

Thespians are winners in Will-O-Way rescue

A grin swept over my face the other day when I read that Will-O-Way Apprentice Theater was going to make it through a serious financial crunch.

In case you missed the news, the theater, located in Bloomfield Township, was about ready to go under due to waning finances. Some good folks got together and recently had a benefit down at the Fisher Theater and the day was saved.

That made my day. You see, I was fortunate enough to have been one of Celia Merrill Turner's students a few years back.

Actually, it was more than a few years, more like 17 or 18 years ago, to be more exact.

Celia is more or less the chief honcho out at the small theater tucked away on Long Lake Road. I remember her the best from that summer I spent studying theater. Her presence dominated the entire scene.

She would point and strut, laugh and frown—always concentrating on developing her wards into the best possible thespians. Seeing what she has accomplished through the years, I figure she's been given far too little credit for her contributions over the years to this community.

Some fine Detroit area actors and actresses have come to prominence because of her efforts. I'd also like to think that she had something to do with the development of at least one fine journalist.

Out of all the summers in my life, the one I spent at Will-O-Way certainly is one of the best remembered—and appreciated.

Obviously, I didn't become a world-renowned, Oscar-winning actor. But thanks to Celia and her crew, a terribly shy kid peeked out of his shell. I suspect she has aided many other children in the same way.

My first knowledge of Will-O-Way came while skimming through the newspaper just before summer vacation. I always have read the newspapers. Like any other 12- or 13-year-old I already was bored, wondering what in the devil I was going to do for three months.

But then I saw it. A small story telling about summer registration at Will-O-Way.

A movie fan from the cradle, I dreamed of stardom. Just think, I could be another Clark Gable or Humphrey Bogart, I had thought.

So, in an uncharacteristic action, I called the phone number. The lady on the other side of the line was very nice and, now that I think back, very amused at the young man making the inquiry.

"Hello, I would like to go to your school. What do I do?" I innocently inquired.

"Do your parents know you want to go to Will-O-Way?" asked the kind lady.



"No, but I know they will think it's all right."

And, of course, they did. As a matter of fact, they were pleased as could be that their introverted son showed an interest in something other than laying on the floor and reading a book or watching television.

Of course, I still do that a lot, even today.

At any rate, I went to Will-O-Way and got my first taste of acting. A lot of acquaintances still think I'm a ham, but that's all right, too.

In the beginning of that long-ago summer, I would hitchhike daily from my home on Joy Road and Greenfield out to Telegraph and Long Lake Road, an indication of how times have changed. A 13-year-old kid could hitchhike in those days without much fear.

But that's how bad I wanted to go. In those days, any place past Ten Mile and Telegraph was the barren wilderness. Traveling to Will-O-Way was an adventure in itself.

Somedays I would get stranded out on the road and have to walk a mile or two before a ride would come along. Often, I was late. Tacitly, Celia found somebody to give me a ride. That was an adventure, too. The woman giving me a ride owned a French Citroen, a vary rare breed of car in those days. Still is I guess.

The years have made her name slip my mind, but I remember she would stop at the Howard Johnson on Maple and Telegraph everyday to buy us ice cream.

It was a grand summer. I learned about mime, played a bit of Shakespeare, wrote a play and even played the part of a frog, although I remember losing the part to a guy named Gregory Gill.

I also remember laying underneath the numerous trees, eating pears (or were they peaches?) while memorizing scripts. I also remember Celia's daughter, Robin. I was in love, but never let on.

The farthest my acting career developed was high school plays and too much community theater. I finally gave it up after tiring of performing for grandmothers and kind relatives.

But, Will-O-Way was worth every minute. I, and many others who have benefited, thank you, Celia. We wish you and your little theater years of continued success.

From our readers

Deck denial leaves homeowners riled

Editor: As new residents of Farmington Hills, (I speak for my husband and myself), we wish to express our sentiments on matters of importance to this city.

First, let us declare that Farmington Hills has many fine things to offer its residents. The Farmington Musicals, Farmington Players, a fine library to name but a few. For these we are delighted.

Now for the other side of the coin. We bought a Pulte home—our first mistake. Next we request a three foot, eight-inch variance to build a deck at the rear of our home. We live on a pond, and there is a common abutting property. The terrain is sloping to the commons.

We have discovered a curious fact. The Farmington Hills Zoning Board (which, I might add, has a marvelous lack of consistency in handing down its hallowed opinions) informs us that it is legal to cement your entire backyard, cover it with horse manure, or whatever suits your fancy—even pour a patio at your property line—but a 10 foot deep deck on our property is against the city ordinance.

