

The beginning is always today.

Mary Wollstonecraft

Newsletter of the Heritage Hunt Little Theater



Play Time

June 2007

From the President

The play's the thing. It's our reason for being. Our next play production has been selected. John Gatt will direct the comedy, *Cloud Seven*, by Max Wilk. John is busy working out the details of finding support staff, working up his budget, arranging rehearsal schedules and the myriad of things that have to be done prior to auditions. The play has nine men and eight women. The show dates are November 7, 8, and 9. If all goes well, we'll be on "cloud nine" on November ninth.

The second team of four from TTT, The Traveling Theater Troupe, has provided entertainment at the rehabilitation center. This time the theme inspired patriotism through readings of poems and speeches, flag waving and songs.

We thank Janice and Silvio for offering their home for our traditional summer social. At last count we have fifty- nine paid members. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at this potluck feast. Details will follow.

We welcome our newest member, Jackie Schmemann. She attended her first meeting in May and is anxious to try her hand at directing a future production. Are there others among us who have the courage to stretch their wings?

Nanette Ross



Fall Production: *Cloud Seven*

by John Gatt, Director

On the heels of a very successful ground breaking performance of *The Cemetery Club*, the Heritage Hunt Little Theater will present a romantic comedy titled *Cloud Seven*.

This play, written in 1958, covers a four day span in a man's life undergoing a major career change. As such, this is the first production where the main character is male. Although there are strong supporting female roles, the focus is on one Newton Reece who rebels from his comfortable position at United Foods to try to find himself. His wife, Mary, doesn't understand what this mid life crisis is all about because she has all that she needs in her social and personal world. And she is less than supportive of his decision.

On his first day home, Newt meets a series of characters as they come to his house. His work at United Foods kept him insulated from people like Beismuller, the laundry man with an exceptional sixth sense for finding rare minerals (or so he thinks). The fact that he quit his job causes major concern at the bank where Mr. Doubleday is worried about how solvent he is

Continued on page 3

INSIDE

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| May Minutes | Pg 2 |
| Spot light on Faye | Pg 2 |
| TTT News | Pg 3 |
| The Workshop | Pg 4 |
| June Workshop Review 1 | Pg 4 |
| June Workshop Review 2 | Pg 5 |
| June Workshop Review 3 | Pg 6 |
| BOD | Pg 7 |
| Summer Activities | Pg 7 |
| Dates to Remember | Pg 7 |
| Welcome Jackie | Pg 7 |
| A Memorial | Pg 8 |
| Opening Fall 2009 | Pg 8 |



☑ There are 58 paid members out of 69 on the membership list.

☑ May Sight and Bite—17 attended, but because of diminishing participation,

Joyce has decided to try something else. After discussion, it was decided that she would host an 'old movie night' at her home. Joyce is requesting more suggestions

☑ Sil Zinacola and Murray Schooner offered their homes for our annual summer pot luck party. Info to follow.

☑ The Traveling Theater Troupe performed before 30 people at the May 13th Rehab Unit Center. Although it was well-received, several members discussed the possibility of restructuring the programs to include more music and activity thereby appealing to the varied levels of cognition.

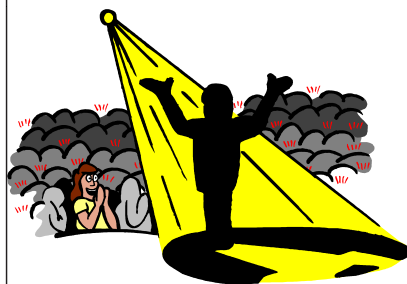
☑ At the June Workshop, Katherine O'Sullivan from the Speech and Drama Department, NVCC, Manassas Campus, will discuss *Character Analysis*. Refreshments will be served and we expect some guests from the Falls Run Players in Fredricksburg. At the July Workshop, we will be reading and discussing the unusual play, *Love Letters* by A. R. Gurney. In August, Alan Mager will discuss designing sets specifically for our club house stage. For September, Joey Wagner will present a workshop on memory, *Where Did I Put My Keys?*

☑ Jane Becker has the TCC dvds that may be picked up by those who ordered them.

☑ John Gatt is the director of the Fall production, *Cloud Seven*. The play has a large cast, 8 men and 8 women and John encourages all to

become familiar with the script and come out for the auditions. He is currently reworking some of the script to mesh better with the ages of our HHLT members and our experiences.

