

THESPIAN ALUMNI INTEREST GROUP

Penn State Alumni Association
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Penn State Thespian Alumni Interest Group

THE ENCORE

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 1

FALL, 2006

A Pledge Story continued...

(Continued from page 3)

and Light Board Operator. In addition, Vince was the CPA Representative for the show and again spent enough hours at TAPS to be part of the Set crew.

A memorable experience occurred when a small group of pledges decided to get together at 4 a.m. shortly before load-in for *Footloose* and write the pledge skit. Several hours and a few random ideas later, the outline for a very funny pledge skit was born.

Some bonding experiences for the 18 pledges in the Spring '06 class included 6 a.m. nerf gun battles, midnight prop

runs, and talking online until 3 a.m. Also the big/little program still exists providing mentors for all pledges.

As a member, Vince is already taking a leadership role. He was elected to serve as treasurer this year and hopes to continue working with lights either as Master Electrician or Lighting Designer.

When asked what he was most looking forward to, Vince said the following, "A lot of the same things I experienced as a pledge. The reason Thespians is so important to me is that it is like one big family. Everyone looks out for everyone else, and you always feel like you fit in.

You have opportunities to learn and opportunities to teach. You have opportunities to lead and opportunities to follow. There is something for everyone, and the mix of people drawn by theatre creates an amazing atmosphere."

In addition, Vince noted alumni are always welcome at meetings (and to lend their tools during load-in)! Meeting alums as a pledge can provide perspective on how the club has evolved and the different passions creating our diverse membership.

Christyn Rossman '02
 christyn@psualum.com

Stu Chamberlain...Still Master of the Keyboards

For several years, *Stu Chamberlain '65* was known around Penn State Thespians as the man with the talented fingers on the keyboard who played for auditions and performances. At recent alumni reunions and get-togethers, he is spoken of with admiration and affection, and there is curiosity about what he's doing now.

Well, to really do justice to the history of Stuart H. Chamberlain, Jr. would require at least this entire newsletter. Or it could be condensed into: award-winning radio network news writer-producer writes for famous people and still plays piano and acts in spare time. Let's go for something in-between to try to capture the essence of Stu Chamberlain's story.

Though his home was State College, Stu's pre-Penn State education was a bit more global. He graduated from Kent, a private school in western Connecticut. Along the line he also attended the choir boy school at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, and had a scholarship one summer to the Westminster Abbey School in London.

Finally, Stu returned home and entered Penn State as journalism major. He had been working summers at WMAJ Radio, looking after the record library and transporting equipment to churches in town for live Sunday morning broadcasts. In September, Stu was the night-time newsman on WMAJ...instant fame! After all, it was THE station the majority of students tuned in at night. And Stu got involved in plenty of activities, but not much campus theatre.

However, when summer came around, he spent most of his free time at the Boal Barn Playhouse, operated by the State College Community Theatre, working on stage, behind the scenes, and as audition and rehearsal pianist for the musicals. He also played piano after work for really

late-night (after midnight) sing-alongs at a local bar.

After graduation from Penn State, Stu became program director of WMAJ-FM and eventually moved to Clearfield, Pennsylvania, as WCPA's first-ever news director. After a couple of years in Clearfield, he went back to State College for the start of the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts and decided to apply for a job at WPSX-TV. Within a month, Stu was what he calls "the kiddies Cronkite" on the local public TV station, a position he would hold for eight years.

It was during these years that Stu Chamberlain and Penn State Thespians found each other. He had taken a job as choir director as St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in State College, joined the board of directors of the State College Community Theatre, and was taking graduate courses in his spare time. Robin Breon knew Stu's talents from the Boal Barn and recruited him as audition pianist and to play in the pit for Thespians.

As Stu recalls, his first show was *It's A Bird, It's A Plane, It's Superman!* followed by *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. But he wasn't just limited to the keyboard...he also appeared in *The Fantasticks* as the girl's father. Apparently this is his "signature" role, since he also played the part at the Boal Barn and at the Amateur Comedy Club in New York (more on this later). Stu says it only took him until his second year of graduate school to become a Penn State Thespian! He worked with the group for about four years and recalls how everybody worked together, worked hard, and still had fun doing the shows. He made good friends and learned a lot of things that he used in later years.

