

What a night

Players Barn closes with a fun night and hopes for future

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A fine time was had by all and money was raised in the continuing effort to build a new Farmington Players Barn on 12 Mile. "The Last Dance" - a gala celebrating the last production by the Farmington Players in their beloved barn theater - went off without a hitch Saturday night, while taking in another \$31,000 for the \$1.5 million construction project.

The barn is expected - if all goes as planned - to be demolished in July to make way for construction of a new and larger theater on the same spot, said Phil Hadley, project manager and chairman of the Players building committee.

The Players raised money from the sale of tickets to the gala, plus proceeds from the live and silent auctions. Red Wing hockey great Ted Lindsay, who donated one of his numbered and autographed jerseys, was on hand to pose for photographs and offer autographs to fans.

Approximately 120 guests attended the gala, including former area mayors, as well as current council members, and state Rep. Andrew Raczowski.

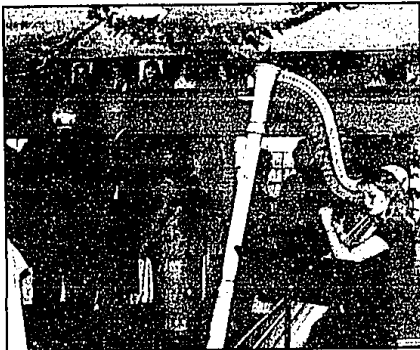
The evening was completed with the last performance of *Kiss Me, Kate* and food donated by 20 area restaurants.

By the way, the revival of *Kiss Me, Kate* was honored yet again at this past week's Tony Awards.

"It will be nice to see the barn expand so they will have wing space to do more elaborate sets," said Farmington Hills councilwoman Vicki Barnett, who served as an honorary committee member for the gala. "The charm will remain but the enhancements will make for more elaborate productions."

Though the barn is officially closed, the Farmington Players aren't taking a hiatus. They will be back in September with a season's lineup of shows, thanks to efforts by members who secured a temporary spot for their productions.

Members are in the process of leasing empty space next to



Graceful: Guests at the Farmington Players Barn gala were entertained by harpist Christina Szlag.

Barnes & Noble on Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield.

"It has truly been laying fallow for five years," Hadley said.

The space is a good-sized room with a stage. "We realized we could turn it into a theater," Hadley said.

Originally, the Players expected to use space at William Tynedale College but proposed construction there prevented it. "We were asking about for anywhere we could go," Hadley said.

The 110-member group has been diligently raising money for the construction of a new theater. Approximately 80 percent toward its goal, the Players are hoping to get corporate help.

"We offer an outlet for creativity, communal team building," Hadley said. "It's their employees we are giving an outlet to. We are not asking for a lot. We are also asking corporations to help us with materials, services."

The new barn theater is expected to seat 242 patrons and the lobby will be large enough to accommodate a full house for mingling and refreshments. The lobby also will be available for area arts organizations to host exhibits.

"We've talked to the arts commission so we want to make it available. We have gotten a lot of interest," Hadley said.

Anyone who would like to contribute to the Players' continuing fund-raising efforts are asked to call the box office (which will continue while they are housed in West Bloomfield) at 553-2955.

The performance lineup for the coming year includes *Fools in September*; *Lion in Winter* in November; *The Uninvited* in February, 2001; and *Stalag 17* in May, 2001.

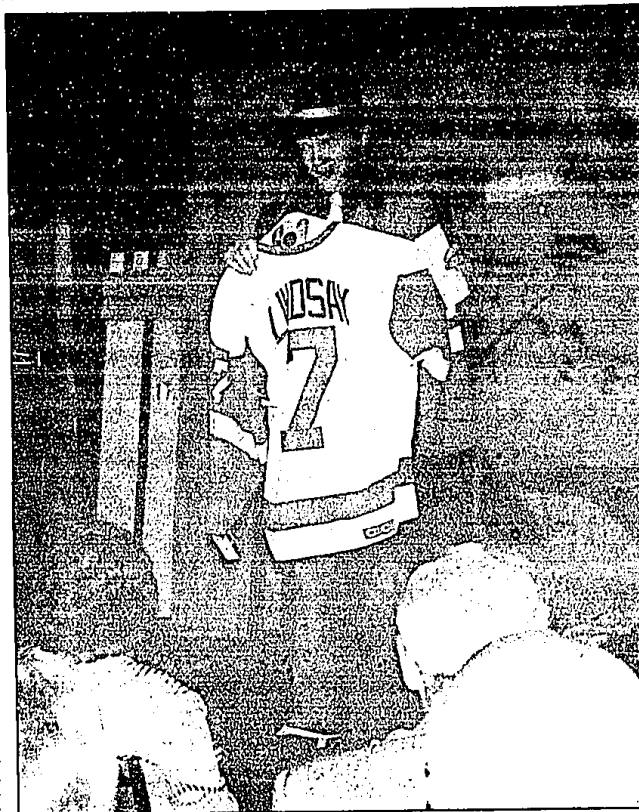


Photo by Julie Hodes

What a find: Graig Forhan displays Ted Lindsay's hockey jersey to the bidders.



An evening: Irving and Virginia Slotnick pause during the gala.

Celebrate summer with Fun Series

Downtown Farmington's Summer 2000 Fun Series will run separate shows at 10:30 a.m. and noon Wednesdays, beginning June 14 through Aug. 2 at various places in Farmington. There is no even planned for Wednesday, June 27.

The series includes:

■ June 14, "Jack and the Beanstalk," by Lester's Puppet Adventures, under the tent in the Downtown Farmington Center

■ June 22, "Shop, Swap and Sell," a garage sale for kids with free table space at Orchard Street Park. Pre-registration is required by calling (248) 473-7276

■ June 28, "The Monster that Ate Your Garden," presented by the Mask Puppet Theatre under the tent at the Downtown Farmington Center

■ July 12, Geri Green, a musical program for all ages, at the

■ The Downtown Farmington Fun Series will debut June 14 and run through the beginning of August.

Civic

■ July 10, Richard Paul, ventriloquist and puppet performer at the Civic

■ July 26, "Zemo the Yo-Yo Man," juggling, magic and yo-yos at the Civic

■ Aug. 2, Doug Sheer, magic presentation at the Civic.

The shows are free.

For more information, call the Downtown Farmington Event hotline at (248) 473-7283. Orchard Street Park is located 1.4 mile south of Grand River, east of Farmington Road.



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