

## THESPIAN ALUMNI INTEREST GROUP

Penn State Alumni Association  
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## TAIG News & Notes

### TAIG E-mail LISTSERV

We have switched our listserv to an account with Vertical Response in order to better keep in touch with you. We use the listserv to send out details about our receptions and newsletters for the spring and summer. If you are not already subscribed please log onto our website and sign up today!

### Connect with Thespians Online

TAIG:  
<http://www.psualum.com/affiliate/thespians>

Penn State Thespians:  
<http://www.clubs.psu.edu/up/thespians/>

### Rather receive this electronically?

Send an e-mail to [taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com) and we will take you off the printed mailing list.

### Printed newsletter only in the Fall

Did you miss out on the spring newsletter? In an effort to save money, we are only printing the fall newsletter. Sign up for our listserv to stay connected in between printed newsletters.

## The Callboard

Thanks to everyone who took the time to share information for "The Callboard."

If you would like to have something included in our next issue, please send an e-mail to **Andrea Schwander** at [taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com)

**Jim Jimirro** Thespian Adviser 1961-1963 is still conducting presentations on the Great American Songbook all over the country and on cruise ships around the world.

Jim J's Jukebox....and the website is [www.jimirro.com](http://www.jimirro.com).

**Dr Larry Myers** (Bud Frump in 1966 "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Tying" and "Guys & Dolls" 1968) is head of Theater at St Johns University in Manhattan. He is an internationally produced playwright & directs The RWM Playwrights Lab. He was on The Board of

The American Stanislavski Association & recreated The Dramatic Workshop at The New School with Dr Maria (Mrs. Erwin) Pisactor .His plays have been produced in Los Angeles, Louisville, Anchorage, Philadelphia, San Francisco 7 The New York Daily News called him "one of Off Broadway's wittiest & more prolific playwrights."

**Tim Altmeyer** (BA Advertising, '88) was on Broadway this past spring covering a role in HIGH by Matthew Lombardo, starring Kathleen Turner. He is currently playing Alan in GOD OF CARNAGE at the Hippodrome Theatre in Gainesville, FL, where he also teaches acting at the University of Florida.

**Steve (Monheimer) Warren** ('64) is moving from Atlanta to Sarasota this month. Hope to continue acting in and reviewing film.

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

## TAIG Calendar

October 20, 21, & 22 , 2010

*Urinetown*

Schwab Auditorium

\*reception details will be sent over the listserv

October 21, 2010 (11 am EST)

TAIG Board Meeting

April 12, 13, & 14, 2012

*AIDA*

Schwab Auditorium

April 13, 14, & 15, 2012

Penn State Thespians Reunion

April 13, 2012 (10 am EST)

TAIG Board Meeting

# The Encore

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 1

October, 2011

## From the Desk of the Editor

As a Thespian, Children's Show writing meetings, in which we took a child's book and adapted it for the stage, were always my favorite. These meetings showed me how truly talented my fellow Thespians could be. Together we were able to find a new, creative way to make childhood values such as sharing, caring, and friendship, come to life with some sparkly fins (*Rainbow Fish*), a few barbaloots (*The Lorax*), or a tiger suit (*Calvin and Hobbes*).

In this issue of *The Encore* Luanne profiles a group of Thespians, the Penn State Stooges, which took their creativity on the road. We also focus on two of the big projects going on in TAIG- the upcoming reunion and setting up an endowment. While I don't spend nights in 318 HUB writing scripts, these projects have allowed me to continue to see how creative my fellow Thespians can be.

I hope to see many of you at the upcoming reunion and as always if you have any feedback don't hesitate to e-mail me.