A BIT of added information: It was not illegal for the building inspector to

deny our patio doors shut so we don't fall or injure ourselves because the grade is low and the distance from the doors to the ground is hazardous. It was not against code to pass inspection on the lack of angle irons to support a fireplace, causing it to fall not once but twice. It was not against code to pass inspection on a house where snow blows in during the winter and rain in the summer because of the lack of something in between the house proper and the foundation.

Fourteen months of dealing with Pulte (the builder) is enough to produce a breakdown in the staunchest person, and now we have a city government which is questionable to say the least.

My husband and I moved here from Northville where we observed effective city government in action. We expected the same here. The zoning board leaves much to be desired. Attend one of its meetings. You will come away disgusted and ashamed of this branch of city government.

A word to the wise—think carefully before you consider living in this city. You may be in for a few unpleasant surprises.

CHARLENE SLABEY, Farmington Green, Farmington Hills

Public left out

Editor: The Detroit metro area has been fortunate in having the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority purchase land over a period of years to give us an excellent park system.

Now there is a problem in Kensington Park. In July of 1975, 106 acres were leased to a private profit-oriented group, known as the Kensington Children's Farm and Village Corp. Using the "Children's Farm" as a guise, they are now attempting to add an amusement park with mechanized rides.

The League of Women Voters of Southfield-Lathrup Village opposes the method in which this was done without any public involvement. There was also no environmental impact statement to determine the effect this more intense use of park land will have on wildlife, watercourses and present passive use of the park.

We question whether public land which has, in the past, been used for nature study, picnicking, scenic drives, wildlife sanctuaries, boating and swimming should be used for an amusement park. Is this the desire of the citizens of the metro area? Does this represent a change in the Metro Park Authority philosophy or intent in

regard to park use? We believe that the public has the right to the type of park system they understood was the intent of the Authority and should be involved in any marked changes, such as an amusement park. They should be aware of extra services an amusement park might demand. Possibly this would result in public tax dollars subsidizing a private corporation. Let your representative know your views.

Contact: Charles R. Shaffer, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, 3150 Penobscot Building, Detroit 48226. Phone number is 961-5865. BERNICE REINHEIMER, President League of Women Voters Southfield-Lathrup Village

Deck debate is old rift

Editor: The subject "flap" covered in detail in your June 19 edition is unfortunate in that decks are still an issue. Having been a member, I can state that the deck question had been a concern and a topic of discussion of the zoning board of appeals at least since 1974.

On the one hand, treating decks in the same light as buildings and other structures seemed unduly stringent; on the other hand, a totally uncontrolled approach could indeed lead to some aesthetic disasters and impositions on neighbors.

Last year, after considerable discussion, the zoning board asked the city council, in writing, to review the question, and even offered middle-of-the-road guidelines for consideration. The council neither acted on or so much as acknowledged receipt of the board's recommendations. This was just one of the many questions that the council chose to ignore, presumably because of lack of time, although ample time was found by several of its members to posture interminably for the press and public on trivia.

It was also one of several ignored questions that led to my ultimate resignation from the board in exasperation and disgust. So now the "flap," although a workable proposal from the zoning board of appeals, still is before the council unanswered.

As to the "debate," Mrs. Fox is correct in her concerns, although I feel that she is overly restrictive on this matter.

Conversely, Lichtman's personal attack on Mrs. Fox is hardly warranted.

Shades of the council members of yesteryear. One wonders if Lichtman is running for office.

During my tenure, if his participation in the zoning board's deliberations were half as lengthy as his current effort for the press, he may have made a more meaningful contribution to that board's output.

Oh, well, once again the council is urged to belatedly respond to the zoning board of appeals' recommendation, act, and end this current folly.

W. STANTON Northville

READERS' FORUM

Letters must be original, copies and contain the signature and address of the sender. Limit letters to 300 words.

Guest Columnist

Tipping the scale troubles

By NANCY AUSTIN

Things that are irritating about dieting or dieters (or thoughts at large or large thoughts about dieting):

Lo-cal fruit recipes that add several hundred calories to the fruit.

People who predominate the conversation about their diet.

People who know and have all the answers.

The liquid protein diet. Fad diets.

Food products that don't have the calorie counts—even no-no's.

People who watch your plate at a party or dinner gathering.

Slick magazine writers who have all the diet answers.

Self-proclaimed diet experts. Twiggies who tell you they are going on a diet.

