

*The Director is the pilot in a light house to
keep the actors off the rocks.*

—Anonymous

Newsletter of the Heritage Hunt Little Theater



Play

Time

December 2005



INSIDE

BOD	Pg 2
Bite & Sight	Pg 3
RTW Update	Pg 3
A Director's Story	Pg 3
Important Dates	Pg 5

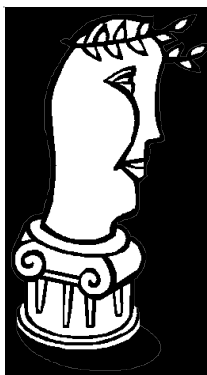
Board of Directors

2005

President
Murray Schooner
Vice President
Sandy Mills
Secretary
Joan DeBell
Treasurer
Helen Esposito
Activity/Program Chair
Joyce Mancini
Communications Chair
Grace Baier
At-Large
Beth Harrington

2006

President
Helen Esposito
Vice President
Sandy Mills
Secretary
Grace Baier
Treasurer
Beth Harrington
Activity/Program Chair
Joyce Mancini
Communications Chair
Rick Sullivan
At-Large
Nannette Ross



In the Beginning: When in Rome

by Bets Knepley, Director

I am excited to be directing our next play, *When in Rome*, a musical comedy with witty dialogue and great songs. Little Theater members who attended the RTW read-throughs gave the play and music high ratings.

Martin A. Foliose wrote the play.

The music and lyrics are by Bill

Francoeur, who also did the music for the three previous productions that I directed.

Work has already begun on our seventh play. Slowly, but surely, the production crew is being organized for doing all that necessary and important work that supports the actors on stage. We still need more crew members. If you would like to explore the numerous backstage positions, please call me at 1360.

Auditions for actors will be held in early January. (See Dates on pg 5.) Audition packets can be obtained from me or downloaded from our website (www.hhlittletheater.org/). We need actors, singers, dancers and even a juggler! This play has a huge cast! So we need you! Please call me at 1360 to schedule your audition slot ASAP. Time is running out!

From the Treasurer

by Helen Esposito

I have enjoyed my experience as Treasurer during the last half of 2005. I look forward to my new "job" as President of HHLT in 2006.

As for our financial position, after receipt and payment of the banquet bill from *Afraid of the Dark*, our checkbook balance will be \$5,821.47. See you all and your \$10 annual dues on January 26. Happy New Year!

Board of Directors (2005 & 2006) December Transition Meeting



From left to right

Front Row: Sandy Mills, VP 2005 & 06; Rick Sullivan, Communications Chair 2006

Second Row: Grace Baier, Communications Chair 2005, Secretary 2006;

Nannette Ross, At Large, 2006; Joyce Mancini, Activities Chair 2005 & 06

Helen Esposito, Treasurer 2005, President 2006

Third Row: Murray Schooner, President 2005;

Beth Harrington, At Large 2005, Treasurer 2006; Joan DeBell, Secretary 2005

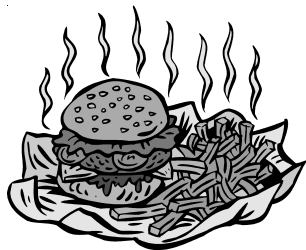
The 2006 Board of Directors intends to review the by-laws, promote a fund-raiser for LSTV, and provide another opportunity to see a play as a group and have a meal together afterwards.

A big thank you to all who have served on the Board and for helping HHLT grow. Also thanks to all the other HHLT members who have given their time and effort. Without you, the members, HHLT won't be such a great organization.

Wishing all our members a happy and healthy New Year.

Bite & Sight Nite—A Delight

by Joyce Mancini



There were 30 smiling faces on October 15th. We had come as a group to Fauquier Community Theater to see a production of *Guys and Dolls*.

Tummies full from a supper at Glory Days Grill, we were awed by the sight of a live band (13 pieces) playing in the orchestra pit. We were acknowledged from the stage for our attendance, and, as usual, loved the applause.

The voices were good and the production was fun, if a trifle dated. Bad boy meets good girl—falls in love—boy reforms and they live happily ever after. I'm not so sure that's the way it works these days but the return to Mayberry values was fun for an evening.

This was a first for our little band of theater lovers. I'm hoping it will continue.



Readers Theater Workshop Update

by Bets Knepley

At our first meeting in 2006 on January 7th at 10 AM in the Craft Room, the program will cover auditioning, member performances and a brief discussion about the plot of *When in Rome*.

Please do put this date on your calendar and join in the fun and games that we enjoy at our Readers Theater meetings.

For more information, contact Bets at 1360 or bjknepley@comcast.net

A Director's Christmas Story

by M. J. Brickach

In the mid 1970s, I returned to teaching English after being home for eight years to raise my children. My first position was at a junior high, grades 7 and 8. All ability levels, from high honors to slow learners. It was at first a shock; society had changed greatly in those eight years, as well as the behaviors of school children. They were no longer docile and blindly obedient as they had once been, or so it seemed. Now, they questioned everything; they stood up for their rights; they told you what they thought, about anything. The first month or two was a period of great adjustment for me, but I gave it everything I had. Soon, things evened out, and with the help and mentoring of a great department chairman, teaching became once again the career "love of my life." At year's end, he gave me a glowing evaluation, excellent and outstanding in all areas, with a strong recommendation that I be continued for employment. Summer vacation was great.

