

# Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



O&amp;E Thursday, February 5, 1987

## upcoming things to do

### ● KISS-PRINTS

The third annual Celebrity Kiss-Print Auction will be Friday, Feb. 6, at the Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield. Bidders may choose from kiss-prints and autographs by more than 130 national and local celebrities including Madonna, Vanilla White, Brooke Shields, Mel Gibson and Robert Goulet. A display will continue in the main concourse through Thursday, Feb. 12. Bids will be taken throughout the week at the mall display or by calling the MGA office at 827-7833. The event will close with a live auction hosted by Jim Harper of WDTX radio at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12. Proceeds go to the Myasthenia Gravis Association.

### ● LIVE BANDS

Holiday Inn of Southfield is featuring live bands for guests' dancing and entertainment from 9 p.m. to midnight. Tuesday-Saturday at Sassy's restaurant and lounge. The hotel's Holidome with piano bar presents various pianists 5-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday. For more information, call 553-7700.

### ● 'ANXIETIES '80S'

St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook will present its original musical comedy, "Anxieties '80s," at 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Feb. 6-7 and 13-14, at the playhouse in Bloomfield Hills. For ticket information, call 644-0527 anytime.

### ● CASTING CALL

Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre in Birmingham is casting for its upcoming play, "The Prisoner of Second Avenue." People interested in auditioning for the Neil Simon comedy may phone the theater at 644-4418.

### ● BAL POLONAIS

Gail Kobe of Los Angeles, CBS ex-

ecutive producer of "The Bold and the Beautiful," will serve as honorary celebrity co-chair of the Bal Polonais IV at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Detroit Athletic Club. Residents from Birmingham, Bingham Farms, Bloomfield Hills and Rochester are among those serving as honorary co-chairs. For ticket information, call 646-5250 or 842-2730.

### ● RED CEDARS

Phil Marcus Esser has returned to the Red Cedars to do a cabaret-type show, performing many old favorites from his hit shows, at 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. and midnight Friday-Saturday beginning Feb. 6 at the main floor dining room of the Red Cedars in Southfield. Esser's shows include "Jacques Breil Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris," "Personals," "Leadbelly to Brel" and "The Fantasies." There is no cover charge or minimum. Reservations are suggested, call 553-5170.

### ● BARBERSHOP CHORUS

The Clinton Valley Barbershop Chorus will give a concert, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Great Oaks Mall in Rochester.

### ● COMEDY CLUB

A new comedy club is presented at 9 and 10:30 p.m. every Friday, then going to two nights a week in mid-March and eventually four nights a week starting in May, at Crusado's restaurant and nightclub in Allen Park. Webber Production, an artists' management company of Birmingham, and TAP Ltd. of Farmington Hills have joined forces to put together the comedy club. Appearing will be such local headliners as Mike Bonner, Darwin Hines and Lowell Sanders.

### ● MYSTERY WEEKEND

The Novi Hilton is offering a Murder Mystery weekend package Friday, March 13, through Sunday,

## Mother Superior

### It's getting to be a habit with her

By Ethel Simmons  
staff writer

**P**EGGY CASS WAS relaxing at home in New York last Friday night after a week of rehearsals for "Nonsense," the musical hit opening a four-week run Friday at the Birmingham Theatre.

Her little dog, Kayo — a three-month-old West Highland white terrier — was nipping at her legs, she said, as she spoke over the phone about the upcoming show. Cass was scheduled to arrive in Birmingham Wednesday for a few more days of rehearsal before the show got under way.

Previews will be at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 2 and 7 p.m. Sunday, with opening night Tuesday, Feb. 10. Performances will run through Sunday, March 8.

The actress' familiar, appealing voice has a catch in it (one writer, she said, likened it to the sound of "driving backwards in a freight yard"). Sometimes, she's heard and not seen, doing voice-overs for such clients as Wendy's and Getty Oil.

