The Magic of Dinner Theatre

It was a cold, rainy winter afternoon when the first of 130 Hawthornites began boarding three sleek, shiny buses across from the Marina.

Dressed to the teeth, happy faces smiling in anticipation, they defied the weather. And why not? They were headed for St. Petersburg's Country Dinner Playhouse and an enchanting evening with an Arabian Nights musical called "Kismet."

The buses were scheduled to leave at 4 p.m. In bus No. 3 Jim Hambleton kept checking and re-checking his passenger list. At 3:55 he announced that everyone was on board. Then, through the rain-splashed window, we spotted Ron Collier headed for the clubhouse. In a few minutes he was back.

What had happened? Two people who had signed up hadn't shown up. So Collier phoned them at home. They had thought the departure time was 4:30. Five minutes later they arrived, and we were off.

We tooled on down the pike through beautiful downtown Okahumpka and across glistening rain-drenched Central Florida countryside as the sun peeked through the clouds. By the time we went up the Interstate 75 ramp the roads were almost dry.

Hambleton took the mike:

"Anybody have a birthday today?" he asked. Nobody. "Anybody have an anniversary?" No luck. "There goes our cake," he sighed. (Dinner theaters have been known to acknowledge anniversaries).

At 6 we pulled into the Gateway Mall. After a drink and a tasty dinner, we were treated to the baubles, bangles and beads of a bubbly, bouncy and boisterous show. The cast, a large one with excellent voices, was in the last week of a two-month run; it had had plenty of time to hone its performance of such musical gems as "Stranger in Paradise" and "My Beloved."

On the way home Hambleton recalled how he and Paul Gentry had come up with the idea of a dinner theater.

"We figured if we got 100 people interested, we'd be in business," he said. "We decided on a $5.00 membership fee so we'd have money to buy tickets and rent buses. Now we have over 800 members. When one moves, his $5.00 goes back into the general fund; when one dies it goes into the memorial fund."

There have, of course, been some unscheduled performances. Such as the time two buses went to Hawthorne, Florida instead of our Hawthorne.

"We called Orlando for replacements," Hambleton explained. "But while we waited, everyone gathered around the clubhouse piano and sang songs for an hour. We had a great time!"

That's Dinner Theatre for you. People who prefer living, breathing, chest-heaving actors on a real stage to television and movies don't mind a little delay or two. That's the magic of the theater.

— Don Dornbrook
"Atrophy: an award given to those who do not exercise." Pamela L. Hughes.

Some changes attributed to aging are caused by inactivity and could be corrected, according to Walter M. Bortz II, M.D., Palo Alto Medical Clinic. He adds that exercise could prevent some age-related disabilities.

Hawthorne residents are offered a wide variety of exercise. You may "recall your body" with Body Recall; "move that body" in Exercise to Music; "get physical" with the men’s or women’s physical fitness classes; or if you prefer to remain "wet behind the ears", join the Aquacising group.

For those who are good sports: “tee off” with the Golf Club, “spike one” with the volleyball team, “have a ball” with the softball team, or “shuffle” on out to the courts. And let’s not forget the many dance activities — everything from square to round, including tap and contra.

Whichever physical activity you choose, keep these important points in mind:

1. Very few people are incapable of participating in any type of physical fitness program — some are just more limited than others.
2. Choose an activity you enjoy, so that you will continue it. Physical fitness is a lifetime proposition, not an overnight, once-a-week endeavor.
3. If you have been inactive for a long time, take it easy at first! You may even wish to check with your physician first.
4. If you’re not limited by any physical handicap, plan to advance your physical fitness program to the highest degree possible. This takes time, effort, dedication, and the want to be physically fit.
5. If you’re overweight, check with your physician first. Usually if a sensible diet (three balanced meals a day) is followed, with a sensible and progressive exercise program, an overweight person can achieve top physical condition within a reasonable amount of time.

Being in good condition also includes not abusing your body; eliminating (or decreasing) stress; and checking your wellness. Don’t smoke; drink in moderation; or not at all; be careful not to abuse drugs (both prescription and over-the-counter); learn how to handle stress; and have regular medical checkups.

March is Living Well in Florida month. Let’s designate March as the first month of the rest of your life to live well.

Remember: “Use it or lose it.”

