

IN THE BEGINNING
by historian P.A.Milkie

"History" tells us how we got to be the way we are today. This season (1986-87) begins my seventh year as historian, and my ninth year as an active Lamplighter. Those years have allowed me to accumulate a resource of documents, photos, and programs which surmise the transitions and composition of the theatre group known as "The Lamplighters."

La Mesa alone can boast of nearly 50 years of continuous seasonal community theatre in San Diego county. The June 1937 La Mesa Scout, predecessor of the now terminated La Mesa Courier, announced the formation of an amateur theatre group, and in this gesture began a creative effort within La Mesa that has not been abandoned even for a single season since it's inception.

The Lamplighters are the result of a long line of fluxuating titles and images, beginning in 1937 with the La Mesa Little Theatre, changing to La Mesa Community Theatre, and later to, Town and Country Players, Foothill Players, La Mesa On The Isle, La Mesa Players, and finally, in September of 1972 appeared the name Lamplighters, and with it the mask logo that we use today. In 1976 our Articles of Association were established, and it was in that 1976-77 season that a new level of maturity began within the organization. The "Hey kids, let's put on a show" image was forming into a more serious and professional minded non-professional theatre. An ongoing playreading committee was formed, season tickets were initiated for the first time, membership dues were one dollar, and general admission raised from two dollars, to two dollars and fifty cents. Saturday drama classes were held for the Park and Recreation, and the "Newsletter" appeared in 1977 with Mary Greenhalgh as editor, followed by Bud Neal, and in 1978 by John Bryan Davis. Don Crouch was the 1977 historian.

In our first year of season tickets (the 1977-78 season) five shows could be purchased for \$10, and a senior citizen pass was only \$5. Thirty-five senior passes were sold. (One wonders how we made money at that time.)

In the 1978-79 season the Lamplighters were issued an official phone# of 464-4598, still in use today, and a Post Office Box for correspondence. One hundred and forty-five season tickets were sold, there were one hundred and seven members, and the summer show was listed as, "Snow Flake and the Seven Warts," by Diane Thrasher.

The 1980-81 season showed 330 season ticket holders, the purchase of two-way walkie talkies, and the mustard yellow stage ceiling was painted black by Harvey Winokur and Brian Short. That summer we won 75% of all ACT Aubrey Awards given, nine out of twelve, and admission was raised to \$4. The lighting system was redesigned by Len Marcus, a telephone answering machine was purchased for the Winokur Box Office, and this was also the summer that the Art Society moved next door. The theatre walls were repainted, comedy/tragedy masks added by Gil Goodman, and a revolving stage was built that summer.

In 1982, On Golden Pond was the first show to use the new sound booth, and Lamplighter T-shirts became available. May of 1983 brought air conditioning, and in September of 1983 a record attendance of 1800 patrons witnessed Agatha Christie's Verdict, resulting in 913 season ticket holders. An office was acquired in January of 1984, when the new Community Center opened. New seats and carpeting were installed in the theatre in November 1984, and in August 1985 a lighting booth was built adjacent to the sound booth at the rear of the theatre. And thus, the years have passed.

What will not be recorded in our official history is the atmosphere which surrounds each separate production; the fun, the fights, the tension, the work, the play, the hate, the love, and the resulting success, always success, or at least succession. Let's see how many of these dust laden references can spark your memory and imagination...

I remember when...Dorthe DuBois broke her leg, also when Ginger Radenhiemer broke her leg, and then Bill Pease broke his arm...I remember that the La Mesa Historical Society purchased the opening night of Frankenstein. (The show closed prematurely after only two weekends)... Lamplighters once quit ACT, and then later rejoined it...Peggy Scotum found puttnams rock...Bud Neal ran for ACT President in 1977, and lost... Dial M For Murder used a push button phone...the atom bomb in The Mouse That Roared, dropped to the floor, and the actors scattered...there once were no members at large, merely committees...I remember when the rug was dyed for Move Over Mrs. Markham, and the stage warped...temporarily... suck face...Elmer, and the loons...Ficus Elastica Decoura...Miss Brill... Bridie...Pogo Poole...Biff...Olga from Lappland...lilacs...the reading of the will..."Golden Memories"...

