

# THE ENCORE

VOLUME 15 NUMBER 1

October 2015

## From the Desk of the Editor

It's time for another edition of The Encore. There is a lot of information about upcoming events in this newsletter, so I hope you enjoy. We start off by introducing you to alumna Sherry McCamley ('77) who is still doing theatre in State College and beyond. Then, the active Penn State Thespians give us an overview of what they are up to. TAIG President, Guy Fissel, gives us an update on what's going on with TAIG endeavors such as the 2017 reunion and an update on the endowment.

I'd also like to take some time to introduce the next Newsletter Editor, Eliza Altenderfer ('12). You may have seen Eliza around tackling Homecoming or at a Thespian show since she is one of our local alumnae. I'm excited about the fresh perspective Eliza will bring to the newsletter as she has been a great asset to the Communications Committee already. You can reach us both at [taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com) so if you have any input for future issues or anything Communications related, please do not hesitate to send us an email.

YFIT,

Andrea (Schwander) Fisher '10  
Communications Chair  
[taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com)



## Alumni Profile: Sherry McCamley

Whoever said you can't do it all, let alone do it all well, never met Thespian alumna Sherry Smith McCamley ('77). Sherry is a self-described singer-songwriter-musician-actor-teacher and has been successful in all of these fields. A State College native, her first performance (playing piano at a bowling banquet when she was in junior high) earned her \$5 and a free game. She has since gone on to bigger, better, and more profitable gigs all over the country.

The State College High School graduate performed with the local band "Stevie & The Six Packs" for many years, eventually marrying "Stevie" Steve McCamley, a fellow State High and Penn State graduate. In high school, Sherry performed in the musicals *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and opposite Steve in the leading roles of *Babes In Arms*.

As a member of Thespians, she appeared in *The Apple Tree* starring Velma Anstadt Lubliner, who would become her close friend. Sherry remembers this show as a lot of fun with a company that was extremely close. She was also vocal director for Thespians' production of *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. During the summer months, Sherry served as vocal director with future husband Steve directing the orchestra at Boal Barn Playhouse for *Promises, Promises*, *Music Man*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Pippin*, *Bells Are Ringing*, and *Godspell*.

During her junior year at Penn State, Sherry was able to have a truly unusual adventure, performing as part of the 1976 Bicentennial Wagon Train Show troupe.

Fellow Thespian Stu Chamberlain called and urged her to audition, even though auditions were being held on both coasts. Since the show was co-written by Bruce Trinkley, one of her music professors, she did so. Somewhat to her surprise, she was cast as a piano player and singer, and spent months traveling with real wagons, cowboys, and horses, performing every night throughout the country. She could probably write a book about this experience alone! They started the trip in Wyoming. Despite it being winter, the first show was outdoors and as they began, a snowstorm hit. Even though they had pioneer style clothing for both summer and winter, it was tough for Sherry playing piano in the cold and snow.

The troupe traveled on to Nebraska, Kansas, and points east playing shows every 20 miles which was as far as the animals could travel at a time. While they actually lived in motor homes, performers also spent a lot of time riding the animals. Over the course of the trip, Sherry rode several horses, a mule, and an ox. People began to pick up and follow them through Nebraska, including a group of Native Americans heading for Washington D.C. who taught the performers their native dances. The two groups put on shows for each other...quite an adventure for a 20-year-old kid from central Pennsylvania!

One beautiful starry night in Nebraska, while sitting around a campfire singing, they noticed a strong bad odor. Everyone denied being the culprit, of course. Someone then realized that they were sitting downwind from the horses, and those horses were farting! The wagon train

floated on barges from Omaha to Kansas City and eventually went up into New England, finally meeting up with the other wagon train and Gerald Ford at Valley Forge on July 4, 1976.

Sherry says it was a great experience which was the start of her lifelong friendship with fellow Thespian and Wagon Train performer Velma Anstadt Libliner. The two formed a singing duo with Sherry on piano, continuing to perform in the State College area as well as in New York City cabarets from 1976 until 1983.

