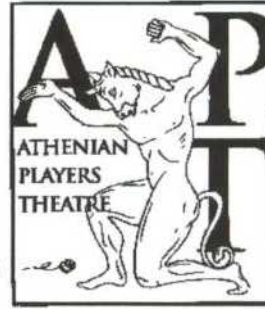


the MINOTAUR



www.seofit.ohio.edu/apf



ATHENIAN PLAYERS THEATRE Newsletter Vol. XIII Iss. 1 September 2004

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Here We Go Again!

Ready or not, here we come! Athenian Players Theatre is entering its thirteenth season with auditions for the first show set for Saturday, September 11 from 3:00 to 6:00 pm at Stuart's Opera House. That show is *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society Murder Mystery*. Try saying that three times fast! Chris Coleman will be directing this farce, and needs four women and one man to fill the roles. Production dates are November 4, 5, 6 & 7. That's one week only, folks. (All three shows this season will have one-week runs of four performances each.) While you're marking your calendar for the November show, you might as well

go ahead and mark it for the rest of the season. The second show will be Neil Simon's *California Suite*, which will run March 3, 4, 5 & 6. Then the season will close with Agatha Christie's classic murder mystery *Ten Little Indians* on May 5, 6, 7 & 8.

With this much advance notice, there's no excuse for missing a single show this season! It is hoped that, as a member of Athenian Players Theatre, you will be cast in and/or work on the crew for and/or at least come to see all three shows. Each APT member counts on the support of all the others to make this a vital community theatre organization, with the emphasis on "community".



Porkopolis

This year's State Conference in Cincinnati was held in a veritable pig sty. But considering the theme, that's a good thing! Flying pigs were everywhere in Porkopolis as the "Southwest Express" took us all to a hoe-down complete with BBQ pork and foot-stompin' music.

A whopping 609 conventioners checked in at the Holiday Inn Eastgate to join the festivities. The Southwest Region theatres did a fantastic job of putting together a great State Conference!

Our own Southeast Region made an impressive show by winning several awards in various categories. For starters, Actors Guild of Parkersburg, which represented the SE Region with the excerpt from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, picked up Merit in Acting Awards for Stephanie Dudley (Stella Kowalski) and Maureen Olander

(Blanche Dubois). Also for AGP, John M. Gradwohl, Jr. won Merit in Set Design for *Streetcar*, a second Merit in Set Design for *Honk!*, and yet a third Merit in Set Design for *Jesus Christ Superstar*. John has been a busy boy!

In the "Newsletter" category, your humble editor won Outstanding for Newsletter for APT's *The Minotaur*, Jeff Walker of Mid-Ohio Valley Players won Merit for Newsletter for *Entr' Acte*, and Coshocton Footlight Players won Merit for Newsletter for *Backstage*.

Costume awards for SE Region members included Trophies for Individual Costume Design to Gayle Krieger and Missy Spinell of Little Theatre of Tuscarawas County for *Victor/Victoria* and Excellence in Overall Costume Design to Krieger and Spinell for the same show.

The Southeast Region itself received a plaque representing the award for Most Improved in the Patron Program.

Continuing on, LTTC's Purple Ladies Missy Spinell, Lora Cotton and Sally Holmes received an Honorable Mention Award in Saturday night's Vegas Costume Contest.

Last but not least, the "OU812" team of OVST's Carol Patterson, APT's Joe Balding and LTTC's Sally Holmes, Gayle Krieger & Lora Cotton won Saturday's late night game of OCTA Feud.

All in all, the Southeast Region made a significant dent in the winnings!

Under the category of "Business", Mid-Ohio Valley Players' Billie Harmon and Coshocton Footlight Players' Susan Metz-Foster were elected to three-year terms on the OCTA Board, and Susan Barzda of Cambridge Performing Arts Centre was elected to serve as OCTA's Secretary.

Congratulations to all! We have much to be proud of here in the Southeast!

When Community

Thespians

Go Home Again

by David Hoxworth

As many of you probably know, I have returned to Missouri so that I can return to doing Adjunct College teaching. I will be teaching 5 classes this fall semester for Drury University. Connie will be joining me later in the year. But as my title might suggest, I returned to see a production of our old community theater group, the Regional Opera Co. They did a production of the founder's new play called *Ozark County*. It is a highly fictionalized account of a poor woman who left this very real rural county and made it big in the big city of St. Louis. She returns during the depression a wealthy woman and marries an old high school flame.

