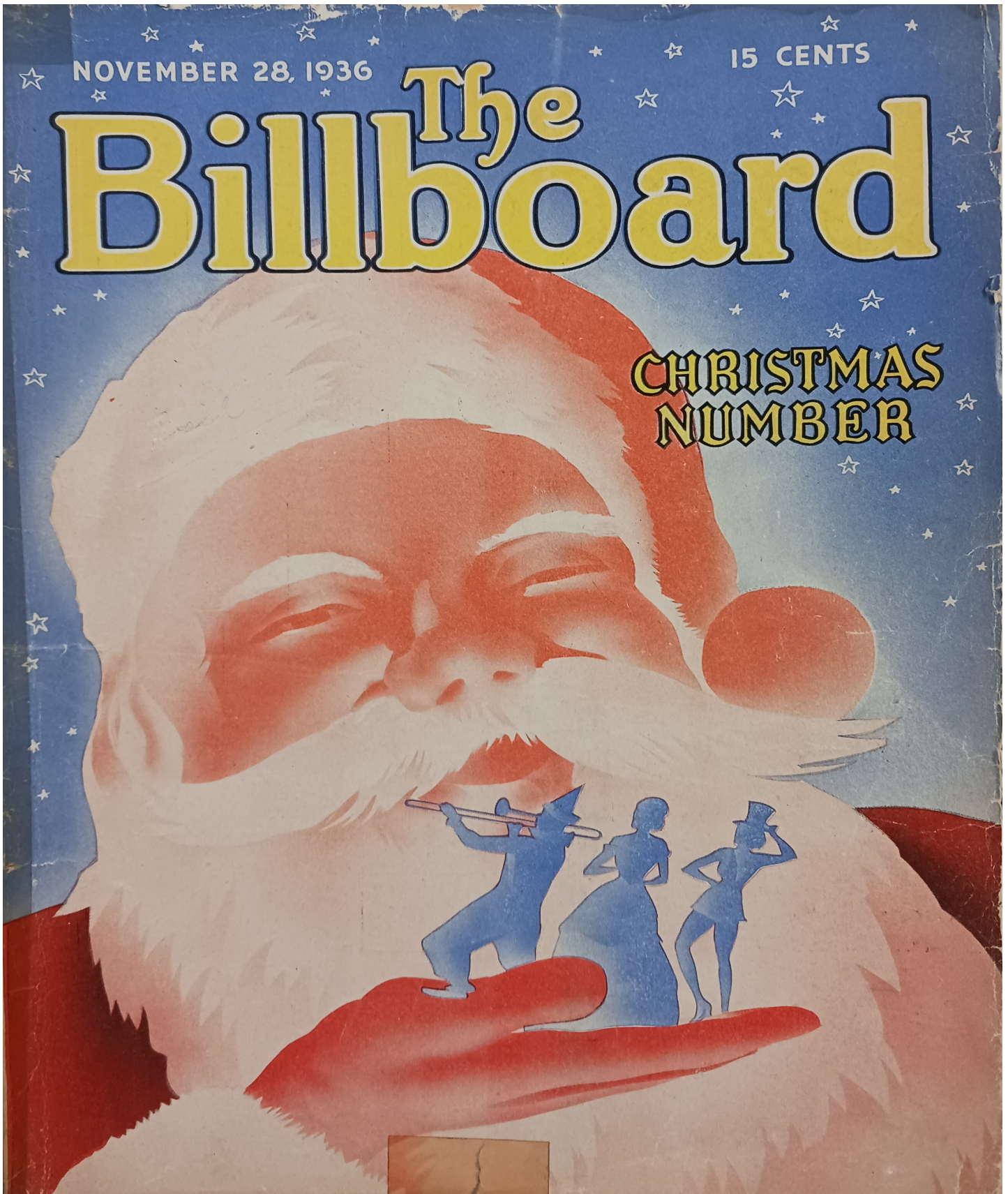


Winging It

The Newsletter of the National Society for the Preservation of Tent, Folk and Repertoire Theatre

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**The National Society
for the
Preservation of Tent,
Folk
& Repertoire
Theatre**

The Theatre Museum

Officers:

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Dr. Monie Hayes

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Mrs. James V. Davis

Second Vice President

David Wagaman

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Mrs. James V. Davis

Secretary

Bob Mueller

Museum Hours:

Memorial Day
to Labor Day :
Thursday,
Friday, & Saturday
10:00-4:00

Fall to Spring
Open by
appointment

**Winging It
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405 E. Thresher Road
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52641



President's Letter

Greetings, friends:

I write this message on the second week of the month, when the board of the National Society for the Preservation of Tent, Folk and Repertoire Theatre meets. I am grateful for my fellow board members and their contributions to our mission of preserving and sharing tent show history and its impact on American popular culture, including community life and local economies. I am grateful for input from our newest member, Chris Fuchs, who trouped with Schaffner Players in 1970 and has since made his career in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. I'm also grateful, as ever, for the ongoing efforts of Grace Davis, now a staff member at the museum, and the ever-reliable David Wagaman, Bob Mueller, and DP Wilson, our area members who give of their time and talents throughout the year, giving tours, keeping minutes, and setting up Zoom access to our meetings for the members who live in other communities, and pitching in on special projects as they come up throughout the year. And Wendy Waszut-Barrett has brought her expertise in historic backdrops to our collection and to our catalog in the research library, and she has brought our collection to a wider public. But there is always more to do and never enough time to showcase our vast and special collection and the story of tent show history that our artifacts tell. So, if you want to partner with us on a project and can bring time to execute it, or if you want to volunteer or even join our board, be in touch. There is contact information on this page.

This is also the last month of the year, a time of looking forward as well as back. I am looking forward to getting a traveling exhibit completed and into various communities in the new year. This project has been in the works for some time, but again, there is never enough of that. I'm encouraged by communication with a local vendor and with the information that a former graduate student intern shared about a visiting exhibit program offered by another Iowa museum, a program we can study as a logistical model. I plan to spend some time on that during semester break as well as next semester, when my course load will be smaller than it is this term. If you know of communities that would like to host such an exhibit, let me know, and give me staff contact information. In the meantime, we can send speakers to locations within driving distance or give talks or tours via Zoom. As my predecessor David Ripper might have written, we will be happy to share the story of rep!

Best to you over the holidays and in the new year.

Sincerely,
Monie



Another Theatre Museum

by Claudia Streeter

As the Theatre Museum in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, is special to us, the membership, and the public, the Drottningholm Theatre Museum of Sweden is well-known in Europe among theatre scholars and citizens. I had the privilege of visiting the Drottningholm Theatre Museum and gaining an appreciation for Swedish theatre history. I bought a book, which I am now donating to the Theatre Museum in Mount Pleasant. Within our building is a theatre library.

The *Drottningholm Theatre Museum* book documents 200 years of theatre before our history collection begins. There are many similarities to our curtains and historic items.

As a Theatre Museum member, schedule a visit. Allow some time to browse in the library. You will be impressed with our exhibits and library collection. Remember why you love theatre.



YES! I want to be a part of the Theatre Museum.

Membership Levels

Student	\$15	Business Supporter	\$100
Individual	\$20	Director's Circle	\$150
Family	\$30	Angel	\$500
Actor's Circle	\$50	Gabriel Himself	\$1,000

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

Membership Level _____

Check Enclosed (Payable to National Society)

Please return your payment with this form to The Theatre Museum, 405 E. Threshers Rd., Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641.

Ad libs
by Grace Swank-Davis

Holiday greetings to everyone from the Theater Museum! We have had a terribly busy year here at the museum and here is a glimpse behind the curtain.

We were lucky to trick, I mean persuade Wendy Waszut-Barrett and Chris Fuchs to join our board this year. Welcome Wendy and Chris.

We started off the year with a visit from Dr. Wendy Waszut-Barrett, the director of Historic Stage Services. Wendy traveled to Mount Pleasant from her studio in Minnesota to assess our opera house curtains. I, for one, hadn't realized the importance of our collection as well as the history of painted scenery. Wendy informed us we have one of the largest collections of Opera House curtains on display in the United States, created by some of the most important scenery studios.

Luckily for us a good friend of Wendy's decided to drive in from Virginia to join us, Associate Professor Richard Finkelstein. Richard taught stage design and lighting at James Madison University, the University of Colorado, and the University of Cincinnati. He's also a renowned stage photographer whose work has been featured in numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Dance Magazine*, *American Theater*, and many others. Richard was intrigued by our museum and took numerous photographs plus a 360-degree video that he gave to us at no charge. We uploaded the video to our website and now visitors to our website can take a virtual tour.

In July, Wendy returned to the museum to do a workshop on the care and restoration of painted drops. Richard joined her and captured more incredible photos. Thank you, Wendy, and Richard.

In May, National Society member Claudia Streeter joined board members David Wagaman, DP Wilson, and me for a trip to Wapello, Iowa to decorate the graves of Neil and Caroline Schaffner, the former owners of the Schaffner Players and, the founders of the Theatre Museum. We then went to visit the grave of my late husband, Jimmy Davis, president for over 20 years of the Theater Museum and the second owner of the Schaffner Players.

The Preservation Iowa Summit presented by Iowa Arts and Culture held their three-day event in Mount Pleasant this summer. Many of the historic preservation professionals and volunteers took a guided tour through the museum.

