

Hear the light and see the sound.

— Unknown

Newsletter of the Heritage Hunt Little Theater



Play Time

September 2007

An Experiment

by Bets Knepley

From the President

by Nanette Ross, President

Did you know there's an acting school in DC that offers free performances of plays presented by their advanced acting students? The school is The National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts. The advanced students call themselves ACT, Actors Repertory Theater. On August 19th, I joined friends in the basement of a church at 1556 Wisconsin Avenue to see a performance of Tom Stoppard's play, *The Real Inspector Hound*. It was a spoof of Agatha Christie—like melodrama, and definitely over the top.

To enter the theater one walks across the stage which has theater seats on three sides. There is no curtain. The stage is minuscule. It was not a great performance nor a great play, but the actors gave it their all. Some would stride across the stage, creating the illusion that they had crossed a large room. They spoke with rounded vowels (perhaps because the setting was London) and used exaggerated hand movements (perhaps because it was a melodrama). They were costumed in late 18th century attire.

One woman who played a servant, attempted a cockney accent. She must have been told to drop initial H sounds. The result was one of the worst cockney accents I've ever heard. To make it ring

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Now that HHLT is almost five years old, I believe that in order to grow (or as I like to say "spread our wings"), we should start experimenting with different types of plays. At the August Board meeting, I presented several ideas which were received favorably. At our August General Meeting, M.J. Brickach discussed another new idea. New ideas are bubbling up.

So, are you ready to try something new...different...an experiment? I hope so, because our next production in February 2008 will be just that. I will be directing *Love Letters*, a unique play by A.R.Gurney. It opened on Broadway in 1989 and was adapted for a movie in 1999. It's completely different from anything we've done before. Gurney describes his play as needing "no theater, no lengthy rehearsal, no special set, no memorization of lines..." It has a cast of two: Melissa and Andrew who read letters that they've exchanged over a lifetime. In the age of faxes, email and cell phones, *Love Letters* is a welcome reminder of the intimate and old fashioned art of letter writing. It will easily take you from laughing to crying and back and forth.

Goldie

Grandy will be
Stage Manager
and Joey
Wagner will

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☑ New member, Lucy Modrak, was welcomed.

☑ The updated profile form is available from Pat Boggs for new members as well as any current members who would like to update their experience.

☑ Activity Committee reports that the Summer Social was held August 12th at Zinacola's. The camaraderie and food were great. Because we have such a good time at our social occasions, the group decided to have a Halloween Costume party on October 31st. The Zinacola's again were kind enough to offer their home. The classic movie night was held August 4th at Joyce Mancini's home. *The Sting* was enjoyed by all. The September 1st movie will be *Moonstruck*. The possibility of HHLT members caroling this Christmas season was offered for consideration.

☑ TTT reports that "For the Fun of It" group performed on 8/7 and is scheduled for 8/29. The "Patriotic Program" was performed on 8/15 at the Manassas Day Care and is scheduled for the Fairmont on 9/4. The "Summertime" group performed on 8/8 and 8/15. Joey Wagner is exploring other venues

☑ Bill Harrison has charted all of the plays that have been read and the responses. He plans to have a meeting soon to decide which plays are still outstanding and need to be reviewed.

☑ Nominating Committee will be Bill Harrison, Joyce Mancini and Denny Cumber, who will represent the Board, and Helen Esposito and Arlene Maroney will represent the general membership.

☑ Bill worked with management from the Club catering office who agreed to lower the price from \$10 to \$6 per person to accommodate for the poor service rendered at our Birthday Party.

☑ Thanks to Alan Mager for an excellent job at the August Workshop on Set Design. Joey Wagner will present a Memory Workshop on September 8th.

☑ The Fall production was cancelled due to an inability to attract sufficient actors for the male roles as well the necessary production staff.

☑ Nanette Ross and Elena Portoles met with Bob Spindel and Jeanna Hilton to discuss using the blue form for HHLT productions. Bob and Jeanna agreed to use the form. HHLT will offer a couple of members to help Jeanna with seating.

☑ Bets Knepley offered a proposal, already accepted by the Board, to present *Love Letters*, using the Card Room one night each week in February as this venue provides an intimate setting. Dessert, coffee and a cash bar will be offered. Auditions are scheduled for November 2, 3 and 4 and there will only be seven rehearsals. Goldie Grandy is the stage manager and Joey Wagner will design the set. The proposal was well received by the membership.

☑ MJ Brickach proposed presenting *Twelve Angry Men* as a 2008 production, probably in the fall. It is a smaller theatrical production with fewer actors and lends itself well to a smaller room, not the ballroom. MJ would like to use the Billiards Room and will contact the Facilities and Grounds committee to obtain permission to move furniture. She is planning on six performances, Tuesday through Saturday evenings and a Sunday matinee.