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**Poet’s Corner**

**Overcoming WHAT?**

I wonder if I’ll ever hear
A quiet, pleasing to my ear.
A quiet ... no orchestral din
Assaulting ears, both out and in
At factories and shopping malls —
Along the street — along the halls.
In terminals and every store
MUSAK grinds on, with more and more
Increasing decibels of noise . . .
(Do they hire only deaf employees,
Who, unlike customers like me —
Though captive listeners — are not free
To take their purse and shopping list
And leave the place — not even missed?)
What did I come for to this store?
I’ll try to concentrate some more . . .
In Doctors’ clinics though I try
To wait two hours with patience, I
Cannot enjoy old magazines
While overdosed with MUSAK’S screams.
In basement levels — sky-rise tops —
In offices and beauty shops —
MUSAK blasts on . . . It is no use —
I can’t negotiate a truce!
Must MUSAK “overcome all noise”
By robbing me of peace and poise?
Don’t get me wrong — I truly like
Good music on a soft-tuned mike . . .
Buy why must I my freedom lose
Of where — and when — and what to choose?
Oh MUSAK! Listen to my plea,
For all you’ve “overcome” is ME!
— ©1982 Ruth Campbell

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**Hawthorne Happenings**

Published monthly by the Hawthorne Residents Cooperative Association of Hawthorne-at-Leesburg

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Golf Suits Her to a Tee

Verna Stone, Hawthorne's own golf champion, has resided here for a year. She certainly adds luster to our women golfers.

Verna was rather precocious when she started out. She tells it this way:

"I began caddying for an 'elderly gentleman' when I was only seven years old on the public golf course in Louisville, Kentucky. I kept the job until I was almost 14."

This unusual man didn't start playing golf until he was 56 years old. Then he went on to make five holes in one when he was in his seventies. It was he who gave her her first set of golf clubs and allowed her to practice hitting whenever she had a free moment.

"I still have the cut-off clubs with wooden shafts which he bought me when I was only seven," she added.

Verna had a chance to watch many players and to get pointers from the champs. She won her first tournament when she was barely 14. Her prize?

"A silver tray engraved with my name as the club champion golfer," she recalls. "I still have it some place among my trophies."

She won a number of tournaments between 1941 and 1946. She became a state champion at 19, and won again in 1948. Before she was 21 she won the Western Open in Evanston, Illinois. She also came off with a win in Maryland.

Her golfing was interrupted by school teaching, military service and matrimony while she was in the service. She has a bachelor of science degree in Physical Education and a master's in Guidance, Counseling and Library Science.

Laughing Matter

In a mobile home, there's a place for everything. But nothing is ever in its place.

* * *

When someone says he has a clear conscience, watch out. He may just have a poor memory.

* * *

Daughters are inclined to marry men like their fathers. That's why so many women cry at weddings.

* * *

In a small town, all you have to do to get across town is cross the street.
By Don Dornbrook

Thanks to everyone for the kind words and compliments that greeted our first edition of Hawthorne Happenings. Your enthusiasm made Volume 1 Number 1 a truly memorable Hawthorne Happening.

My thanks, too, to the wonderful, cooperative, dedicated staff that did such a yeoman job of producing a quality product on such short notice. Specifically Elnora Bolan, Anna K. Merlino, Marie Richardson, Edith Schipper, Rosalind Sykes, Carolyn Orme, John Tienken, Don Comunale and Nat Bodinger. All performed like the professionals they are.

Nor must I forget the good people at Tech Spec, our printer, without whose cooperation and expertise the whole project could have collapsed. So orchids to Ginger Gehrke, the capable shop superintendent who hovered over our baby like a mother hen. And Jayne Fischer, the artist who gave our logo and heads such a bright, clean look.

Take a bow, folks. It was you who made it all possible.

* * *

ANOTHER EXHIBITOR was Bill Lacy who had a one-man show of 41 watercolors at Citizens Bank in February. Among our favorite eye-catchers were “The Way It Was,” a pair of orange streetcars; “Spider View,” the way the world looks to a spider; “Washday,” a big-city alley-dweller’s view of wash on the line; and “Talladega, Ala.,” a close-up of workworn hands filling a water pail in front of a tumble-down shack.

Speaking of Lacy, how many of you managed to catch his appearance with Malcolm Pidgeon on Eleanore Pierce’s Channel 4 program? It was a gasser, Dad! Sample dialogue:

Bill: Why do tickets to everything cost $4?
Eleanor: It’s a nice round figure.
Bill: We’ve got a lot of those in the park.

