



Winging It



The National Society for the Preservation of Tent, Folk and Repertoire Theatre

NEW "OLD" THINGS ARRIVE!

Following is quoted from an email that arrived at the Theatre Museum in December from Sherwood Snyder of Chicago.

"As I approach my 84th year I find that nostalgia is my constant companion. While digging through my 'things' from a life in the theater, I found four original Toby scripts and some items I collected for my dissertations at the University of Oregon and the University of Minnesota during those halcyon days of campus life. I cherish it all but realize that what little I have could easily disappear at my final curtain.

"I have scripts for Pearle Wilson's TOBY BUTTS IN, SWEET PAPA TOBY, and TUMBLEWEED, all used to the point that I think I smell grease paint. I also have a copy of "an up to date" version of LENA RIVERS. Pearle Wilson gave them to me back in the late fifties in Portland, Oregon where I spent several weekends with her...all memorable visits. She had a trunk full of "Toby" things at the time and was a great help to me. She bristled at the fact that Neil Schaffner claimed to be the original Toby, a claim she felt belonged to her husband Frederick Wilson. What a vibrant woman she was.

"A side note, I worked with Jay Bee Flesner, whom you all know, at the Old Four Eyes, Teddy Roosevelt outdoor drama in Medora, ND. He was bigger than life."

Sherwood sent the scripts and "some items" that were fascinating to read. The first two scripts the Museum only had one copy of each. TUMBLEWEED is a new one for the script collection; LENA RIVERS will be inserted with the others by that name. (It was rewritten by James Dunseith of Toledo, OH for Mr. Lewis Mack. Wonder what the history behind that is.)

It was amazing all the people Sherwood contacted—Neil Schaffner, Ted North of Hollywood, Dot and Jess Sun, Boob Brasfield, just to name a few. We will be entering this part of his collection into our database soon.

Snyder had quite a theatrical background; studied at the Feagin School of Drama and Radio at Radio City in New York, worked summer theaters at Ellinnee Village Playhouse and Red Barn Theater of Saugatuck, Theater-in-the-Round of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Edyth Bush Theater of St. Paul, and the Guthrie Theater during its first two years. He attended Western Michigan, the University of Oregon, and the University of Minnesota. Sherwood taught at Maclester College for two years and moved to Chicago in 1967 to join the staff of Chicago State University. For the next 22 years he taught, directed, and designed. Since retirement he has continued with his art, according to a biography found on the internet.

He wrote his master's dissertation circa 1958 and his PhD dissertation around 1965, but does not have copies of either one at his home.

The scripts will be added to the Museum's collection. That is being worked on by two different volunteers. Charlene Hinrichs is entering the scripts slowly to the database and Diane Collett is making a list of the titles of the scripts and the authors, when known, to be a new section on the website. Diane's job will go a little faster.

A D L I B S
BY GRACE SWANK-DAVIS

Greetings from beautiful downtown Mt. Pleasant, Iowa!

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Mickey Lacey's sister Karalee Ross. I had the pleasure of meeting her many years ago at our seminar and from what I have heard she was a clever performer and a great trouper. Mickey wrote the lovely obituary for his sister.

Some of you may have noticed that we now refer to our annual seminar as a conference...a while back it was decided that seminar was not the correct word as it conjures up mirages of classes and the like so now it's the Theatre Museum's Annual Theatre Conference. And we hope you are planning to attend! The usual suspects will be present as well as some new faces so use the one on page 5 or print a registration form from our web-site: thetheatremuseum.com today!

I had a unique experience recently...I have wanted to clean and dust our actress glass display for a long time but as it is behind a glass window we had to get Old Thresher's maintenance man Larry to unscrew and take out the window. Then I gingerly hand rinsed, dried and buffed each piece of glass. Since the pieces in the collection are approximately 130 years old, you can imagine how careful I was and I'm happy to report not one dish or bowl was chipped or broken. David Wagaman suggested the display cabinet be painted black to better offset the glassware...once that is done I will put all the pieces back and exhale.

