

With any part you play, there is a certain amount
of yourself in it. There has to be, otherwise it's just
not acting. It's lying.
Johnny Depp

December 2011

The Newsletter
of the
Heritage Hunt
Little Theater



Play Time

Come play with us!

May 2012 Production: *Old Hams* by

Robert Rinfret

from Ad Art Catalogue

Calendar

*Wishing all a Happy Holiday
& a Wonderful New Year*

December

No General Meeting

January General Meeting

Thurs Jan 19—7pm—Craft Room

January Classical Movie

Contact Joyce Mancinni X1622

Auditions for *Old Hams*

TBA



Inside

Local Theaters	Pg 2
Tina's Adventure	Pg 2
FCT Audition	Pg 2
2012 Board	Pg 2
Prez Sez	Pg 3
A Review	Pg 3
The Spotlight	Pg 4
M.J.'s Announcement	Pg 4
2011 Board	Pg 5
Did You Know?	Pg 5
Nov Minutes	Pg 5

More information about our next production which will be Co-Directed by Gene and Kathryn Schmiel.

The setting is the Ophelia L. Davis Home for Actors, Musicians and Singers, a 1920's manor in 21st century Burbank, California. Its residents, who have called it home for over 40 years, all worked in film, radio or TV.

Their friend and former owner of the home, Ophelia Davis, died leaving the older performers in a terrible predicament. The taxes are due and if they can't be raised, the son of Ophelia's attorney, Ben, will sell the house so he can make millions when the land is used for a shopping mall.

At wits end, the performers turn to Ophelia's granddaughter and Ben's nephew for help. Using all their acting skills, some clever disguises, and a missing lottery ticket, they manage to turn a garage sale into a hilarious showdown. It makes for a fun filled and unexpected ending. The strong characters and plot makes this show memorable for both actors and

Continued on page 3

More Than You Probably Want to Know

by Bets Knepley



Last month in the "Did You Know" column, I asked a series of questions about our past productions—Which production sold the most tickets? Which production had the highest production costs? Which production had the largest cast? Etc.

Well, now you get the answers. Treasurer Treva Whyte provided the data that was available and I am responsible for the analysis. If you have any questions please contact me.

Since our founding in 2003, HHLT has produced two plays annually, except for 2007 (only one) and 2008 (three). Four plays were musical comedies with large casts (in the 30s). Probably *The Last Dress Rehearsal* had the largest cast (46), as it included

Continued on page 5

Local Theaters: IV

by Bets Knepley

Reston Community Players was incorporated in 1972 as a non-profit organization, evolving from the Reston Players which was a for-profit entity founded in 1966.

RCP brings to the public a variety of theatrical experiences, including classics and original plays as well as popular Broadway musicals, dramas, mysteries and comedies. Partially founded by grants from Fairfax County, RCP offers four major productions per season.

RCP is a member of the Arts Alliance of Reston and Arts Council of Fairfax County. They are also a charter member of Washington Area Theatre Community Honors (WATCH).

RCP sponsors The Traveling Players, an on-call troupe that can provide light entertainment for banquets, etc. Their stage combat troupe, the Noble Blades, provides performance and training with certified instructors. They sponsor two scholarships that are given annually to local high school students dedicated to pursuing the performing arts.

Their 2011-12 season is *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, *I Love You Because* and *August: Osage County*. They also have a New Play Project that welcomes edgy, avant garde works, as well as traditional from local playwrights.

I believe that RCP is the most talented and professional little theater group in our area.

Check out their website at <http://restonplayers.org> ▲

Another HHLT Member Branches Out

by Tina Mullins



Even though I am close to 60 years of age, I was gutsy enough to audition for the part of Arlene who is a pregnant 43 year old woman in Prince William Little Theatre's production, *Baby*. The part was a stretch for me in more ways than one. In addition to the age barrier, it is a Mezzo-soprano role and I sing Alto 1 or 2. I thought it might be fun to experience an audition outside the Heritage Hunt Little Theater. While I had a lot of experience in my 20s, I am afraid without the recent opportunities at HH, I would never have had the courage to take the risk of putting myself "out there." I was amazed that I was able to secure a role in the small ensemble (3 women and 3 men)...where I sing Alto!

This has been a great experience so far. I am the oldest person in the cast by about 20 years. The people in PWLT are very welcoming and rehearsals have been fun. I can't wait to perform the cute number the women do called "The Ladies Singing their Song." Each female ensemble member has a cameo solo performance where we sing about the woes and joys of childbirth. In addition, the ensemble appears throughout the show doing small choral parts and various small roles. Great way to get my feet wet.

I hope everyone comes to see the show. The show will be performed at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in February 2012. ▲

Upcoming Audition at FCT

by Bets Knepley

Fauquier Community Theatre will be auditioning for *And Then There Were None* on January 4 and 5. Auditions are open and will be cold readings from the script. For more info, check their website <http://fctstage.org/> and click on auditions. ▲

2012 HHLT Board

by Bets Knepley

Elected at the November meeting were: Mary Glascock, Walt Meyer, Art Moscatello and Kathryn Schmiel.

