



Winging It

National Society for the Preservation of Tent, Folk and Repertoire Theater

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

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Telephone:
319-385-9432

405 East Threshers Road
Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

Web-site:
thetheatremuseum.com

Don't forget to like us on
Facebook!

The museum is open
from Memorial Day
to Labor Day
Tuesday through Sunday
10:00-4:30

During the winter months
the museum is open by
appointment.

Volume 18, Issue 1

Winter 2013

The 2013 Theatre Conference is April 19, 20 & 21

The 2013 Theatre History Conference sponsored by The National Society is set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 19th, 20th and 21st in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. In addition to the conference, the Society is celebrating its 45th anniversary and the opening of the museum 40 years ago.

As well as the educational and informative papers there will be good food and good cheer plus the former troupers will present a play written for the conference by Advisory Board member, Roberta Wilkes, herself a former trouper.

Please use the registration form on page four.

Now is the time to make your plans to attend the Annual Theatre History Conference.



“A Trip Back To Memories”

By Mickey Lacey

Well, I gave myself an early holiday present the last weekend of September, 2012. I made the trip to Parsons, TN., (an old Bisbee's regular show town). I caught the opening night of Mark Tubbs and Shane Bridges "Rivertime Players Show" on the original stage of the old Colliers Comedians tent show. In fact all but the new top and sidewalls were from the original Colliers outfit. Stage, bandstand, poles, chairs, stakes, footlights, even the backstage steps. What was almost as pleasant to see was a complete full house. Full house in a town of about twenty two hundred people on the same night as a homecoming football game! What a sight.

I also made it to their show year before last when they were using the original top and sidewalls. Needless to say to anyone that knows canvas and as old as the Collier outfit was, the new was long overdue. But, man, the old really smelled good when I walked under it. I remember, I got goose bumps. The goose bumps came again when they asked me to stand and introduced me as a long time member of the Bisbee show. I couldn't believe the number of old timers that came up to me and shook my hand. Questions, questions, questions. Who was that? How did that guy raise that woman off the floor? They set that tent up next to my house, etc. etc. etc. The outfit was donated to the city of Parsons by Dawn Larsen. The lot still proudly shows the original 1942 trucks as well.

Continued on page 2...

A Trip Back To Memories continued from page one.

Year before last Mark was telling me that he and the Mayor were working on getting money acquired to purchase a new top and walls. At that time, it was still in the early stages and just “kicking tires” if you will. However the Mayor of Parsons Mr. Tim David Boaz has really been a strong supporter and promoter in helping the cause. He also remembers the Bisbee show and its reputation. I loaned him an old Bisbee’s handbook from about 1947 showing cast members and histories of each, etc. He copied the whole book.

After a lot of haggling (I suppose), they finally negotiated a satisfactory price from a company in Florida and made the deal. New top and walls. However, it’s not canvas. Rather, all vinyl. Mark said the closest thing to canvas would have been about twice as much money. I don’t know enough about the vinyl as far as its tolerance to storms. However, I personally was so tickled that Mark stayed as close to the old canvas color as possible. Not the red and white or green or blue and white striped. I was so afraid it was going to look like a fireworks stand. “Whew....what a relief”! It looks great sitting out there on the city hall green grass.

While walking around the tent, I called Dick Ellis. “Wish you were here pal”.....smile. Dick said, “Tell Mark to just hold the curtain for about three days, and I’ll be right there.”

I know, he really wanted to be there. I also called Roberta Wilkes from the lot and she was disappointed that she couldn’t be there. Maybe next year, kid.

The dedication Mark and Shane put into that show is really outstanding. I never saw two guys work harder than those guys. From dawn to dark.....daily. It’s the old story for them; everyone has opinions, everyone is gung-ho until.....then, there stands Mark and Shane; Right up till curtain. Troupers.....yes. Boy, I wish had that energy again.

The show was called “Driving Miss Crazy.” A takeoff on the popular Driving Miss Daisy film. Shane Bridges wrote the script and directed. He did a good job directing the local people. I must add that the people involved with the show are really dedicated as well. It’s not just a chore for them.

The show had a cast with about four or five small kids, as well as some teens and adults. Matter of fact, I really don’t remember just how many members there were. I spent most of my time watching faces and reactions in the audience. The show got some good laughs and applause however. It appeared the crowd stayed right with the script. Believe me....they loved it.