☑ The members discussed the feasibility of performing TCC at the FCT. There are many issues which will need to be identified and evaluated. Nanette suggested that an ad hoc committee of Sil, Tina, Lana and two other members of the HHLT explore what would be involved and bring their recommendations to the Board to decide if/how we want to proceed. Lois Potter volunteered. Another member is still needed.



Spotlight On Faye Green

by Sandy Mills

A recent new member of HHLT, Faye Green comes to us from Annapolis and has three children within 12 minutes of Heritage Hunt. What better reason for relocating could there be?

Only here for eight months, Faye is already involved in line dancing and tap and finds that a "retired" life fills her days as much as her working life did in the communication industry. Faye is doing many of the things she always wanted to do but never had time for. She likes hiking, gardening, decorating, and grandchildren.

Faye's theater preference is musicals and some of her favorite ones are *Showboat* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. In HHLT, she hopes to be involved in backstage workings to start, but who knows how far she may travel in this journey. Faye Green has already shown us she is not afraid to try new things.

now that he is unemployed. Enter Fiona Bostwick, the poor lost soul neighbor who can't figure out what went wrong with her marriage. Fiona is not opposed to slipping a little bourbon into her coffee as she bemoans her frustrations. Newt plays advisor and gives Fiona a way out of her condition. And she must learn how to "slink."

The word about his decision to quit spreads rapidly and even the local deli demands cash instead of a credit card. In bursts, Mrs. Potter of Potter, Potter, and Potter Realty scouting out the house for a potential future sale even though the Reeces didn't call for her. After she leaves, Newt and Mary make an attempt to talk but Newt's definition of talking includes mid-day romance. This plan goes out the window because the Women's Club executive board comes over to hold a meeting. The chairperson is Mrs. Doubleday, the bank president's domineering wife. Newt is forced to retreat to the basement to work on building a Swedish Chair. Also present is Mrs. Finch who is a little confused by all that Mrs. Doubleday wants to do. Mrs. Finch is trying to write a book about Molly Pitcher but she is experiencing a writer's block. Newt pops in and out of the room as he is baking brownies for the ladies and Mrs. Finch is even more confused. Mary is embarrassed that Newt is home and not working. Newt give Mrs. Finch advice on how to approach her book writing.

Out of nowhere Mr. Trumbull the president of United Foods visits Newt to talk him out of quitting. And as the play progresses, Newt does return with a new idea that is shot down by Trumbull so Newt quits again. Throughout acts, Sally Reece, Newt's mother, appears and supports Newt in his decision. Her widower friend Russ shows up and tells Newt he is a legend in the community. Finally Mr. Bostwick comes to tell Newt that he doesn't appreciate the guidance Newt gave his Fiona. His anger is quite apparent.

But in the end, Mrs. Finch writes a passionate account of Molly Pitcher, Fiona learns how to slink and her husband is thrilled, Marlowe the bank teller vents, and even Beismuller goes on to use his sixth sense. Mary is confused by it all

and feels she doesn't understand Newt at all. The final scene decides what Mary and Newt will do in the future.

In total there are 8 male roles and 8 female roles. All are in their mid 50s or older. So there is room for everyone who wants to audition. I will have copies of the play made for a read through on June 28th after the meeting. Equally important are people to fill roles as Producer, Stage Manager, Scenery, Publicity, Make Up, Ticket Sales, Menu, Props, and Costumes. Nothing happens on stage without all these key players. So please express your interest on June 28th. Because I work full time, the support staff is critical to success. If you need more information about what each person does, please ask and I'll provide you a check list stating the duties of each.

This is my third time directing and this is the biggest challenge of the three. The others were smaller casts with music and dancing thrown in. I know that there are many talented people in the Little Theater and I am counting on your support.



Travelling Theater Troupe

by Ina Mayer, Coordinator

The Travelling Theater Troupe gave its second performance

on Monday June 11 at the Gainesville Nursing and Rehabilitation venue. *God Bless America* was well received by the residents and comments after the show told it all. One woman said that we need more patriotism in our lives. Many joined in the singing of *America*, and *America The Beautiful* after we had read all four verses. Other selections included *Hats Off*, *Freedom Is Not Free* (written by a high school ROTC junior), Emma Lazarus's poem on the base of the Statue of Liberty and was concluded by Bill Harrison's wonderful rendition of *The Gettysburg Address*. Besides Bill, the other performers were Nanette Ross, Helen Kreigel and Ina Mayer. Thanks again to Joey Wagner for being the "booking agent."



