

# The Distaff Side...

By Jerry Wendi, Women's Editor

"How would you like to have luncheon with Helen Hayes and attend a press conference afterwards?" invited Wally Roberts, Observer Drama Editor, over the telephone.

Wouldn't you call that a perfect way to spend a day? What could there be to discuss with Helen Hayes that wasn't already known? Her life is practically Americana. Her triumphs in the theater, her happy marriage with Charles MacArthur, the tragic death of her daughter, and her home in Nyack, etc.

It was a day of surprises, for there is much to discover about Miss Hayes, as she is a person who is always moving forward in her life. The first surprise came when we entered the dark paneled drawing room, and caught sight of her.

Everyone knows of her inner beauty and great poise but she is a pretty woman in a doll-like way. Great wide apart blue eyes, a golden tan that was complemented by her print dress in shades of gold and a tiny figure. But the vibrant voice and magnificent sense of timing are still the same. When she speaks, every eye is on her, although she makes no attempt to dominate the conversation.

It was a privilege to attend that afternoon for it was a chance to meet the theater great. Miss Hayes, Will Geer, her partner, and the Robert Schmitzners, a handsome couple, represent the people who love the theatre and form dynasties in it. This present state is a dream come true for all of them.

As Helen Hayes puts it "For once, in my life, I can read plays and act in the things that I really enjoy without having to think first of the box-office."

Miss Hayes and Geer are in Ann Arbor to appear with the Association of Producing Artists, the theatrical repertory company better known as the APA. Tuesday night will open a seven-week season beginning with a revival of "A School for Scandal."

Marcella Cismey and her husband Robert Schnitzer have a distinguished background and among their successes are "The Skin of Our Teeth" and "The Glass Menagerie" both starring Helen Hayes.

This has long been a strong project of this editor: that universities should sponsor the theater so that everyone could see a play in its most perfect form, as it was originally intended to be.

Miss Hayes expressed herself, "I have a very strong belief in the concept of the acting company that has continuity. It seems to me the universities are the main white hope of the theater. They are going to keep the theater alive and shining. The

commercial theater simply can't afford to send out touring companies anymore, and a repertory company such as the APA makes it possible to see plays we can't see in the commercial theater."

In a profession when romantic alliances are fleeting, Miss Hayes knew a truly great love. Even now when she speaks of her husband she says tenderly, "My Charlie" with that special catch in her voice that women reserve for those most dear to them.

Charles MacArthur was a gay and popular man, and Miss Hayes had a sense of humor which delighted him. It was evident when she was asked if she didn't think the theater was becoming very "respectable." "I hope not," she laughed, "there must always be a feeling of raw life to the theater."

You may think you have seen everything but you haven't, because Miss Hayes will play a Madam in "We, Comrades, Three." She shakes her head ruefully, "For the first time in my career, too." Her partner, Will Geer reassured her.

We asked her the question that many people have wondered:

"To what do you attribute the fact that you have always enjoyed the highest regard, not only in the theater, but as a woman, in a profession that hasn't always been noted for the respect accorded its performers?"

She shook her head thoughtfully, "I'm glad you

asked me. We all need something to get through these trying times."

She was silent a minute, her face shadowed in reflection, was she thinking of the handsome Charlie and her lovely daughter, both gone?

Then smiling, quickly, she said, "I am an Irish Catholic. Part of this religion, or any religion," she added, "is to be of use to your fellow man. I have also always had the discipline of the theater. No matter what my feelings have been, I have always had to go on, because not to do so would have been to bring misfortune to those who were depending on me. If at times, it seemed hard, now I am grateful for it."

There you have it, the recipe for greatness not only in the theater, but in life, by a great lady.

Ed. note: Tickets are available at the PTP office in Mendelsohn Theater, Ann Arbor.

## Redford Toastmistress Club To Meet September 27

The Redford Toastmistress Club will launch its 1966-1967 year at a 12:20 p.m. luncheon meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 27, at the Botsford Inn, Farmington.

In addition to educational features, introductory speeches will be presented by Mesdames Frank Visger and George Kuehn. Icebreaker speeches are designed to give new members an opportunity to "feel" their way towards speech making and although some leeway is allowed in Evaluation, the speechmakers are given constructive criticism regarding their strengths and weak points.

Toastmistress Clubs are open to membership to women who would like the opportunity to learn to give a report, make an announcement, conduct a meeting, introduce a speaker, think on their feet and express their views with poise and confidence. They offer a method of helping women through the study of effective speaking, leadership, basic parliamentary procedure, and analytical listening.



HELEN HAYES gestures toward her co-star Will Geer (right) during a press conference at the League of Women in the University of Michigan last week. Seated next to her are from left: Rick Bay, assistant wrestling coach at U. of M. and Wally Roberts, Observer Drama Critic.



THE FIRST LADY OF the theater, Helen Hayes, will appear in "Right You Are" for the A.P.A. Repertory Company at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

## Dinner and Fashion Show To Be Held September 21

Hi neighbor! What do you know? And what do you say? Add a voice and add a face. Rosedale Gardens extends a cordial invitation to join their association.

The first function of the Women's Club is a dinner and fashion show at Jacobson's in Dearborn on Wed., Sept. 21, at 6:45 p.m. The tickets may be obtained from Jo Cole, 421-7593. There is a limited number, so hurry and obtain them.

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More and more laundering experts are urging homemakers to get away from the extra burden of spring and fall housecleaning by keeping things spotless throughout the year. So, start your fall clean-up—NOW.

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## The DRC Story

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On the second level of our Grandstand area, in a section the racing public sees only at a distance, is housed a maze of intricate machinery that makes up the equipment used in our Pari-Mutuel Department.

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In Clark's crash test, theoretically a Fan at each of the 210 windows buys a ticket on the same horse and the Mutual Clerks simultaneously punch the keys to issue the tickets.

"The ticket the Fan gets actually is a receipt," Clark says, "but it isn't issued until our master system has made an acknowledgment of the wager and recorded it. In the 'impossible' situation we set up for the crash test, it takes only three to four seconds for every possible Straight, Place, Show or Combination wager to be acknowledged and recorded."

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Dale Shaffer President

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