

LIFE WITHOUT JANE . . .

In the early 1950's the dollar sign loomed large in our lives. Usually it was bright red, rather than a comforting black. In early January we learned that the five productions presented in '49 brought in \$2040.80. Expenses had been \$2339.27, and \$298.95 remained unpaid. To add to our woes, the price of postcards, which we used as notices of coming productions, rose to 2¢! They had always been called "penny postcards"!

Mollie DeLanoy, always practical, suggested we prepare a Studio Players cookbook to be sold for additional revenue. Whether no one cooked or no one cared, I don't know, but nothing came of the idea until almost forty years later, when Mollie produced just such a book and it became a "best seller".

In January of '51 we applied (again) for tax exemption on the grounds of being a "non-profit educational institution". Again we were refused. It was not until years later that we achieved that assistance.

About this time Jane Paul, who had created, nurtured, guided and taught us, announced her imminent departure. Her health was declining and her doctor had urged her to head for a southwest climate. Jane must have felt like a parent who has taught a child to drive a car, but knows perfectly well that experience is really the only teacher. She gave us time to plan ahead, though it didn't do much good. It was like having the rug pulled out from under our feet when we were just learning to walk on our own.

We asked Linda Reid, an admirer of Jane's, to direct our fall show, "The Philadelphia Story", with Allen DeLanoy and Pat Cone in the leads. If we had expected firm, experienced guidance, we were disappointed. We fudged through it, quietly using our "Janie rules", and though it wasn't bad, it should have been a great deal better. Following "Story" we asked another "professional", Stanley Klein, to do "Candida", and it was all right but it lacked Jane's own polish. "The Two Mrs. Carrolls" was handed to Pat Cone to direct, and she did her best, which is all she could do. Alex Reed was our choice for the play, "Biography", and turned out a creditable production. Eventually we selected our directors from our members, hoping for the best - and sometimes getting it. Jane proved an almost impossible act to follow.

In 1955 our stage curtain, the beautiful "patchwork quilt", had to be discarded since it could no longer absorb the fireproofing solution with which we had sprayed it. It was a sad loss.

1956 brought a tremendous upswing in Theatre Party sales. We double-cast "The Tender Trap" to accept four parties per week, plus the public shows. Eight requests for Theatre Party nights for "Sabrina Fair" had to be refused, since there were no nights left. That same season we presented our first play for children, "The Clown Who Ran Away". It turned out to be the grandfather of the Magic Trunk shows.

But not everyone thought the Studio Players were great! Someone, with a Playhouse key and a large grudge, entered, closed the stage curtains and then crossed and locked the chains that pulled them. This was not discovered until time for the opening curtain. Twenty-five angry minutes later the situation was corrected. The door lock was changed. Again.

Perhaps the highlight of those several years came in May 1959. There was a triumphant "mortgage-burning" party! Cocktails at 4:30, supper at 5:30, and a spectacular bonfire - and beer - later. The Playhouse was ours!

FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF MANAGER MEETING, JUNE 26,1956.

Editor's Note: Members of the Studio Players have often asked openly just what goes on at a meeting of the Board of Managers. The following is included in this history in the hope that it will answer the question.

Roy Douglass said he had thought it over and decided that he would not direct "Streetcar". He would like to do either "The Glass Menagerie" or "Tea and Sympathy" with the stipulation that if he did "The Glass Menagerie" he would double cast the show which would use 4 women and 4 men. A long discussion followed which led to two motions by the Board.

1. It was moved and seconded that "Streetcar" be substituted for either "Glass Menagerie" or "Tea and Sympathy" and Roy would direct.

2. It was moved and seconded that "Skylark", the least important show be omitted to make room for a play of Roy's choice, subject to the Board's approval, and from the list of plays. That Jay Danish direct "Streetcar" and that Pat Cone direct "Solid Gold Cadillac".

The Board voted with the majority in favor of substituting "Streetcar" for either "Glass Menagerie" or "Tea and Sympathy" and Roy to direct.

In the discussion of which of the two plays to do it was decided that Roy would direct "The Glass Menagerie".

NOTE: The 1956-57 season presented the following four plays.

Gigi	Directed by Jay Danish
The Glass Menagerie	" " Roy Douglass
Skylark	" " Pat Cone
Here Today	" " Roy Douglass

IN THE "OLDEN DAYS"

The current casual dress code for ushers and out-front managers would have raised the eyebrows of audience members fifteen or twenty years ago. Jeans were not yet "in" as accepted attire. They were for set-building, house-cleaning or rehearsing. Outfront managers appeared in "black tie" or their best dark suits, while the females chose what were known as "cocktail dresses".

Audiences "dressed" too, especially on the weekend nights. Theatre was regarded as very special entertainment, and people dressed accordingly. It's a little sad to lose that evidence of the importance of the occasion, but some of the glamour of theatre still remains. Flowers still arrive from time to time, and there has never been a recipient who wasn't thrilled!

"AND OUT OF THE MAGIC TRUNK COMES" . . .