We set up a table in Mount Pleasant's Central Park for the Tapestry Fest. This is the second time we have participated in this event.

Mount Pleasant was an overnight stop for the 51st annual RAGBRAI, (Registers Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa). The bicyclers camped on the Old Threshers grounds, and we received quite a few visitors including a nice young man from Great Britain with whom I had an enjoyable conversation.

The Retired Teachers of Henry County hold an annual get together followed by a luncheon at a local Chinese restaurant, and this year they met at the museum. After David Wagaman and I gave them a guided tour they invited us to have lunch with them. A win win for us!

This summer, we decided to take advantage of a portion of the funds left to us from the estate of William and Marte Slout to hire two part-time employees. One of them is Spencer Barton, a young professional with a master's degree in museum studies, and the other is me. Spencer brings expertise in grant applications, marketing, artifact care, and cataloging. I'm excited to work with him as we move forward. Both of us are on one-year contracts.

The Old Threshers Reunion was a great success this year, taking place from August 29th to September 2nd over Labor Day weekend. The museum was open from 9:00am to 4:00pm every day and I could not have gotten through the week without the help of our members who came to give us breaks. Claudia Streeter, Montie Hayes, Spencer Burton each donated some time to give David Wagaman and me a breather. Mark Peper came up from his home in Branson, Missouri. He gave me a lunch break every day and, in the evening after we were closed, he did some work on our displays in the exhibit hall. Thanks guys! And I have to give a very big thank you to David Wagaman who came every day at 9:00 and did not leave until closing and he didn't mind staying in the museum alone every time I ran across the way to get an ice cream! Thanks, David, for all you do for the museum throughout the year!

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We had a couple of visitors during Old Threshers including Dick Ellis's son, Richard and his wife, former National Society president David Ripper stopped by with his always lovely wife Michelle, and their two kids Jordan and Trevor and their adorable grandson. Also, Bill Claus's daughter Angela and her family. I got a good photo of the family in front of the model tent Bill made for the museum.

This year we made a few changes to some of the displays in the exhibit hall. We took down two of the curtains from 1874 to better preserve them, redid the lighting display and the musical display, although I'm still not happy with the musical display and will work on that some more during the winter months. Through the generosity of our board member DP Wilson, we got the last of our three-sheet posters framed. I always refer to it as Slick, but it's from the Dubinsky Bros.' Stock Co. starring Abe "Slick" Rosewall.

Unfortunately, two of our long-time members, "Toby" Dick Ellis and Sue Mitchell passed away this year. Dick of course, was a long-time performer and friend of the Theatre Museum who passed away at the age of ninety-seven. His obituary was in the last issue of *Winging It*.

Sue Mitchell had been a volunteer for several years at the museum's Caroline Schaffner Research Library. She spent countless hours cataloging our documents into the museum's PastPerfect program and became an expert at managing all our files. When we remodeled the exhibit hall in 2021, Sue became my right-hand lady. She and I took down each and every object in the exhibit hall. While I put them safely in boxes, she listed the items. She was very patient with me after I retired and started spending more time at the museum, even though I got in over my head many times! I miss working with her, and I miss her. Thanks, Sue, for all you did for the museum and for being a wonderful person.

It's been a busy year but I'm hoping that 2025 will be an even bigger and busier year. We are starting a marketing campaign to tour bus companies as we just had a very successful tour bus group come through at the beginning of December. Also, we will be revamping our web page as it needs a few tweaks here and there. We'll be adding a list of all the tent shows we have files on and their territories. And as always, I'll be tweaking the exhibit hall displays.

In everything we do we need our member's support and I'm not necessarily speaking just monetarily. If you have ideas, if you have concerns, if you have suggestions on how to improve our marketing, our web page, our Facebook page, our exhibit hall, our newsletter, please share it with us. Invite your friends and family to like our Facebook page. We are working extremely hard to keep this museum going and the only thing that is going to lead to its demise is not having the support and the interest of our members.

Everyone here at the museum and the National Society want to wish you all a very happy holiday and the brightest, happiest, and healthiest 2025, and don't forget you're always welcome on the lot.



We Extend to Our Many Friends
Our Best Wishes for

A Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Year

MURDOCK PLAY BUREAU
5800 South Presa Street
San Antonio, Texas

Holiday Greetings to All

ABE "Slick" ROSEWALL
EIGHTEEN YEARS with **Dubinsky Bros.' Stock Co.**

JACK IRVIN
BONNIE WARREN

JOHN and FERN
R A E

JACK FLEMING
EMMA BOULTON

DAVID L. REESE

FRANK C. MEYERS

Mignon SCHREIBER

Mrs. Abe ROSEWALL

BABY EVLYN

Little JOHNNIE RAE

Now with GRIFFITH BROTHERS, the Biggest Circuit in the Middle West