

# Versatility includes new play

**By Helen Zucker**  
special writer

To say that Ed Shaw is a versatile fellow is an understatement. A man who loves words, Shaw has used his verbal abilities working as a management consultant for the last 20 years. For firms as diverse as Chrysler, EDS, Ford, GMAC, Henry Ford Hospital and Burroughs, he has trained thousands of people in marketing communications, organizational planning and instructional design.



"Ed Shaw wrote 'Two-Time & Bags,' a modern version of 'The Gift of the Magi.' Both his play and 'Magi' are on a double bill at Detroit's Altie Theatre.

But words on the job aren't enough for Shaw. In his spare time, he has invented a board game called *Isawich*, is at work on three more games and has written plays and television scripts. In 1983, he had the good fortune to have his "A Letter from Corbett" produced by the One-Act Theatre Ensemble in Hollywood. The Equity Theatre Group did well by Shaw's play, and it opened to rave reviews.

Not content to rest on his West Coast laurels, Shaw continued working on "Blaney Street Sketches," a loosely knit group of stories based on kid row characters, street people of the '50s and '60s, a time Shaw sees as more "human" than the '80s.

Feels motherly toward Two-Time, played by Brian Schulz. As Shaw sees it, Two-Time "couldn't last a week on the street without Bags." And it's Bags, the outcast lady, who makes Christmas possible for her companion.

ED AND SUSAN are both Detroit natives. Susan traces her family back to the French trappers who roamed Michigan eight generations ago, and Ed was a member of the first graduating class of Henry Ford High School. After Antioch, where he majored in biology, Shaw realized he cared more about words than he did about biology. He landed a scholarship in communications that took him to Syracuse.

"Blaney Street Sketches" written in different cities Shaw spent time in as a young man, turned out to be the inspiration for "Two-Time & Bags," playing through Saturday, Dec. 24, at the Altie Theatre in Detroit. Director Gordon Reinhardt had invited Shaw to do the play as a companion piece for the Altie's Christmas production of O. Henry's "Gift of the Magi."

He says he learned everything he now works with — graphics, design, videos — during the six months he spent at Syracuse. He took a master of arts in English at Wayne State

HENRY'S 19th-century story with a woman who sells her magnificent hair to buy a watch for her husband while her husband goes to buy a tortoise shell for his wife, and the two end by cheating the magic of love that comes from giving of oneself.

Shaw deals, in 20th-century fashion, with a man and a woman who have been turned out of a mental asylum during a budget cut. The two are living "somewhere downtown," but Bags, played by Laurie Meeker,

University, where he wrote three plays, and met Susan when both were working for the Michigan Cancer Foundation.

Shaw's father, Irwin, is director of the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield. Mother Lillian took up painting at age 62 and has gone on to do lush nudes. Daughter Jessica plays the guitar. Wife Susan has shown at the Scarab Club, seventh Michigan Artists' Competition and is a graduate of the Center for Creative Studies.

Sculptures by Sally Kaplan on the coffee table, phone calls from friends at the Altie and excited talk about "What's the next play?" are a legacy of Susan and Ed's busy, creative life.

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