At the December Transitional Board of Directors Meeting, the following slate of officers for 2012 was decided: **President**, Walt Meyer; **Vice President**, Kathryn Schmiel; **Secretary**, Sandy Mills; **Treasurer**, Mary Glascock; **Membership**, Betty Hitchcock; **Activities**, Art Moscatello; **At Large**, Ed Prendergast. ▲



The Prez Sez...

Thanks to Everyone from all of us on the outgoing board for your help and cooperation in making the HHLT the great success it is.

Leadership Transitions: The next general meeting will be the last one for four board members: Ina Mayer, Goldie Grandy, Treva Whyte, and yours truly. It has been a great pleasure for all of us to lead the hardest-working and best group in Heritage Hunt!

Leadership Transition: The outgoing and incoming boards met on December 7 and the new list of officers can be found elsewhere in the newsletter: Looks like a great team!!

Looking Ahead: Kathryn and I are moving ahead in preparing the May production of *Old Hams*, with Jane Becker as producer. As always, we are looking for help for everything from staging to lighting, as well as acting. We hope to have our auditions in late January or early February.

Storage of HHLT Inventory: Many thanks to Margaret and Joe Gorzka for opening their lower level to store a significant amount of HHLT staging materials. Thanks also to the many HHLT members who transported the materials.

Condolences: Bill Schuetze, Dot's husband, passed away on December 7. Dot advises that they hope to have a memorial service after the first of the year. Our prayers are with the family.

Best Wishes: Joey Wagner advises that Dennis Massie will be having surgery next week. Dennis, you have our best wishes for a speedy recovery. ▲

Gene Schmiel

Continued from page 1
audiences!

The cast includes: **Louise Crockett** (live-in help; a former nurse in her early 40s who looks down her nose at the residents); a **Radio Announcer**; **Rose Blume** (70s, tall, self-assured and feisty); **Iris Blume** (Rose's younger sister, kind, caring and a peacemaker); **Madame Clara Voyant** (70s, a retired mystic who has visions that no one believes); **Eddie Chambers** (70s, tall, distinguished); **Gus Hall** (Eddie's life-long friend, short, stout, together they look like a modern Abbot and Costello); **Benjamin McCallister, Jr** (50s, family attorney, also known as Little Ben and Big Rat); **David McCallister** (Ben's nephew) and **Sarah Davis** (granddaughter of Ophelia Davis).

A Review: The 39 Steps

by Bets Knepley

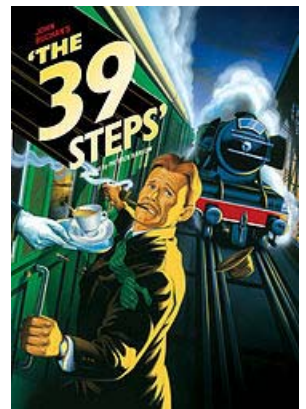
Playwright and Director George Abbott said three things matter in theater: timing, timing and timing. *The 39 Steps* plays at breakneck speed and it is played for laughs all the way. And the Winchester Little Theater did a fantastic job!

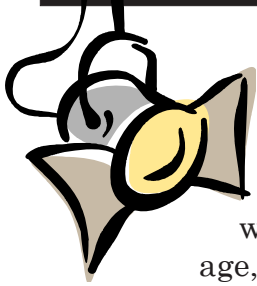
The show is silly, in the best sense of that word, almost Monty Pythonesque at times. It is perhaps the ultimate spoof espionage thriller. I love that kind of humor, but some may not find it their cup of tea. One critic stated, "There are so many trillion-dollar sets on stages today, that people are charmed that this play makes something out of nothing. Everything is done by the actors' bodies and split-second changes of costume. It's just fun for the sake of having fun. It pulls out every theatrical trick in the book, and it does it at an extraordinarily high level of craft."

There are 150 characters in the show played by just four actors. However, Winchester Director Sally Andersor added a special touch of her own—four "shadows" which allow the actors to use Winchester's thrust stage to the fullest extent in all 36 scenes.

Some background—*The 39 Steps* started as a World War I espionage novel by Scottish author John Buchan. It became an Alfred Hitchcock film in 1935. Then it was adapted for the stage and opened in London as a hit comedy. Now it's on Broadway. It has won multiple awards, including the Olivier Award, Drama Desk Award and two Tony Awards.

(We have a new puppy and won't be able to see as many plays as we had. So please email me your play reviews. Thanks.) ▲





The Spotlight is on Chuck Breder

by Bets Knepley

Charles Breder, or Chuck as we know him, was born in Atlantic City. But around six months of age, his missionary parents moved the family to West Virginia and that's where he grew up.

Music was his passion in school and he credits this for his ability to get out of his small town. He played the baritone horn in high school as well as college—in the marching band and concert band. He even met his wife Louanna in the band. He graduated from a small Baptist college, Carson-Newman and Vanderbilt University with a major in chemistry. He still work two days a week in D.C.

He has a daughter in Manassas and a son in Providence—each with two children.