The Workshop

by Bets Knepley, Workshop Coordinator

Our June Workshop, *Character Analysis*, led by Kathryn O'Sullivan, was a big success, according to the thirty-one attendees, including nine guests. The Falls Run Players from Fredericksburg, came out in force with six of their members attending. It was great to meet and chat with other senior theater members. I thought it would be interesting to see how different members of our group viewed this Workshop, so I asked and some graciously "volunteered" to do a review. So be sure to read what these three members thought of this ground-breaking Workshop in their articles that follow. The only disappointment was our refreshments.

Our next Workshop (Saturday, July 14th at 10am in the Craft Room) will be a reading and discussion of A.R. Gurney's unusual play, *Love Letters*. Those of you who attended the June Workshop may be able to use what you learned. The New York Post critic, Clive Barnes, stated that this play was "fascinating—not merely in the interplay of characters—but also in the special insights it provides on what it must have been like to be a ..." What's so unusual about this play? Well, you'll have to come to the Workshop to find out.

The August Workshop (Saturday, Aug 11th) will be a discussion led by Alan Mager, who will be giving pointers on how to design a set for our unique HH stage. If you like decorating and have an eye for color, this is a good workshop for you. We need more set designers and it's fun to do. Just ask Alan. And, note, set designers do not necessarily do the set construction.

The September Workshop (Saturday, Sept 8th) will deal with memory improvement and will be led by Joey Wagner. This is a great topic for those of us who have memory problems. It's titled *Where Did I Put My Keys?* Joey claims, "Use it or lose it. This applies to the mind as well as the body. In this Workshop you will learn ways you can boost your brain health; participate in fun brain teaser games and exercises that will challenge your mind; and learn how aging and other factors, such as health and stress, effect memory."

Would you like to lead the October Workshop on a topic of interest to our members? Or do you have a topic that you want to learn about? Please tell me (1360). Thanks.

June Workshop Review 1

by M.J. Brickach

HHLT Members and invited guests were treated to a wonderful Workshop on July 9 in the craft room: *Character Analysis & Development* by Professor Kathryn O'Sullivan of the Speech and Drama Department at Northern Virginia Community College. This lady's talents, besides teaching, extend to all areas of the performing arts—dance, acting, directing, script writing, and now film-making—and thus her presentation was filled with all sorts of anecdotes about her past experiences. These made everything come to life and take on real meaning about real people she has known and worked with. Excerpts from the script of her recent production at the college of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* by Kaufman and Hart were used as starting points for how we might analyze the characters of Sheridan Whiteside and Maggie Cutler.

Her advice for us as characters who are cast in a play was both practical and theoretical, beginning with several careful readings of the script itself and how the author describes your character. Then, you should look at what your character says or doesn't say (yes, silence can be golden on stage); what your character does; what others say about your character; how others react to your character; and finally how your character reacts to others. This is the starting point for ANALYZING your character.

Continued on page 5

But as rehearsals continue, as lines and blocking are learned, as costume decisions are made, as the director's vision for the play becomes clear, as an actor you must then focus on DEVELOPING your character. Professor O'Sullivan showed that character development has four levels: the psychological—what is your goal and how are you going to pursue it; how will you overcome obstacles that others put in your way; what tactics will you use to overcome these obstacles; and what your expectations are even if your goal is not reached. Level two is the physical - how you walk, talk, gesture, or look on stage. (Here we got up out of our chairs and practiced head walking, chest walking, hip walking, knee walking, toe walking, and any combination of the above.) Level three is the societal background - how family, friends, past romances, education, and employment would influence your character. Level four is the moral level - what does your character think is important in life; what are your character's values; how far are you willing to go to get what you want; where do religious or spiritual beliefs influence your character?

In conclusion, as amateurs we may not be able to reach all four levels of character development. Not all scripts will take us to such heights. Not all directors will be able to make us reach down so deeply within ourselves. But if we're going to put ourselves up there, we should at least make bold choices and bring our character to life with enthusiasm and excitement and passion. Our audience deserves nothing less!

June Workshop Review 2

by Dot Schuetze

What a fantastic workshop! Funny, informative, helpful and entertaining. Kathryn O'Sullivan, Professor of Speech and Drama at NVCC, shared in detail how an actor should prepare for an audition, and, ultimately, a part. It is much more complicated that you realize.

Briefly, here are some of the highlights: Remember, we as senior citizens can still PLAY and have fun. We can pretend we are any age, any character, anything we want to be. So, begin at the beginning. Read the play for ENJOYMENT. Then read it again for INFORMATION (the setting, the time period, how characters act and react to each other).