Since her graduation from Penn State in 1977 with a BS in Music Education, Sherry has taught and performed in Pennsylvania, New York, California, New Jersey and Ohio. Another of her Thespian friends, T.J. Bayless, had moved to California. When Sherry and husband Steve moved to San Francisco, T.J. recommended her for a part in a show and she got it. She also became a founding member of the Newstage Family Playhouse in Walnut Creek, California, which is a professional theatre made up of people who wanted to present more plays (as opposed to groups doing light opera and classic musicals). At Newstage they would begin with a bare-bones script that adults would build to perform for children, creating shows that could be enjoyed on several levels. It was creative, fun, and did not make money.

Now Sherry and Steve are living in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she continues performing in cabarets and events as well as acting and singing in local productions. She's even gotten to play one of her "bucket list" roles: Mama Rose in a professional production of *Gypsy*. She sings and plays in local clubs and one of her favorite gigs is "Sherryoke", where she sings and plays piano along with accompanying others who want to sing (a sort of live karaoke). Her "day job" is Drama Director at Milford High School where she directs and teaches acting, drama, and musical theatre. The school presents a play in the fall, a winter musical, a spring comedy, and a cabaret style variety show. Sherry is excited to be directing *Once On This Island* as this year's musical.

You would think this might be enough of a career for anyone, but Sherry

McCamley is now into what she considers the most rewarding phase of her career. In 2011 she formed Feisty Broads Productions with Cathy Springfield to produce socially relevant and thought-provoking works. They received a grant from the Cincinnati Arts Ambassadors Fellowship program last year to write *She's Crazy: Mental Health and Other Myths*, a cabaret-style show for which Sherry wrote seven songs. Sherry sings in the production, along with telling stories with Cathy about experiences with mental health issues in their families. They have presented this one-hour show for mental health groups, including National Alliance on Mental Health and the Cincinnati Veterans Administration Hospital, and will be taking it to several colleges and as part of the Healing Program in Cincinnati. The show is designed to entertain and educate, to tell stories both humorous and serious - not to be flippant or preachy. Sherry is also bringing this production to her hometown in collaboration with the Jana Marie Foundation, staging performances November 13 and 14, 2015, at the State Theatre in State College. It has been so fulfilling for Sherry to hear from people who have seen the show and said things like "You saved my life," and "This show caused me to get help". These types of comments mean a great deal to Sherry, knowing they have helped someone, and she's hoping to do a high school version of the show next.

Oh yes - Sherry also has a CD of original songs called "Changing My Point of View" available on iTunes. She and Steve have two children, Patrick and Erin, both of whom perform and musical direct in the Cincinnati area...carrying on the tradition!

Sherry Smith McCamley has been doing it all in music and theatre since she was a child, and shows no sign of stopping - or even slowing down.

Remember: November 13 & 14 at the State Theatre if you're in town (or can be).

Luanne Russell '63  
TAIG Historian

## TAIG Calendar

### Homecoming Parade

October 9, 2015  
State College

### Legally Blonde

October 22-24, 2015  
1:30 PM & 7:30 PM  
Schwab Auditorium

### Fall Board Meeting

October 24, 2015  
10:30 AM (EDT)  
221 Chambers Building

### TAIG Reception

October 24, 2015  
4:00 PM  
Schwab Auditorium

### Children's Show

December 4-6, 2015  
Schlow Library

### MasquerAIDS

January 30, 2016  
Schwab Auditorium

### RENT

March 24-26, 2016  
Schwab Auditorium

### Spring Board Meeting

March 26, 2016  
10:30 AM (EDT)

### Summer Board Meeting

July 16, 2016  
11:00 AM (EDT)



## President's Corner

There is a lot to update you on in the world of TAIG for 2015. Sadly, a prominent Thespian legend passed away earlier this year. After 102 years, Grace Baer Holderman took her final bow on January 15. Grace performed for most of her life, starting as a child and continuing until she was in her 90s. She had lead roles in a number of Thespian productions and was active in State College Community Theater. You can see Grace in a video called "Amazing Grace" - the video is produced by WPSX and we've featured it on the TAIG Facebook page.

