

Winter Newsletter

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President.....Valerie Amidon  
Vice President .....Anne La Rose  
Administrator .....R.J Muehlhausen  
Recording Secretary .....Marje Cates  
Treasurer .....Eric Johns  
Lenore Almanzar      Ellen Bailey  
Ross Clark      Charlyn d'Anconia  
Ross Eastty      John McElveney  
Jaclyn Palmer      Pete Parkin

### EMERITUS

Jim Kent

Newsletter Staff: Ellen Bailey, Ross Clark

Remember the Pasadena Playhouse  
Alumni & Associates in your Estate  
Planning

### PPA&A CONTACTS

PPA&A  
[vamidon@ppa-a.org](mailto:vamidon@ppa-a.org)

PPA&A Newsletter  
[Newsletter@ppa-a.org](mailto:Newsletter@ppa-a.org)

PPA&A Website  
[www.ppa-a.org](http://www.ppa-a.org)

Henry & Joyce Sumid Scholarship  
[www.Sumidscholarship.com](http://www.Sumidscholarship.com)

Pasadena Playhouse Archives  
[archives@pasadenaplayhouse](mailto:archives@pasadenaplayhouse)

Playhouse Website:  
[www.pasadenaplayhouse.org](http://www.pasadenaplayhouse.org)

January, February, March 2015

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

The New Year brings us two pieces of good news.

The Pasadena Playhouse has generously offered to change the policy regarding complimentary tickets for members of the Alumni & Associates.

Previously, members were required to request tickets only on the same day of the performance they wished to attend. That time frame has now been extended to within 48 hours prior to the performance.

It is important to remember that PPA&A members are allowed only 2 complimentary tickets per production, and only for productions produced solely by The Pasadena Playhouse. Discounted tickets to productions that are a joint venture with the Playhouse and another producer may be available. You should inquire of box office personnel the producing status of the production you wish to see. The complete policy regarding tickets to Playhouse productions can be found in this newsletter on page five.

The application process for the 2015 Sumid Scholarship began in mid-January, and as has happened in the past, we have received a handful of application starts right off the bat. What makes this year a little different is that two-thirds of the applications started are from students of USC. We believe the response from students enrolled at USC is a

*continued on page 2.*

**President's Message**  
continued from page 1.

direct result of the joint venture with USC Drama School and the Pasadena Playhouse known as **Greenhouse**.

We are extremely encouraged to see this involvement from USC drama students and are hopeful it will lead to an even stronger relationship between that great school and our great theatre.

Best,

*Valerie*

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Pasadena Playhouse Alumni and Associates



**Cash Flow Statement  
Ending October 27, 2014**

	Check book balance from 8/25/14	\$2,441.67
<b>Income</b>		
Annual memberships (1)		\$40.00
Life memberships (0)		\$0.00
Directors (1)		\$3.75
Transfer from Franklin Fund		\$2,000.00
Bank interest, 8/29 and 9/30		\$0.13
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$2,043.88</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Payment on legal fees		\$2,000.00
Restoration of painting		\$1,260.00
Picture light for painting		\$98.09
Bank fees, 8/29 and 9/30		\$34.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>\$3,392.09</b>
Check book balance, 10/27/14		\$1,093.46
<b>Other cash assets</b>		
Unexpended legal retainer		\$1,000.00
<b>Cash balance, 10/27/14</b>		<b>\$2,093.46</b>
<b>Investment Fund Balance (Franklin Income Class A - \$2,500 from Rose Freeman)</b>		
As of 8/22/14		\$49,724.97
Account withdrawal		\$2,000.00
Revised balance		\$47,724.97
As of 10/24/14		\$46,213.43
<b>Gain/(loss)</b>		<b>(\$1,511.54)</b>

**BOARD MINUTES**

**PPA&A Minutes of Board Meeting**

**October 27, 2014**

Present: V. Amidon, E. Bailey, M. Cates, R. Clark, C. d'Anconia, E. Johns, J. McElveney,

RJ Muehlhausen, J. Palmer, (A. La Rose by phone)

Absent: R.Eastty, L.Almanzar, P Parkin

Call to order - 7:13 pm

Minutes of previous meeting - acceptance m/s/p

Treasurer's Report - acceptance m/s/p

**Presidents statement:**

- Greenhouse expenses expected to be low in 2015
- Cards reflecting life membership are now needed for all members
- No anticipation of legal expenditures in immediate future

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

- On checking out the memorial tiles in the "alley" - some are missing, others are suffering from overexposure to weather.

Time to prepare for the next round of scholarships.

