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Guess Who Answer:
 Bill McTurk



The Penn State Thespians
 Alumni Interest Group
 c/o Carol Whittaker
 35 Scott Building
 University Park, PA 16802

THE ENCORE

Thespian Alumni Interest Group Newsletter



Volume 2, Number 1

December, 1999

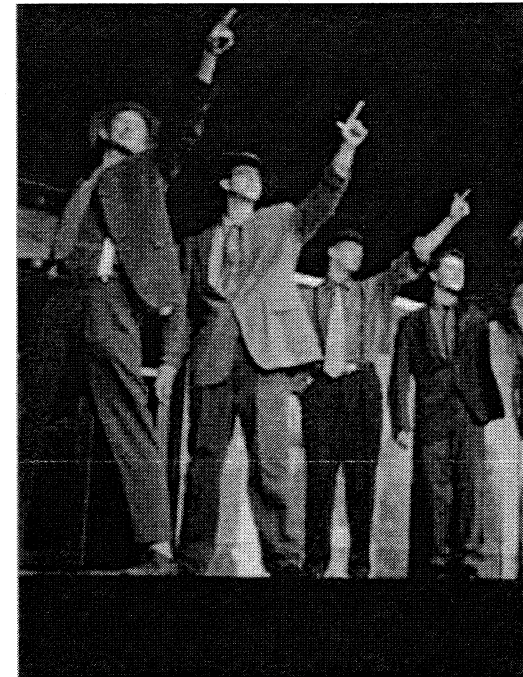
“Guys & Dolls” a Smashing Success for Thespians!

This seasons' past show, *Guys & Dolls* was a huge success for the Thespians in every sense of the word. The club decided on the show last year because of its enormous popularity and because it is a fun show to put on.

Starring our very own Dianna Di-Palma as “Miss Adelaide” and Mauri Buetzow as “Sarah Brown,” the show had many other talented actors in the supporting roles as well as a skilled ensemble. However, the shows acting talent was not the only reason the show was a success. From the technical side, Thespians' Darren Ferrazzo, Steve Beckel, Sara Keegan, Anne Thompson, Andrea Letso, Sam Huckabee and Monika Schimek also contributed to the shows success.

Steve & Darren worked many hours to produce a set that appeared to be a street scene, but, with the aide of a run crew the set opened up to reveal the “Save a Soul” mission. Sarah and Anne contributed by painting marvelous backdrops and fashioning use-

ful props respectively. Andrea, with the help of Sam created a very cool lighting scheme. They even added a cool light-



ing effect with the help of a fogger during the “Crapshooters Dance.” Last, but certainly not least, Monika slaved away in the costume shop for nights on

end to ensure that every guy and every doll was dressed accordingly.

When the show went up on November 19th, everyone who was involved had the “Opening Night Jitters” and was very excited about the show. To make matters worse for the faint of heart, we had to delay the start of the show a half hour because the ticket line was out the door to the street. By the time everyone got their seat, we had nearly sold out the house. I say nearly because on Saturday night we did sell out! When it was said and done (2:00 am Sunday morning), everyone involved with *Guys and Dolls* was very pleased with how successful the show had been. We all looked back on what a wonderful experience the show had been and realized why we did all that hard work. Four simple words have now become a trade mark saying in the club and accurately portray why we do what we do. Pure Love of Theatre or PLT. I am sure you all have it too!

-Robert Yacyshyn '01

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Calendar of Events

March 31st/April 1st, 2000
 Spring Show
“Once on This Island”
 8:00 pm/2:00 pm & 8:00 pm

April 1st, 2000
 Board Meeting
 9:00 am

Guess Who?



Pictured here with Adele Yablon in the 1946 prod. Of our own “No Kick Coming” this gentleman has given back to the Thespians in many ways. Can you name him?

Answer on Back Page

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I write my last column as President of the Thespian Alumni Interest Group, I would like to indulge you for a few minutes and talk about some of the accomplishments we have made this past year as well as talk about some of the challenges we face going into the next millennium.

Over the past year we have accomplished a tremendous amount to push the group forward

- In our first formal solicitation effort we were able to raise \$15,000
- We installed a control process to ensure that the funds are spent wisely
- With your donations we were able to purchase a computer and a keyboard
 - ~ The keyboard eases the burden of having a room with a piano for rehearsal
 - ~ The computer is used for program design, lighting design, and record keeping
- We have "cleaned up" the Thespian database so we can reach more alums than ever
- Finally, we have produced another newsletter and plan to continue this outreach

However, even though we have been successful this year, we still face many challenges

- We need more involvement from our alums, the TAIG can not do it alone
- To that end, we realize we need to keep you better informed so that you can help us
 - ~ This newsletter is one way of communicating, we are thinking of others
 - ~ If you have any suggestions please contact us (our address is on the back)

So where does this leave us? In short, the TAIG is a relatively new organization and we have worked hard to get our feet on the ground. Now that they are, it's time to take steps. We need to get more help and involvement from you so that Thespians can become the organization that we spoke of at the 100th Anniversary Reunion.