* * *

JOTS AND DOTS: Those new pink street lights are part of Florida Power’s 10-year-program to change about 66,000 Central Florida lights to sodium vapor from mercury vapor. They use half as much electricity to produce as much light as the older mercury lights . . . those clever sketches that accompany some of the stories written by Rosalind Sykes are the work of the author . . . A funny thing happened at the 8th annual Commodore’s Ball of the Hawthorne Boat Club at Silver Lake Golf and Country Club: Retiring Commodore Richard H. Ray received two identical plaques of appreciation. “That’s the result of two different groups working in absolute secrecy,” said Joseph P. Richardson, new commodore, as 76 jolly party-goers roared with laughter.

* * *

Geb Gebler was walking down Hawthorne Boulevard when he passed a woman on the other side and waved to her. He thought it was odd when she didn’t wave back. “But then she must have felt an explanation was called for,” he said, “because she yelled ‘If I wave, I’ll fall off my bike.’”

* * *

Bob Hickey, keeper of the canes
THE LOAN CLOSET, which provides orthopedic aids and appliances to Hawthornites recuperating from injuries and strokes, had an average of 45 items on loan each day in 1982, reports John Tienken, adding:

"It's far better to know about us and not need us than to need us and not know us. This service was started about eight years ago with just two folding wheelchairs, some walkers and a few canes and crutches. We now have seven wheelchairs, eight walkers (both rigid and folding), many quad canes, scads of canes and numerous pairs of crutches, and related items.

"Many of the items have been donated by residents who no longer have use for them. But we have had to purchase additional wheelchairs and walkers with proceeds from breakfasts or card parties. Since there's no charge made for the use of loaned items, we welcome donations from residents. All we ask is that loan closet items which are housed in the First Aid Room be checked out properly and returned as soon as possible."

* * *

OUR QUEEN OF HEARTS has got to be Virginia Simon. Not only did she observe Valentine's Day by singing love songs in the Lime Room, she exhibited antique valentines designed by her mother, Juvia Johnson, in the Leesburg Public Library.

It was refreshing to see these sweet cherubs with their pastel colors and benign faces smiling from their red post cards. We especially liked the little boy and girl and their message:

"Oh, sweetheart, how my spirits rise
When I see the love light in your eyes."

* * *

FEBRUARY BROWN BAG hit the jackpot with some 600 kaffeeklatschers turning out for Carter Randall, senior vice president of Sun Banks and panelist on TV's popular Wall Street Week. They were joined by a battalion of bank officials and Marie Bolles, assistant to the publisher of the Leesburg Commercial.

"I've been a stuffy, pin-striped banker for over 35 years," Randall greeted his audience, "But I have prided myself in being able to help people participate in the economic system under which we live."

"When I heard you give the pledge of allegiance to the flag, it made me think that every once in awhile we should pledge allegiance to the capitalist system."

* * *

With Shenandoah to the north of us and Pelican Isle Mobile Home Estates to the south of us, they're going to run out of names for new parks. How about Mobile Mansions — for big wheels?
Cris and Ken Have a Lot of Input

“When Melva Boughton was describing her trip to Lapland,” James (Cris) Criscimagna says, “she told me that while she was there in July the sun never set.”

That remark reminded Cris how interesting the sun’s movements are and he decided to formulate a computer program on the subject. Now he “enters” the program, adds a specific latitude, longitude and date and can see graphically duplicated on his computer video screen the sun’s movement above the horizon at any given time and place in the world.

Kenneth Mowen heard a talk about biorhythms — a term used to describe the ebb and flow of an individual’s energy — and envisioned a tool that might add to a person’s knowledge of his own life rhythm. He composed a computer program that graphically illustrates the ups and downs in everyday life according to the theory of intellectual, emotional, and physical cycles.

And the computers not only display the information on the screen but on command will produce “printouts” (copies) for circulation to interested persons.

These are random examples of the dozens of programs written by Ken and Cris, two of several computer-competent Hawthorne residents. Ken taught art in secondary school in Ohio and is a retired U.S. Army officer with 32 years of combined active and reserve service. He became interested in computer studies when he discovered that his grandchildren were pursuing the subject in and out of school. He wanted to be able to speak the same language.