It is so good to watch these young people take hold of a bygone institution and work tirelessly in the attempt (and successfully I might add) to keep it alive. It makes this old trouper very proud. I know I wouldn’t be alone if other old troupers saw it too. Hell, just seeing the outfit all setup on that green grassy lot and a full house will put a tear in your eye.

Mark tells me they are working with (or on) the city once again to have a deserted air hanger “donated” in order to build an opera house out of it as well. HMMMM...that sounds kind of familiar too, doesn’t it. Anybody for “circle stock”!!

No, they are not Bisbee’s, Schaffner’s, Sadler’s, Slouts, Brunks, I.W. Swain or Chick Boyes. No, they’re not using Toby scripts, they don’t feature professional vaudeville acts and they don’t have a six- or seven-piece band to open with. I know some would have comments to make. But, it’s been a long time since I’ve seen so much dedication. Especially to show just two weekends out of the year, (for the love of it). They are “The Rivertime Players.” Making a niche and creating their own following in great little show town and surrounding area.

If you get the chance, make the trip. Old troupers, get a tear in your eye as well. Keep the memory alive Mark and Shane. Great job! Also a big thank you to Mayor Tim David Boaz and the community from old dogs such as me and others for their tremendous support for them.

THE THEATRE MUSEUM OF REPERTOIRE AMERICANA

CALL FOR PAPERS

2013 Annual Theatre Conference

April 19, 20 & 21

“Professional Rural Popular Entertainment”

The Theatre Museum invites submissions of papers, performances or panel discussions pertaining to tent theatre, opera houses, vaudeville, Chautauqua, showboats and minstrel shows. This year's conference focuses on professional popular rural entertainment from the 1850s to the 1950s, but papers relating to other aspects of rural entertainment will be accepted. A \$200 stipend will be awarded to the best student paper presented.

Our museum is home to rare opera house curtains, posters, handbills, props, wardrobe and our research library contains over 1,800 scripts and thousands of ordinal photographs.

Do not miss this opportunity to participate in this exceptional conference and the chance to tour one of the most unique theatre museums in America.

Send proposals by March 15th, 2013 to: theatremuseum@iowatelecom.net or

The Theatre Museum, 405 East Threshers Road, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641.

Telephone: 319-385-8937.

Visit our website: www.thetheatremuseum.com.

**Ladies and Gentlemen
Members of the National Society
Friends of the Theatre Museum
Those Who Study and Preserve Our Heritage
Troupers of All Ages
COME CELEBRATE
FOUNDING OF NATIONAL SOCIETY – 45 YEARS AGO
OPENING OF THEATRE MUSEUM – 40 YEARS AGO**



Registration For The 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.theatremuseum.com
Fax (319)385-0563

April 19, 20 and 21, 2013

_____ I plan to attend the annual Theatre History Conference. Fee: Members, \$75.00
Non-members, \$95.00. Troupers & Students, \$25.00
_____ I/we will attend the casual supper on Friday, April 19. (Circle I or We)
_____ I/we will attend evening banquet on Saturday, April 20. (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 TBA

CONFERENCE FEE INCLUDES:
Conference program, continental breakfast, Saturday lunch and dinner, and entertainment.
Members, \$75.00 - Non-members, \$95.00. - Troupers & 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 1, 2013

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: National Theatre Society

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

Mt. Pleasant Motels:
(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: _____

Ad Libs

By Grace Swank-Davis

Greetings from beautiful downtown Mount Pleasant, Iowa

At the February meeting it was decided to do our newsletter, Winging It in-house. For the last several years, 2nd Vice President Emeritus Dr. H. Gene Biby has been the editor and has done a wonderful job...we thank him for all his hard work for the benefit of the museum. Since I seem to be the only one here who has Publisher on their computer, I was elected to be the new editor. I hope I can do as good a job as Gene has done...it's harder than it looks.

The museum is getting in high gear for the annual Theatre Conference set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 19th, 20th and 21st. We are Rounding Up the Usual Suspects plus we will be welcoming several newcomers. It looks as if we will have a good turnout with interesting papers and great fellowship as always. One special new addition this year...we will put on a play Saturday night! Roberta Wilkes has written a new play entitled "Toby Saves the Day" or "Will the Real Toby Stand Up". She wrote it with special thanks to: Mickey Lacey, Dick Ellis, David Ripper, David Wagaman and Bob Hollis. There are so many parts in this play we need a big turnout for the conference so we have someone to watch us! Roberta has done a fantastic job and it should be great fun for all.

