

Only those who will risk going too far
can possibly find out how far one can go.

T.S. Eliot

Newsletter of the Heritage Hunt Little Theater



Play Time

May 2007

From the President

As the weather is finally breaking from the hum drum grayness of winter and the unseasonable weather we've had, I wish all our members a wonderful Spring and Summer to come. So go outside and breathe a fresh burst of Spring air and take in nature's wonders as all the new life is budding around us.

The Spring production was a success, as I knew it would be. It felt strange for me to be audience rather than actor in a HHLT show. But I know when the curtain descends it is not the end of HHLT—just time for a brief pause to send accolades to those who participated so ably both onstage and behind the scenes and then, before you know it, we'll be working on our fall production.

Of course, we are all anxious to see how TTT, our community outreach productions are received. By the time you read May Play Time the winner of HHLT American Idol may be known. Did you take part in the fun of it all? Those of you who attended our Site and Bite social event had a good time. I'm looking forward to our next workshop on June 9 on character analysis, lead by Professor Kathryn O'Sullivan. Will you be there?

As you can see there is so much going on in our Little Theater. I encourage you to get involved.

Nanette Ross



TCC: Thanks for the Memories

by Bets Knepley, Director

TCC is over! And a great group of HHLT members—from the actors to those "thousands" behind the scenes—made our audiences happy that they chose to see a performance.

Again, a warm thank-you to all who helped in any way to make TCC the success it was. And to quote a favorite person of mine, Dr. Seuss, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

The Cemetery Club: A Review

by Mary Winsky

Friendship, marriage, love, death: these huge themes moved minds and hearts at The Heritage Hunt Little Theater's incredible gutsy production of Ivan Menchell's *The Cemetery Club*. This play, with all the magnificent people involved in it, took a chance. It dared to open the hard parts of our lives at this age, an age of loss and change and growth. And it opened them poignantly, with laughter and tears.

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Highlights from the APRIL Minutes

☑ John Gatt has agreed to be the director for the fall production. There are currently four dates scheduled for play production, but the Board decided to plan for

three production dates, November 7, 8 and 9 with November 6th as the final dress rehearsal date. Nanette has put in a request for the 2008 dates, planning on early May for the Spring. She spoke with the Celebration Singers and the Men's Chorus to avoid conflicts with their performance dates.

☑ A note was sent to Jeanna Hilton complaining of the poor service for our birthday party. We have had no response and are holding the bill.

☑ The Sight and Bite is still scheduled for May 6. The play has been changed from the *Will Roger's Follies* to *The Odd Couple*.

☑ Helen Esposito read a note from Bets Knepley that the time for the Search for the HH IDOL had been changed to 2—4pm on May 19 because of a conflict with the Women's Chorus Dress rehearsal. The search for performers has had a slow start. Bets encourages all of us to consider participating—a 4 minute spot—and to stretch our wings.

☑ A second group of the Traveling Theater Troupe is meeting, preparing a patriotic show. Joey Wagner is contacting outside places as possible venues for these offerings.

☑ Elena Portoles reported that Phyllis Schrader is recuperating well at the Rehab Center across the street after her heart surgery. She can have visitors and is expected to be home soon.

☑ Elena also read a report from Bets on TCC regarding ticket sales—there are 561 sold as of today.

Outside Events

The next HH Women's Organization meeting (Tues, June 12, 10 am) program will feature Debbie Halverson, President of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, who will describe the many programs offered. As a special feature—Maureen and David Mason will perform an exercise from the Reader's Theater, *Theater From the Waist Up*. **Only paid members may attend this meeting.** (Contributed by Elena Portoles)

The Reston Community Theater will present a musical theatre audition workshop and master class with Euan Morton and Lee Armitage on Mon, June 4, 7pm at the CenterStage Theater at the Reston Community Center. Cost is \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. For more info call 703.501.7588 or visit www.restonplayers.org (Contributed by Bets Knepley)



Dates to Remember

May General Meeting
Thurs., May 24th at 7pm
Craft Room

June Newsletter Article Deadline
Tues., June 19th

The June Workshop
Sat, June 9, 9:30am, Board Room
Light Refreshments Offered
Character Analysis by
Professor Kathryn O'Sullivan, NVCC

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

Fall Production Dates
November 6, 7, 8 & 9

Director Bets Knepley led this courageous departure from this theater's already successful history. She raised the high bar and invited us to witness a small cast of talented actors soar. Not bolstered by the large casts of past performances, five stood together on stage and invited the hundreds in attendance on the four nights to laugh loudly, and think deeply.

