

Old clothes find new life on stage

Continued from Previous Page

to work. When the theater group did "Brigadoon" a few years back, it made all the bloody white shirts and kilts for the men.

For years it stored costumes in the attics of members' houses. Now all the costumes are efficiently kept together in a locked wardrobe room. Mini Gass, publicity chair for the group, said, "We have lots of authentic things like beaded velvet gowns from the '30s. People donate clothes they think we can use or they pick up treasures for us at estate sales."

Authenticity is a goal when costume-making a play. "We get as accurate as possible and fake the rest," said Barb Gowans of St. Dunstan's. She keeps a collection of costume books for reference and her favorite is "a huge atlas book with pictures of clothes for the beginning of the world through the '50s."

When the Troy Players was researching costumes for "Inherit the Wind," a research librarian in the group Xeroxed pictures from a 1934 Sears catalog because costume books showed only high-fashion, big-city styles.

"The people in the small Southern town where the play is set just didn't dress like that," said Linda Brick. "The men had ill-fitting clothes, pocket watches and fedoras. To be authentic, we made all the men take off their wrist watches, and sewed big collars, out-sized buttons and cuffs on everything for the women."

ALL THE THEATER groups lend and rent costumes. Until recently, renting to the public was big business for the Farmington Players, especially around Halloween. Hope Nahstoll, who's been a member of the group for 31 years since its beginning, said, "We cleared between \$1,000 and \$2,000 every year on costume rentals and we

charged far less than professional costumers. Eventually rentals got to be too much of a hassle, with the nuisance of checks that bounced and people who gave fake phone numbers."

The board recently decided to rent only to other theater groups. "Lots of school groups depend on us for costumes," Nahstoll said.

Reciprocal agreements to borrow or rent costumes is common among theater groups. When Nancy Gurwin needed a top hat for "I Do, I Do," the Farmington Players rented her its collapsible model. This season the Birmingham Village Players will borrow Washington Senators baseball suits from St. Dunstan's when it puts on "Damn Yankees," and St. Dunstan's in turn plans to outfit its cast for "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" with costumes from the Birmingham Village Players.

Barb Gowans of St. Dunstan's said, "We beg, borrow or buy costumes wherever we can find them." For its production of "The Music Man," St. Dunstan's rented costumes from three different groups — the Rosedale Park Theatre group, the Farmington Players and the Wyandotte Players.

"We have easily 1,000 to 1,200 costumes in our own collection," she said, "with 50 costumes alone for 'Kiss Me Kate' and another 40 for 'Brigadoon.'" St. Dunstan's rents those out to groups who reciprocate when they can with costumes from their own collections.

ONE OF THE most popular pieces is the chicken suit St. Dunstan's made for "Tribute." Everything goes out eventually. "Even the pregnant stomach which attaches in seconds for a very pregnant look makes the rounds," Gowans said. It's been used in "Generation X," "Mame" and "Same Time Next Year."

Twenty years ago the Farmington Players bought the costume collection



GAMILLIE MC COY
Romantic hat is one of the many chapeaux that accessorize costumes the Birmingham Village Players uses for its stage productions.

of Mrs. Lancaster, a Farmington elocution teacher. Later, when a men's formal wear store went out of business, it bought out the stock. Now it boasts one of the largest costume collections among community theater groups in the area, with a minimum of 200 tuxedos, formal morning suits and full dress suits.

Word has gotten out in the community that the players appreciate vintage clothes. Hope Nahstoll, current wardrobe chair at the Barn theater, said, "People say to me, 'Would you like my mother's 1928 wedding dress?'" The answer is usually yes, although every few years when the wardrobe closets groan with too many clothes, the players weeds out its collection and holds a glorified rummage sale, as it did last September. Profits from the sale are plowed back into the collection.

The Avon Players used to loan costumes to other groups without charging

rent, but it recently changed policy when costumes began coming back in need of cleaning. Now it requests a refundable deposit on each costume and charges an average fee of \$5 each to cover cleaning and repairs.

IT STORES several thousand costumes in the playhouse's basement. Mary Copenhagen, costume chairwoman for the last five or six years, said, "Period costumes from around 1900 see the biggest usage. Our most elaborate set of costumes is from 'The King and I.' Avon Players does at least one costume show a year, usually a musical. This spring it will present 'Company.'"

"I have personally sewed a couple thousand costumes," Copenhagen said, citing favorites such as a 20-foot-long pink satin dragon, that had to be rigged with a fan for ventilation, and a 9-foot-high troll for Youththeatre productions.