Mr. Turley's plays are often about actual characters of the rural Ozarks. He was a previous script writer in Hollywood, ran political campaigns and has sold several of his plays, including one which was used really for its title and setting for a short lived TV weekly about an Amish family and starred a famous football player. It was called *Aaron's Way*, and again it was based on an actual Amish family in Missouri. The TV series had little similarity with the original play.

The major thing I was struck by is the paucity of talent in comparison to your productions. However, I must remember the population base is probably only 1/4th that of the Rolla area.

There is one real positive though about ROC. (see "Thespians" on page 4)

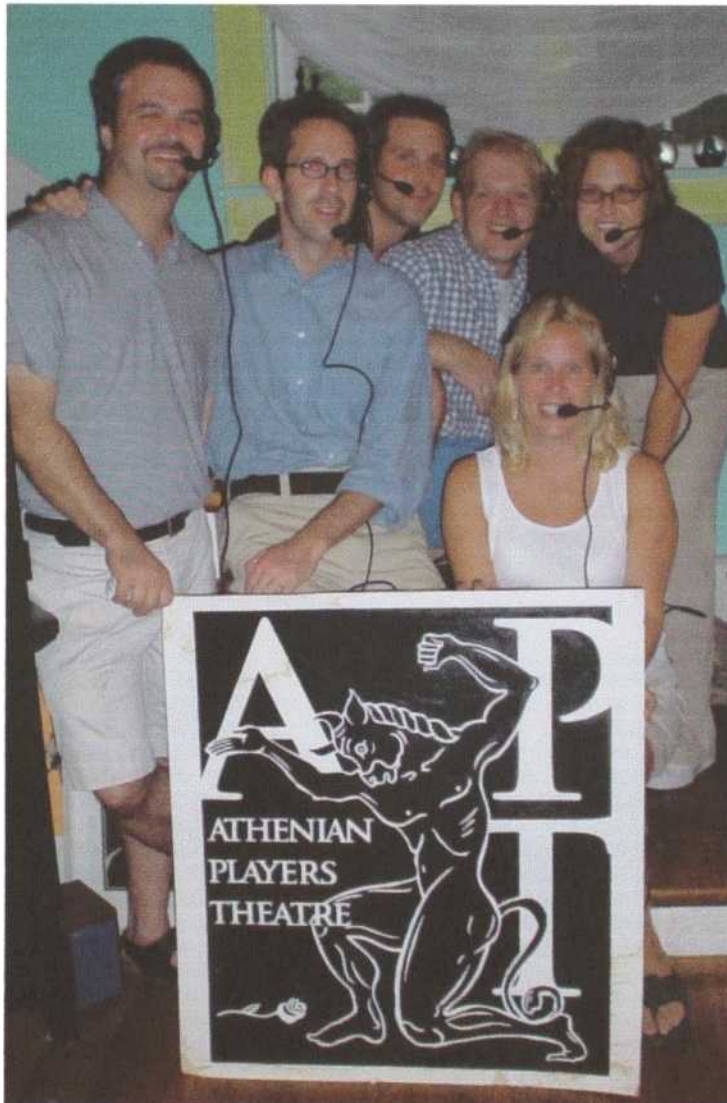
Headsets R Us

With a little help from our friends and a lot of help from the Athens Foundation, we happily show off our six new radio headsets, purchased (as well as two floor microphones) with this year's AF grant. These new headsets will facilitate quality communication between the Stage Manager and the running crew for all of our upcoming

with which we have purchased much needed equipment such as lighting instruments for lighting the stage and power tools for building our sets.

With this year's addition of headsets and microphones, the technical aspects of our productions will be much improved, allowing smoother-running shows.

Thank you, Athens Foundation!



shows, and the low profile floor mics will enable much improved sound quality, especially for our musicals.

Over the past few years, the Athens Foundation has supported Athenian Players Theatre with several grants,

Aiken Heart

APT's favorite stringer in Aiken, South Carolina, has landed another role! Marvin Bowman, character actor and no doubt resident character, will play Uncle Lui in the local September production of *Tony 'N Tina's Wedding*.

It's an audience interactive play about an Italian wedding, and is being performed as a fund raiser. Several New York actors have been cast in the leads while local Aiken actors will fill in the other featured roles. Marvin says Uncle Lui has an attitude and leaves to use the bathroom in the middle of the wedding ceremony. Whatever it takes to steal focus, huh?