In 1976, with changes at WPSX-TV, Stu headed for New York and met someone who knew someone who was hiring at NBC's new all-news radio network. He auditioned and was hired, finding it amazing that he was in New York work-

Thespian 2006-2007 Season

October 26 - 28th
The Rocky Horror Show
 Schwab Auditorium
 Evening showings 8 p.m.; Sat matinee 2 p.m.

October 28th (5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.)
 TAIG Pre-Show Reception
 Location TBA

March 29 - 31st
Crazy for You
 Schwab Auditorium
 Evening showings 8 p.m.; Sat matinee 2 p.m.

March 31st
 TAIG Pre-Show Reception
 Location TBA

Other Events

- * Children's Shows
 Dec. (7 & 9) and May TBA
- * THON
 February 16 -18, 2007
- * MasquerAIDS
 Spring 2007
- * Synergy
 February 24, 2007
- * 2006-2007 TAIG Board Meetings
 October 28, March 31,
 July 14

More details will be sent via the
 TAIG e-mail LISTSERV.
 Or check
[http://www.clubs.psu.edu/
 PennStateThespians](http://www.clubs.psu.edu/PennStateThespians)



The Callboard

Thespian alums are always doing amazing things—and we LOVE telling you about it!!

If you would like to have something included in our next issue, please send an e-mail to **William Schwab '01** at was136@earthlink.net

Ray T. Fortunato '47 '52(g)
 RayForty@aol.com

LIFE AFTER 80
 Little did Ray realize when he started as a Thespian accompanist in 1941 (before Pearl Harbor) that at age 82, he'd still be in the entertainment business. There's hope for those who are "Deeper into life."

In 2005, Ray gave over 30 public performances (piano playing, singing, leading group singing, etc.) for retirement communities, alumni groups, private parties, etc. Also, at age 82 he had his first CD released.

His over 50 years in Thespians (student, advisor, Board member) were a delight and he is so very grateful. Life is good, don't ever quit.

Patricia (Patty) Christman Deussing '69
 patdeussing@mac.com

Patty's first foray into theatre was at Penn State in the winter of 1966 when she auditioned for a dance role in *Anything Goes!* Her

mother was always singing and tap-dancing around the kitchen but she was rather reserved. Patty learned a few good steps and loved the fishnet stockings. The lights went on in her head when she got involved with the PSU Thespians. What a great group of talented and supportive folks she found. Patty later went on to play Hedy LaRue in *How to Succeed in Business*. Alas, she went on to graduate and to a long list of careers.

Patty is currently in Charleston, SC and lo-and-behold on the Board of Directors for the Charleston Stage Co.

Clay Robeson '96
 Clay@Robeson.com

Clay's "Thespian Claim To Fame" is that he was never actually an active member. He went straight from Pledge to Alumni, getting inducted shortly after he graduated. During his time at Penn State, his work included *Pippin* (Fall '94) and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Fall '96).

Currently, he is producing, acting and writing for Moron Life, a sketch comedy show in San Jose, California (<http://MoronLife.com>). A video podcast version is available online.

Starting in January 2007, he'll be directing a live Improv show in San Francisco called B-

Movie Night (<http://bmovie.com>), which, if the technology pans out, will be a live webcast every week. He's also using his improv skills to work as a training facilitator for NASA Ames in Mountain View, CA on a research project related to future Mars missions.

Outside of sketch comedy, he is the webmaster for his home town community theater (The Riverfront Playhouse), and is working on launching a weekly webcast talk show.

Jill Pakulski '04
 jumpingjackswithjill@gmail.com

You may remember Jill as the co-writer and co-host for the *Schwab 100th Anniversary Show* (Fall '02). Since graduation, Jill has resided in New York where she is working towards a Master's in Nutrition and Education. Jill developed a kid's show (www.jumpingjill.com) to promote fitness among youth. She has been performing across the city since the summer.

Jill also performs with her brother in a pop rock collision band Sunset West (www.sunsetwest.net). Their CD, **Hope on the Horizon** was released in 2005 and is on sale at smarpunk.com.

This publication is available in alternative media on request. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce.

Penn State
 1855
Alumni Association

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Stu Chamberlin

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instead of NBC. He's been there ever since.