Cris, a former director of high-school science in Rockford, Illinois, grew bored with relaxed retirement and was looking for something not to occupy his time but to stretch his mind. When he delved into computers and computer programming he knew he had found what he was seeking.

Cris and Ken’s more commonplace computer programs, useful in almost anyone’s everyday business and social life, include mathematical operations; lists of address — of club or committee members or organizations, for instance; records of business transactions; copies of letters and other items; bookkeeping, simple and sophisticated; club or association minutes; labels and tickets.

Both men incorporate design into their programs, so that the information printed out on paper is well spaced and clearly and attractively arranged. They have also programmed special graphic designs.

One of Ken’s designs is a very familiar picture. To make it, the computer, on command, takes 28 different steps, moving swiftly around the screen to end up with a color reproduction of the Hawthorne emblem.

“Our Flag,” by Cris, is a similar operation. In less time than it takes to write this, our nation’s flag is outlined on the screen, the field, complete with the correct number of stars, is filled in, and the alternating red and white stripes indicated.

These Hawthorne computer enthusiasts obviously enjoy their fascinating machines, including the games that can be played on them. Computers however, are not toys, they both emphasize. This can be readily understood after a glance at the instruction manual for the new model Ken recently purchased. It is more than 1 1/4 inches thick!

Computer usage is expanding at a rate that dizzies the minds of most of us. But soon computer terminology will be in everyone’s vocabulary. Then we will be able to use such words as bits and bytes, memory, input, binary system, software and hardware, CPU, and peek and poke and have a two-way conversation with Hawthorne’s computer experts like Cris and Ken.

— Marie L. Richardson
Mr. and Mrs. Alumni

"Is this the Gosselink residence? This is the Central College Alumni Office representative. I have a pleasant assignment. I have been asked to tell you that you have been named Mr. and Mrs. Alumni 1982, to be honored at homecoming weekend at Pell, Iowa, October 22-24. You will be guests of your college and all travel expenses will be paid."

Bob and Mae Gosselink had just returned home from 10,000 miles on the road. Bob had just sighed to Mae, "Let's not go on any more trips for awhile." And then, the telephone rang! Needless to say, they repacked their bags for the trip to Iowa.

Happy memories of their hometown college filled their heads: their many undergrad dates in Bob's 1920s Ford Coupe (featured in a newspaper photo); their math studies with honored Dean Pietenpol; Bob's family members who have thronged through Central to earn a total of 25 degrees in two generations; members of Mae's family who also studied at Central; and their granddaughter, Amy Gooters, now a junior at that same college.

They smiled at memories of daughter Judy Gosselink Grooters' graduation in 1960. Naturally, she married a Central grad. And son, Jack, was graduated in 1963. He's now Professor of Music at Iowa State.

Following graduation from Central, Mae and Bob had many satisfying years in Hull, Iowa, where Bob was superintendent of schools for 15 years. They then moved to Chicago where he was principal of Chicago Christian High School for 25 years. Mae taught Latin in that same Chicago School for 19 years.

Upon arrival in Pella, they stopped to visit Mae's sister's family, where they learned that they have been invited to accompany Mae and Bob to the festivities. Young Amy flew north from her Texas home to accompany her grandparents, as a college guest.

All in all, Mae and Bob were honored at the board of trustees luncheon, the president's dinner, the homecoming football game, the alumni banquet and the church convocation. At the alumni banquet, they were given four large watercolors of Central Campus. And they were asked to speak at the alumni banquet and at the homecoming game.

"Standing on the 50-yard line on the football field was quite an experience," Mae said. "You hear your voice echo from goal to goal. When I said "thank you," I could hear it bounce back to me three times!"

The Gosselinks enjoy round dancing, square dancing, Hawthorne Chorus and steering committees for Book Review and Brown Bag. Bob is a deacon at Leesburg's First Presbyterian church and Mae is a chairman in W.O.C. there.

Their home is embellished with Virginia Lee Thornton pastel portraits of all five of their grandchildren. — Rosalind MacRae Sykes

Of Soy Beans and Boy Beans

This is the time of the year when the first balmy days bring nostalgia for spring, little creeping things and plants. I'm like Ogden Nash who said he didn't know a string bean from a soy bean, or a girl bean from a boy bean. Anyway it is fun to grow flowers and vegetables.

