

There's More Behind a Show Than the Public Realizes

Members of the Village Players find themselves amidst varied activity. They apply themselves to the production of shows both for the public and then for their membership exclusively; they study and employ the stagecrafts and then take time out for the social aspects of their organization.

Ten months out of the year the theatre-workshop-clubhouse is bustling with activity. The public is often unaware of the presentation of a play. According to Walter Skinner, president of the Players, these thespians are continuously striving to improve or perfect the technical workings behind stage.

Just completed, for example, is a six-weeks course in make-up, taught by Professor Leonard Leone, head of Wayne University's dramatic department. These fundamentals of basic and character make-up were given to a group which included Mrs. Gordon Baker, Mrs. Edwin Deer, Mrs. Richard Brown, Mrs. Kariton Pierce, Mrs. Robert Garrison, Mrs.

J. R. Alexander, Mrs. Harris Machas, Mrs. Elliot Hagelin, Mrs. Carleton Scott, Mrs. Edward Reid and Mrs. Warren Pease. Arrangements for the class were made by the Players' make-up chairman, Mrs. Thordine Dweley.

Professor Leone's success with an earlier directors' course given for eight weeks to some 23 aspiring members gave impetus to the popular demand for this latter class, according to vice-president, Mrs. Ellen Higgins. And because of demands in recent shows for subtle drawing of aged and character roles, the group began to pay dividends immediately, she said.

On the subject of what goes on behind stage, Mrs. Higgins reported that plenty of hard work really is combined with a lot of

fun behind scenes. "The newest member goes to work immediately; husbands and wives often find here an activity on which they cannot work together. The work of both is the important part covering going on at present under the direction of board member Gordon Baker."

Have New Addition

Because of the new addition to the playhouse opened a month ago, enlarged working space has offered the opportunity for extensive overhauling and improvement of stage equipment, Baker stated.

"Flats" or "wings," he explained, "are the side pieces of scenery which, when fastened to get or a scene within which the dramatic action takes place.

"For amateur purposes, the usual standard height is 12 feet, varying in width to obtain flexibility in scene design. Flats are wooden frames across which the canvas is tightly stretched and which can be raised according to the design's demand.

"That's what our group has been doing—revising—stripping off old canvas and replacing it with brand new stuff," a decided advantage for faster effects. Both men and women have worked hard on this project, day and night."

Mrs. Stanley Hood has organized the morning group of women, which included Mrs. Clifford Guest, Mrs. Wallace Ivers and Mrs. Higgins. New members, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Royal and Kariton Pierce have worked and learned much. Other husband and wife teams include Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Adger, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Joslyn, Mr. and Mrs. Russ Richardson and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hawkins.

The evening crew has included Jesse Eakins, Dean Burnett, Walter Skinner, Boyd Bay, Harris Machas, George Green, Lane Bishop, Mrs. Edward Reid and Richard Brown. Work is still in progress and this is the biggest project at the moment. All newly covered flats are being used in the January public show, "The Late Christopher Bean."

In the Old Days

As the project could have been undertaken so easily before the new addition was completed. But they had to wait several days, George Dweley recalls that when, after its founding in 1924, the group was producing its plays in the Community House rooms of St. James parish house.

Royal technicians and production difficulties stood in the way then, Dweley remembers when, in order to see plays with the seven foot ceiling of the Sunday school room, audiences had to be seated with the first two rows on the floor, the second two on primary school chairs and the third two on regular chairs while the rest stood.

All scenery had to be so constructed that it could be dropped through a trap in the floor. It was a real jump to the 30 foot high stage of their new playhouse into which the Players moved in the fall of 1927, according to Dweley. The building was designed by the architect of the Wallace Frost and the builder was Robert Tillotson.

Last year a new wing was designed by Edna Bissell and built by Dweley. This annex gives the group greatly enlarged stage room. The new portion includes, on stage level, corridors, dressing rooms, make-up room, paint room, electrician's room, warehouse for storage of properties, wardrobe and scenery and on the auditorium level, a kitchen.

For Hospitality

"The kitchen," Dweley explained, "has completely built in cupboards and serving counters. Being directly off the auditorium floor it has facilitated the serving of refreshments on social occasions. It was decorated and curtained entirely by the women members.

The new section provides practical cross-overs with stairs to basement on both sides, additional exits from the basement and two additional exits from the stage. It is not only of great technical value but it has also increased the safety features of the building," Dweley pointed out.

The group is looking towards the eventual completion of a hobby shop for members, racks for scenery and closets for period costumes.

In the opinion of many Players, future growth will probably include the construction of an addition in the front, this to increase the seating capacity by about one-fourth, to provide a large and adequate lobby with both men's and women's coat rooms and raised seats.

When the annex was officially opened last February, the original murals in the auditorium were redone by Mrs. Paul Averill who was assisted by Mrs. John Hamel.

SOCIAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Among the many who attended the annual cabaret held by members of St. Dunstan's Guild last Saturday evening were Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Hart of Westwood drive.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Budd moved from their Lake Park drive residence to Vaughan road in Bloomfield Hills yesterday.

This coming Wednesday, Mrs. Otto Kern of Squirrel road will be hostess at a kitchen shower for her niece, Miss Barbara Ann Hughes.

Mr. and Mrs. William D. Downey of Abbey road and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur B. Hoffman spent the weekend skiing at the Otsego Club. On January 26, Mr. and Mrs. Downey will entertain at an open house for their son, Bill who graduates this month from Baldwin high school.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Thomas Smith of Martell drive will be hosts at a cocktail party this Saturday evening preceding the Winter Club dinner dance.

Miss Phoebe Otter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence E. Otter of North Woodward avenue is planning in New York City and another daughter, Julie are visiting a weekend in New York City the first of February.

Last Sunday evening, Mrs. Torrey Shallcross entertained a group of friends at a supper party in her Beach road residence.

Before attending the Winter Club dinner dance this coming Saturday, Mr. and Mrs. Chad R. Ritchie of Partisan road will entertain a group of friends at cocktails at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club.

Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Jackson are spending the winter vacation at Lake Worth, Fla.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward R. Godfrey, Jr. of Lake Park drive are entertaining a few friends Saturday evening at cocktails before going to the annual cabaret at St. Dunstan's.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter T. Bromley were hosts to a few friends at cocktails in their home on North Woodward avenue last Saturday evening. Afterwards they went to the cabaret party at St. Dunstan's.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Davis are now settled in their new home on West Long Lake road. They moved

early this month from Woodridge road.

Mr. and Mrs. A. O. Thalacker of Westwood drive were among the many who attended the annual cabaret at St. Dunstan's last Saturday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Simon James of Arlington drive were hosts to Dr. and Mrs. Leo Perrin for an evening of canasta last Saturday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. David E. White of Pasadena, Calif., were the distinguished guests of Mr. and Mrs. Donnell R. Matthews of Pilgrim road.

In honor of Mrs. Paul Connelly, a former Birmingham resident, Miss Mary Bickel and Miss Mary Barnett of Detroit entertained members of their bridge club at a luncheon in the Busch home on Abbey road last Saturday.

After vacationing in New Orleans for ten days, Mr. and Mrs. Donald S. Bell have returned to their home on Elm street.

Billy Covill, of Brown street, celebrated his seventh birthday Saturday with a party in his home. From Royal oak were Larry and Gary Carps and cousins, Peggy and Lenny Spullock; other guests included classmates and friends of the host from Birmingham, Jerry Redies, Michael Jennings, Michael Emery, Hunt Hodges, Patricia Slaughter, Lynn Seeger, Candy Mack and Philip Mack. Prizes were won by Candy Mack, Larry Carps and Michael Emery.

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar S. Pierce of Willow lane have returned from a trip to Hollywood, Fla., where they visited with Mr. Pierce's sister, Ernestine Pierce and Francis Knight at their winter home there.

Mr. and Mrs. John P. Carrite were among those who were hosts at cocktails Saturday evening before the St. Dunstan's cabaret party.

Mr. and Mrs. Eliot Robinson who have returned from a six-month wedding trip in Europe are now settled in the gate house on the estate of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Otter.

A two-week visit in Dallas, Texas, and then a jaunt to New Orleans is being planned by Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Stogall of Willow road.

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Auxiliary Holds Installation

The Metropolitan Club No. 9 and the Ladies' Auxiliary held a joint installation last Saturday evening at the Party-Time Place. Installed for the women's auxiliary were: president, Ann Tobin; vice-president, Ruth Kelly; recording secretary, Maxine Politz; financial secretary, Edith White; treasurer, Jean Carr; sergeant-at-arms, Ethel Schary; trustees, Marguerite Mellem, Margaret Haack and Gertrude Peterson and chaplain, Betty Snow.

A social evening followed.

Business Women's Social Meeting

Members of the Birmingham Business Women's Club will hold a social meeting in the Community House this evening. Features on the program will be the movie, "Grandma Goes to Town" and a skit put on by the Community House to illustrate the services rendered by the house.

Jane Hall is chairman of the arrangements committee and assisting her are Mary Burnside, Irene Hanley and Lillian McLean.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Clark of Adams road and Mrs. Clyde Hagerman, Sr., have returned to Birmingham after visiting with the Clark's son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. George Rosacker in Peoria, Ill., for a week.

Mr. H. P. Sandoval of Ruffner street and his brother, Thomas of Flint, Mich., left by plane last week for San Jose, Costa Rica in central America. They will remain there for six weeks visiting relatives.

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