D-I-E-T. It's a four-letter word. Feeling guilty about eating.

Physicians who prescribe diet pills. Physicians who prescribed liquid protein.

Physicians who hand you a 1,000-calorie diet plan produced by a pharmaceutical company.

"Over the counter" diet pills. People who blame all their fat on large bones or glandular problems (only five per cent of obesity is due to glandular problems).

People who remind you that you are on a diet.

People who remind you that you should be on a diet.

People who say, "This one little piece won't hurt."

People who say they'll begin their diets tomorrow.

Products that cost more because the sugar hasn't been added.

Food commercials. Pre-sweetened cereals.

Manufacturers that add sugar to almost everything in our cupboards.

Being told you are chubby—then receiving a friendly pat in the chubby area.

Doctor's weight charts that always say you are overweight by 20 pounds.

Cookie jars with noisily lids.

People who say they like you fat. The expression "Fat and sassy."

Feeling guilty while standing in the Dairy Queen line.

Putting on a bathing suit for the first summer swim.

People who offer food as reward or punishment.

Hosts or hostesses who feel insulted if you don't have seconds and even thirds at their dinner party.

Magazine ads for products promising instant weight losses without dieting.

Skinny people who smugly ask how to put on weight.

Worrying about running into someone I know while buying a no-no.

Feeling fat when you aren't.

Bakery window displays. Family members who sabotage your efforts.

Garments that shrink too fast.

Weight Watchers use of the word "legal" in referring to OK foods.

Dieting honestly and seriously and not losing weight.

Full length mirrors. Scales that aren't accurate.

Scales that are. Cravings.

Fat arms. Fat people who don't use a deodorant.

Fat people who complain that seats in public places aren't big enough.

Bicycle seats that aren't big enough.

Overeaters who openly complain in restaurants that the portions aren't big enough.

Overeaters who have second and third helpings at smorgasbords.

Fat people who say they only eat a little bit.

Want to register your complaint in this column? I'm sure there are a lot of thoughts that I've left out. Sure, some of these are tongue-in-cheek, but there is always an element of truth there.

Send your tidbit to me at P.O. Box 223, Plymouth Mich. 48170. If yours is suitable for printing, you will win a free issue of "Tipping the Scales," the national dieter's newsletter. Be sure to include your name and address. Winners will be announced in a future column along with their "best." Deadline is June 30.

Boy Scouts liked what we had to say

Editor: Just a note to thank you for the absolutely tremendous front page coverage you gave our Boy Scout Troop 389.

So many people have commented on how pleased they were to see something like this appear in the paper.

On behalf of the boys in Troop 389 and their Troop Committee, please accept our thanks and appreciation for such a nice story. The pictures turned out beautifully and told the story in greater depth.

BARBARA M. MUNN, Farmington Hills

Farmington cop complimented

Editor: On June 5, my wife was involved in a minor accident near our home in Farmington. Our car and our neighbor's 3-year-olds also were in the car so the collision took on more meaning. No one was injured.

Aside from the issues of who is at fault, I would like to commend Officer Charles Lee of the Farmington Police Department for his skillful and sensitive handling at the scene of the accident.

He was both calm and helpful, sorting out the statements of witnesses and those involved in the accident.

Perhaps the best testimonial to his handling was my 3-year-old daughter's description of what he did: "He helped us. Policemen help people."

Certainly, Officer Lee aided in the formation of a very positive attitude toward Farmington policemen, at least. And for this, I'm most grateful.

DON HADLEY Farmington

Our picnic pal

Wildlife is usually unwelcome at a picnic around the table of a campground because it's usually in the form of a biting bug or a loose-bowled bird. The exception is the chipmunk.

His red coat at first may be mistaken for a squirrel's. But he's smaller, his tail is less bushy, and he has black and white stripes on his face and back.

He's a solitary dweller, a hermit, mating briefly during the breeding season but otherwise going it alone.

In several days of camping, you can get one almost to eat from your hand. One wonders: Do we treat them like pets because they're so cute

and friendly, or are they friendly because we treat them like pets?

The chipmunk lives around trees—not in high branches like the squirrel but in a hole or a den in the roots. He moves in and out with incredible speed. If you scare one, move a few feet away and wait a couple of minutes. He'll poke his head out soon enough.

A chipmunk eats seeds, nuts, fruits and insects. Lovers that fall from your picnic table are his meat and potatoes. He carries them in his capacious cheek pouches to his lair to enjoy at his leisure.

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