**Andrea Schwander** ('10)  
TAIG Newsletter Editor  
[taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com)



## Alum Profile: Penn State Stooges

Once upon a time there were Four Stooges, that's right, four... Ned ('41), George ('41), Roy ('41), and Mike ('41). From about 1939 until 1941 four zany guys, members of Penn State Thespians, became well known around campus and beyond as the Penn State Stooges. They specialized in snappy patter, jokes, parody, and crazy songs... and the students loved them! Ned Startzel and George Parrish were fraternity brothers who decided apartment living was more to their liking. They found a place on the third floor right across the street from The Corner Room and were soon sharing the space with the "musical genius" of the group,

Mike Brotman who became a friend through Thespians. They were soon joined by another Thespian, Roy Rogers, and thus was born the group known as the Penn State Stooges.

According to campus news articles of the day, they caused a sensation among Penn State students because they were not only different, but "they're the best seen in these hills." They made their debut in the Little Theatre in Old Main at one of the Penn State Christian Association meetings, quickly caught on, and a few weeks later had their first paying job at the Penn-Belle Hotel in Bellefonte. An early financially successful

spell was a week's trip through Bradford, Altoona, Sunbury and Harrisburg. Other gigs ranged from Horniak's Wax Museum in Mount Carmel where they were billed as "The Three Pots from Pottsville with their Decoy at the Piano" to Homecoming in Barnesboro. They even went out of state to the Meadowland Ballroom in New Jersey and to a very special 45-minute show backstage at the Imperial Theatre in New York for none other than Fred Waring and Irving Berlin and their wives! The Stooges composed most of their own songs with such titles as "Who Stole the Old Deacon's Outhouse and Forced the Poor

(Continued on page 2)

## Penn State Thespians Reunion—April 13th - 15th, 2012!

Have you lost touch with your pledge class? Would you like to connect with the current actives of Penn State Thespians? Do you want to help TAIG kick off the endowment for Thespians? If you answered yes to any of these questions, plan to attend the reunion celebrating our 115<sup>th</sup> year and 200<sup>th</sup> show in Schwab. TAIG is organizing a reunion for April 13-15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at Penn State.

In the coming months you will start to receive more information about the reunion primarily via e-mail (if you are not yet subscribed to our listserv, check out the back page to find out how to sign up). We will be sending out information about signing up, hotels with group discounts for our event, a tentative schedule, and much

more. If you do not have e-mail, please call Kate Proulx at 610-554-5417 or 8850 P Golden Oak Dr. Manassas, VA 20109 for a printed version of the registration when it becomes available.

Until then there are a couple of ways to get involved with the reunion. The reunion committee is currently soliciting donations for a silent auction we will be holding to benefit the Thespian endowment (see the Finance Committee Report for more information on the endowment). Some of the prizes we have already secured are Broadway show tickets, original artwork by actives including a quilt made from show t-shirts, and some Penn State goodies. However, we could still use more items. If you know of a company that would be willing to donate a good for our

silent auction please contact us (e-mail below) with more information. And if you have something you think people may bid on that you would like to donate for the cause please contact us as well.

Besides procuring silent auction items, there will be others ways to be involved in the reunion as we get closer to the date. If you haven't already done so, contact us (e-mail below) and we can put you on the reunion listserv.

We hope to see you in April!

**Andrea Schwander** ('10) and **Kate Proulx** ('10)  
Reunion Co-chairs

 Penn State  
Alumni Association



(Continued from page 1)

Old Man to Move Inside”, “The Fall of Purity”, “Her Name was Lie-A-Whilla In the Poola”, “The Corner Room, It’s Unusual”, and their all-time hit “Dirty Olga From the Volga”.

As another outlet for their talents and humor the Stooges, in their years together, wrote three full shows for Thespians: “The Joint’s Jumpin’”, “Danger: Men At Work”, and “The Balloon Goes Up.” “Danger: Men At Work” or “Don’t Send Your Boys to Vassar” was directed by the legendary Sock Kennedy, won first prize as Best College Musical of 1941, and also featured the Stooges in the all male cast. Yes, those were the days of no women in Thespian productions.