Thursday, December 13, 1984 O&E

(T.Ro-12C.6.F-40X)13C

COUPON
CHRISTMAS SEASON SPECIAL
SAVE 15%
On Baked Fish, Sea Food, Chowder, Shrimp Cocktail, Chicken or Roast Beef, etc. Present this coupon to our cashier. Complete meal about \$3.95.
• Allen Park • Royal Oak • Detroit, W. 8 Mile
• Bloomfield/Pontiac • Southland Shop, Ctr. • Warren
• Dearborn • Eastland Shop, Ctr. • West Bloomfield
• Mt. Clemens • Oakland Mall • Westland Shop, Ctr.
11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.
(1 Guest Check Please)
Expires Good
Now Thru Dec. 26, 1984
Not Accepted After This Date

COUPON
NEW YEAR'S DAY SPECIAL
SAVE 15%
On Baked Fish, Sea Food, Chowder, Shrimp Cocktail, Chicken or Roast Beef, etc. Present this coupon to our cashier. Complete meal about \$3.95.
• Allen Park • Royal Oak • Detroit, W. 8 Mile
• Bloomfield/Pontiac • Southland Shop, Ctr. • Warren
• Dearborn • Eastland Shop, Ctr. • West Bloomfield
• Mt. Clemens • Oakland Mall • Westland Shop, Ctr.
11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.
(1 Guest Check Please)
Expires Good
Dec. 26-Jan. 1, 1985
Not Accepted After This Date

Call Now For NEW YEAR'S EVE Reservations
Machus Sly Fox
SPECIAL DINING ROOM MENU TO INCLUDE CUISINE CHOICES:
Such as Chateaubriand for Two, Stuffed Flounder with Lobster Sauce, Baked Filet of Lemon Sole, Shrimp Tempura, Prime Ribs of Beef and Many More. All entrees served with Machus Cheese and Crackers, Machus Special Salad Service, Warm French Bread from the Cart.
SPECIAL NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA IN OUR LOWER LEVEL
A FIVE COURSE DINNER
Choice of Six Entrees 8:00-10:00 P.M.
Prime Rib, Filet Mignon, New York Strip Steak, Baked Filet of Lemon Sole, Broiled Swordfish or Roast Duck.
Piano Cocktail Music 8:00-9:00 P.M.
Dancing To Begin at 9:00 P.M.
1 Bottle of Champagne Per Couple at Midnight
CASH BAR • HATS • NOISEMAKERS • FAVORS
\$32.50 per person (includes dinner, dancing, tax & gratuity)
We require a deposit of \$25.00 per couple (Refundable)
725 South Hunter • Birmingham • 642-6900

DO IT AT HURLEY'S
Christmas Party
Complimentary Hors d'Oeuvres
MON. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
TUE. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
WED. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
THUR. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
FRI. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
SAT. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
SUN. 12-11 PM. DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF DONNAROSSA
5500 Crooks Rd. at I-75
Troy, MI 48068
(313) 879-2100
NORTHFIELD HILTON

FOR PEOPLE WHO PREFER AN INTIMATE NEW YEAR'S EVE
Imagine a truly intimate New Year's Eve with those who enjoy the finer touches in life.
It begins with a six-course dinner prepared by Chef Emmons, complemented by your selection from five glorious entrees. All presented in the ambience of our intimate restaurant. TWO SEATINGS AT 6:00 or 9:00.
Enhance the 9 p.m. dinner with a midnight celebration in our plush lounge, yours for the evening. Music by the Greg Pericot Trio • dancing amidst love seats • a champagne toast at midnight • and a sweet table at 1:00 a.m.
Of course, your mood will be such that we would like you to stay overnight with us... and at our special mid-lounge sync rate, who could resist forsaking any interruption.
Call us for further information on the only intimate New Year's Eve in town. 313-873-3000. Early reservations are recommended. Complimentary valet parking.
BANK HOTELS
Hotel St. Regis
3071 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202 (313) 873-3000



Spend Christmas with us. It'll be just like old times.
The Christmas spirit is alive and well and nipping at your nose at Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village throughout December. Get that special holiday feeling while a vintage phonograph plays at the Wright Brothers' home and the aroma of baked goods fills the streets. In the museum, St. Nick will give out free mementos, and visitors are invited to make their own gifts of yesteryear. See antique toys and ornaments, hear carolers and get a feel for Christmas the way it used to be. This year, your Christmas present could be Christmas past. December 1st through the 31st except Christmas Day. Dial 271-1620.
Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village.
The great American museum that's also great fun.

L.J. Loophole's Presents an International Dining Festival
EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY
PRIME RIB & POLYNESIAN BUFFET
— 6 to 10 P.M. —
ONLY \$8.25 CHILDREN UNDER 10 \$4.25
ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET!
FEATURES...
• CARVED PRIME RIB
• SEAFOOD NEWBURG
• CHICKEN CASHW
• BEEF & PEA PODS
• ORIENTAL RICE
• STIR FRIED VEGETABLES
• SENSATIONAL SALAD BAR
557-4800
Sheraton-Southfield Hotel
17017 W. NINE MILE RD., SOUTHFIELD, MICH 48075

Great American Salad Bar at the NORTHFIELD HILTON
WICKERWORKS
5500 Crooks Road at I-75
Troy, Michigan
60 SALADS + 15 CONDIMENTS
★ AMAZING ASSORTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL BREADS ★
★ FRESH FRUITS ★
SATURDAY EVENINGS AT 6 P.M.
SALAD ONLY \$6.95 COMPLEMENTARY WITH ENTREE
RESERVATIONS 879-2100
NEW! MINI SALAD BAR!
20 Salads/10 Condiments
Sunday through Thursday...