**GREENHOUSE:**

- Several upcoming projects in works - Nov 2nd will be open for guests

Next HOTHOUSE will be held at the Carrie Hamilton Theater

**ARCHIVES:**

- Will likely have all material digitized before start of 2015, then we will return to Huntington.

- There is a possibility of interns becoming available from Northridge and Fullerton Universities.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS:**

Question arises re: plaques on the new seats -- Lenore is in charge - will consult.

ADJOURNMENT 8:23 PM

## Alumni Support the Playhouse

Once again Maryan (French) Stephens, class of 1964, has shown her generosity and thoughtfulness by making another sizable donation. This time it is in honor of Bea Hassel to be used specifically for the continued preservation of the archives. Previously in 2014 she made two other meaningful donations, one in honor of Gene De Wilde and the other toward the new seats and carpeting in the theatre.

Both Bea and Gene foster fond memories for so many former students. Bea functioned in several areas of the Playhouse over the years so it's hard to imagine any student not coming in contact with her in one way or another. From 1957 on the same might be said of Gene either in make-up classes or later as Dean of Students.

The archives collection is continuously being added to and updated. Almost all programs, pictures and reviews we possess have been digitized. The same can be said of all books and plays in our library. The Huntington Library has a great deal of Playhouse records that we do not. Plans are now ready to send a team there to scan material they have that will help complete our collection.

The new seats and carpeting in the theatre really succeeded in enhancing the ambiance of the auditorium. It brought back the

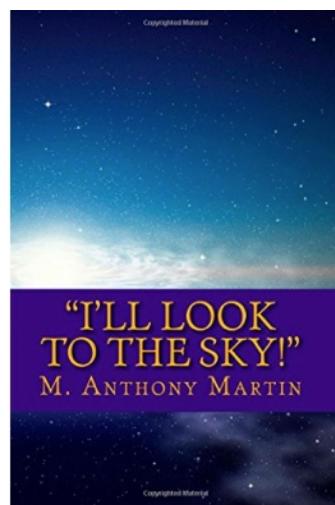
warmth, charm and beauty we always loved, and no more grumbling about uncomfortable or broken seats.

So thank you one more time, Maryan. The Playhouse and PPA&A both want to express their gratitude for your welcomed support.

Ellen Bailey  
Pasadena Playhouse Archivist

## WE GET LETTERS

**Mark Martin '69** writes:I was in Pasadena today, both at Vroman's Bookstore (and at the Playhouse), arranging for sale of my book, "I'll Look To The Sky!". It will be submitted to Barnes & Noble as well. It will continue to be on sale through Amazon.com and Amazon Kindle.



Regarding the book: It has been getting five star reviews on Amazon. It is was featured in the October 5th edition of the "Pasadena Star News", it was also featured in the PSN affiliates: "Long Beach Press Telegram", and all of their affiliates in Southern California, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The "New York Times" has accepted it for review, and contact is being made with the "London Times," and "Publisher's Weekly." Big news is that it has been brought to the attention of Creative Artists Agency, so we shall see what happens!

## A Class Act

By Matt Hormann

Back in June, I wrote an [article](#) for the Pasadena Weekly on my great-uncle, Helmuth Hormann, who taught theater history at the famous Pasadena Playhouse drama school from 1949 until 1967.



creativity, wit, and warmth. At the Playhouse, he was considered “legendary” among both students and faculty. How do I know this? After my article was published, a former student, Lenore Bond Almanzar ('53), wrote the following letter to the Weekly—60 years after taking my great-uncle’s classes:

*“As a graduate of the Pasadena Playhouse in 1954, I was fortunate to have had Helmuth Hormann as*

*an instructor. It was a thrill to see the article about him in Pasadena Weekly (‘Family History,’ June 19).*

*Dr. Hormann was an outstanding director and teacher who gave his students so much insight into the theater. One of my favorite memories of him was in a class he taught on kabuki theater. He personally acted out the stylized portrayal of each character and even jumped on the desk to make his point. Everyone laughed and loved it and, best of all, learned so much about that classical theater style from Japan.*

*He was definitely one of those teachers who will never be forgotten. I was lucky to have experienced his humor and talent.”*

Another former student, Jim Edwards, who took my uncle’s class 50 years ago, recalled him as “one of the best there.” Interviewing former students and faculty members, I was surprised to find how many lives Tutti had touched.

When I think of him, I’m often reminded of a line from the 1995 film Mr. Holland’s Opus, uttered by one of the grown-up students to the music teacher played by Richard Dreyfuss, who is looking back over his 30-year career: “We are the melodies and the notes of your opus. We are the music of your life.”