It was in 1956 that the Players decided to present a play for children as a Christmas present to our audiences. The requirements were not difficult - a simple set, no more than fifty minutes playing time, and no foreseeable expenses. We came up with one called "The Clown Who Ran Away" and presented it in December 1956. It was greeted with enthusiasm by the children, and we continued with a December play each year.

After a few years Playhouse member Ruth Fost urged more plays, more often, and exerted the leadership to make them happen. Four plays were planned for each season, and an increasing number of troupings were booked. For one of these Carole Caton generously offered her husband's small open truck. It was a Christmas play, and we filled the truck with the fireplace, the red window curtains, the brightly wrapped (fake) packages, the red crepe paper decorations - it looked very festive! Two cars filled with costumed cast members and the crew followed.

It was a gray, overcast winter day. It began to snow. Very wet snow. A lot of red paint had been used on set pieces - and a lot of red crepe paper. By the time we arrived we had a soggy crimson mess.

We dried off what we could, covered up what we couldn't, borrowed a few pieces of school furniture and improvised some changes. In true trouping spirit everything was managed and the curtain rose on (appropriately) "The Christmas That Almost Wasn't".

In May 1974 "The Invisible Dragon" was presented. An important prop was a trunk from which, at appropriate moments, various articles were taken. In the Board Meeting minutes of June 1974 it is revealed that the group's name had become the Magic Trunk Players.

In December 1974, when it was time for the annual Christmas play, the "new" stage was in place, a massive concrete expanse with no finished surface. Seats had not yet been installed in the auditorium. Such small details did not bother Ruth. The actors took to the stage; large rugs were thrown on the auditorium floor, and on these the young viewers sat, knelt, stretched out or jumped up and down during the exciting bits. The play was "The Wicked Witch's Christmas" and the audience was so close the children could see every movement of the actors' eyes as Noel and Candy, deprived of speech, blinked "once for yes, and twice for no." It was disappointing when the seats were installed and the children had to "sit quietly and behave themselves",

Ruth Fost now runs The Pushcart Players, with accomplished actors, a fine repertoire of plays and their own covered van! We owe Ruth a great deal.

Our three Magic Trunk plays each season have become not only a tradition, but a source of income far beyond our original expectations. In addition, the youthful audiences bring in adults who then come to see our "grownup" plays. There have also been birthday parties, school and Scout groups - and more revenue. Children's theatre represents another facet of true community theatre.

DURING 1957 . . .

Every active, paid-up member received one free ticket to each production.

A confusing item appears in the Minutes of 5/27/57. "There is no hot water now and it is leaking into the ground."

An automatic water heater was installed for \$110.00. A bid was received to install a sink and toilet in the basement for \$375. This news was joyfully greeted until it was mentioned that we had no sewer. This will be looked into more carefully.

By July it had become standard practice to have free beer at all work sessions.

Two copper cigarette urns, given to Jay Danish by her employer, Shulton, were found useful in the lobby. And still are!

In October the slides of all our previous productions disappeared.

At the December Membership Meeting complaints arose concerning 1) new members having to start in Laboratory Theatre. 2) Discontinuing the privilege of one free ticket per show, and 3) more should be given for the \$10 annual membership dues. Member Charlie Pittner observed that "You get out of a group exactly what you put into it."

WATERING HOLES . . .

Rehearsals, performances, work sessions, meetings - all these can rouse both hunger and thirst. From the beginning of the Studio Players there has always been a spot the majority preferred. The first was Huber's.

Donn Huber was a member of the Studio Players and when it was learned that his mother ran an excellent soda fountain not many blocks away - right next to the Bellevue Theatre - it became the popular place to go. Ice cream in lovely flavors could be had in any form - a cone, a dishful, a sundae or a soda - they all became favorites. If one was truly on the brink of starvation a most spectacular sandwich would be forthcoming. Those with cheese, thickly melting all over them, were preferred.

Those were quiet evenings, since we were often the only customers. By the time we arrived everyone else had gone home. They were warm, friendly evenings which was a good thing, because we liked each other's company but no one had much money to spend.

Not many years later Tierney's Tavern, not far south along Valley Road, was the popular choice. It was always noisy, always friendly. Most of us drank beer (who could afford anything else? Those were the Depression Years!) The Montclair Operetta Club people often came in after a show or a rehearsal. They would take over a long table and sing their little hearts out. It was great to listen to and may have sold a few tickets for them. On one occasion, when the Playhouse had been flooded by bursting frozen water pipes, the cast of "Night of the Iguana" slithered to Tierney's second floor for rehearsals.

When Charlie Brown's opened, behind the Bellevue Theatre, our loyalties changed once more. We drank mostly beer (it's always cheaper!) though a few spendthrifts would go for a Scotch and soda.

And then Finmore's appeared, right across the street! Leave the car at the Playhouse, trot a few steps and there everyone was. Of course it, too, is apt to be noisy. We make it that way. But it's friendly, and provides food for the starving actor. As long as Finmore's stays there, the Players will most likely be there too. Heaven forbid that we should just climb in our cars and go home!

LIFE IN THE SIXTIES . . .

