



Even leading man Robert Dearth laughs at comedienne Winnie (Mrs. Dean) Coffin, who does some ad libbing at a rehearsal of "The Bloomingham Newcomers."

## 'Newcomer' Production Spoofs Community

By ROBIN BAHR  
Special Writer

Get your funny bone ready. It's in for a workout!

Bloomfield and Birminghamites are going to find themselves laughing—at themselves—when "The Bloomingham Newcomers" opens tonight at The Arts Center.

This won't be the first time either. Three years ago it was "The Bloomingham Eccentrics," a highly successful musical comedy written by Dean Coffin and performed by St. Dunstan's, that delighted audiences with its spoof of the local scene.

Now comes "The Bloomingham Newcomers," written by the same talented gentleman and produced by St. Dunstan's and The Village Players for the Arts Festival.

Once again it's a musical comedy, "taking off" our fair city, especially its organizations.

**THE PLOT** revolves around the plight of newcomers Herb (played by Bob Dearth), Fanny (played by Winnie Coffin) and Sally Rice (by Ann D'Hyveic), after they are transferred from quiet, small Mesquite, Ohio to high-living Bloomingham, Michigan.

Having bonded up on the nature of the beast via "Fortune" magazine, the Rice's move in, prepared to take the town by special storm.

It seems that, according to Fortune, the Welcome Wagon lady (Mary Ellen Hill) and everyone else, to be successful around here you've got to be a jinner.

With 215 organizations in Bloomingham (at last count), it should be a cinch, so they figure.

**FIRST THE** Rice's move into a house on Durbin Street under the direction of the very polished Pottor's moving crew. Then they move in on the organization—The Newcomers, Village Woman's Club, Epitaphs of the Library, and so on.

Laughing, crying, and quarreling with The M. C. (Mrs. Fanny and Family Newcomers) winds up, however, in a public reading from the "Fortune" magazine on the part of the Rice's.

Herb, a former member of a social club, succeeds in getting the organization and further, as it turns out, he is tentatively accepted to be the new secretary.

**COMPLAINTS** come. Eventually, after a series of hilarious mishaps and misunderstandings, the Rice's settle down to a happy life in Bloomingham.

There is a point to all this. Dean Coffin thinks we do become over involved in organizations and find ourselves ever committed, even at the high school level.

But the emphasis is definitely on the fun, rather than the message.

And if the show fits us, it does the same for our detractors, too. One of the big singing numbers, drinking "Cream de Ment and Beer," parodies the Fortune article that parodies local clubwomen.

This is one of the many funny num-

bers in the show. But the music, like the plot, has serious moments, too.

**MRS. CHARLES** Homeloch has written lovely romantic duets for Sally and her Mocadoire bean (Jeffrey Gilbert). She has also written a moving ball ad-type piece, "The Song of Detroit," reminiscent of "My Boy Bill" from Carousel. Isabelle wrote all this and more in four weeks, as fast as Dean Coffin could write the lyrics.

An undertaking of this size might well take several months. It has taken five weeks.

After the music and book were finished, a cast of 66 was selected following three open-to-everyone tryouts. Choreographer Anne Walter went to work on the dances. Musical director Jean Schmidt and assistant Bob Bates began rehearsing the singers.

**THE PRODUCTION** crew, under Nelson Kamral, tackled the enormous job of designing, constructing and painting 14 sets.

Keeping all this in smoothly running order, attending daily rehearsals, and coordinating sets, dance, music, and story into a unified whole has been the job of general Mrs. Jan Warner. She was assisted by Bob Davis.

Having presented theatre at Wayne State University, Stevens College, Theatre Arts in Detroit and that includes Shakspeare as well as contemporary drama and comedy. Dear Warner finds this show as fascinating and challenging as anything she has encountered.

"**THERE IS** so much involved in just the technical aspect of producing a show of this size," she said in a spare moment last week. "The stage in the Geodesic dome is a real one without a curtain. This means a complete rearranging that set during the evening without any interruption of the flow of action. With 14 sets, that's a tough job. A huge job. It's a real challenge. The amount of time spent on it is the whole area. A lot of people in the organization are doing a great job. As each has been wonderful."