LAMPLIGHTER HISTORY

1967-68 Season; La Mesa Players

On July 1, 1967 became La Mesa Community Theatre

- no plays listed during season -

1968-69 Season; La Mesa Community Theatre

Sept. 1968: Stop the Wedding (Walt Starr, first time directing)

May 1969: The Man Who Came to Dinner

1969-70 Season; La Mesa Community Theatre

Sept 1969: Cheaper By The Dozen (Karen Pannell/Starr)

March 1970: George Washington Slept Here

June 1970: Dracula

1970-71 Season; La Mesa Community Theatre

Aug. 1970: Murdered Alive

Nov. 1970: Nobody Loves An Albatross (Donna Andrews)

Dec. 1970: Theatre Name Returns to La Mesa Players

1971: A Ready Made Family

May 1971: Dracula (Bob Campbell)

1971-72 Season; La Mesa Players

Sept. 1971: Arsenic and Old Lace

: Don't Drink The Water

March 1972: The Ninth Guest (Bob Campbell)

1972-73 Season; Lamplighters Community Theatre (SEPT.)

Oct. 1972: Dracula

March 1973: See How They Run (Tom Morton)

June 1973: Boy Meets Girl (Bob Campbell)

1973-74 Season; Lamplighters

Sept. 1973: Golden Memories (D. Larry Steckling)

Feb. 1974: Catch Me If You Can

April 1974: Front Page (Bob Campbell)

July 1974: You Can't Take It With You (Tom Morton)

1974-75 Season; Lamplighters

- Dec. 1974: My Three Angels (Walt Starr)
- : Ready When You Are C.B. (D. Larry Steckling)
- April 1976: Pull The Curtain (First Version) (Karen & Walt Starr)

1975-76 Season; Lamplighters

- Oct. 1975: Inherit The Wind (Don Crouch)
- March 1976: **Mary Mary** (Jim Brown)
- June 1976: Double Door (Bob Campbell)

1976-77 Season; Lamplighters

- Oct. 1976: The Seven Year Itch (Paul Treske)
- Jan. 1977: The Country Girl (Vickie Deitrich)
- March 1977: Frankenstein (Crane Johnson)
- May 1977: Plaza Suite (Phil Stokes)
- Summer : Revenge of Sir Modred (Dorothe DuBois)

1977-78 Season; Lamplighters

- : Caine Mutiny Court Martial (Bud Neal)
- : The Thirteenth Reel (Bob Campbell)
- : King of Hearts (Paul Treske)
- : The Gingerbread Lady (Arden Winokur)
- : Pull The Curtain (Walt Starr)
- Summer : Invisible Ogre (Cleo Anderberg)

1978-79 Season; Lamplighters

- : Bus Stop (Marilyn Lambert)
- : Bell, Book and Candle (Walt Starr)
- : Dial M For Murder (Don Crouch)
- : The Mouse That Roared (Arden Winokur)
- Summer : A Fate Worse Than Death (Mike McLeod)
- Sleeping Beauty or The Rose Tattoo (Ellie Frank)

- 1979-80 Season; Lamplighters
- : The Pleasure of His Company (D. Larry Steckling)
 - : Dr. Cook's Garden (Jim Berry)
 - : Marriage Go Round (Terry Nugent)
 - : Death of A Salesman (Bob McKenna)
 - : Cheaper By The Dozen (Paul Treske)
 - Summer : Classic Film Festival (Pat Milkie)
- 1980-81 Season; Lamplighters
- : An Inspector Calls (Jim Berry)
 - : Move Over Mrs. Markham (D. Larry Steckling)
 - : The Little Foxes (Bob McKenna)
 - : The Goodbye People (Arden Winokur)
 - Summer : Treasure Island (Phil Smallen)
- 1981-82 Season; Lamplighters
- : Forty Carats (D. Larry Steckling)
 - : On Golden Pond (Sandy McCallum)
 - : The Effect of Gamma Rays On Man In The Moon Marigolds
(Pat Smith)
 - : The Runner Stumbles (Bob McKenna)
 - Summer : You Know I Can't Hear You When The Water's Running
(Mari Mayers, Pat Milkie, Terri Simmons)
- 1982-83 Season: Lamplighters
- : Community of Two (D. Larry Steckling)
 - : Close Ties (Arden Winokur)
 - : Full Circle (Kevin P. Mullin)
 - : Something's Afoot (Paul Treske) (Our First Musical)
- 1983-84 Season; Lamplighters
- : Verdict (Pat Milkie)
 - : Magic Time (Arden Lee Winokur)
 - : Summer And Smoke (D. Larry Steckling)
 - : Hayfever (Kevin P. Mullin)