The museum has a new television. As most of you know in one of the museum's displays, we have a T.V. screen that we play DVDs of tent shows on during the summer months. The one we had was relatively old and big as a battleship. I found a nice T.V. that plays DVDs. Now we look more up to date and it was on sale saving the Museum \$70.00.

The Museum had some enjoyable visitors in December. My late husband Jimmy Davis' two sons Brant and Ryan and their mother Juanita and her husband Gary came for a visit. They had spent Christmas in their home town of Quincy, Illinois. Brant lives in Springfield, Missouri and has his own evening radio show on 104.7. Ryan is in real estate in Las Vegas, Nevada and Juanita and Gary can be found in Branson, Missouri. This was the first trip for any of them to the museum since the remodel and they were very happy with the improvements. Perhaps they will come to the seminar, I mean conference.

Make plans in to visit us in April, And remember, you are always welcome on the lot,

Grace

C O N T A C T U S !

The Theatre Museum of Repertoire Americana
405 E. Threshers Road
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

Museum's phone number: 319-385-9432

Museum's email address:

theatremuseum@iowatelecom.net

Our New Web-site: www.thetheatremuseum.com



CURTAINS IN THE NEWS

A recent entry on the Museum’s email list finally was opened and museum personnel learned about what was happening in the field of preservation of “theatre” curtains. In 1996 Christine Hadsel was placed in charge of a group restoring curtains in Vermont. During the next several years they located 185 and worked with volunteers to clean and re-hang as many as possible. Since then, she had used her expertise to help other states in the northeast do the same.

You can learn more by going to the website entitled “Curtains without Borders” that shows curtains from New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and New York. One section talks about the conservation methods used. Curtains from a few other states are shown, but none from the Theatre Museum. We will have to see how the Museum can be linked to their website.

FINAL CURTAIN – KARALEE (LACEY) ROSS



Karalee (Lacey) Ross, sister of Advisory Board member Mickey Lacey, daughter of long time rep show troupers Maxine and Leo Lacey, made her final curtain Thursday, December 22nd, 2011. She passed away while at Health South Hospice Hospital in Houston, Texas at 7:15 P.M. after a long battle with cancer. Karalee made her first entrance to this world stage on February, 20th, 1936 in Wynnewood, Oklahoma. She was 75 years old.

Her first trouping was with the J. Doug Morgan Show at four weeks old. Her first routine of song and dance was at the ripe age of four years with her mom and dad. Other shows she trouped with were, the Jack Hart Players, Toby Young Comedians, Sid Kingdon Comedians, Chick Boyes Players, Vern Slout Players and Bisbee's Comedians.

Karalee worked hard to perfect her Tap and Acrobatic routines that sold so well; as well as her vocalizations and piano. She began doing ingénues at fourteen or fifteen years old, and wowed the young boys. Boob Brasfield once remarked that “Karalee is a natural.”



At eighteen years old, Karalee married out of the business and raised a fine family. Karalee is survived by three sons (talented musicians in their own right), John and Kevin Morton of Magnolia, Texas and Vince Morton of North Carolina, as well as a stepdaughter Jenny Ross, two stepsons, Ashley and Hugh Jr. Ross, all from North Carolina and her brother Mickey Lacey of Vilonia, Ark. Her husband of many years Hugh Ross preceded her in death.

Ironically one of Karalee’s favorite lines was from the movie *Yankee Doodle Dandy* with James Cagney playing George M. Cohan and the Cohan Family.....”My Mother Thanks You, My Father Thanks You, My Sister Thanks You and I Thank You.”

She will be terribly missed.





MONTANA REPERTORY THEATRE



The Montana Repertory Theatre performed in Mt Pleasant during their 40th touring season, February of 2012. The company of Equity actors performed *Doubt*, the play which earned the Tony Award in 2005. The author, John Patrick Shanley, won a Pulitzer Prize and the movie earned an Academy Award for best adapted screenplay in 2008.

Following the performance David Wagaman and Claudia Streeter treated the director and some of the cast to a private tour of the Theatre Museum. The guests were stunned by the collection and the late night hospitality. The cast was also impressed by the Iowa Wesleyan Chapel facility. This is the fifth time the Montana Rep Co. has been booked by IWC. National Society and IWC faculty member David File is on the committee that keeps quality theatre rep companies coming to Mt Pleasant at the present time. The city once had three opera houses dating from 1842.



