

# THE ENCORE

volume 1 number 1

## Thespian Alumni Interest Group Newsletter est 1998

Welcome to the premier publication of the Thespian Alumni Interest Group (TAIG) Newsletter! This is your one stop source for Thespian information. Inside these pages you will find Alumni Profiles, upcoming events, updates on TAIG, updates on Penn State Thespians, and more.

As will be our continuing policy, let us know how we are doing and what you would like to see. For contact information see the back section of this newsletter.

-Ryan Johnson & Cheryl Kysilka  
May 1998

### Calendar of Events

#### 1998

- July 8-12: Central PA Festival for the Arts
- July 11, 9:00am: Open Board Meeting
- September 26: Synergy
- November 20-21: Once Upon a Mattress
- November 21, 9:00am: Board Meeting
- December 11-12: Children's Show

#### 1999

- March 26-27: Spring Show (TBA)
- March 27, 9:00am: Board Meeting
- April 23-24: Children's Show

## 100 Years And Better Than Ever!

What can we say? From the cocktail hour Friday night, when **Mike Rosenfeld '56** tried to teach **Jason Wetzel '98** how to create a song, to Sunday's soggy group picture in front of Schwab the entire 250 partied like true Thespians.

For those listening outside the door of the cocktail party Friday night all you may have heard was shrieks followed by, "I didn't know you were coming!" Noisy reunions enlivened the evening. When **Lew Fisher '28**, oldest Thespian in attendance, took over the piano it sounded like every Thespian party ever attended.

Saturday introduced TAIG to many of the alumni. A spirited meeting about what this new alumni group could or should accomplish resulted in many new ideas and some concrete goals for the leadership of the alumni interest group. Results of this meeting are still hitting the drawing boards of TAIG.

Saturday night found us honoring our own for achievement and enjoying the student revue production that showcased our first 100 years of shows. Highlights included alumni **Ray Fortunato '47**, **Grace Holderman '34** and **Ruth Yeaton '53** performing with

the students in a few numbers. We saw it there, Grace can still tap dance.

Then, the "old hams" were given one more opportunity to perform on a Thespian stage (technically) during the open mike part of the evening. Highlights included a recreation of the Penn State Stooges, several talented vocal numbers, and musical and comedy routines. Special kudos to the student lighting and technical crews for a flawless performance.

Sunday's breakfast found many chatting like old friends, exchanging addresses and talking of those who couldn't make the journey--this time. It is rumored that resumes and job information was traded among the younger alumni.

The dedicated group then sloshed over to Schwab for a group photo on the steps of the "old haunt!" No one noticed whether Schwabo stepped into the picture.

A plaque has since been placed in the auditorium lobby commemorating the first 100 years of the group. Soon the final two decade posters will be permanently hung with the other eight works.





# The Presidents' Corner



**Steve Berger '86**, President TAIG

This last year has been wonderful for the Penn State Thespians. Not only did we celebrate our 100th Anniversary and recollect about our shared past, but also got the Thespian Alumni Interest Group (TAIG) into full swing.

As many of you heard during the reunion, we have many grand plans for the TAIG. In the short term, we have begun to look into the financial situation of the student organization and see if there is a way for our organization to help alleviate some of the operational financial concerns they are facing. **Bill McTurk '48** and **Ray Fortunato '47** have been working with the University to understand the current situation as well as what we can do. You will be hearing more about that as the Summer progresses.

We are creating a list of all TAIG members. **Marc Kimelman '52**, **Ryan Johnson '96** and **Cheryl Kysilka '84** are leading this effort.

The initial list was used to send out this newsletter, so if a Thespian friend did not get a copy, please let Marc Kimelman know as soon as possible. As we go forward, we will continue to build our Alumni database (and link it into the Alumni Association's lists) so that we can effectively communicate with every Thespian Alum. We have also begun distribution of this newsletter, ably edited by Ryan Johnson. You will see a couple of these each year as we try to keep everyone in the loop.

On a longer term basis, we have lots of ideas, including developing a roster to send to all members, more frequent communications, future reunions, hosting events at Arts Festival, networking events in different cities and many, many others. We also would like to get directly involved with the students such as sponsoring a "Masters" class to assist them in devel-

oping an original script, producing scholarships and even going so far as to look for a permanent rehearsal/set construction location.

But we cannot do any of these things without your help. We want this to be your organization and to make being a member meaningful for you. Therefore, please let us know if we are on track or not. As we mention projects you would like to volunteer for, a simple call or email to TAIG is all it takes.

In closing, if you are planning to be at Arts Fest this July 11, I would like to invite you to the TAIG Annual Meeting. It will give you the opportunity to meet with your Board and hear about the current initiatives.

I look forward to working with you and hope that you take me up on my request to let us know how we are doing by filling out the comment card.

**Steve Beckel**, President Penn State Thespians

Since my term as Club President is drawing to a close, I have been looking back on the past year, and I'm pleased to say that the club has definitely grown strong.

The celebration of our 100th year as an organization was a great success; not only in bringing many alumni back to Penn State to see old friends but also in helping us gain new members and a new awareness on campus.