The '60's started off with concern for our building. In the opinion of Hal Paitchell it was "falling apart". The roof continued to leak and the basement continued to flood. Hal asked several builders what we could do to improve the Playhouse. We learned quickly that we were "merely tolerated" by the Town of Montclair, since the building was there before the zoning and fire laws were put in effect. We would not be permitted to make any major changes or repairs to our Playhouse.

Stephen VanZandt, whose business occupied the space opposite us, drew up a plan for a new building. It would be used for "light manufacturing" in order to make it mortgageable, and would have 200 removable seats and a stage. We were grateful for Steve's work, but not enthusiastic. Another suggestion was a large Quonset hut set on a concrete slab. We also heard that buildings were being torn down in Passaic to make way for a highway, and we might be able to get one and have it moved. It was also pointed out that we should consider a building large enough to rent part of it. The question arose of whether we should consider relocating. Our stubborn reply was that "this seemed the best location for our purposes."

Then into our laps fell the opportunity to do a season of summer theatre at the Towers in Cedar Grove. It was an experience that those of us who lived through it will always remember. Each show ran five nights a week for two weeks, and there were always two shows rehearsing simultaneously. The Towers, unlike the Playhouse, was air-conditioned. The auditorium and the stage were exclusively ours to work in, and the bar was handy. Sometimes too handy.

As often happens, many of the Players who had agreed on what a great idea this was became invisible. By necessity every cast held a lot of "outsiders" in roles that should have been filled by members. We opened with "Under the Yum-Yum Tree", followed that with "Say, Darling" and "Solid Gold Cadillac" and as a smash finish, "Little Mary Sunshine".

No, we didn't make as much money as we hoped to. Yes, we worked a lot harder than we expected, since most of the Playhouse enthusiasm was just that. Enthusiasm. Not participation. And yes, those of us who were involved had a wonderful time, got very tired and learned a lot. The most important thing we learned was to "stay home". At the Playhouse.

Another endeavor in that busy period was a connection with the Social Education Drama Association, or SEDA. This stemmed from St. James Church in Upper Montclair. The aim was to dramatize social problems, and to quote from Cue Sheet, "Interest in SEDA is so high there is a definite possibility of an off-Broadway theatre and a protracted run." Neither of those exciting things happened, but Player Alastair Anderson's one-act, "One is a Lonely Number", was beautifully presented by the Players, and well received. A feather in Al's cap and ours.

And somehow, in addition to those extra-curricular activities, we still maintained our Playhouse season of four major productions.

"I REMEMBER - " by Milt Koosman

For about fifteen years we had been doing four productions a season, and it kept us all so busy we had been considering doing only three. Hal Paitchell had recently joined the Players and attended the meeting at which the change was discussed. He stood up and read a statement saying that we should do five shows a year. I almost had a fit! I said, "I'm the Production Manager and we can barely get four shows built! How the hell can we get five built?" Hal said very calmly, "You barely get four sets built so we will barely get five built." And so we went to five shows.

"THE BEST LOCATION?" . . .

In the summer of 1962 there was concern about our building. In the opinion of Harold Paitchell it was "falling apart". The roof continued to leak and the basement continued to be either very damp or flooded. Hal asked a few builders what we could do to improve the building. He learned quickly that we were "merely tolerated in the Town of Montclair" since the building was there before the zoning and fire regulations went into effect, and we would not be permitted to make any major repairs.

Stephen Vazandt, whose business occupied the lower end of Alvin Place, across from the Playhouse, drew up a plan for a new building for us. It would be used for light manufacturing in order to make it mortgageable. and would have 200 seats and a stage. This did not appeal to us. We wanted our theatre for ourselves.

Another suggestion was a large Quonset hut set on a concrete slab. We learned that buildings were going to be torn down in Passaic to make way for a highway, and we might be able to get one of them and have it moved. It was also pointed out that we should consider a building large enough so that part of it could be rented out. The question arose of whether relocating should be very carefully considered. Our answer was that "this seemed the best location for our purposes."

It was finally decided that we procrastinate on any major repairs until we decided whether or not to build. A motion was made and passed that for the present we would simply repair the roof.

TALENT VERSUS DOLLARS . . .

EDITOR'S NOTE: At this period, the early '60's, it was the custom to cast from within the membership, and that all cast members be "in good standing", meaning "dues paid".

"Five Finger Exercise", to be directed by talented Jean Evans, became a test case. Two leading cast members declined to pay their dues and were deemed ineligible by the Casting Committee. The Stage Manager refused to pay the \$5 balance of his dues and waited to see what would happen. The affair was thrown into the laps of the Board of Managers. The Board moved that the Stage Manager be permitted to work on lights, but not stage manage. This was not seconded. Another motion was made that he be disqualified for nonpayment of dues. This was seconded but not passed.

When Jean was told of the refusal to pay dues she assured the Board that checks were forthcoming. One did indeed appear, with the notation that it was "a donation and not membership dues." The Casting Committee found this to be unacceptable and disqualified the donor. Jean then recast the show, held one rehearsal and withdrew as director.