Ned Startzel had many anecdotes about the Penn State Stooges. They worked and partied in that Allen Street apartment and Police Chief Juba did not feel kindly toward the boys and their rather energetic get-togethers. One hot summer evening with the windows open they were writing a skit about four guys rolling dice and shouting “seven come eleven” and “snake eyes”. Suddenly the chief and his deputy burst into the apartment expecting to find a crap game in progress. They were taken aback, and disappointed, to see four young men sitting on the floor with pen and paper in hand.

The Stooges had a 1933 Chrysler with

rumble seat and wide running board, their means of transportation for 2½ years. They had been to New York a couple of times at the request of Fred Waring, a former Penn Stater famous for his musical group “The Pennsylvanians”. Thespians invited some of Waring’s singers to headline their fall and spring shows. In the spring of 1941 the Swingerettes, two lovely young ladies, were to be in the show and Fred Waring and his wife decided to drive to State College with them. There was an afternoon party in the mountains the Saturday of the show. Ned and George Parrish were returning to town with the girls in their Chrysler and Fred following them. A major point...the Chrysler’s running board was just wide enough to hold their quarter keg of beer. The car blew a tire and the keg rolled down the mountainside. George and Ned scrambled down the mountain to rescue the beer, Fred grabbed the girls and left the scene. The boys never did find the beer and lost their deposit on the keg. They returned to Schwab just in time to perform and as Ned entered the side door, he ran into his parents, his girl friend, and three of his high school teachers who had come to see the aptly named “Danger: Men At Work”.

The original members of the Penn State Stooges were graduated in 1941 and had hoped to keep the act together, but World War II soon started and the boys went off to various branches of the military. Still

the tradition of the Stooges continued in Thespians with a new group. Ray Fortunato started at Penn State in September of 1941 and took part in Thespian shows right away. He recalls the new Stooges were Ted Claus, Jack Hunter and Bud Mellott, and in subsequent shows Jim Mitchell and Chuck Pflieger took part. With this group, he thinks Pat Lamade Robison played piano. Ray also believes all of the material they used was that of Ned’s group, including “Dirty Olga...” which was now being carried all over the world by Penn State Thespian alums serving in the military. Even though the war was going on, Thespians continued to produce two shows a year, and they made dozens of trips to army camps with mini-shows. The new Stooges were with them on these trips. In spring of 1943, Ray and thousands of others were called into the military. When they came back, they resumed their Thespian activities and the second group of Stooges still performed. Ray believes the Penn State Stooges were discontinued in ‘46 or ‘47.

In 1947, Thespians had their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show and invited the original Stooges to return and perform but were told they couldn’t make it. So the new Stooges decided to do the act. But at the least minute, Ned’s group was able to attend so the new group sat out the show and allowed the “originals” to perform.

Today, Ned Startzel is the only one of the original Stooges left. As profiled in the last newsletter, he has remained active, producing and performing in the Spectacular Senior Follies in Dallas and singing with the Dallas Rotary Chorus. Of the later Stooges, Jack Hunter went on to write a New York Times best seller called “The Blue Max” which was made into a major motion picture in his lifetime. Bud Mellott performed and directed with various theatre groups in the Pittsburgh area including The Pittsburgh Playhouse and Stage 62. He was also a prize-winning grower of orchids.

The Penn State Stooges were a zany entertainment group with a sense of humor, a love of music, and the creativity to make fun things happen...a part of proud Penn State Thespian history.

Thanks to Ned Startzel and Ray Fortunato for their assistance with this article.

**Luanne M Russell, ‘63**  
luanner1@verizon.net

## President’s Corner

I’d like to welcome our newest board members – Kevin Warner (1988), Evan Smith (2011) and Eliza Altenderfer (2012). Kevin is Thespians past president, Evan a former Thespian secretary, and Eliza was the Thespian Historian and Alumni Liaison last year.

We also have several new Officers. Andrea Schwander is our new Vice President. Most of you know Andrea’s work as she has been our Newsletter Editor for the last year. Evan is our incoming Secretary and Luanne Russell is our newest Historian. Vince Roscioli remains Treasurer.