I'm not sure if my great-uncle initially set out to be an actor and fell into teaching through circumstance like Dreyfuss's character, but he was clearly the artist of the family. "He was so unlike my dad, who was the good student—very diligent and very academic," recalls my father, Nicholas Hormann. "As a lifelong bachelor, it was pretty clear that the theater was his life. His friends in the theater were his family."

By the time my great-uncle entered the University of Hawaii, he had developed what would become a lifelong love of the theater. After graduating at the age of 20, he enrolled in the Max Reinhardt Theater School in Germany, but was forced to discontinue his studies when Reinhardt's theaters were seized by the Nazi government.

Returning to Hawaii, he earned a master's degree, witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and supervised a group of Hawaiian lei-sellers to sew camouflage for the U.S. Army during World War II. ("They called him Hormann the Foreman," recalls my dad.)

He earned a PhD in drama from Cornell University, and, after the war, spent two unsatisfying years teaching acting at a small college in Texas, before joining the Playhouse faculty in 1949.

## Updated Ticket Policy with The Pasadena Playhouse and the PPA&A

- The PPA&A will receive a maximum of 2 complimentary tickets to each production that is produced solely by The Pasadena Playhouse. (The box office will inform the Alumni caller if the production is a Playhouse production or otherwise.) Requests for tickets must be made within 48 hours prior to the performance of choice. ***Please call the box office for reservations at (626) 356-7529.*** Tickets will be based on space availability. Additional tickets may be offered for purchase at a discounted price, if available. **Complimentary tickets will not be available during the final week of the production.**

- The PPA&A will receive offers of discounted tickets to those productions that are a co-production of The Pasadena Playhouse and another producer. Availability of tickets to co-productions will vary by show and may not consistently be available.
- The PPA&A will receive notice via email of invitations to certain dress rehearsals, as they are available.

## WHAT THE ALUMNI ARE DOING

**Muriel Minot** writes: The last issue of the Newsletter reminded me that I have not been doing my secretarial duties for your “Man-of-the Year” (2011) Terry Beasor ('57).

As of this writing, Terry is finishing filming a role in an independent film entitled; “In Your Pocket”, written & directed by Matt Cooper.

He also has 2 National commercials running; Kraft “Mac ‘n Cheese” and “Verizon-Hero



Fantasy Football Reunion”.

Terry is feeling well and feeling very lucky, indeed.

**Robert Hecker ('47)** In the second world war, 15 estates and manors came to the aid of battle-weary airmen of the Eighth and Ninth US Air Forces. Ironically nicknamed “flak houses”, the rest homes were set up to give pilots respite from the barrage of German anti-aircraft guns (flak is a contraction of the German term Flugzeugabwehrkanone, or

a i r -  
defence  
cannon)  
a n d  
f r o m  
t a k i n g  
o n



Messerschmitts for six-hour stretches.

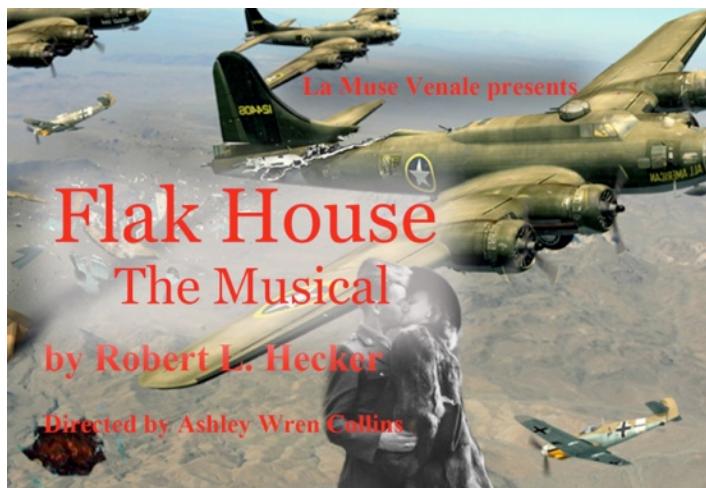
In late 1944, after surviving 19 missions, American writer Robert L Hecker, a bombardier with the Eighth Air Force, spent 10 days at Fursdown House in Hampshire with his B17 crew. That brief but unforgettable experience is the subject of his off-Broadway musical, Flak House, opened in October at the Actors Temple theatre in New York.

Robert L. Hecker is a prolific screenwriter, playwright, and producer.

“I’ve been wanting to write a musical about my experience in world war two, but couldn’t figure out how to stage a show in the air, where most of the action happens,” said the 92 year old from his office in Los Angeles. “Then it hit me, a flak house would be the perfect setting. It’s where the guys brought all their troubles and fears.”