☑ Bets also suggested the possibility of performing Old Time Radio Shows which could be done on the ballroom stage in the and would need not only actors but a good sound effects team. Another possibility is doing a play by Robert Fulghum.

☑ Arlene Maroney, a member of the Facilities and Grounds committee, will talk to that group about securing access to a toilet for members who are back stage for very long periods of time. Arlene will talk with Everett Medlin who is an architect and a member of that group for help in drawing up a design that would accomplish the purpose. The details are still unresolved.

☑ MJ introduced Sue and Don Jewell, prospective new members.

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true she needed to modify her vowel sounds and change her inflection pattern.

What I found most interesting, was a social gathering with the actors following the production. Most of these actors are people who had worked or are working in other fields. One of the men taught second grade, but wants to be an actor and took leave of his job to follow his dream. The woman who played the servant is a nurse. Another gentleman is an engineer who left a cushy, well paying secure job to pursue an unstable career in acting. Still another has a BS in nutrition and fitness and has performed as an acrobat and served in the army as a combat medic.

In September and October this repertory group will present Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. In December they will present a premiere production of *Thirteen Beers and a Power Bar*.

Why are their productions free? As they explain it, responding to an audience is vital to an actors training. The words you speak may be the same but each audience is different. Acting empowers you to play upon the emotions of the audience.

Seated Aerobic Classes at HH?

Free trial class: October 15

8-week Series to begin October 22

"Seated Aerobics" is chair-assisted exercise that incorporates safe methods of performing basic arm, leg and body movements to strengthen muscles and increase flexibility. The program consists of a warm-up aerobic portion, a cool down, resistance work and stretching. It is effective fitness for beginning exercisers as well as experienced exercisers with medical conditions or physical restrictions that might prohibit standing or more intense types of exercise. Exercises can be done in a wheelchair.

Joey Wagner, a Certified Senior Fitness Instructor will be teaching this class and offering a free class on October 15. See the October Horn or Channel 18 for details. Plan to attend the free class. Remember "Use it or Lose it".



Put these Dates on Your Calendar

September General Meeting

Thurs, September 27 at 7pm-Craft Room

The Flick Fest

Sat, October 13—7pm

At Joyce Mancini's Home

Movie: *Lawrence of Arabia*

October Newsletter Article Deadline

Wednesday, October 17

The October Workshop

Sat, October 20-10am-Craft Room

Read-Thru of our February Production,
Love Letters

Auditions for *Love Letters*

Closed Auditions in the Board Room on:

Fri, Nov 2nd from 7pm to 9:30pm

Sat, Nov 3rd from 10am to 2pm

Sun, Nov 4th from 2pm to 4:30pm

To schedule your audition,
call Goldie Grandy at 1548

Feb 2008 Production Dates

Love Letters in the Card Room

February 5, 15, 20 & 28 at 7:30pm

"How Sharp Were You?"

by Joey Wagner

The answers to the September Workshop handout "How Sharp Are Your?" are below. How did you do?

1. One hour, 45 minutes
2. Eleven months (all but February)
3. Seven pigs lived
4. One hundred fifty-seven (3 x 50, +7)
5. Ten (9 fielders + 1 batter); 13 (9 + 1 batter + 3 base runners). Add 1 if you count the on-deck batter.
6. *In God We Trust or United States of America*
7. Two hours (now, + 4 half-hours).
8. The match
9. They aren't playing each other
10. Misspelled: is misspelled



The Workshop

by Bets Knepley,
Workshop Coordinator

A big thank you to HHLT member, Joey Wagner, for leading our September Workshop titled *Where Did I Put My Keys?*, which dealt with memory improvement. For those of us who have memory problems, this was a super workshop. The attendees participated in fun brain teaser games and exercises that challenged their minds; and they learned how aging and other factors effect memory.

The August and September Workshops were lead by two of our members, Alan Mager and Joey. These Workshops were well received by all who attended. Do you have a subject that you'd like to discuss with HHLT members? Volunteer by calling me at 1360 today.

The October 20th Workshop will be a read-thru of our February Production, *Love Letters*. The topic for the November 10th Workshop will be "Using Your Voice in Acting."



Left:
Joey
Wagner
testing
our
brain
power



Above: Everyone's listening Intently to Joey

It's All About the Process

by Bets Knepley

Performances are not the only important part of a production. The success of a show is not determined by whether every seat in the house is full. It's about the Process. The Process means that every rehearsal is important to the outcome, as well as being part of the *fun*! Every dance rehearsal, every crew painting session, every tech rehearsal, every production meeting and *even the strike* is part of the Process and part of the *fun*.