In closing I would like to thank you for the opportunity to setup and lead this organization these past few years. I leave the position of President in the capable hands of Don Stohl, who has been a board member since the groups formation in 1997. I will remain on the Board and assist as I can. I truly look forward to working with you as we make the Thespian Alumni Interest Group even greater! -Steven Berger, '86

TAIG Gift Fund Report

Even though we have not reached our initial goal of \$25,000 we are close! Over 140 loyal and generous Thespian alumni have donated over \$20,000. The TAIG and Thespians say "Thank you, thank you!"

One gift deserves special mention and a very special gratitude. **Lew Fisher**, beloved Thespian and piano player from the class of 1928, took advantage of Penn State's Gift Annuity Program (see back page) and donated \$12,000!! Be sure to check out his profile on page three.

The money available in the fund is already being put to good use. We made a grant to the current club for purchase of a keyboard which was used extensively for the productions of *Company* and *Guys and Dolls*. Another grant was provided for the

purchase of a computer and a printer to be used in the Thespian office. Many more items are on the club's "wish list!"

Now, wouldn't you like to support this student organization that touched our lives when we were at Penn State, and possibly after? Yes? The process is really simple. Just fill out the form on page 4 and send it to the address specified there. If you already make an annual gift to Penn State, just write "Thespians" to receive a specific portion of your donation. Thanks!

-William McTurk, '48

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ALUMNI PROFILES

Llewellyn Fisher

Class of 1928

I've always been attracted to the Arts, but went to college to get an education and start on a "good" career. I chose the finance world. In 1920 I joined the musician's union while still in college. Graduating in 1928, I became a stockbroker in 1929. Truthfully, my musical talents kept me alive from 1930 to 1935 while I maintained my stock brokers office.

I finally retired from the investment business in 1995. During my life I have been married and widowed twice. And had the pleasure of raising a daughter. I now enjoy my grandchildren, great grandchildren and the newest, a great-great grandchild.

At the 100th celebration I loved entertaining the crowds, as I have all my life, by playing the piano. When Carol & Steve asked what I wanted to volunteer to do with TAIG, my only answer was that I would volunteer for a complete rest!

- Llewellyn Fisher, '28

The State of Grace

Talk about theatre angels, we have our very own! Lew Fisher has given to the club his Sara Lee Stock valued at \$12,000. He is a retired accountant executive who remembers with deep fondness his own Thespian days; so now he is investing in the club's future. He still plays piano - you heard his terrific lilted style at the Centennial get-together. Lew has generously given the cake...the rest of us have the opportunity to add the icing. Our deep thanks to Lew Fisher.

-Grace Baer Holderman, '34

Jeff Skowron '93 lives in Manhattan and recently played "Ed the Hyena" in the Broadway production of *The Lion King*. He will seen soon in a TV special with Mary Tyler Moore and Valerie Harper.

Emily Lloyd '94 who was in several Thespian productions and directed "Pippin live in LA" and is a production assistant for the CBS sitcom *Ladies Man*.

James Jimirro

Class of 1958, 1963(g)

My fondest memories from my time at Penn State are walking from Beta House down to Pollock Road to Schwab Auditorium fro 7 pm show rehearsals. After working several hours, we finished the evening at the Corner room with great donuts and coffee. During my tenure at Penn State I "did" several shows and served a few years as faculty advisor to the club. In retrospect, I am amazed at how young we all were and how effective we were at organizing all aspects of the show business. As advisor, I learned valuable skills in financial management and motivation. After graduation, I accepted a job at Walt Disney. During my 14 years with Disney, I worked first for Walt Disney Home Video...then the fun began! I launched the Disney Channel as it's first president. Exciting times to be in the entertainment industry. Subsequently, I formed my own company, J2 Communications and purchased National Lampoon. J2 is involved with Lampoon's motion pictures, television, audio/video, and internet sites. Still a great time to be in the entertainment industry! I maintain an apartment in NY to have ready access to my lifetime passion for musical theatre. In Los Angeles, I serve as Board of Directors for Theatre LA, a "trade" organization for all LA theatres. In the future I hope to bring to fruition LA's first major theatre festival.

-James Jimirro '58

SIGHTINGS



Robert Vukich

Class of 1969

Bob is marking his 40th year in technical theater and still loves every minute of it. He has served as stage manager, producer, lighting designer, scenic designer, and technical director for over 300 productions beginning at Beaver Falls High School. He then moved on to Penn State University Theater and Thespians, and to local groups at McKeesport Little Theater, Monroeville Civic Theater, Sherwood Forest Theater, and a long list of high schools, including 25 years at Woodland Hills High School. He has also designed lighting for the Pittsburgh City Theater, and South Hills Theater in Dormont.

While with Thespians, Bob designed sets for *Anything Goes*, *West Side Story*, and *How To Succeed.....*, and painted *Music Man* and *Oklahoma*. He served as president of Thespians as well. After graduation, he returned to design and produce the 75th Anniversary productions of *Hello, Dolly* and the *Diamond Revue*.

But Bob feels his greatest accomplishment with Thespians was getting the club's constitution changed to allow women to serve as president of the organization!

Bob has a passion for the marvelous old movie palaces, theater pipe organs, and the vaudeville era of entertainment. Of course, he also works for a living. He has designed 13 flower shows for Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, including this year's big three. These feature a garden railroad display that is the talk of Pittsburgh. Opening day of the winter show, people were standing in line in the rain waiting to get in. Bob is a registered landscape architect and land planner, and a partner in Chambers Vukich Associates of Zelienople.

- Luanne Russell