Thespians also have new officers. We welcome Patrick Kelly, President and as such, also a TAIG board member. Kristen McLaughlin is Vice President, Jennie Ciborowski Secretary, Ravender Virk Treasurer and Amanda Lippert is the Historian and Alumni Liaison. I’d also like to take this time to thank the past officers and 2011 seniors of Thespians. They put on two great productions last year and continued to build on previous years successes.

TAIG and Thespians alike have been busy since last Fall planning our reunion for April 2012 and addressing the Thespian financial situation. The reunion is shaping up very well with some fun activities so mark your calendars for April 13-15<sup>th</sup>, 2012!

Thespians have chosen two great shows to put on this year. First up is *Urinetown: The Musical*, a satirical musical comedy which won 3 Tony awards. For the Spring Reunion show, the Club is presenting *Aida*, winner of 4 Tonys with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice. The upcoming Thespian season should prove to be exciting. I can’t wait to see these shows and I hope to see many of you in the coming season.

Guy Fissel, ‘77  
taig.president97@gmail.com



*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 *Andrea Schwander* ('10), TAIG Newsletter Editor at [taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com)

Questions regarding TAIG may be sent to TAIG President **Guy Fissel '77** at [taig.president97@gmail.com](mailto:taig.president97@gmail.com)

### 2011-2012 TAIG Board Members

Guy W. Fissel '77, President  
Andrea Schwander '10, Vice President  
Evan Smith '11, Secretary  
Vince Roscioli '09, Treasurer  
Luanne Russell '63, Historian  
Eliza Altenderfer '12  
Fred Leuschner '50  
Eric Minford '76, '83(g)  
Tom O'Leary '08  
Stacy Reck '88  
Nicholas C. Semon '07  
Kevin Warner '88  
Ruth Yeaton '53, '59(g)

## Request from the Actives

Thespians is compiling photos and fun facts about its 115 year history for the upcoming reunion! If you have any photos of a show you were involved in, please send them in! These can be photos of the performance, set pieces, props, news articles, etc.; anything during that show's production or something you may have kept about it over the years. Also, now is the time to submit any reflections on the shows or what Thespians meant to you during your time at Penn State.

Please email any photos (labeled with the show and a description in the email) or quotes to [gsi5003@psu.edu](mailto:gsi5003@psu.edu) by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Or, if you prefer, mail it to:

George Inglis  
The Penn State Thespians  
c/o Communication Files - HUB Desk  
University Park, PA 16802

Feel free to email if you have any questions!

**The Rivals 1898** (left)- Remember hearing about the first Thespian show? Here's the cast! Help us celebrate our 115 years of history this April at the reunion.

## TAIG Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee has been meeting regularly since last October to brainstorm how to fund Thespians. Thespians today face many challenges that older alumni would have never dreamed of. Regular readers of the newsletter know about the high cost of renting Schwab, which includes box office and ushering staff as well as ticket sales. Besides the high upfront cost of Schwab, there are many other activities competing for students' time and dollars. In fact, many PSU entertainment options are free, including several other student-run production companies.

The high cost of renting Schwab, coupled with increased competition, means that the club requires independent funding if it is to continue. Since its inception, TAIG's mission has been to support and promote Thespians, including financially. For many years, there has been talk of setting up an endowment which would provide a stable, continuing source of funding for the club. The time has come to put talk into action.

To this end, we are setting up an endowment through the University. We hope to have the paperwork in place by October. If all goes well, the reunion in April will be the official kickoff to our endowment. In the meantime, we are looking for corporate donors and sponsors. If you know a company that is looking to support the Arts, please send Guy Fissel contact information at [taig.president97@gmail.com](mailto:taig.president97@gmail.com).

Vince Roscioli '09 and Guy Fissel '77  
TAIG Treasurer and TAIG President