Airmen suffered depression, insomnia, crippling fear, intense fatigue and tension associated with flying in extreme combat conditions. Early in the bombing campaigns, commanders realized that the usual three-day

pass spent getting drunk and staying up all



night was counterproductive, so they recruited flak houses for rest and recuperation.

Located far from a combat environment, the homes provided a physical, emotional and mental escape from the horrors of war. Palatial estates, such as Eynsham Hall and Spetchley Park, emulated home-like atmospheres with American Red Cross nurses, home-cooked meals, comfortable beds with clean linen, beautifully kept gardens and quiet libraries. Activities included fishing, clay pigeon shooting, darts, chess and cards.

Hecker's *Flak House* is based on his 2002 novel, *Rush to Glory*, a love story between a pretty psychiatrist and a bombardier suffering combat fatigue. Along with using 1940s swing music, Hecker wrote 15 original songs.

The Eighth Air Force was known as the Mighty Eighth, as it could dispatch more than 2,000 B17 and B24 bombers and 1,000 fighters on a single mission. It is the subject of Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks's series, *Masters of the Air*, now in development for HBO. The Eighth suffered more than 47,000 casualties and 26,000 died. "The difficulties were knowing that you had to get up and do it all over again day after day," said Hecker.

Flak houses were a godsend as the crews were treated like royalty in homes that dated back to the 12th century, including Moulsford Manor in Berkshire, which was once owned by Henry I.

Hecker grew up during the Great Depression, living in a two-room farmhouse in Idaho, so lodging in a 20-bedroom castle with butlers, ornate furnishings and paintings of earls and duchesses was a fairytale come true. "We played basketball, football, rode bikes and slept until noon," said Hecker. After the war, Hecker returned home to California, where he graduated from the Pasadena Playhouse and worked on top-secret films for the Air Force Motion Picture Division. His musical, *Honestly Abe*, about the young Abraham Lincoln, is still running off Broadway.

**Ross Clark ('69)** opened his new children's musical *It's A Dickens* in December just around the corner from the Playhouse at the



Scottish Rite Center Theatre to almost capacity audiences including many Playhouse Alumni and staff.

He is already in auditions for his next original musical opening May 2 at the Scottish Rite. The new work is a musical version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set in Venice Beach, California in 1965, called *Summer Dreamin'*.

Ross is carrying on the Playhouse tradition of Children's Theatre with his young charges



The 60's Shakespeare Musical  
a new musical by Ross Clark

doing everything from ushering, changing sets in addition to singing dancing and acting in his productions. If you have a chance to see *Summer Dreamin'* don't miss it!

Ross is also appearing as the King in the Pasadena Civic Ballet's production of *The Little Mermaid* the end of February.

Please send your alumni doings to:  
[newsletter@ppa-a.org](mailto:newsletter@ppa-a.org)  
so we can keep everyone up to date!

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



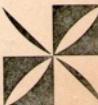
AMELIA  
EARHART  
IN PERSON

★  
PASADENA  
COMMUNITY  
PLAYHOUSE  
SUNDAY EVENING at 8:20  
JUNE 23  
★

"Adventures in Flying"  
Informal Talk on the  
TRANS-PACIFIC AND MEXICAN FLIGHTS  
By  
AMERICA'S FOREMOST WOMAN FLYER

WILL ROGERS REMARKS:  
A night or so ago I went to listen to Amelia Earhart tell  
of her Trans-Pacific flight . . . HER PERSONALITY EQUALS  
HER FLYING SKILL. Don't miss it."

TICKETS: 50c, 75c, \$1.00, \$1.25.  
(no tax)  
On sale at Playhouse Box Office.



## NEXT AT THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE

The Playhouse Mainstage  
February 3 - March 1, 2015



### A Conversation with Patricia Morison



Sunday, March 15, 2015

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Join us for a conversation with Patricia Morison on The Pasadena Playhouse Courtyard where she will be interviewed by her good friend, Director/Producer John Bowab. She will also perform a couple of her favorite songs.

Each ticket of \$100 honors Ms. Morison's 100th Birthday and supports the artistry on The Pasadena Playhouse Stage.



Patricia Morison (born March 19, 1915) created the role of Lilli/Kate in the original Broadway production of Cole Porter's KISS ME, KATE in 1948, opposite Alfred Drake. She was present this past September at the Opening Night of The Pasadena Playhouse's KISS ME, KATE, starring Wayne Brady and Merle Dandridge and directed by Sheldon Epps.

[Click Here for More Info](#)



The Playhouse Mainstage  
March 17 - April 12, 2015