Herb, a former member of the organization, says he should find it interesting and as was the case with the singing, he is going to love it. He says he has the subjects of the show.

### W. C. Scott Veteran Of Many Stage Roles

W. C. Scott, a retired teacher of tenor W. C. Scott, a veteran of the movers in "The Bloomingham Newcomers," has been heard in stage performances for many years.

Scott, of Lane Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, is a retired teacher. He has been a member of The Village Players of Birmingham for 15 years, which included a term as the theatre group's president. He played the difficult role of the captain in "Mister Roberts" and also starred in "Tobacco of the August Moon" at the Players' Chestnut Street Playhouse.

# Festival Chairman Congratulates Workers

By COLIN H. JOHN  
General Chairman

### Birmingham Arts Festival

As general chairman of the Fifth Annual Birmingham Arts Festival, I have had a panoramic view of the tremendous spirit and enthusiasm with which the people of our community work to stage our big annual cultural event.

From here, I have seen how hundreds of citizens working together on a common goal can boost community spirit, like the way the men behind the Boston tea party rallied the Spirit of '76.

It has been heartwarming to watch the dedication with which the Birmingham-Bloomfield lovers of the arts work to stage the arts festival.

**THEY SEEM** to work with pride in the fact that it has already grown to be the state's biggest arts festival, and that its annual exhibition of art has become an important event in Michigan art circles.

This year, I watched as over 100 actors, actresses, musicians and dancers responded to the call for try-outs for the festival musical, "The Bloomingham Newcomers." A cast of over 60 has kept a strenuous schedule of four rehearsals weekly. Over 200 people are working behind the scenes to help them. Some are painting scenery, others built sets, col-

ored props, sewed costumes, and sold tickets.

**AT THE** Birmingham Art Center, members of the Bloomfield Art Association, which sponsors the annual community-wide festival, have labored diligently, with help from many non-member volunteers.

Over 10 women will be at work "finishing school" in the festival art market on Thursdays. Laterally hundreds of other volunteers, bringing exhibitions, setting up demonstrations and supervising the exhibition of art in downtown store windows.

Every resident of our community can be truly proud of these dedicated, hard-working people who make our big celebration of the arts possible. To all of them, I send my sincere thanks for a job well done.

The fifth annual Birmingham Arts Festival will feature an art exhibition, demonstrations by painters and sculptors, tour of artists' studios and a nightly performance of an original musical comedy "The Bloomingham Newcomers."

A giant geodesic dome seating approximately 700 persons will be the auditorium for the production, "The Bloomingham Newcomers."

## Art Association Officers Serve With Art Festival

The Birmingham Art Association, sponsors of the 4th annual Birmingham Arts Festival, has six officers, eight new trustees and seven incumbent trustees serving on their board of directors.

Officers are Eliot Robinson, president; Robert B. Bender, first vice-president; Roger Crispell, second vice-president; Mrs. Don Ahrens, secretary; Mrs. Carl D. Rodgers, corresponding secretary; and Douglas S. Brown, treasurer.

Eight new trustees were named recently. They are Merrill Bates, Bender, Brown, Colin John, Edward H. Lerehen, Robinson, Linn Smith and Clifford West. All are serving three-year terms with the exception of Bender, John and West whose terms are for two years.

**SEVEN** incumbent trustees are serving: Paul N. Averill, Mrs. Ahrens, Mrs. C. A. Hall, Mrs. Harold Drow, Mrs. Rogers, Crispell and Dean Coffin.

John is also general chairman of the Arts Festival, and Coffin wrote the Festival's "Bloomingham Newcomer" play and lyrics.



### Pensive Director

Keeping a close watch on the action in "The Bloomingham Newcomers" is Director Dean (Mrs. John H. Warner, of 1061 Lakeside, Birmingham).



## 'Tender Moving Care'

Rehearsing diligently for the song "Tender Moving Care" in the "Bloomingham Newcomer" production are members of the chorus (from left): W. Carleton Scott, Larry Hare, and Bo Broock.