"Nonsense," about five nuns who put on a show, brings Cass back to the Birmingham Theatre, where she appeared as a nun in "Agnes of God," co-starring Susan Strasberg.

"THE MOTHER Superior, yet again," she said, of her role in both "Nonsense" and "Agnes of God." Of course, "Agnes of God" was heavy drama, and this show is a song and dance entertainment.

The only similarity between her two roles as mother superior is in her dress, a nun's habit. In "Agnes of God," the habit was of alk chiffon, she said. In "Nonsense," "It's regular nun cloth, the real McCoy," she declared.

Cass said she went to Catholic school as a child, and the nuns' garments always looked stiff and



(Above) She was the Mother Superior in "Agnes of God" at the Birmingham Theatre in 1984.



(Below) Peggy Cass again is the Mother Superior, this time in the musical "Nonsense."

scratchy but actually are very soft and comfortable.

"It's very nice," she said of her costume. "I'm never too crazy about the wimples and hats."

Playing the role of a nun has one definite advantage, "There are no quick changes."

Cass appears in 16 numbers in "Nonsense" and wears the same outfit throughout the show.

"It's really a revue," she said. "It's very much ensemble work — dancing. It's not like any show you've ever seen before."

In "Nonsense," five nuns from the Little Sisters of Hoboken try to raise money for an orphanage, to bury some dearly departed sisters who have been stored in the freezer. They put on a show, singing, dancing and doing comedy.

Of her four co-stars, Cass said, "They're very talented girls, and two are beautiful."

HER BIG number is "Turn Up the

Spotlight," which is about liking the spotlight.

As the Mother Superior, however, "She's trying to keep a firm hold on the situation. I think it's funny, really."

The dance routines are strenuous for Cass. "I haven't booted around since I've been a kid. It's like Jane Fonda workouts."

Cass is looking forward to returning to Birmingham.

"Is the Phoenixia still going? It had the best rice pudding I ever ate in my life."

She also mentioned the Midtown Cafe, where she enjoyed baked brie for the first time. "I've done it myself since," she said.

Cass has won fans through her stage, screen and TV appearances. On Broadway, she created the role of Agnes Gooch, the uptight secretary of flamboyant Auntie Mame, in the play "Auntie Mame." When Gooch finally breaks out, watch out!

She received a Tony Award for her portrayal of Gooch and also earned an Oscar nomination when she took the same part in the movie version in 1958.

"People still ask, 'Aren't you Agnes Gooch?'" she said. "It was a wonderful part."

CASS HAS BEEN doing musicals on stage and spent two years with "42nd Street." She likes musicals, although they're hard work, performing every night. Among her other recent shows are "Annie" and "The Front Page."

On television, she appeared for 19 years on "To Tell the Truth." Another quiz show for her was "Password." She played many dramatic roles on "Loveboat" and "Vegas."

Not long ago, Cass took a trip around the world.

"I had a wonderful time," she said. Then she cut a children's record, did "H.M.S. Pinafore" in Florida and took the rest of the summer off.

Cass and her husband, a retired teacher of dyslexic children, live in New York with their two cats and dog.

The Birmingham Theatre production of "Nonsense" is being directed by playwright Dan Goggin, who is from Alma, Mich. Cass said they rehearsed with him every day in New York. The show's success has led to a number of companies, in Florida, New York, San Francisco, Chicago and London. And it's still running in New York.

Cass also played a nun in "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All to You," a show where the first half is practically a monologue, she said, and is based on that playwright's rather unhappy experiences with Catholicism.

Dan Goggin, however, has a more pleasant response to his Catholic upbringing.

"This one is much more loving," she said.

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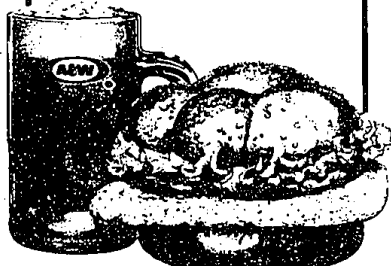
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