This summer, some of you may have heard about an accident that occurred in Schwab. On July 27th, during a presentation for prospective students, an

8'x2' piece of plaster fell from the ceiling under the balcony. One person was injured, taken to the hospital, and released the same day. Repairs are still underway but will be complete by the fall show.

Looking towards the future, TAIG and Thespians will be joining forces again this year during Homecoming. We are currently preparing the float and if you're in town be sure to look for us during the parade on October 9. Also, although it's a year and a half away, we have started planning our 120th reunion - so mark your calendars for March 24-26, 2017! If you would like to help plan, or have any ideas for the reunion, please email our reunion committee at [taig.reunion@gmail.com](mailto:taig.reunion@gmail.com).

We are also continuing fundraising efforts for the Thespian Endowment. We have reached 71% of our goal, with a current total of \$88,777. Many thanks to all those who have contributed so far! If you have not donated yet, please consider making a donation to keep Thespians going for another 118 years. There is an insert within this newsletter listing all current donors. On the reverse, there is a donor form if you would like to add your name to the list.

I hope to see you at either Homecoming or *Legally Blonde* this year.

Guy Fissel '77  
TAIG President  
[taig.president97@gmail.com](mailto:taig.president97@gmail.com)

## News From the Actives

Even though classes only started a few short weeks ago, we are ramping up for a great year of theatre and sharing the arts with the Penn State community! The production staff for *Legally Blonde* has been hard at work, and it's showing - auditions for the show had one of the highest turnouts in recent years with over 115 students coming out for auditions! Our cast of 29 includes approximately 10 new members, and stars Morgan Sichler as Elle Woods. The show is directed by Monica Mazel and is produced by Matt Schiffman. We will also be partnering with TAIG to participate in the Homecoming Parade again to promote the show. We invite all alumni back to Schwab Auditorium for *Legally Blonde* on October 22-24!

In addition to our main stage show, Thespians is also busy with other aspects of the club. The Children's Show chairs have selected *Junie B. Jones* for the fall show. This book was selected based on multiple requests from children during *The Magic School Bus* last spring. The Children's Show chairs have started writing meetings and are looking forward to their run on December 4-6 in Schlow Library.

MasquerAIDS has also selected their theme for this year's show: Love Wins: A Chronology of a Nation. It's a story told in honor of those we've lost, in celebration of those still with us, and to inspire those yet to come. The show date is January 30th, 2016, in Schwab Auditorium.

Our THON chairs have also been off to a busy start! A small group of Thespians went to visit our THON child, Theresa (our newest THON family), on August 29th to celebrate her 10th birthday! She was really happy to see us and we had a lot of fun. Theresa is doing very well after her rotationplasty surgery in January of this year - she had CAT scans taken last week and they are all completely clear! She is still on some medications and is in the process of getting used to her prosthetic, but we look forward to welcoming Theresa and her family when they come to see the fall Children's Show.

Dylan (formerly Jenna) Duckett, our original THON child, is doing great. He started high school this year, which is certainly something to celebrate. We invited the Ducketts to *Legally Blonde* and are hopeful that they can make it.

They'll also be hosting us for a canning weekend later this year!

We have a lot of fundraising ideas for this year including trying to organize a canvassing trip where we will also do Christmas Caroling, along with our annual FTCabaret. Our main goal for this year is to raise enough money to get a third dancer for THON 2017...and we think we can do it! For more information on giving to Thespians THON, please visit the "Thespians Benefiting THON" section on our website, [psuthespians.com](http://psuthespians.com)

We are excited for our spring show, *RENT*, which runs from March 24-26, 2016.

If you are ever curious about the current state of the Penn State Thespians, please feel free to reach out to me at [thespiansHAL@gmail.com](mailto:thespiansHAL@gmail.com). I love talking to alumni and about Thespian life. Hope to see you around this year!

Jason Marko '16  
Historian/Alumni Liaison  
[thespiansHAL@gmail.com](mailto:thespiansHAL@gmail.com)

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Questions and comments regarding the content of this publication as well as suggestions for future articles may be directed to *Eliza Altenderfer ('12)*, TAIG Newsletter Editor, at [taig.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:taig.newsletter@gmail.com)

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

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