He recalls many fun experiences at work...interviewing Rosalyn Carter in 1978, going to Detroit in 1980 to see Ronald Reagan nominated, having the opportunity to write for such well-known people as David Hartman, Peter Jennings, and Bill O'Reilly. He has also won EIGHT Writer's Guild of America Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Radio News Regularly Scheduled, for such programs as World News Tonight and World News This Week on the ABC Radio Network. Last year, he was invited to a reception at Gracie Mansion for his work on a New York City public service announcement for cable TV

One his most interesting memories was a great compliment that began with dread. Stu's boss sent him to Washington to write for Sam Donaldson who has always had a reputation for eating writers alive. He went in at 6 a.m. Monday and at 9 a.m. was summoned to Sam's office to present the copy he'd written, and then told to return at 10:30 a.m. When Stu went back, Sam told him he liked the copy! They stayed friends and worked together for the rest of the week. When asked to do the same show for another week, Sam said he wouldn't do it unless Stu stayed!

You may have also heard of Paul Harvey, who has been on ABC since 1950, and was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Bush last year. He also has written every word of his newscasts all those years. That is, until he and his wife went on vacation and he felt out of the news loop and wanted Stu to write his news for a couple of days! Paul was so happy with the result that he still calls on Stu to help him out, in fact Stu spent a month writing for him this summer.

As for his involvement with theatre, shortly after arriving in New York, Stu joined the Amateur Comedy Club, which

remains one of his greatest pleasures. It is not stand-up comedy, but the oldest continuous theatrical production company in America, having produced at least one play every year since 1884. It is also a wonderful private club. The club did the first legal performances of *The Fantasticks* after the long-running New York production closed, and Stu played the girl's father for the third time. He has enjoyed being a performer in countless productions for the club over the years. But the members recently realized they were paying a musician \$1,500 to play for their musicals when they had Stu who had to do it free because he's a member! So he has served as musical director and accompanist for recent productions of *Eating Raoul, the Musical*, and *My Fair Lady*...at the keyboard again! For good measure, he also sings in his church choir!

Stu is also a member of the famous Lambs, America's First Professional Theatrical Club, (where he says they drink and sing a lot); and a member of the Deadline Club, the New York City Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

When Stu first decided to get out of apartment life...rent was too high and the neighbors didn't always appreciate his baby grand piano playing...the wife of an old friend went with him. He found a house to his liking on Long Island, but didn't have quite enough for the payment required on the spot. She had the rest and since she and her husband were expecting their first child and were also looking for a house, they bought it together. The Weldons, who went on to have four children, are still with him in another house in a better neighborhood and the arrangement has worked out fine for everyone.

Stu has fond memories of Thespians, saying it was always fun to do a show. As for using things he learned that have stuck, he recalls that the musical director for *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* drilled the cast over and over on putting the final consonants on words when singing. It's something he has never forgotten, and a lesson he has taught to others many times over the years.

Stu Chamberlain, still performing and writing, a master of both keyboards.

Luanne M. Russell '63
lrussell@hearst.com

THE ENCORE

THE ENCORE is a publication of the Penn State Thespian Alumni Interest Group (TAIG). Questions and comments regarding the content of this publication as well as suggestions for future articles may be sent to **William A. Schwab '01** at was136@earthlink.net

Questions regarding TAIG may be sent to TAIG President **William A. Schwab '01** at was136@earthlink.net

2006 - 2007 TAIG Board Members

William A. Schwab '01, President (was136@earthlink.net)
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Luanne M. Russell '63 (lrussell@hearst.com)
Ruth Yeaton '53, '59(g) (ryeat11@yahoo.com)

President's Notes

This year, your TAIG Board has continued to work towards increasing alumni ties and providing support to the undergraduate organization.

One of our major projects for the year includes long term planning regarding the financial stability of the undergraduate Thespian club. Due to rising production costs and an uncertain availability of funding via the student activity fee, a long range solution is needed. The TAIG finance committee is spearheading an effort to create a Thespian endowment fund to provide funding assistance to meet these costs. **Pete Kiefer '56** and **Sarah Arras '02** chair the committee.

We will continue to host a pre-show reception for all returning alumni prior to the Saturday evening performance of each Thespian mainstage show. Details will follow via the TAIG listserv or contact **Sarah Arras '02** (keegs200@hotmail.com) for more information.