Chuck has always been interested in the theater. One of his first roles was the Stage Manager in *Our Town*. The director asked him to hold a pipe as a prop. But this was not permitted by his strict missionary father. However, after much discussion and pleading by the director, Chuck was allowed to hold the pipe and began his theatrical journey. He has performed in many productions with the Falls Church Columbia Baptist Church at Constitution Hall. Since joining HHLT, he's performed in of our six plays. His favorite role was as the Judge in *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Chuck states he loves the "meaty roles."

His weirdest role was in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. He sang the role of Balthazar, the black king. Why weird? Well, his face had to be blackened and during the dress rehearsal, his black makeup was so dark that he all but disappeared. Also instead of blackening his legs, he had to wear panty hose! Oh Chuck—what one must do for the performing arts!! ▲



Looking Ahead to Fall Production of 2012

by M. J. Brickach

I have changed the dates of next year's fall production from the second week of November to October 23 - 25. Now that we HAVE to open on a Tuesday evening if we want a 3 - night run (which I do), I could foresee all sorts of conflicts with the HHWO monthly luncheon meeting and program. Problems with having our set already in place if they needed the stage for their program. Also problems if I wanted to have some of our stage on the floor. After considerable stress last year, we were able to work around this because we weren't opening *Judgment at Nuremberg* until Wednesday night. This year things are different! When Cary Proferes offered me the above earlier dates, I decided to grab them. We also have the ballroom for Sunday all day and Monday evening for Dress Rehearsal and Technical Rehearsals as needed, after moving our set in on Sunday morning. No one can bump us!

What does this mean for those members wishing to participate? EVERYTHING IS EARLIER!!! Auditions will take place in late July and rehearsals will begin in August. So make your travel plans accordingly! I have had to do just that. Perhaps one plus of this new schedule is that those of you who absolutely must go somewhere in October can still do that in the last six days of the month.

Another idea I hope to implement is to give our audiences a choice: unreserved concert seating in the ballroom for the first two nights and reserved seats dinner theater on the final night. Unless, of course, F & B and the JPAC group come up with some rule saying we can't!

Stay tuned and keep your fingers crossed. ▲

HHLT BOD**President**

Gene Schmiel

Vice President

Ina Mayer

Secretary

Sandy Mills

Treasurer

Trevia Whyte

Activities

Betty Hitchcock

Membership

Ed Prendergast

Member-at-Large

Goldie Grandy

Treasurer Treva Whyte reported a balance of \$10,059.73 in the treasury. A donation of \$500 was sent to the Dumfries Food Pantry.

A Few Good Years—Trevia stated that 325 tickets were sold. Co-Director Ina Mayer thanked everyone who helped make this production successful.

Elections were held. Mary Glasscock, Art Moscatello, Walt Meyer and Kathryn Schmiel were elected to the BOD.

Gene and Kathryn Schmiel will direct the May 2012 production. Jane Becker will be the producer; Sandy Iasiello, makeup.

JPAC announced that during 2012 no performing arts group can have performances in the ballroom on Friday.

There was an extended discussion concerning M.J. Brichach's need to vary from the new rule.

Joe and Marge Gorzka have volunteered to store some scenery at their house. A member team will meet on November 26 to move the scenery from Claire Keating's to the Gorzka's.

The full minutes can be read on HHLT's website at <http://hhlittletheater.wordpress.com/> ▲



Highlights of the November Minutes

Do You Know?

by Bets Knepley

Did you know that people are happiest when they are having sex, exercising or **visiting the theatre**? (According to a new UK study involving Apple and the London School of Economics)

Did you know that acting is, and always has been, story-telling?

Did you know that the main thrust of drama is to **move people**?

Did you know that the main thrust of comedy is to **amuse people**?

Did you know that the director and the actor have to **serve the audience and work for the author**?

Did you know that it's important to **give the audience time for pauses**, to let their imagination work, so they **can relate** to their own experiences? ▲

*Newsletter is edited & published
by Bets Knepley*

HHLT Website

<http://hhlittletheater.wordpress.com/>

Continued from page 1

the Line Dancers, The Women's and Men's Choruses plus other skits within the play itself.

After earning our 'chops,' HHLT produced several well known dramas (*The Cemetery Club*, *Love Letters*, *Twelve Angry Men* and *Judgment at Nuremburg*.)

Nine productions had three night runs; eight had four and one, six. Venues were the Ball Room (15), Card Room (2) and Billiards Room (1). *Charleston* had our largest audience (798). *When In Rome* netted the most (\$2936.43) with 793 tickets sold. It also had the highest production cost (\$2602.57). *Blind Man's Bluff* had the lowest ticket sale (192). *Reunion at Mt. Sanguine* netted the lowest (\$174.34).

Our net per ticket has ranged from \$5 to \$10 depending on whether it was a dinner, or just dessert or a cash bar. Ticket cost ranged from \$8 to \$30. From the information HHLT has available, our catering expense totals around \$158,000.

When I studied the statistics, I could find no firm trends except that our tickets sales have declined from almost 800 to an average of 390 over the past three years. Some of the decline is because HH offers more entertainment now. All the HH entertainment groups seem to want the same time of the year...even though HHLT was the first to use May and November. Perhaps it's time to change our production cycle (March and September? February and August?). ▲