Really LEARN more about the character you hope to play. Think what their GOAL or objective might be. What OBSTACLES might stand in the way of obtaining that goal (fear, personality flaws, other characters in opposition).

What type of CHARM or INTIMIDATION TACTICS might your character use to obtain that goal? What EXPECTATIONS must your character have to achieve that goal?

What does your character look like (height, weight, hair color, etc.)? What age? What gender? How do they walk? This was a fun exercise she put us through. These ideas are primarily used to add more "color" to your character on stage, making the visual more interesting. We all had to get up and walk leading with our head (like a studious professor); walk leading with our chest (a confident CEO, politician); walk leading with our hips (a model); then walk leading with our knees (soldier or marching band).

Kathryn encouraged us to look into the family background of our character. What were the people like who raised you (parents, grandparents, foster parents, etc.)? Do you have siblings? Are you the oldest, middle or youngest? What about your friends growing up? Did you have many? What activities did you do? Or were you a loner?

What about romantic relationships? How did you meet? Was it long term? Did they or did they not work out? Are you employed? What are your co-workers like? Are you unemployed? Why? Did you go to school? College? What subjects interested you?

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER ULTIMATELY WANT OUT OF LIFE?

Continued on page 6

So, next time we see you on stage we will know you have put all this good information to work and will thrill us with your magnificent performance.

Kathryn's final words: "Be yourself in your character. Remember, acting is playing—ENJOY."

A Workshop Review 3

by Alan Mager

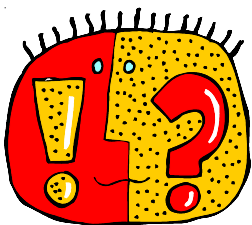
On June 9, I was one of 31 theater enthusiasts from HHLT and The Falls Run Players who participated in a workshop on character analysis and development presented at Heritage Hunt by Kathryn O'Sullivan, a professor of speech and drama at Northern Virginia Community College. Kathryn started the workshop by demonstrating how actors can discover a great deal of information about their characters through reading and analyzing the script. She did this through an exercise in which we read a short excerpt from *The Man Who Came to Dinner* by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman.

Following this, she led a lengthy discussion of the four levels of characterization: Psychological, physical/biological, societal and moral. Building on this, she emphasized the importance of actors' using their imagination in making effective and interesting choices for their characters. Finally, she ended with a discussion of outside-in versus inside-out actors.

Kathryn's intimate style, lively delivery and sincere interaction with the participants gave the entire workshop a very personal feel to me. She held my interest throughout, repeatedly sparked my imagination and effectively pushed me to think deeply about each of the concepts she presented. From this one session, I came away with more of a sound basis for character analysis and development than I had in all my previous experiences and readings. I learned how to infuse more of myself into my characters while at the same time creating a uniqueness for each character that would generate audience interest.

Although the participants' comments and questions frequently threatened to move the discussion away from the workshop outline, Kathryn proved to be a master of keeping things on track and making everyone's input pertinent to the discussion topics. Her obvious depth of knowledge regarding all things to do with theater made the workshop an extremely enriching experience. If I had any complaint about the workshop (and I really don't) it would be that too much material was covered. But how can one complain about a banquet where there was too much to eat? Kathryn handled it all well and left me wishing that I could spend much more time with her.

Many thanks to Bets Knepley for organizing this fine workshop and to the HHLT Board of Directors for agreeing to pay for it. It was an excellent investment.



Questions, Anyone?

by Bets Knepley

A new feature of the HHLT Newsletter will be the column, **Questions, Anyone?** If you have questions in the theatrical area, I will endeavor to answer them, with the assistance of our members.

An example question: What's the longest running play on Broadway? Answer's below. Now it's your turn! Hurry up and rush those questions to me at 1360 or bjknepley@comcast.net Thank you.