Pat Cone was asked to direct "Five Finger Exercise" and agreed with extreme reluctance. There is no record available as to whether everyone was in "good standing" when the curtain opened.

THE START OF A TRADITION . . .

In the spring of 1963 the Players presented "Five Finger Exercise". It was directed by Pat Cone, and the cast included a talented young actress named Betsy.

During the break that occurs in every rehearsal, the cast would light their cigarettes, pour their coffee into flimsy paper cups, and relax for a bit. Betsy soon learned of this break and arrived one night carrying an attractive ceramic coffee mug with her name on it. This was duly admired, with a few light remarks about "having a cup with your name on it! Very exclusive!"

As is generally done at the close of a Playhouse production, the director has some small mementoes for cast and crew. On this occasion the director had the brilliant notion of presenting white ceramic mugs, with the name of the cast or crew member on each, and the date. These were happily received until Players who had not been involved with "Five Finger", and therefore had no cups began to complain. It was only a short step to awarding "Playhouse cups" to Candidates as they became members, and the tradition was created.

In every season there are people who decide to become members, and are duly awarded Playhouse cups. After a few months of hanging unused on the kitchen wall, gathering dust and abandoned by their owners who have moved on to other theatres or other interests, these cups are cleaned and repainted for new recipients.

Lest an "old Player" return and look in vain for his cup, a careful list is kept of the name, the date and the number of stars each mug bore. It takes very little time to restore it if need be.

The following appeared in the March '66 issue of Cue Sheet. The writer is not known.

IN MEMORIAM . . .

The sad demise of our steam boiler, which occurred last week, was caused by a wound of undetermined origin (probably senility), which allowed the aqueous life fluids to escape. Bill Ward discovered the body and summoned the House Physician, Dr. Post, and the Medical Advisor, Dr. Paitchell. All their skill and knowledge was used in efforts to revive the patient, but to no avail.

As a result of this untimely tragedy a frigid atmosphere of gloom has now settled over the entire Playhouse. Unable to face the chilly scene of so many warm memories, all the "Iguanas" have slithered to Tierney's second floor where they rehearse in happier surroundings, while Laboratory Theatre casts have been meeting in Bond's, in parking lots and in the homes of friendly members.

However, friends and relatives will be cheered to know that a healthy and sturdy young boiler is even now being installed by our Friend in Need, capable Lenny LaRiccia, and a few days should bring on the Great Thaw.

In lieu of flowers, all able-bodied members are asked to contribute their able bodies for set construction and Playhouse cleaning on Saturdays at 11 a.m.

R.I.P.

A MORNING TO FORGET . . .

Years ago, before we had built the addition which is now our stage, our only lobby was the small one where the boxoffice now projects. The current lobby was part of the auditorium, with the stage at the far end. For a cast party we unbolted the first six rows of seats from the floor and moved them out of the way, giving us "party space".

In December 1969 it was time for the first performance of that year's Magic Trunk Christmas show. The six rows of seats had been replaced and everything looked ready until someone sat in one of the front seats, leaned back and took half the row with him. It seemed the seats had not been bolted down after being replaced. The following is from CUE SHEET of January 1970, and the editor was the inimitable Larry Brady.

"You've heard of Nights to Remember? Well the Saturday morning of the children's show was a Morning to Forget. It started with a casual call from Bill Ward at the Playhouse to Pat Cone at home. "Where are the bolts that hold the seats?" Pat didn't know but promised to find out. Hal Paitchell, the Seat Maven, was buried in a Coca-Cola plant in Jersey City (a fate even worse than putting up seats) and the C-C p in J C didn't answer its phone. The Asst. Seat Maven, Ben Minor, didn't even have a phone! Increasingly frantic calls were made to virtually everyone who had ever been seen to touch the seats, but the result was a total zero.

"It is, by now, 12:30 p.m., and the eager audience has started stamping and streaming into the Playhouse. Determined ushers are forcibly restraining the children from sitting in the unanchored rows, while Sid Lewis wisely runs to the hardware store for new bolts. These turn out to be the wrong size and fall through the holes onto the heads of the unnerved cast in the basement. At this point Mike Schlossman gets on the line and trails her husband to an unidentified warehouse in the depths of Paterson where he is taking inventory. Larry reports that he recalls seeing some bolts in an empty Awful-Awful cup on one of the makeup tables - could they possibly - - With the telephone still dangling the bolts are found (they are indeed the right ones!) and to the audience's delight the seats are firmly fastened down in record time.

"Mollie DeLanoy arrives and zips through the rows like a train conductor collecting fares, and the first performance is under way to a packed house. If there are a few Players now with graying hair that looks as if it had been pulled out by handfuls - that Saturday morning may be the answer.

"But - an AWFUL-AWFUL cup?"

"I REMEMBER - " by Milt Koosman

In 1960 we did "Oh, Men! Oh, Women!" with Allen DeLanoy as a psychiatrist and Lillian Brenner as one of his patients. Lillian always had trouble with memorizing lines, and one evening she rose from the couch and announcing she had to get a drink of water, she walked offstage. Allen fumed, but Lillian returned quickly. However, the third time she tried it, Allen was ready. "You stay right there", he announced firmly. "I'll get it for you!" and Allen stormed off.