In September, I faced another shock. The department chairman had been promoted to the high school level and replaced by the new and inexperienced Mr. T. He had many years in the classroom but this was his first time chairing an English department. He didn't seem to like his new position, not the teachers, the students, nor even the building.

A few weeks into September the principal approached me and asked if I would be willing to start a Drama Club. (He had heard I was active in community theater and said the parents had been "on his back" to get more cultural activities going). He also said that he would ask other faculty to help, especially in the technical areas. After telling him that I could not stay too long after school for rehearsals and I would need a lot of faculty help, I agreed.

Continued on page 4

Well, our first production, *A Charlie Brown's Christmas*, turned out, after two months of rehearsal, to be a huge success. On a Friday evening in early December, the school auditorium was filled to capacity. We had the perfect Charlie Brown in student Gary L and the perfect Lucy, Snoopy (with custom doggy ears made by the home economics teacher), Linus and Schroeder, and a simple but beautiful set. Make-up and costumes were just right. Gary L was not acting a part; he became the part. He made Charlie Brown and the whole play come alive. The show was so well-received that the three elementary schools in the area started calling and asking if we could bring the show to their students as a Christmas assembly. This would be quite a challenge: the faculty members working on the production as well as myself would need substitutes to take over their classes; the superintendent would have to okay this; a school bus would have to be hired to transport all of us and our "gear" over the course of three days; student lunches would have to be provided; etc, etc, etc. I was more than willing to meet the challenge. It added quite a bit of excitement to the pre-Christmas season and swelled the students' heads with fame and pride and accomplishment. It swelled my head as well. This director was truly walking on cloud nine. Everywhere I went it was "good job, congratulations, nice work." Then the ball dropped. That cloud I had been walking on opened up and a torrential downpour took its place. To mix the metaphors even further, the you-know-what hit the fan!

Department chairman Mr. T informed the English teachers that he wanted our mid-term exams typed, ready for copying, and on his desk before we left school for Christmas vacation. "I don't want to have to think about this over my break," he stated. This was unheard of. Since

exams were not given until the fourth week of January, there was plenty of time to work on them during the school break or right after the new year. All the English teachers protested. We were being singled out and made to change our deadline from the rest of the faculty. It seemed so unfair. And no one protested louder and longer than yours truly. There was just no way I could be thinking about exams now: I was taking "my show" on the road and keeping up with the regular demands of my five classes. Remember, this was in the days before Xerox machines, photo copiers, computers, etc. This was the dark ages: all typing had to be done on stencils and ditto masters. It was slow, time consuming, not something you could rush. I politely told Mr. T that I could not comply with his demand. I promised to work diligently at home after Christmas and have my exams on his desk the first day back at school. I also said that what I was doing was quite important for the school, for the students, for the principal and for the little children who would, perhaps for the first time, see live theater. He looked at me coldly, saying nothing in reply.

The new year came in, exams were given, the second semester started and before I knew it, it was spring! I planned something simpler for the spring production, a series of scenes and vignettes celebrating gender equity and notable contributions to society made by women. Both boys and girls were eager to be in it and once again student Gary L had a leading role. He was simply fantastic.

It wasn't until the end of the school year that Mr. T got his revenge. Since all teachers were evaluated yearly, he used this method to "put me in my place." This would become part of my personnel file, a matter of record. On my evaluation, Mr. T wrote that "Mrs. Brickach is a competent teacher but she would be even better if she devoted as much time to her classroom duties as she does to her

extra-curricular activities." I was dumbfounded when I read it! Speechless! Angry! Saddened, as well. How could something so positive turn into such a negative? How could something so good leave such a bad taste in my mouth? What price do we pay for success? I knew then in my heart that I had directed my last play at this school. Over! Done! Besides, there was another teacher waiting in the wings who wanted the job. He could have it!

What happened after that? Well, the Drama Club survived, but didn't thrive. It just was. A year later I moved up to the high school where I would direct many productions over the years as well as appear in faculty plays and teach a new elective course called "Theater Workshop." My avocation had now turned into my vocation. I was immersed in theater and loving it!

Mr. T lost his job as chairman due to a school closing and was replaced by someone with more seniority so he had to go back to being a classroom teacher. He lasted one more year and then retired.

Gary L went on to be the star of his high school's drama productions, and wrote letters to us faculty members thanking us for giving him "his start." He also went on to a prestigious college and the next I knew of him was that after graduation Gary was trying to break into a theatrical career in both in the D.C. and New York areas. I lost track of him after that. The years passed. It was now the late 1980s. It had been fifteen years since *A Charlie Brown's Christmas*. The last I knew of Gary I saw in the local newspaper. It was his obituary. He had died of AIDS in New York at the age of 28. And he had appeared on the Broadway stage.

Dates to Remember

General Meetings

Fourth Thursday at 7 PM
in the Craft Room
Thursday, January 26

Readers Theater Workshop

First & Third Saturdays
10AM in the Craft Room
January 7 and January 21

Audition Dates for *When in Rome*

Sun, Jan 8—10AM to 3PM in Craft Rm
Tues, Jan 10—6PM-10PM in Board Rm
Wed, Jan 11—6PM-10PM in Board Rm
Please schedule your audition slot by
calling Bets at 1360 ASAP

May Production Dates: *When in Rome*

Tues, May 2
Wed, May 3
Thurs, May 4
Fri, May 5

To All Little Theater Members