Speaking of plays, the production the summer theatre will present this year is Neil & Caroline Schaffner's "Once in a Blue Moon." Appearing as Toby is Advisory Board member Brian Iles. This will be Brian's 12th turn as Toby.

When Collections Supervisor, Martha Hayes informed us that the printer connected to her computer would no longer work, we bought a new one only to find out that the computer she uses to do all the cataloging is too old to work with the new printer. It was decided years ago not to hook her computer to the internet so there is no way to update that computer's program. This incident brought to light that the library's whole computer system is antiquated and must be updated. Advisory Board member Mark Peper happened to be visiting the museum at the time this was coming to light and as he is quite knowledgeable about computer advised us on what we need. In addition, the library needs a computer program specifically for museums. Mark has started a computer fund for the museum with a generous contribution...won't you help? Any checks made out to Midwest Old Threshers earmarked for the Theatre Museum's computer fund is tax deductible. Let's keep the library moving forward.

Try to make the conference in April; it's looking to be a great one.

In closing, when I was a kid there was a show business agent by the name of Milton Schuster, and in his advertisements his motto was "Be a Booster for Schuster and Schuster will be a Booster for You". So, in that vein, I ask you to be a "Booster" for the Theatre Museum and let's keep the museum moving forward into the 21st century.

ADDITIONS TO WEBSITE

Take a look at the Museum's website: thetheatremuseum.com. You will see the heading "Script Collection." There you will find a listing of 2,735 entries in the left-hand column. These entries are the names of the over 2,000 scripts in the Museum's collection and, and when known, the alternate titles of some of the plays. Those alternate titles are also shown in the middle column. The authors are shown in the right-hand column. You can search by titles and by authors.

As is noted in the introduction, the Museum can photocopy scripts. You will learn more by coming to the Theatre Museum and examining the actual scripts. A number of scripts have been annotated by the companies who used them and then donated their copies to us. Then, too, there are different versions of the same play.

If you haven't visited the Theatre Museum for awhile, you will want to "Take a Tour" and see what changes have taken place.

Martha Hayes

Become a member.

Six membership
Levels available.

Student
\$15

Individual
\$20

Family
\$30

Actor's Circle
\$50

Business Supporter
\$100

Director's circle
\$150

Join Today and Support
the Theatre
Museum

PLEASE HELP!

Our computer systems are now outdated. We are in need of both a new system, which has the capacity to handle the information already digitized and software designed for museums. This will enhance our ability to retrieve information without potentially damaging originals.

We also have the need to continue to get the rest of our information into digitized form and cannot do this with the home use PC we have been using for the past 8 years.

Advisory Board member, Mark Peper has volunteered to begin a fund to replace our "Frankenstein" systems (half of it is DOS based) by making a generous donation earmarked for this project. Please help by sending your check to Midwest Old Threshers and mark "computer fund" in the memo line. The estimate at this time for both hard and software is \$3000.00. Please donate what you can; any amount is helpful to bring our 19th and 20th century message to the 21st century.

A Note from the By-laws Committee

This year we celebrate the 45th anniversary of our Society. A time to reflect on our successes and look forward to the next 45 years.

Your board has been planning and establishing goals to make us more visible, viable, and involved to tell the story of Repertory Theatre Troupes in rural America and how important this is to our culture and Theatre in general.

Some of the action items discussed include:

Modernization of our collection and its presentation

Continuing efforts to collect preserve artifacts and information

Realizing Neil Schaffner's dream of holding play festivals celebrating 150 years of quality entertainment.

Your board has identified a path to making these goals happen while also honoring and assisting the Midwest Old Settlers and Thresher Association who have been so very generous to our Society over the past 40 years by establishing a permanent home for our Itinerate Entertainment genre.

The first step has been to update our by-laws to accommodate everyone who has a passion for Tent Rep, Circle Stock, Showboats, etc to meet these goals. This is where we need everyone's input and assistance.

Please attend our annual conference and meeting April 19th through the 21st Roberta Wilkes has generously given her time and talent as an attorney to make sure our i's are dotted and t's crossed to move us closer to our goals. With everyone's help, and some organization we can do these things and more. EVERY MEMBER AND FRIEND has a role to play in this production so please attend and accept your part large or small. As I have always been told: "There are no small parts, just small people." So your involvement, no matter how large or small is VITAL to our existence.

David Ripper



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