THE ANIMAL KINGDOM . . .

There are few actors harder to work with than reluctant animals. Over the years we have been, for the most part, able to stay away from four-legged cast members, but sometimes there are plays we want very much to do, and the animal is "built in."

In 1953 we did "Bell, Book and Candle" with an outstanding cast that included (if memory serves) Dee Cochran as the female lead. That play also required Pyewacket, a cat that was the witch's "familiar". There was only one feline auditioner, and she belonged to a member who promised on oath to keep a firm eye on her between scenes. Easier said than done.

At one performance Pyewacket turned up missing at the crucial moment. While the cat's owner, the stage manager and various others trotted up and down Alvin Place calling "Here, kitty, kitty, kitty -" in increasingly desperate tones, Dee, onstage, reclining on a sofa, produced the most astonishing performance we had ever seen. One would have sworn the cat was stretched out beside her, purring comfortably. Dee's hand stroked it, following the body curves of the invisible cat, until even the director, chewing her fingernails on the bridge "believed"

The performance continued, the elusive cat was finally captured and returned. At the closing, when Dee appeared for her curtain call, she held Pyewacket in a strangle-hold and the audience applauded vigorously.

"Bell, Book and Candle" is a delightful play - but never another cat! Not ever!

Then there was Wooley. Wooley was an exceedingly large and shaggy sheep-dog, owned by Ruth Fost. In 1969 we did "King of Hearts" and Wooley joined the cast. All through rehearsals he did his thing, which consisted of little more than making an appearance on a leash, and cast and crew were delighted!

However, we hadn't considered an actor's vanity. At the first performance Wooley spied the audience and was delighted! Recognition at last! He stood at the edge of the stage, straining at his leash, and barked joyfully. at every performance. It took strong hands to hold him, and he resented that, but he never did make that flying leap into the auditorium that seemed terrifyingly possible. He just barked. He had a very loud bark.

For "The Royal Family" we looked for a pair of Great Danes and quickly learned that anyone owning one Great Dane finds that is quite enough. We couldn't come up with two. However, a pair of very large Airedales came our way and were promptly cast. All the team had to do was make an entrance on leash, and the leash was in the capable hand of Jay Ashton. The dogs were perfectly trained, nothing went wrong, and they are visible in the cast picture of that show.

Recently the woman who owned them attended a Playhouse performance of "No, No, Nanette" and introduced herself as the "Airedale lady". She said they were very well, thank you, and asked to be considered in any future canine castings.

As a final thought, a former Playhouse member and a young man of varied talents, Kit Cone, once played a whining dog shut in a closet, and in another production spoke the unforgettable line, "Polly wants a cracker" for a stuffed parrot. He was very convincing.

FROM CUE SHEET - April 1970 . . .

Dear Members - -

At a recent Board of Managers meeting, during the reading of the various committee reports, I began to wonder just how much the general membership was aware of the workings (or, for that matter, the existence) of these very important committees.

Take the "Building Committee" for instance. This hardy group of energetic Players is in charge of originating and putting into action all kinds of projects including the oft-mentioned "second floor John." Now, as everyone who has heard the call of nature during a performance and has headed for the "Powder Room" during an intermission knows only too well, one "John" for some 100 odd people of various sexes creates a lot of problems. One way to avoid at least one of these problems is to put notes in all envelopes that contain Patron tickets asking Patrons to please use their own John prior to leaving for the Playhouse.

A second, and possibly more feasible, solution is to install a second secondfloor John. This has been thought about and planned for many years but not until recently has anything been done about it. It is really a pleasure then to be able to announce that a second-floor John will be installed this very summer by unanimous vote of the Building Committee.

This second John will be installed adjoining the present one, using part of what is now known as "The Powder Room". As we all know this does not give us much room to work with and, in order to have a separate men's and ladies' room a few sacrifices will have to be made. These will be minor and slightly inconvenient, but must be lived with in the name of "progress".

The most noticeable of these "inconveniences" will be that, due to size limitations, the ladies' room will directly adjoin the men's room. This in itself is not too bad except for the fact that a new entrance will be built for the ladies' room, but the men's room entrance will remain the same. This will mean simply that the entrance to the mens' room will be gained only by first passing through the ladies' room. This, of course, is minor, and should cause no trouble if everyone remains calm. Just remember, a friendly "Hi!" and a big smile as you go through will help ease many of the first experience difficulties.

That's all for this month. Next month I'll discuss "The Finance Committee" and their plans to install a pay toilet in the cast area.

Your president, Pat Cone

The above "Presidential" message has been brought to you through the courtesy of your Editor (The Original April Fool.)

Larry Brady

Editor's Note: What is now, in 1992, the Tech Room, was, in 1970, the "Powder Room". \

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1970 . . .