Check It Out !!!

Jim Parsons is our new web master, and he's been hard at work re-vamping APT's web site. Not only does it have a new look, but

Jim has added some new information to catch it up with our latest activities. You can check it out by logging on to:

www.seorf.ohiou.edu/apt

Dues Time

With the new season upon us, it's time once again to pay dues for membership in Athenian Players Theatre. This is our 13th season and dues are still a very reasonable \$10.

The Minotaur is just one of the benefits of membership in APT, so if you live in or near Athens County and wish to continue your membership and continue receiving The Minotaur, please send your dues to: Athenian Players Theatre, PO Box 283, Athens, Ohio 45701. Only those faithful members who have moved away will remain on the mailing list without paying dues.



Ex-Athenians Keep Busy

If you've actually been reading your Minotaurs before lining your parakeet's cage, you know from the May issue that Ted Alexander and Heidi Mender are now living in Lansing, Michigan. Ted is chief engineer for a cluster of radio stations, and Heidi, who just recently joined him there, is interviewing for jobs. Meanwhile, they've both been cast in this month's show by the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre in Lansing. That show is Peter Weiss' musical *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* or, as it is more commonly known, *Marat/Sade*.

Heidi will be playing one of the four protagonists/comedic relief characters while Ted will be the sleazy (Heidi's word) Dupperet. Could this be type-casting?

Anyone interested in learning more about CCP can visit them on the web at www.riverwalktheatre.com or call their box office at 517-482-5700. *Marat/Sade* will run September 16-19 and 23-26.

Break legs, Ted and Heidi!

Little Black Book

Every now and then one of Athens' own home town boys makes it into the movies. The latest is former APT member Paul "Jake" Jacobson (*Funny Girl*, *See How They Run*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Romantic Comedy*). The movie is **Little Black Book**, which opened in theaters on August 6th. If you missed it, in a few months you'll be able to rent it on VHS and DVD.

The movie, which stars Brittany Murphy, Ron Livingston, Holly Hunter and Kathy Bates among others, is an interestingly witty romantic comedy which ends a little differently than you'll probably expect. Jake first appears about 10 minutes into the film. He plays a member of the production crew for a daytime TV trash talk show. Though he's an extra (no spoken lines) he's featured in several scenes, racking up a good bit of on-screen time.

Having made some connections with his participation in this film, there's no telling what might come next. So, Jake, don't forget us little people...

Roadtrip Report

For the weekend of August 13-15, your editor and Joe Balding drove from Athens southwest through Porkopolis to Louisville, Kentucky, then across the Ohio River (again) to Jeffersonville, Indiana to visit friends Steven Renner and Sean Patrick. Some years ago Steven was the business manager for the New Harmony Theatre, a fine regional theatre in Evansville (Indiana) now in its 17th season.

On Saturday we all drove the two hours to Evansville to see the matinee performance of *Cowgirls*. I've gotta tell you, it was time well spent!

Joe and I had never heard of the show, so after seeing it I think I can safely say it's one of theatre's best-kept secrets. Full of toe-tapping music and raucous energy, this play was written by Mary Murfitt and Betsy Howie.

The cast consists of six women, and it must be a hard show to cast because all six must be multi-talented. Every

character must not only act and sing well, but also be adept at more than one musical instrument!

The story concerns a country western saloon in Rexford, Kansas. The owner needs a three-member all-woman band to perform in a last-ditch effort to bring in the crowds and save the saloon from foreclosure.

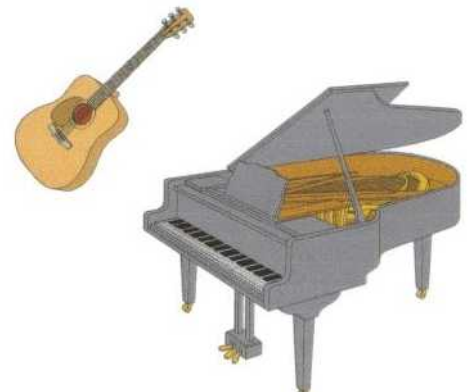
She hires a group called "Cowgirls"

over the phone, but when they show up it turns out there was a misunderstanding: the group is actually the "Cog Hills", a trio of classically trained musicians who don't know a horse from a spittoon.