REPORTS FROM PAST NEWSLETTER



1974 — Three troupers were presented with 50 Year Awards at the annual meeting of the National Society on August 31. The recipients were: Robert La They, Trixie Maskew and Grace Eagle.

Dr. Jere Mickel announced that he has written a book that will be published in October. The title of his book is "Footlights on the Prairie."

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fritz presented the museum with six painted curtains from the Fritz Opera House in Blakesburg Iowa.

Jimmy Davis, President of the National Society traveled to the West Coast for the annual meeting of the West Coast Division of the Society. About 50 people showed up for the meeting hosted by Grace and Crawford Eagle at Plumber's Park in L.A.



2012 THEATRE MUSEUM AWARD



One of our members, Dr. Don Wilmeth, is receiving an award from the Theatre Museum of New York for Theatre History Preservation on April 30, 2012 at the Players Club. His work on the *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre* is being cited. An interview with Dr. Wilmeth is included on the Theatre Museum, New York website and one learns about the variety of entries included in this book. These include not only mainstream topics, but also such areas as popular forms (circus, vaudeville, tent, and burlesque) and key plays from the United States theatrical annals. (The Theatre Museum in Mount Pleasant won the same award in 2008.)



Registration For The 27th Annual Theatre History Conference MUSEUM OF REPERTOIRE AMERICANA



Museum (319) 385-9432 · Main Office (319) 385-8937
405 East Threshers Road, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641
theatremuseum@iowatelecom.net
www.thetheatremuseum.com
Fax (319) 385-0563

April 20, 21 and 22, 2012

_____ I plan to attend the annual Theatre History Conference. Fee: Members, \$75.00
Non-members, \$95.00. Troupers and Students, \$25.00

_____ I/we will attend the casual supper on Friday, April 20. (Circle I or We)

_____ I/we will attend evening banquet on Saturday, April 21. (Circle I or We)
Price included in conference.

PRE-ACTIVITIES: Friday, April 20, 12:30-4:00pm Theatre Museum Library
4:30: Happy Hour & Supper (Hosted by Roberta Wilkes & Bill Dunn) at Comfort Inn

CONFERENCE FEE INCLUDES:
Conference program, continental breakfast, Saturday lunch and dinner, and entertainment.
Members, \$75.00 - Non-members, \$95.00. - Troupers and Students, \$25.00

National Theatre Society dues:

Student	Individual	Family	Actor's Circle	Business Supporter	Director's Circle
\$15	\$20	\$30	\$50	\$100	\$150

Reservations for Conference/Dinners are needed by Monday, April 2, 2012

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: National Theatre Society

Seminar \$ _____
Dues \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

Mt. Pleasant Hotels:
(Grand Avenue - Frontage Road)

Comfort Inn & Suites 319-385-0571 FAX 319-385-3464	Rodeway Inn 319-385-2004 FAX 319-385-8324
Mt. Pleasant Inn 319-385-2102 FAX 319-385-3223	Super 8 Motel 319-385-8888 FAX 319-385-8888

OTHER INFORMATION DESIRED:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

THE CURTAIN'S RISING!

ON WHAT? 27th ANNUAL THEATRE HISTORY CONFERENCE

WHERE? THE THEATRE MUSEUM
(tent, folk and repertoire theatre)
MOUNT PLEASANT, IOWA

WHEN? APRIL 20, 21 AND 22, 2012

WHO SHOULD ATTEND? YOU! (IF YOU ARE A TROUPER,
ACTOR, DRAMA STUDENT, HISTORIAN OR THEATRE BUFF)

\$75.00 INCLUDES: ENTERTAINMENT,
ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE,
MEALS, RESEARCH IN THE LIBRARY
AND UNLIMITED VISITS WITH FORMER
TENT SHOW TROUPERS
friday afternoon through sunday a.m.

STUDENTS: PRESENT A PAPER FOR A
CHANCE AT A \$200 PRIZE!



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email him at mississippiriverdavid@hotmail.com