Three lifelong friends, Lanna Krogman as Ida, Tina Mullins as Lucille and Gayle Chisholm as Doris, have made a ritual of visiting their husbands' graves in the four years since Doris's husband's death. Their humor and banter and shared history have glued them into fascinating relationships we get to watch unfold. Ida, at once vulnerable and strong, seems ready to move on though she clearly loved her husband. Lucille is bent on spending her late husband's money on furry bargains and finding romance to balance his unfaithfulness. Doris devotes her life to her spouse's memory, tending his grave and her grief with steady devotion. Their three very different versions of mourning gave space to wonder about our own actual and imagined dealings with death.

Into this triage of choice enters, Sam, played by Sil Zinicola, the neighborhood butcher and widower they meet in the cemetery. His growing interest in Ida makes Lucille jealous and Doris disapproving. He threatens their well-worn patterns enough for Lucille and Doris to intervene and separate the couple. Their manipulation is exposed before and after their friend Selma's wedding to which Sam brings the lively and talkative widow Mildred, played by Pat Boggs. The three friends, loosened by wine and dancing, reveal their separate truths, till then unspoken, and make us wonder together what "enough" is and dare to hope for "more." The evening crescendos into catharsis, and the three women stagger off to bed, exhausted by revelations.

The next morning's hangover scene is hysterical until Ida discovers Doris has died in the night. We plunge with them into present grief, rippling in us new combinations of feelings. Sam and Ida reunite and, with Lucille, make a final

visit to the cemetery. There Lucille fusses over her friend's grave as she used to disapprove of Doris's fussing over her late husband's. And finally she is able to tell Doris to say goodbye to her own philandering husband.

The ending is intensely satisfying.

Friendship, marriage, love, death. As I rose from my seat to join the audience in thunderous applause, I turned to see a roomful of misty eyes and warm expressions. We had formed a club too, though not of cemeteries. We were one—bigger somehow and more open of heart.

As I looked back up on stage at the behind-the-scenes crew, I realized it hadn't been a small cast after all. The producer Jane Becker was there, and the stage manager, Goldie Grandy, and Denny Cumber and Nan Hepp, the property mistresses. And Pat Dews had worked her costume magic again and Sandy Iasiello, the make-up. And Dot Schuetze had doubled as assistant to the director and understudy. And Dave Milbradt, Bill Whyte and Rick Sullivan from the HHLSTV Crew had handled sound and lighting; Lynn Lewis, choreography; Alan Mager, set design; Ted Day and Alan Mager, set construction; Lucy Modrak and Grace and Ed Baier, set painting; and Joey Wagner, set decoration. Karen Naylor lent her coffee table. Bets and Goldie did program and publicity; Ed Knepley was the photographer and Elena Portoles and Carol Katchmark were in charge of tickets. The beautiful dinner music was pianist Jack Merelman's and those NY accents were so authentic thanks to Sylvia Waldman. The setup and tear-down crew consisted of Alan Mager, Goldie Grandy, Sandy Mills, Jim Burwell, Sil Zinicola, Rick Sullivan, Ted Day, Art Moscatello, Jack Merelman, Helen Esposito, Denny Cumber and Bob Rewald. Wow, it sure does take that proverbial village to produce a show as fine as this.

Bets picked a strong script with realistic dialog, great lines and well-developed characters. But it took the actors and crew to pull together this bittersweet, urbane comedy into a life-affirming evening of large laughs and small tears. And all of it right here in the Heritage Hunt Club, not a "Cemetery Club" for sure.



*The Debut of our
Traveling Theater Troupe
at the Gainesville Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility*

Debut Performance of the Traveling Theater Troupe

by Ina Mayer

The Travelling Theater Troupe gave its debut performance at the Gainesville Nursing and Rehabilitation Facility with "Just For The Fun Of It." The four members of the group—Joyce Mancini, Grace and Ed Baier and Carol Katchmark—embellished their performance with many props and they were warmly received. We were asked to return with other programs. We have another scheduled there in June in time for Flag Day with our patriotic program, "God

Bless America" which is presently in rehearsal.

Many thanks to Joey Wagner for booking our shows in various venues. We are planning to start rehearsing more programs as we evaluate the reception of our audiences. Thanks, too, for the patience of those of you who indicated an interest in this endeavor. There will be a place for all who are interested in performing.

Mamma Mia—Marvelous

by Helen Kriegal

In April my daughter and her girls treated me to a birthday celebration in the Big Apple. What a wonderful three days with the usual sight-seeing around NYC—a real treat, as I have not been to the city in many, many years.