- FEBRUARY - An agreement was reached with Stephen VanZandt (Alvin Place property owner) the terms of which provided that VanZandt would bill us for \$10 for each snow removal he did for us. This to be an automatic process and not subject to a Play-house request.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT: (As recorded by Larry Brady, the Secretary.) The light in the parking lot will be installed shortly. It will light the area from dusk to dawn, 365 days a year, and effectively eliminate the now popular Lovers' Lane.

Due to a gradual disappearance of soda intended for sale at performances, a "kitty" has been installed in the kitchen. The charge is 10¢ a glass, payable in advance.

The "Summertree" set will be "deplanted" on the Sunday after closing. The following Saturday the set for "Dracula" will be built - or exhumed - whichever you prefer.

The "Summertree" tree passed the test of realism when birds were discovered nesting in it. For "Dracula" some backstage assistants are needed to fly bats, produce green mist and sundry other duties. It was also reported that the ushers will dress as nurses. Just in case.

- MARCH - "Dracula" totally sold out.
Joe Martin, Theatre Party Manager, reported that all the available Theatre Nights have been sold for the remainder of the season.
- OCTOBER - It was moved and passed that \$50 be allocated from working capital to purchase electrical equipment to light our sign on Alvin Place.

At this time it was the custom that any Player working on a production - in any capacity - could attend the Cast Party at no charge. For the party following "Cactus Flower" 40 members were on the "free" list. These were cast and crew, builders of the revolving set, the sturdy grips who revolved it, lighting and sound people, makeup, costumes, props - everyone!

Anyone not on the list paid \$2.00 for the party.

- NOVEMBER - At this time Jane Paul was living in Globe, Arizona in her 19th year of broadcasting a regular radio program on Public Affairs.

A BIT MORE ABOUT THE '70'S . . .

It was a time in which we were blessed with some new members who are still in evidence and still contributing. People like Bob Charles and Walter Nieman. Like Jack Prince and Flip Bick. Like Don Sheffrin and Ben Minor, Pat Trottere and Auris Kvetkus.

It was the period during which Ed Cone noted casually one day that the new A&P, which was being built across the street from us, was encroaching on our property. When we examined our property map this did indeed seem to be the case. Joyce Slous's husband Larry, a lawyer, agreed to take over. Eventually we were compensated.

It was the decade when Jane Paul, living Arizona, was told that her legs must be amputated. She flatly refused. She died within a few weeks.

A second Playhouse member, Bill Winters, was ordained as an Episcopal priest. The first was Peter Holroyd.

The Magic Trunk productions were gaining popularity and adding sizeable sums to our bank account. Don Sheffrin made his first Playhouse appearance in a Magic Trunk production, "Yankee Doodle Came to Cranetown". It was written "to order" by Pat Cone to honor the long history of Montclair, which was first known as "Cranetown".

The Starving Actors' Potluck Supper had become a popular annual event on our calendar. People signed up to bring a casserole, a salad or dessert. Rolls, tea and coffee and wine were supplied, card tables were set up in the basement, folding chairs were rented, and everyone enjoyed!

The exterior of the Playhouse was painted by a group including Flip Bick, Ben Minor, Dick Roper and Ed Murphy.

A stray cat took up residence in the Playhouse. Known by some as Jennnifer and by others as Pyewacket, she caught our mice until she was adopted by a non-member named (appropriately) Ella Pettway.

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

In the '70's it was the custom that any Player working on a production - in any capacity - could attend the Cast Party free of charge? For the party following "Cactus Flower" 40 members were on the "free" list. These included cast and crew, builders of the revolving set, the grips who manually turned it, technicians, makeup, costumes, props - everyone! The few not on the list had to pay \$2.00.

"HANDS ACROSS THE SEA" . . . Chapter I -

To go back to the very beginning of this adventure we must turn to World War II and the London blitz. The indomitable British endured the horrors for over a year, but to save their children they shipped them off to distant country homes or to Canada or the United States. Many children from a section of London known as Barnet were sent to families in Montclair, which resulted in a close alliance between the two towns. When peace had been restored and the families reunited, the two locations formed reciprocal groups called Friends of Barnet and Friends of Montclair. Over the years various cultural events were exchanged, including lectures, musical programs and the like.

In 1985 an Englishman named Brian West, posted to the U.S. on business, was living in Montclair. An excellent actor, he had been a member of a theatre group in Barnet called Entens, for its postal code, N10. He discovered the Studio Playhouse and became a member. It was there one evening that he met a fellow Englishman, Hugh Pike, who had also been an Entens member, and Pat Cone. In the course of a sociable conversation the question arose of "Why not a theatre exchange?" No one could think of a reason why not, and so we did.

It was agreed that Entens would visit us first. The play they brought was Noel Coward's "Private Lives". The handsome black and white set was built from sketches and transAtlantic phone calls, and supervised by Heath Stanwhyck. It was a visual knockout! The nine people who bravely faced these wild shores were delightful and talented. They were suitably housed by various Players, admired the set we had created for them, had a couple of rehearsals on this different, and much larger, stage, and the show was on.