After a performance, it can be very poignant to stand on *the very spot* where only moments earlier hundreds of people were focusing all their attention. Even though the spot is no longer important to anyone, the echoes of applause can still be heard. This is the true magic of theater.

There often is a bittersweet feeling of knowing that, when all those exhausting hours are finally over, that *living work of art* that once was a production is now gone forever and just a memory. You can never go back. If your best friend missed the show—sorry, it's too late. You can never have *that* cast and *that* set and *that* audience together in one place ever again. Unlike fine art that hangs in a gallery for hundreds of years, our chosen form of *performance art* is fleeting and cannot even be captured because a live performance is quite different from a movie.

All you can do is grin and daydream about the next Process (production) coming up.

Ten Exercises for Your Brain

Contributed by Joey Wagner

1. Recall what you just forgot

Everybody forgets what they went into the next room to get. It isn't a problem with memory. Usually it's a matter of something psychologists call interference or divided attention. Trace your movements back in your mind. Picture what you were doing and where you were. Pop! You will remember why you are standing in front of a desk with a pencil in your hand.

2. Remember new words

Any new vocabulary word can be remembered more easily if you take the time to look up its historical source (also known as etymology). For example. The useful word "captious" will be hard to remember. It means "fault-finding," "quibbling" or "critical." You will see it contains the same root as the word "capture." I other words, captious means "trying to catch someone in an error."

3. Tune into something new

Tune in to a radio station you never listen to-one of the ones you usually pass over quickly. Don't be quick to reject or judge what you hear, whether it's a music station, or a talk station with a bombastic and self-righteous host. Listening to someone you disagree with will give you the opportunity to formulate counter-argument in your own mind.

4. Play the devil's advocate

(But only among friends, at first) Set minds do not improve with age. Next time a topic comes up that you have always known about (it could be defense spending, the death penalty, etc), try to make a good argument for the opposite point of view. You may end up feeling more sure of your original opinion, or less sure of it. Either way, it's a good exercise in logical thinking and it's fun!

5. Find a tennis ball

Got a tennis ball handy? Pick a numbers task like balancing a check book. Start checking the numbers while you squeeze the tennis ball rapidly with your RIGHT hand. That will also help you get started solving a crossword puzzle more quickly. Why? Your brain's circuits go to sleep when you don't use them so you need to wake them up. The left side of your

brain handles simple math tasks. When it picks up activity on the opposite side of your body, it wakes up to monitor it.

6. Play charades

Most people are more concerned about their memory than about their prowess in games like charades. In fact, inability to play pantomime games is one symptom of dementia. In addition to the workout that charades can give to cognitive skills, they also serve as an excuse for social interaction and a little physical exercise, all those factors-mental, social, and physical stimulation-help the brain to stay fit and healthy.

7. Punctuate creatively

Exercise your skills by punctuating the following two statements in various ways. One makes the woman seem subservient; another makes her seen essential. "A woman without her man is nothing." How could you arrange punctuation to mean that the condemned gunslinger was firing before, or after, his hanging? "Billy the Kid shot the sheriff half an hour after he was hung."

8. Work your math smarts

One easy way to be the person who can come up with the math answer fast is to practice with everyday figuring. For example, figure out in your head: how much to leave for a tip; how much change the clerk should hand back after you pay for your newspaper; how much more quickly you'd reach your destination if you drove 5 mph faster.

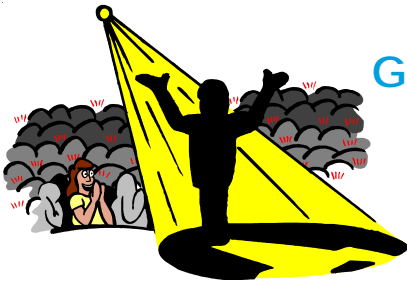
9. Stir up your brain cells

Use everyday down-times to stir up your brain cells. For example, while waiting in line at the checkout, try to estimate the total grocery bill in your head. Estimate crowd sizes or pairs of shoes in your brain. Visualize each of the tasks you plan to complete that day and mentally walk through each one (do that the night before and your brain will start solving problems while you sleep).

10. The single best 20-minute brain-maintenance exercise

If you do nothing else to help your brain help you, walk briskly for 20 minutes at least every other day. A fit body pumps more blood to energize brain cells.