Another exciting TAIG project is the possibility of creating regional programming in conjunction with the Penn State Alumni Association. With large Thespian membership populations in New York, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, we're hoping to bring the Thespian spirit directly to our alumni.

I look forward to this year when we will continue to build on the alumni enthusiasm for these amazing projects. Thank you for your ongoing support.

William A. Schwab '01
TAIG President
was136@earthlink.net

TAIG Gift Fund Report

This year, TAIG is looking to the Gift Fund to build the base for future fundraising drives. (see President's note for more information)

Seven years ago, **Bill McTurk '48** spearheaded the effort to establish the TAIG Gift Fund as a way for Thespian Alumni to "give back" to the organization that had such a profound influence on our lives.

Through your generosity, over \$30,000 in equipment has been purchased for the Thespian club since 1999. Major items have included a computer for the Thespian office, power tools, and a contribution towards the complete renovation of the lighting system in Schwab.

If you have previously donated, we sincerely thank you—and so do the Penn State Thespians! Remember, 100% of your gift goes into the fund and each and every gift, no matter the size, has a positive impact on the Thespians.

To donate to the TAIG Gift Fund, simply designate Thespians to receive a portion of your annual gift to Penn State, or use the clip-out form on the right.

You can also donate online via this link:
<https://secure.ddar.psu.edu/GiveTo/>

THESPIAN CONTRIBUTION FORM

Name		
Address		
City	State	ZIP Code
Phone	E-mail	Class Year
My gift of \$_____ is to benefit the Penn State Thespians.		
<input type="checkbox"/> My check is enclosed, payable to Penn State		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my	<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa
	<input type="checkbox"/> Discover	<input type="checkbox"/> American Express
Account Number	Exp. Date	
Signature		
<input type="checkbox"/> My company's matching gift form is enclosed.		

Please complete this form and mail to:
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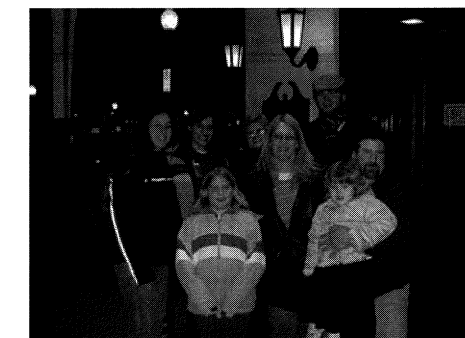
If you are interested in making your donation by Electronic Funds Transfer or by means of a multi-year pledge, please contact Kathy Kurtz at (888) 800-9163

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UNDERGRADUATE UPDATE

2005-2006 Highlights

* Thespians raised \$3,650.33 for THON! The club also started a relationship with a new THON family, the Ducketts, and their 4 year old daughter, Jenna. To support Thespians THON effort, visit <https://secure.ddar.psu.edu/Thon> and designate Thespians for credit.



Thespians celebrate Thon Weekend with the Ducketts

* MasquerAIDS hosted by **Sue Paterno '62** raised \$2,300 for The AIDS Project of Centre and Clinton counties. Contact MasquerAIDS@yahoo.com for more information.

* Over 20 new members were inducted into the undergraduate organization in Spring 2006.

A Pledge Story



For many alums, pledging Thespians supplies some of the most unique collegiate memories. **Vincent Roscioli '09** (pictured above) agreed to share his insights on the current pledge process from his experience in 2005.

A double major in Computer Engineering and Mathematics, Vince first participated in technical theater in high school. From Bethlehem, PA, Vince found Thespians browsing the list of student organizations on the Penn State website.

After emailing **John North '06**, the '05 Vice President, Vince began attending pledge meetings. Vince wanted to join Thespians in order to become an active member and thus participate in show selection and club administrative activities.

In the fall (*Into the Woods*), Vince served as the Assistant Master Electrician and as Light Board Operator for the show. Even while taking 17 credits, he also spent enough hours at TAPS to be considered a part of the Set crew.

Taking 19 credits in the spring (*Footloose*), he filled the roles of Master Electrician

(Continued on page 4)

Don't miss out on TAIG news and announcements throughout the year—join the TAIG E-Mail LISTSERV today!!

If you would like to subscribe, please contact **Bill Schwab '01** at was136@earthlink.net



2005-2006 Student Officers: Nick Semon, Lindsay Good, John North, Lauren Pope, Rebecca Sammak