Local audiences were thrilled at the crisp performances given by the cast, who "zinged" their lines as they were meant to be delivered. Performances were packed! The final one was followed by a "gala", given by the Friends of Barnet. Held in a tremendous tent placed high on the hill of Montclair State College (where a very chill wind flapped and rattled the canvas), everything was in true theatre tradition. The champagne flowed, served by stewards in Beefeater costumes. The loaded buffet tables, the centerpieces combining small crossed British and American flags with red candles and flowers, the little white Lenox swans awarded to the cast and crew - it was a triumphant evening!

Entens presented the Players with a handsome plaque to mark the occasion, created by Christine Gilbert, a member of the cast. The Players gave each Entens member a navy T-shirt, emblazoned with "STUDIO PLAYERS - May 1987".

As we left we were followed by the hauntingly touching notes from the Lone Piper, as his kilt swirled in the chill wind, and his bagpipe skirled in our warm hearts. It was a night to be remembered by everyone who was there.

ENTENS/STUDIO PLAYHOUSE - "CHAPTER TWO" . . .
By Merrill Montgomery

And then it was our turn. Neil Simon seemed the obvious choice as an American playwright, and we selected (so appropriately!) "Chapter Two". The Players we selected would represent the Studio Playhouse, and must be able to pay their way from departure to return. And of course we found them! The gods of theatre must have been smiling on us, because the cast consisted of Carole Caton, Jay Ashton, Karen Cressman and Joe Dowd. The director was Norman Keller and, although it was impossible for him to make the London trip, Joan Skal, Bob Charles and Merrill Montgomery would fill in all the stage manager and crew spots. So far, so good!

Unfortunately something should be said about our flight to London. It was due to leave Newark Airport at 8 p.m., but word came that it would not take off until 10, so we delayed our departure from the Playhouse. On arrival at the airport we were told it was delayed until 1 a.m. It finally left at 4 a.m., carrying a group of sleepy, disgruntled Players! Then came a stop at Gander to refuel. In the interests of mercy we will pass over that! We were bedraggled. The men's beards were growing. We just wanted to get there!

We arrived at Gatwick at 6 p.m., and were met by Alan Nichols, Colin Ley and Grahame Greene, who ferried us to our destinations. It was then we learned that, expecting us much earlier, a welcoming party had been arranged for 7:30. Should they cancel? Certainly not! We arrived at our assigned homes, combed our hair, splashed water on our faces and turned up at the party. It was wonderful!

The next morning we were due to attend a reception given by the Mayor. Fearing tea and a biscuit we were delighted to find a bar and a table filled with hors d'oeuvres. We met the Mayor, the Mayoress, the Town Clerk and various Councilmen, all of whom were charming and friendly. It was not until the next day, Monday, that we appeared at the Tower Theatre for rehearsal. We were finally shooed out so their crew could complete the set. No, they would not allow us to help!

OPENING NIGHT! Two words to strike terror into the actor's heart, whether amateur or an international star! House lights down, blackout, lights up. Jay and Joe waiting stage right for their entrance cue. From the script - "The door opens and George Schneider enters." Jay strides onstage. Joe takes four beats and follows. "George, you're not going to believe this . . . " We're off!

Incredibly, everything went smoothly. Good solid laughs, and good beautiful stillness during the more touching scenes. Great performances by our four wonderful actors. Following the curtain call we were all hugging each other and babbling "We did it! We did it!"

During the next few days of performances there were trips to places we all wanted to visit, there were parties and there were gifts. And then there was our departure. But by then we all knew that any time we were planning a trip to England there were people we could call or visit. The whole experience was unforgettable, and I daresay that each of us is grateful to the Studio Players for giving us the opportunity to be a part of CHAPTER TWO.

Editor's Note:

The following paragraph by Lynn Fiori appeared in the July 1980 issue of CUE SHEET. Perhaps it is something we don't say often enough.

"Dear Playhouse,

Thanks for the memories - of rehearsals and performances six nights a week, of full houses and audiences of less than twenty, of shifting those uncooperative flats and scenery, and hanging lights in impossible places, of Saturdays and Sundays with buckets of paint, of Board meetings, Players' meetings, and always production meetings; of eager smiles on the faces of young audiences, of working hard to "get it all done by dress rehearsal" - and never quite finishing, of cooperation and personality clashes, of enthusiasm and apathy, of much laughter and a few tears, and most especially THANK YOU, PLAYHOUSE, for being a source of pleasure and fun and fulfillment for so many of us, and for encouraging all of us to be ourselves at our very best." "

L'ENVOI . . .

The dictionary defines "l'envoi" as "a short stanza ending a poem." This is neither a poem nor an ending, but it does mark the pause that exists between the last pages of this history and whatever comes next. Having been a part of "the world in microcosm" has been a profound experience in my life. The frequent successes, the rare downfalls, the Players who have become my friends, and the other Players who, for one reason or another, have chosen to move on in search of something they did not find with us - the physical growth of the Playhouse and our increasing ability to afford such improvements - all these things have been a very large part of my adult life. For this consuming interest, which has often filled both my days and nights - thank you!