Our Spring challenge was to produce one of the most controversial shows I've seen in all my years here, *Hair*. The cast was phenomenal (told to me by many returning alum), the music was inspiring, and the house was full! *Hair* sold out both night performances. There were even scalpers at the front doors! I would like to take this opportunity

to thank all the people within Thespians who helped make the show a success. The publicity we received from the show is amazing. I would like to thank all the alumni who returned to Penn State to support *Hair*. Your presence meant a lot to the current club.

As a result of *Hair*, I am greatly pleased to report that The Thespians and the Musical Theater professors have come to an agreement to allow theater majors not chosen for a URTC production to use Thespian shows for credit towards their degree. I am confident that this agreement will allow Thespians and the Theater department to coexist without making great performers choose between us. One condition was made by the Thespians; special audition treatment

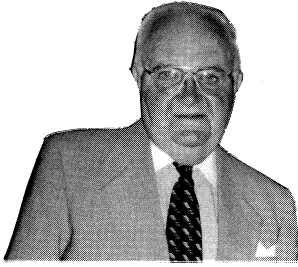
would not be made to ensure casting particular students. We did not want to make it so it would be easier for a theater major to be cast than it would be for a Thespian. After all, they are our shows. The agreement was accepted, and I believe all are happy.

Finally the club has had the pleasure of working with numerous pledges (now deemed 'Understudies' in an attempt to make us sound less like a fraternity) this year. I am proud to announce that we have inducted 30 new members this year. I hope you all join me in wishing them all a warm Thespian welcome.

I would also like to invite Thespian alum to drop in on any General Club Meeting.



# Alumni Profiles



Ned Startzel - Class of '41

My biggest contribution to life at Penn State was the creation of the Penn State Stooges. We were an instant hit around the campus and around the state for that matter. My last two years at school I put money in the bank and paid all my expenses, all brought about by our performances all around the state.

Fred Waring took a big interest in our act and had us to New York on two occasions that I remember. The biggest night of my life was when Fred and his wife took us to see Louisiana Purchase. Irving Berlin and his wife were there.

We entertained the four of them backstage for an hour after the show. What a thrill. Unfortunately for our careers, the three of us soon entered WW II.

My experiences with the theater scene at Penn State have been with me all my 80 years. It gave me a good sense of humor, a fine speaking ability that served me well in my 35 years with Moore Business Forms, my church life teaching Sunday school classes, my Rotary activities including singing with the Greater Rotary Chorus around the world. I used many Thespian created songs for the group and much of the patter developed those many years ago. We are still touring with 10 concerts in Texas and New Mexico before June 5th.

My current "stage" of life finds me as the largest distributor of that Pennsylvania favorite, Tom Sturgis Pretzels, to formerly uneducated pretzel eaters of Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. What a fun business to combine my own love for good pretzels and my sales abilities. I also enjoy ceding the stage to some of my talented grandchildren who have been bitten by the same bug.

### At a Glance

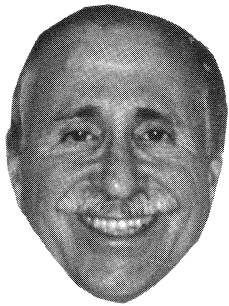
**Thespian Productions:** Mikado, Stuff n Nonsense, The Balloon Goes, Danger: Men at Work  
Founding member, Penn State Stooges

**Currently Resides:** Dallas, TX

**Career Post College:** WW II veteran, Moore Business Forms (35 years), Sturgis Pretzel distributor (currently!)

**Family:** wife, 4 college educated daughters, several grandchildren.

**Note:** Startzel and Parrish performed at the 100th revue using much of the Stoooge material developed at Penn State.



Mike Rosenfeld - Class of '56

During my college years I lived the life most Thespians live, Thespians first, degree second. I spent many hours writing music and lyrics for 5 Fall musicals. I added my hand in collaborating on some of the sketches as well. I moved to NYC after graduation to write for Broadway but ended up in the mail room of the William Morris Talent Agency. I was promoted and sent to the Beverly Hills Office as an Agent for Motion Picture, Theatre and TV Talent. I worked at WMA for 17 years and did just about everything.

In 1975 four other men and myself left and formed the Creative Artists Agency, CAA. We have handled such personalities as Dustin Hoffman, Tom Cruise, Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Robert DeNiro, Barbra Streisand, and Goldie Hawn. Working with other creative people and finding what "works" with audiences has helped develop good Agent skills. I left CAA in 1982 but still commute to produce TV and movies as I please.

I appreciate getting the experience I needed in school as a Thespian to build my career in the "big time". Although I never made it as a songwriter. I have had enough good luck and real involvement in the entertainment business to satisfy the creative juices nurtured during college.

