Youngest director takes hold

Although "Lion in Winter" is the first full-length play she has directed and Barbara Underwood at age 25 is the youngest director Birmingham Village Players has ever had, she appears firmly in command of her responsibili-

firmly in command of her responsibility.

A Birmingham resident, Ms. Underwood has been rehearsing with her cast for the last two months. "I auditioned early," she said, because there are many two-person scenes in the show and I wanted to have plenty of time to work will the actors."

The red-headed director previously directed performances of one acts for the citys "In the Park" programs two years in a row, for Players, She also directed a one-act Pinter play for a

potluck supper at the Birmingham Village Players playhouse at Chestnut and Hunter.

Belieing her composure, she said, "I'm kind of a frantic director. I have to do things physically for the actors." She explained she gets up on the stage and demonstrates what she wants done.

ANY TIME A CAST member is hav-ANY TIME A CAST member is having a problem with a line, Ms. Underwood may "give them a modern line and comparisons." Translating from Olde English concepts to contemporary slang can be hilarious. As a third-generation member of players, Ms. Underwood comes by some of her theatrical institutes naturally. Her grandfather was a member, and her father, Art Underwood, is currently president.

She said she was concerned that peo-ple might think she got the job direct-ing "Lion in Winter" because her father happened to be president this year. But, Ms. Underwood said, "I was assured he stayed out of it, and it was a board of directors' decision."

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She was especially eager to direct 'Lion in Winter' because she is a self-taught student of English history. Of English-Section descent, Ms. Underwood has traced the family tree and the student of the self-taught student of English of the third the self-taught of the self-

ACTION IS SET in the year 1183, combining a couple of historical events into a fictional drama. The plot is melodramatic, with "something to of-fend everyone," Ms. Underwood said. It contains humor, and physical violence "with a 20-pound broadsword." Ms. Underwood graduated in 1974 from the Academy of Dramatic Art, now defunct, at Oakland University in Rochester. She then went on to two processional jobs, with the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival and the Alley Theater in Houston.

She decided to come home and Not entirely happy with the realities of the professional theater world, she decided to come home to Birmingham. She works as a graphics artist with Multi-Craft in Troy, which does automotive graphics.

"The Birmingham Village Players

motive graphics.
"The Birmingham Village Players approaches professionalism more than any community theater group I've ever seen," she said.



Barbara Underwood, 25, who has a professional theater background, is directing "Lion in Winter." (Photos by Randy Borst)



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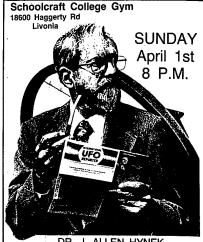
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