994, she was awarded the Women in Film Crystal Award. In 2003, she won the Ian McLellan Hunter Award; in 2009, a Golden Apple Award. ▲



Highlights of our JUNE Minutes

June General Meeting Minutes

Treasurer Mary Glascock reported a balance of \$8723.76, with income of \$3248 and expenses of \$3675.20. Profit on *Old Hams* was \$1214.64. There were 8 membership renewals.

Vice President Kathryn Schmiel stated that nominations for the Board will be coming up and that a nominating committee of three will be formed. Her call for a volunteer to read *Dead Man's Cell Phone* was answered by Ina

Mayer.

Activities Chair Art Moscatello reported that he is planning our annual potluck picnic for a weekend in September.

Membership Chair Betty Hitchcock, introduced recent members, as well as a potential one: Marlene Griffenhagen, Kathy Carrico, Ginny Chapman, Joan Patton and Nancy Mahevich.

M.J. Brickach, director for *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* by Nora Ephron, discussed the October play. Auditions are June 10 and July 1. Copies of scripts and audition forms were distributed.

Denny Cumber reported on the benefit for the new Haymarket Hospital. Four HH performing groups will perform for about 20 minutes each in two performances on Sunday, June 23 or 30.

Full minutes can be read on HHLT's website <http://www.hhlittletheater.wordpress.com/> ▲