The first seed catalogs are out. Back home, my husband and I would be planting a rose garden already (from our comfortable chairs, of course). The Paul Scarlets were five feet tall and climbing up the back fence in our imagination. He wanted to plant Johnny Jump Ups and Sweet Williams because he said there were too many prissy 'girl' flowers like Margaritas and Black Eyed Susans. I, in turn, thought it was risky to plant dogwood trees too close to the catnip plants.

We were practical too, when we decided to plant tomato vines. There was an 8-by-10-inch glossy photo of a handsome Senior Tomato which made me a tomato fan. I could see myself gathering baskets of vegetables.

Our neighbor sneered at us because he thought we were upstarts at raising tomatoes. He had a crop every year propped up on the other side of our hedge incidentally.

At any rate, this is the stuff that dream gardens are made of, with the help of a catalog and a comfortable armchair. — Elnora Bolan
Will the Real Bubbles Stand Up?

As we entered Hawthorne Auditorium on Book Review night, we were instantly transported to the make-believe realm of opera.

To the strains of “Lucia di Lammermoor” we floated to our seats. Then followed more operas sung by the inimitable Beverly Sills, “one of America’s national treasures,” as Gwen Black calls her.

Suddenly a woman was standing on the stage, a woman with red-gold hair nonchalantly discarding her bridal veil and rhinestone tiara in the grand manner of Sills. She wore a rose chiffon and rose velvet Grecian gown, authentic for Beverley’s role in Rossini’s “Seige of Corinth.”

Could it be Bubbles herself?

For a moment we thought we were in New York City being captivated by the beloved Beverly Sills at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Then we realized it was our own Gwen Black standing there. What a striking resemblance to the opera star! Gwen was ready to review “Bubbles,” the autobiography of Beverly Sills.

It is a fascinating story, and Gwen told it well, pretending all the while that she was the star herself telling her life story.

Gwen told of Beverly’s 43 years of hard work and self-discipline before reaching stardom, her humble beginnings, and how she memorized 22 arias from records as a child. She recalled how her mother made many of her costumes from discarded clothing and how Sills wowed a Major Bowes Amateur Hour audience with an aria from “Rigoletto” when she was only seven years old.

“For years my mother had used three parts of gold bleach and two parts of red rinse on my hair,” said Gwen in her role of narrator. But my chaperone mistakenly reversed the formula. I appeared with beautiful red hair from that time on!”

As we left the hall after a magic night at the opera, we felt we had experienced the triumphs and despair of an opera star with the great Beverly Sills.

- Elnora Bolan

Is it Bubbles, or is it Gwen?

St. Patrick Saw Snakes, Too!

St. Patrick was a gentleman
Who through strategy and stealth
Drove all the snakes from Ireland.
Here’s a toasting to his health —
But not too many toastings
Lest you lose yourself and then
Forget the good St. Patrick
And see all those snakes again.

— An old toast

An now that March 17 — St. Patrick’s Day — is upon us, would you like to know how he got rid of those beasties? Here’s how it happened, according to Robert J. Myers in his book “Celebrations”:

“Accompanied by the furious rat-a-tatting of a big drum, St. Patrick arrived at the hill from which he was going to banish the reptiles. The people who had gathered to watch the spectacle cried out when the drum broke because they believed St. Patrick’s magic power was dependent on it. A huge black snake slithered down the hill, laughing to see the saint so powerless. But just then an angel appeared and mended the drum. The drum was sounded and St. Patrick preached the sermon that drove the snakes and vermin from Ireland.

‘Two stories are told about the last snake in Ireland. An old serpent who lived in Lake Dilveen gave St. Patrick such trouble that he was left in the lake with the promise that the bishop would return ‘on Monday’ to destroy him. St. Patrick entirely forgot about him and the serpent is said to still be alive in Lake Dilveen. Every Monday he comes to the surface, looks about questioningly, and says, ‘It’s been a long Monday, Patrick,’”

“According to the other story, the last snake refused to be driven away. St. Patrick had a box made and told the serpent to get in. ‘No,’ said the serpent, ‘it’s too small.’”

“‘Nonsense,’ said St. Patrick, ‘it’s just your size, try it and see.’”

“‘Very well,’ said the serpent, ‘I’ll show you it’s too small.’ So he crawled in and sly St. Patrick snapped the lid shut and plunged the snake into the sea.”

— Don Dornbrook