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Spotlight on Goldie Grandy

I'm a native Coloradoan, born in Loveland, Colorado. I had an idyllic child-

hood. My father was the Colorado State Forester, so we spent a great deal of time in the mountains during summers and vacations. There I had my first pony when I was seven and as I grew so did the size of my different horses. I rode alone every day into the forests, with the freedom not many girls had in those days. Sometimes when the shepherd were bringing the sheep past the ranger station on their way to the "high country," I would have the opportunity to 'adopt' a lamb whose mother wouldn't take care of it. I had lambs who followed me around like dogs and were wonderful pets. We also had free ranging cattle from the ranches in the area who grazed the 'low country' and it was not unusual on my daily ride to run into a large bull! Do you have any doubt as to who got the right of way on the trail?? I guess you could say I was definitely a 'tomboy,' wearing my brother's castoff jeans and my treasured cowboy hat, going with my Dad to the forest to mark the trees for cutting and then going to the sawmill to see them processed. We also checked campgrounds to be sure rules were being followed and stocking them with firewood. When reading was a newly learned skill I once read the Smoky Bear warning "Help Prevent Forest Fires" as "Help Private Fires." Every Fall the family moved to town so my brother and I could attend school. I guess my urge to entertain started there. I played flute in the marching and symphonic bands, and got into the class plays. I played (sang) Second Hand Rose in a student variety show and also was stage manager for our Senior class play.

I sold my last horse to pay for tuition to college, where I spent 2 1/2 years and got my MRS degree. We moved around a

bit, from Colorado to Massachusetts to Virginia with a brief, wonderful stint in Paris. We had six children (the last born in Paris) over a 10 year period. I did get into an amateur dance/theater group in Massachusetts where I played the Wolf in a musical version of *Peter and the Wolf*, and both a Purple People Eater and a weird cocktail waitress in a musical set in outer space. I also had a dancing role in *Carousel*, but broke my foot (didn't say I was a good dancer), so had to play a lesser role. The move to Virginia slowed my theatrical endeavors as my husband traveled a lot and six children kept me busy. Anyway, the theater 'bug' had not been forgotten and when my children were all grown and out of the nest, I moved to Heritage Hunt and joined the Little Theater. I write the Little Theater news for the Horn, have been stage manager for *When In Rome* and *The Cemetery Club*, had two minor roles in *The Hound of the Clackervilles*, and have assisted with raising the set and striking it for several plays. Recently I've become part of the Traveling Theater Troupe. I look forward to continuing to be involved in the activities of the Little Theater and count myself luck to be part of such a terrific group of people.





Happy Halloween Haunting

by Joyce Mancini,
Activity/Program Chair

Here's a chance to show your creativity and play a role, too. Dig up a costume to wear to our first Halloween party. It's October 31st, Halloween Night. Don't let the ghosts and goblins keep you sitting home. Join us at the Zinacola's for a fun gathering. Prizes for costumes include: funniest, scariest and most original. Sil and Janice are such gracious hosts and we guarantee a fun night. Sandwiches, salads and light refreshments will be provided. I hope we get a really good bunch of spooks and spirits to liven up Halloween at Heritage Hunt. Spouses welcomed.

We are planning a Holiday Happening in early December before it gets too hectic with other events. Stay tuned for more details.

Next month's flick will be on Saturday, October 13th, 2007 at 7pm. The flick will be *Lawrence of Arabia*. Popcorn, soft drinks during the movie, coffee, tea and cookies after. Join us, it's fun.

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create a minimal, yet, intimate set, as it will be a "staged reading."

I hope to cast four different teams who will perform one time each. There may be opportunities to take this play "on the road." Each team will rehearse only seven times. No memorization or blocking required. However, actors' voices must be able to convey a wide range of feelings. What a challenge this will be for us!!

Love Letters will be performed on February 5, 15, 20 and 28 in the Card Room where dessert (coffee, tea, and cake) will be offered, plus a cash bar. Tickets will be \$10pp (\$7 for dessert and \$3 for us).

A read-thru of *Love Letters* will take place at the October 20th Workshop at 10am in the Craft Room. Auditions are set for November 2, 3 and 4 in the Board Room. See "Dates to Remember" for exact times. Call Goldie at 1548 for an audition packet, to borrow a script and to schedule your audition. I will be out-of-town until October 17th, so Goldie will be the *Love Letters* contact.

I am quite excited about having the opportunity to direct this wonderful play. With your help and cooperation, I believe that HHLT can take another tiny step upward.



Don't Miss This

by Bets Knepley

Don't miss HHLT member Lana Krogman's performance as Mrs. Blair in the Prince William Little Theater's

production of *Inherit the Wind* on September 28 & 29, October 5, 6, 7, 12 & 13. Congratulations from all of us, Lana.

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