In this particular production, one woman plays piano, accordion and guitar, another plays guitar, banjo and harmonica, a third plays violin/fiddle, mandolin and guitar, and yet another plays cello and guitar. All play beautifully.

The saloon owner and her two employees couldn't be more country, and the hired trio couldn't be less, but the often hilarious and sometimes heartachingly serious effort to give the trio a crash course in twang has all six characters baring their souls and playing & singing beautifully from the heart.

Probably because of the required multi-talents of the cast, the show is not frequently done, but when such a cast comes together, it's a beautiful thing.



Thespians (continued from page 2)

They own their own theater. In a small, once booming railroad community near Rolla, Newburg, a theater for Vaudeville was built in the 1920s. After talkies came along it was used as a movie theater for awhile. As the town began to go belly up the theater was left to its own devices. Mr. Turley bought it from the town and with volunteers did enough work to start doing productions. All the profits have been poured into renovations. It has a new roof, inside and out, two dressing rooms, a bathroom has been added and cushioned seats were installed when a Rolla theater closed and gave them to the company. This year several thousand was spent in re-tuckpointing the building. It will seat about 125 and I have seen it overflowing. It has a faithful following and usually has 40-60 in attendance at its four performances of each play. Its only expense is utilities. Bet many of you wish you had such a place. It is not as nice as Stuart's, but you can't beat the price.

If you are ever around the Rolla, Missouri, area during the summer, plan to take in a production during the last two weeks of June, July, August and September. Look me up and I'll show you around.

(Editor's note: David appeared in APT's production of 1940's *Radio Hour* and, most recently, in *Dearly Departed*.)



River City Players Welcome Wild West

It might have been a serendipitous extension of the hoedown in Porkopolis, but the Southeast Region's newest member theatre, River City Players of Pomeroy, Ohio, had a wild west show of its own on its stage over Labor Day weekend. It was their annual musical production, and this year it was *Annie Get Your Gun*.

This editor had the good fortune to attend a dress rehearsal just before heading to OCTA State Conference, the dates of which coincided with RCP's performance schedule.

This young theatre is only in its fourth year, having thus far offered a musical each Labor Day weekend. It's easy to see why they've done musicals, as their cast is chock full of musical talent, including strong vocals from their

supporting characters and chorus, not to mention the beautiful voices of their leads.

River City Players is looking into expanding their season by possibly adding a spring show. Here's wishing them the very best!

Bereans Join Up

APT's partner in crime, the Berean Community Players of Nelsonville, has been accepted for membership in the Ohio Community Theatre Association, bringing our SE Region's membership up to an even dozen! That's three new member theatres this year alone. If we keep growing like this, we may not be the "smallest" region for long!

Welcome, Bereans!!!

(Thanks to Norm Cohn for this story - Ed.)

Subject: In the News...

Israeli police are looking for a man named Joseph, wanted for looting in the port city of Haifa. The suspect is described as the son of an ex-nun from Barcelona and a German father. He is a former flutist, and worked occasionally as a farmer.

In short, they are searching for a Haifa-looting, flutin' Teuton, son of a nun from Barcelona, part time plowboy Joe.

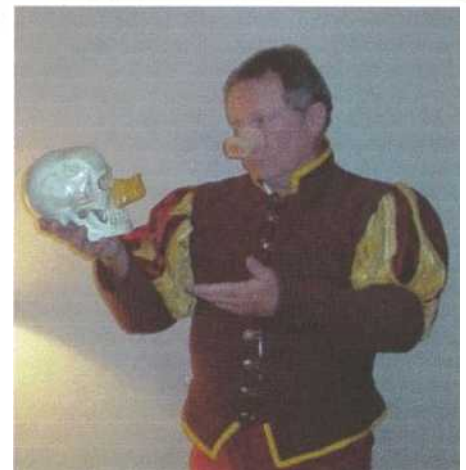


Sir Francis Bacon
2004 State Conference

Next Meeting
 -- Tuesday, September 14 - 7:00 pm --
 -- The Plains Public Library --

 Be sure to come to the next general membership meeting for Athenian Players Theatre!
 Among the several items of interest to discuss:

 ~ Our upcoming 13th Season ~
 ~ New equipment via 2004 Athens Foundation grant ~
 ~ Possible new or additional APT logo ~
 ~ Establishment of APT Awards ~



Ham let
2004 State Conference