1984-85 Season; Lamplighters

- : The Dining Room (Ret Talbot)
- : Crimes of the Heart (Pat Smith)
- : Come Back To the 5 & 10, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (Kevin Mullin)
- : Two by Two

Summer Workshop (Actors: Mary Qualls/ Directors: Pat Milkie)

1985-86 Season: Lamplighters

- : The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker (Harold Frank)?
- : Spider's Web (Martin Gerrish)
- : Streetcar Named Desire (Pat Smith)
- : To Grandmother's House We Go (Mary Qualls)

86-87

87-88

88-89

So Long on Lonely Street
I'll Be Back Before Midnight
Dark at the Top of the Stairs
Move Over Mrs Markham

89-90

Sabrina Fair
Act of Imagination
Social Security
Anastasia

The Lamplighters have been honored through the years by the Associated Community Theatres of San Diego, in their Annual Aubrey Awards Presentations. Listed below are the ACT Aubrey Awards, and the KEZL Spotlight Awards, which the Lamplighters have garnered in recent years...

1979/80 Season

Death of a Salesman;

Best Actor in a Leading Role; Norman Maxwell

The Pleasure of His Company;

Best Set

1980/81 Season

Move Over Mrs Markham;

Best Actor in a major role; Rob Smith

Best Actress in a minor role; Katherine Faulconer

The Little Foxes;

Best Actress in a major role; June Phillips

Hospitality Award

The Goodbye People;

Best Production of the Year

Best Direction; Arden Lee (Winokur

Best Actor in a Leading role; Saul Snyder

Best Actor in a minor role; Phil Smullen

Technical Award

1981/82 Season

On Golden Pond;

Best Production of the Year (ACT Aubrey Award)

Best Production of the Year (KEZL Spotlight Award)

Best Direction; Sandy McCallum (KEZL Spotlight Award)

Best Actress in a Leading Role; June Phillips (Spotlight)

Hospitality Award (ACT Aubrey)

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man In The Moon Marigolds;

Best Actress in a Leading Role; Sue Hiatt (ACT Aubrey)

Best Actress in a Minor Role; Mary Eagan (ACT Aubrey)

The Runner Stumbles;

Best Direction; Bob McKenna (ACT Aubrey)

Best Actress in a Major Role; Adele Garland (ACT Aubrey)

1982/83 Season

A Community of Two;

Best Actress in a Minor Role; Cleo Anderberg

Full Circle;

Best Costumes; Ret Talbot

Something's Afoot;

Best Direction; Paul Treske

Technical Award

Close Ties;

Best Actress in a Leading Role; Ruth Sweeney (KEZL Spotlight)

1983/84 Season

Verdict;

Best Actress in a Major Role; Ann Richardson

Hayfever;

Best Actress in a Minor Role; Helena Baranski

1984/85 Season

The Dining Room; Comedy

Best Production

Best Direction; Ret Talbot

Best Actor in a Major Role; Russ Lledyd

Best Actress in a Major Role; Bonnie Kucera

Come Back To The Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean; Drama

Best Production

Best Direction; Kevin P. Mullin

Best Actress in a Minor Role; Taylor Howard

Lighting Design; Constance Jenkins

Two By Two; Musical

Best Actor in A Leading Role; Jim Williams