Pat Cone
May 1993

WHO WERE THOSE PEOPLE ? . . .

Editor's Note: They were people who were part of the Studio Players, for comparatively short periods or for decades, who left valuable traces of themselves behind. They were planners and doers. They were the "but for whom" people. Such a list will go on as long as the Players exist, and many names will be remembered of members whose presence has strengthened and lifted us in one way or another. Here are a few, to whose memory our gratitude will always be immeasurable.

EDNA CAMPAIGNE - A charter member of the Studio Players, it was Campie's boundless enthusiasm that brought in our first members; her business ability that kept us on our perilous financial course, and her belief in and loyalty to the concept of the Studio Players that often kept us going. She had a foghorn voice and an infectious laugh. She was a magnificent actress.

GIULIO PONTECORVO - A member almost from the beginning, Ponte was a middleaged ~~slave~~ Italian who never lost his accent. A capable business executive, he managed to guide us through our early (and for some years continual) financial problems. Whenever possible he avoided being on stage.

ALLEN DeLANOY - Another very early member, Allen was an actor, a dancer, a salesman and a promoter. He served on many Boards of Managers, frequently as President, and appeared in a staggering number of plays. A Player to the end, he left us abruptly and tragically, shortly after his last stage appearance in "Li'l Abner" in early 1990.

MARGARET GROUT - Onstage a superlative actress, offstage a motherly, humorous and efficient woman. A member in the very early years, she was an important contributor to our growth and success, largely because of her ability to ease tensions and smooth ruffled feathers.

DUNCAN FERGUSON - A Scot, with the kilt to prove it, this salesman, who could sell anything to anyone, joined us in 1941, playing the title role (in black-face) in Saroyan's "Jim Dandy". Invaluable in the laundry-to-theatre conversion, he was an excellent actor, a "let's get things done" president, a capable carpenter and a totally charming man with a diabolical sense of humor. He was always the first to say "Where are we drinking tonight?"

LAWRENCE SCHLOSSMAN - From his introduction to the Playhouse in 1960, when his wife, Michal, was cast in a play, Larry became 100% Studio Player. Always at work sessions, always ready to listen to ideas or complaints, frequently President, Larry did everything - except act. He was directing "Forum" in 1975 when he went home from a rehearsal - and never came back.

HAROLD PAITCHELL - A comedian onstage and off, Hal's painstaking work in the planning of our new stage in 1974 was invaluable, and the physical work that he performed then and, later in other areas, was immense. Frequently President, always Friend, and never without his life-saving (for all of us) sense of humor.

PRESIDENTS OF THE STUDIO PLAYERS . . .

Among the many Boards of Managers who have assumed the responsibility of guiding the Studio Players through a season - some have achieved a great deal of good, others have caused internal strife, though unwittingly, and with the best intentions. It would be impossible to go through the records of almost any organization, and especially an "artistic" one, that has been in existence for more than fifty years, and find a story of total and continuing harmony. It is human nature to think that you could do a better job than the person who is doing it - and perhaps you could. However, not many Studio Players who are asked to serve for the first time on the Board have a clear conception of what the position will entail. The duties of each position are concisely written, but they cannot cover the personalities of the people involved, nor the tact, dedication and stamina required to discharge those duties. Following is a list of those brave, dedicated people who have served as President of the Board of Managers since the beginning - guiding, coping, working - and always striving for the best.

1941/42	Duncan Ferguson	67/68	Mary Anderson
42/43	Marjorie Doherty	68/69	Mary Anderson
43/44	Allen DeLanoy	69/70	Patricia Cone
44/45	Allen DeLanoy	70/71	Patricia Cone
45/46	John Borman	71/72	Lawrence Schlossman
46/47	John Borman	72/73	Harold Paitchell
47/48	John Borman	73/74	Harold Paitchell
48/49	Robert Windsor	74/75	Lawrence Schlossman
49/50	Patricia Cone	75/76	Lawrence Schlossman
50/51	Patricia Cone	76/77	Mary Anderson
51/52	Patricia Cone	77/78	Elizabeth Sterling
52/53	Allen DeLanoy	78/79	Elizabeth Sterling
53/54	Margaret Grout	79/80	Patricia Cone
54/55	Charles Burgi	80/81	Patricia Cone
55/56	Roy Douglass	81/82	Walter Nieman
56/57	Charles Burgi	82/83	Patricia Cone
57/58	Charles Burgi	83/84	Lynn Fiori (resigned)
58/59	Florence DiLeo		Robert Charles
59/60	Patricia Cone	84/85	John LaMartine
60/61	Patricia Cone	85/86	John LaMartine
61/62	Lawrence Schlossman	86/87	Ray Wood
62/63	Lawrence Schlossman	87/88	Patricia Cone
63/64	Patricia Cone	88/89	Robert Charles
64/65	Patricia Cone	89/90	Robert Charles
65/66	Harold Paitchell	90/91	Jay Ashton
66/67	Lawrence Schlossman	91/92	Josh Merrigan
		92/93	Jack Prince