### At a Glance

**Thespian Productions:** 5 original scores and lyrics for Fall musicals, Musical Director, Orchestrations.

**Currently resides:** Wine country, California

**Career Post College:** William Morris Talent agency. Founded Creative Artists Agency. Flying instructor

**Honors:** Thespian Distinguished Alumni Award, 1997

**Note:** Mike has volunteered to return and assist students in creating original productions.

# Sightings

**Julius Epstein, '32**, was recently honored by the Los Angeles Chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association with their distinguished Alumni Award. He helped create Hollywood's Golden Age. His screenwriting credits include *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1942), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944) and the classic favorite, *Casablanca*. The LA Chapter of the Alumni Association as further honored Julie by establishing THE JULIUS EPSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP.

**Jeffrey B. Moss, '66**, is Directing a national tour of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. It begins in early Fall and features Joanne Worley.

**Molly Rodriguez, '90**, is currently working as an Assistant Director on the Film *G's Trippin* by Beacon Pictures. In July, she is scheduled to begin working on the situation comedy *King of Queens* with Ben Stiller.

**Jason Zanitsch, '96**, has founded the Itinerant Theatre Company. The companies first performance will be *Godspell* at the Garman Opera House in Bellefonte PA. The production has a large Thespian (past and present) involvement.

# We Want Your Help!

Please fill out and mail back the enclosed card. Your input is very valuable to us. After all this organization is for you the Alumni of the greatest group at Penn State. We want to know all about you. Please take some time to send us your profile. Include your Thespian shows, your career (theatre or non theatre), what Thespians may have taught you that helped in your career, your life after college, and anything else you can think of. Please try to send a photograph as well. (Photos can be returned)

Please give us you input!

I did the following Thespian shows when I was at Penn State:

Since leaving PSU, my theatre related and/or non-theatre related career includes the following: (Tell about your career-both how you made your living and what theatre related things you may have done for fun and fulfillment)

I learned the following from my participation in Thespians that helped me in my career:

Tell us about your life after college:

What would you like to see us (TAIG) do?

Is there anything you would like to volunteer for?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Check to be removed from our list

Deg/Class \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fold this card in half (this is the inside) and staple before mailing.



# How to Contact TAIG



Use the info below to get in touch.

**General Information on TAIG:**

Steve Berger  
1336 Cambridge Ave,  
Flossmoor, IL 60422  
H: 708-922-9577  
W: 312-223-6178  
steven.berger@atkearney.com

**Funding Feasibility:**

Bill McTurk  
209 Horizon Drive  
State College, PA 16801  
H: 814-867-3977

**Membership:**

Marc Kimelman  
Apt 301  
4677 Bayard St  
Pittsburgh, PA 151213-2710  
H: 412-681-2700 x 253

Cheryl Kysilka  
127 Selma St  
Norristown, PA 19401-4340  
H: 610-278-2540  
W: 610-277-4100

**Communications:**

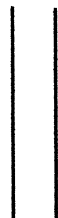
Ryan Johnson  
14812 Dixon Ct  
Dale City, VA 22193  
H: 703-878-1342  
rxj103@erols.com  
or  
Cheryl Kysilka

Trying to track someone down?  
Maybe we can help. If you know  
the whereabouts of other Thespian  
alum or are trying to reach others  
in your area, contact us.

If you have concerns about this newsletter or any future TAIG publications, please contact the Communications group. Any contributions such as personal profiles or current events in Thespian lives are appreciated. Special arrangements can be made to return items if necessary.

Place  
First  
Class  
Postage  
Here

TAIG Communications Committee  
c/o Ryan Johnson  
14812 Dixon Ct  
Dale City VA 22193



# What's Next?

What can you look for in future issues of this newsletter? Lots! In addition to *The Presidents' Corner* and *Alumni Profiles*, we plan to expand the *Sightings* section to include announcements from our readership. Announcements such as productions containing Thespian alumni, Thespian gatherings at area coffee shops, or other events that you may be involved in are all welcome.. Of course we will continue to keep you posted on TAIG and current events. Want more? Fill out the comment card and let us know!

## Board Members

President:  
Steve Berger '86

Director:  
Grace Holderman '34

Director (nominating):  
Luanne Russell '63

Vice Pres (funds):  
Ray Fortunato '47

Director (communications):  
Ryan Johnson '96

Director (nominating):  
Don Stohl '54

Secretary:  
Nancy Kochosky '59

Director (membership):  
Marc Kimelman '52

Alumni Assoc Rep:  
Cheryl Stringer

Historian:  
Carol Whittaker '68, '78G

Director (membership/comm.):  
Cheryl Kysilka '84

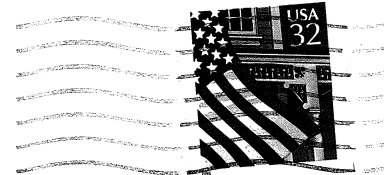
Club Advisor:  
Margaret Lloyd '84, '88G  
Carol Whittaker '68, '78G

Director:  
Al Beliasov '55

Director (funds/nominating):  
Bill McTurk '48

Club President:  
Steve Beckel until June 30th  
Zach Brown starting July 1st

TAIG Communications Committee  
c/o Ryan Johnson  
14812 Dixon Ct.  
Dale City VA 22193



Don't forget to check us out on the world wide web at :

<http://www.clubs.psu.edu/PennStateThespians/encore/>

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