Board of Directors

President

Nanette Ross

Vice President

Bill Harrison

Secretary

Denny Cumber

Treasurer

Rick Campbell

Activity/Program Chair

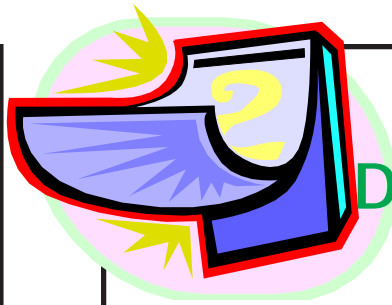
Joyce Mancini

Communications Chair

Pat Boggs

Member-at-Large

Jim Campbell



Put these Dates on Your Calendar

First Read-Thru

Monday, June 25-6:30pm-Craft Room

**FIRST Read-Thru of our Fall Production,
*Cloud Seven***

June General Meeting

Thurs, June 28th at 7pm-Craft Room
**Second Read-Thru of our Fall Production,
Cloud Seven, will follow the biz meeting**

The July Social

Sat, July 7th-7pm

At Joyce Mancini's Home

Movie: *Rainman* with Dustin Hoffman

July Newsletter Article Deadline

Monday, July 16th

The July Workshop

Sat, July 14-10am-Craft Room
**Read & Discuss the unusual play,
Love Letters by A.R. Gurney**

The August Workshop

Sat, Aug 11-10am-Craft Room
**Alan Mager will discuss *Scenery Design*,
particularly for our Stage**

The August Potluck PICNIC

At Sil & Janice Zinacola's home
Date: TBA

Fall Production Dates

November 6, 7, 8 & 9

Activities for the Summer

by Joyce Mancini, Activity/Program Chair

Ninety degree days are upon us again. I'm not sure this Jersey girl will ever get used to them. So if you don't see me much, it's because I'm hiding in my air-conditioned house. I'm always open to a visit, however. Drop in for a cup of tea. I'd love that.

Our picnic and potluck supper is being planned for August. Date to be announced. We're waiting to work around Janice Zinacola's work schedule. Keep your eye on your email and postings.

I invite you all to view a classic film at my home on Saturday, July 7th at 7pm. Let me know if you'd like to come. Nothing fancy, but I'll pop some popcorn and we'll watch *Rainman* with Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise. Discussion and coffee and tea will follow. Let's try it and see if it flies. I love those old movies. I think we can learn a few new tricks to help us. The technology was minimal back then so the actors really had to work to get the story to come alive. It also is fun to try to recognize some of the people who were bit players and since become STARS!!



**A Big
Welcome to
New Member
Jackie
Schmemann**

Opening Fall 2009

by Helen Esposito

Prince William County, the City of Manassas, and George Mason University, along with the private sector, have joined together to create the region's first state-of-the-art performing arts center on the Prince William Campus of George Mason University.

A number of organizations will benefit from this center, including performing and visual arts organizations based in the community (performance and exhibition space), business and civic organizations (meetings, conferences, and special events), schools (venue for student performance groups, curriculum-based arts programs,) and George Mason University (teaching and performance venues for theater, dance, music and visual technology).

The center's unique design and its program will make this a destination region for northern Virginia residents who love the performing arts. The center will also be an important ingredient in the continuing economic development of this region bringing in an estimated 162,000 attendees in the first full year of operation, \$2.7 million annually in economic activity generated from the operations and ancillary spending of \$4.1 million annual in the community.

The center will include a 10,000 square foot grand foyer that can accommodate 300 for a seated dinner and 600+ for a reception; a performance hall of 1,166 seats on four levels; a 300 seat flexible theater/rehearsal area.

Several residents of Heritage Hunt, including HHLT members, Helen Esposito, Pat Boggs, Clare Keating, Natalie June, M.J. Brickach and Yvonne Stathis are members of a committee which has been formed to develop a partnership between HH residents and this new center. While our committee's role is still evolving, we will more than likely be involved with some fund raising events. So stay tuned to channel 18 and the *Heritage Horn*.

In Memory of James Campbell

by Nanette Ross, President

We are all saddened by the death of James Campbell. He was well loved and will be long remembered and missed.

Jim actively served the Heritage Hunt Little Theater. He was elected to HHLT Board of Directors and was the treasurer for two years. He played major roles in most of our productions

His first HHLT role was Muggs O'Toole, a gangster in the musical *Charleston!* You may remember him next as Ricky Ricardo in *Trouble at the Tropicabana*, a murder mystery spoof and a take-off on one of the *I Love Lucy* TV shows. In addition to being musical director for our production of *When In Rome* he played the Messenger to the Emperor. His last role was Dr. Watson in *Hound of the Clackervilles*. Even though he was quite ill during rehearsals and production, he saw it through to the end.

Yes, Jim served us well. Whatever he did, he did to the best of his ability. However, it was his human qualities that I most cherished. To know him was to love him. Jim was one of the kindest, nicest, human beings that it was my pleasure to know.

Good bye, Jim.