The highlight of our trip was going to the Winter Garden Theatre and seeing the wonderful musical, *Mamma Mia!* (Music and lyrics by Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvius. Book by Catherine Johnson). Over 30 million people all over the world have fallen in love with the characters, the story and music that *Mamma Mia!* brings to the stage.

The upbeat and hip music of ABBA adds to the tale of love, laughter and friends. The show begins on the eve of a young daughter's wedding day on a Greek island. The plot centers on her quest to determine the identity of her absent father. The daughter invites the three men to her wedding without her mother's knowledge. Suddenly and without warning this brings three men from her mother's past back into her life after a twenty year absence. Two of her mother's friends arrive for the festivities, adding much reminiscing and soul searching. The story culminates with a wedding—but not of the daughter as planned, but of the mother to one of her prior lovers. And much to everyone's surprise, the daughter rejects marriage (for the time being) and decides to travel around the world with her would-be-fiance.

This is a rare occasion when the performers and the audience are caught in the excitement of the story and entertainment of the music and choreography. If given the opportunity I would definitely go and see *Mamma Mia!* again. It leaves you with a wonderful feeling of joy and contentment.



The Workshop

by Bets Knepley, Workshop Coordinator

Our June Workshop, *Character Analysis*, led by Kathryn O'Sullivan, Professor of Drama at NVCC, Manassas Campus, will take place on Saturday, June 9th at 9:30am in the Board Room. Coffee, tea, decaf & pastries will be offered. I have a list of about 12 members who will attend along with several members of the Falls Run Players, our sister little theater in Fredricksburg. Please contact Bets at 1360 if you plan to attend this ground-breaking Workshop and haven't done so yet.

The July Workshop (Saturday, July 14th) will be a reading & discussion of A.R. Gurney's unusual play, *Love Letters*. What's so unusual about it? 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 on set design. If you like to decorate your house or watch "Design on the Dime" on HGTV, this might be a good workshop for you. We need 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 be led by Joey Wagner. Her topic may be of interest to us who have memory problems. It's titled *Where Did I Put My Keys?* a memory improvement workshop. Joey states, "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."

In ending, I, like Joyce Mancini, am puzzled about the lack of member participation in little theater offerings. I've asked for member feedback several times, in surveys. Even then, it was difficult to get much response. So I've come to the conclusion that HHLT members are happy with the status quo. If I'm wrong, please let me know. Thanks.

Site & Bite—A True Delite

by Joyce Mancini, Activity/Program Chair

On Sunday, May 6th, a group of 17 people attended a performance of the Odd Couple at Fauquier Community Theater. The show was fun. It contained all the characters we've come to know and love from the TV series. Murray and all the other card players were there. The Pigeon sisters were sill hunting for men. Felix was still cleaning. Oscar was still messing up.

Several times the sum of \$1.50 an hour was mentioned for good household help. I'm going to write Felix with an offer of \$1.75 to come and clean for me. Goodness, I might even go up to \$2.00 an hour. I can dream, can't I?

Dinner at the Brass Cannon at Stonewall Golf Club followed. Good food, tastefully served in our own private room made for a lovely evening. Good conversation followed. I think everyone enjoyed themselves.

I'm looking for several things at this time. I'm not getting much participation for Site & Bites. What am I doing wrong? Let me know and I'll try to correct it. Maybe a cheaper dinner? Maybe a different type play? Whatever!! All suggestions are welcome!

Would anyone like to host our annual summer pot luck picnic? I'm looking for a house to hold this year's party. You provide the place. Little Theater supplies drinks, paper products etc. It works out to an enjoyable day for all. Call me at 1622 if your home is available.

T C C S N A P S



That
Zany
Stage Crew
left to right
Denny Cumber
Jane Becker
Goldie Grandy
Nan Hepp



*To the Left
At
the
Cemetery
*left to right**

Gayle Chisholm
Lanna Krogman
Sil Zinicola
Tina Mullins

*Below
Before Selma's
Wedding
*left to right**

Gayle Chisholm
Lanna Krogman
Pat Boggs
Sil Zinicola



T
C
C



**Trouble's
Coming**
left to right
Tina Mullins
Gayle Chisholm
Lanna Krogman

S
N
A
P
S



**All
Is
Forgiven**
left to right
Lanna Krogman
Tina Mullins

C
O
N
T
D



**At
Doris's
Grave**
left to right
Tina Mullins
Lanna Krogman
Sil Zinicola