

# Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS

## Besides box lunch, audience gets show

Actress Jeanne Arnold, who is a favorite with Meadow Brook Theater audiences, confesses that the Meadow Brook Theater Guild is a favorite of performers.

And it was no secret quietly revealed but instead told by Ms. Arnold, to an audience of some 500 women and a few men Friday at the theater guild's third annual Luncheon on the Aisle.

Held in Wilson Hall, where Meadow Brook's 14th season opening production will debut tonight, the Luncheon on the Aisle was a full-house fund-raiser for the theater.

Ms. Arnold, who presided over the afternoon event, declared, "I don't think there's any theater group across the country that's been as good to actors as the Meadow Brook Theater Guild."

THE GUILD's membership of about 35 women has bought everything from toasters to blankets for the 12 mobile homes that house the actors during their stay on the Oakland University campus near Rochester.

Last year, the guild raised \$1,700 from the Luncheon on the Aisle. This year, because of the sold-out house, even more money will go toward making the actors comfortable.

The professional acting company for each production is in residence for six weeks — 3½ weeks rehearsing and 3½ weeks performing.

On arrival, there's a basket of delectable foods and a welcoming glass of wine in each performer's trailer. The repast is provided by the guild, which also makes sure television sets in the trailers are in good working order.

The guild gives a Sunday brunch for each cast and holds this gathering in a member's home, so the actors may meet both husbands and wives and become more acquainted with the community.

A rental car, paid for by the guild, is available for the actors' use on Monday, their day off during the show's run. The guild arranges for tours of Meadow Brook Hall, which the visiting performers always want to see.

AFTER MS. ARNOLD prepped the audience with her vocal rendition of "Life Upon the Wicked Stage" (Ain't Nothing What a Girl Supposes), she discussed some myths about the theater.

She claimed it's not that actors love applause because they want to bask in their own egos but, instead, that hearing applause is a signal to performers that they are communicating — which is their goal.

Ms. Arnold added what she termed a personal comment, remarking, "I've heard people in this community say, 'I'm not going to go there (to Meadow Brook Theater) anymore, if they're going to do that kind of play!'"

She continued, "There will be times you will be insulted, mad — if it's not propaganda — you don't have to like it."

Ms. Arnold introduced Terence Kilburn, artistic director of Meadow Brook Theater, who talked about the opening production, "The School for Scandal."

He said that the social comedy classic by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, set in 18th century London, chronicles a time when news traveled fastest by word of mouth and gossip reigned.

THE CAST of "The School for Scandal" then performed a nearly letter-perfect rehearsal, which whetted one's appetite for the entire production.

Characters in the play include intriguing characters as Lady Sneerwell, a malicious gossip, and her circle of rumormongers such as Snake, Mrs. Candour and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Donald Ever portrays Sir Peatree, a bachelor who becomes a husband and at 50 by marrying a squire's daughter, portrayed by Erika Petersen, who adapts easily to her extravagant life as "a lady of fashion."

During the rehearsal, Kilburn and stagehands carried furniture from one set to another. "The revolve doesn't work," Kilburn said, pointing out that the wrong-size hardware had arrived and put the scene design crew behind schedule constructing a revolving set.

Introduction of the scene designer, Peter-William Hicks, and of the costume, Mary Lynn Bonnell, completed the Luncheon on the Aisle program. Although the actors rehearsed in makeshift costumes and casual clothes, a few completed costumes were brought out for the audience to admire the lavish workmanship.

For people interested in becoming guild members, information is available by calling 375-0465.

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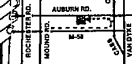
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