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Theatre Arts Department

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SIDES

The Newsletter of the Department of Theatre Arts
At Eastern Illinois University

June 2006

Volume V, Number 2

Update from J. Sain on Unofficial Reunion of EIU Theatre Alums and Friends of 1975-1983

Well, the reunion was very successful.

We were expecting five or six early bird arrivals on Friday evening, but were astonished to have 25 for an impromptu dinner at the Mattoon Ramada Inn!

Saturday lunch was at capacity... crowd of 42 in What's Cookin' banquet room. We toured the Village Theatre after lunch and took a group photo. (I'm the one who looks like a combination of Gabby and Burl Ives in the front row

center! I wouldn't mind so much if I had half their talents!)

We met on campus and did a construction walk-around. We continued passing Buzzard and stopping at Tarble. Many in the group weren't here for the Buzzard remodel or the Tarble in its entirety. Therese Kincade was with us and I asked her to address Tarble questions. I took the opportunity to announce the generosity of the Tarble's did not stop at the Art Center but continued through the EFA scholarships funded by the family. A few of the teachers in the group were pleased to hear about the scholarships and were eager to recommend students.

We continued around Tarble to Lumpkin, the Alumni Clock Tower and the new addition to Booth Library (all new construction to this group) We concluded the tour by passing through Booth Library and ended up on the front steps behind the stage at "Celebration – A Festival of the Arts". We visited many of the booths and left everyone on their own until dinner.

We met back at the Ramada Inn for dinner and sat around the indoor pool revisiting the "golden era" of theatre at EIU. What a fun time! Sunday morning we met at Clarence Blanchette's house for brunch prepared by Kevin Kelly, Joe Allison and Nancy Chandler.



Front Center: Jim Pierson, J. Sain, Nancy Paule-Chandler
Row 1: Gary Shrader, Jan Heideman, Michael Madlem, Peggy Burke Gire, Dann Gire, Julie Woosley Hannah, John Tilford, Joe Allison
Row 2: Bruce Morriss, Scott Zimmerman, Kevin T. Kelly, Alice Stoughton, Diana Allen,

Tony Cox, Cindi Switzer Bedell, Hillary Nicholson Harp, Gail Gober, Steve Warnick
Row 3: Kris "Tina" Salamone, Paul Niemeyer, Theresa Sparlin, Brent Sparlin, Nick Battaglia, Mary Yarbrough, Clarence Blanchette, Merel Ray Pfiefer, Terry Pfiefer.

Not pictured, but attending other reunion events were: John Salamone, Dennis Dieken, Jeri Matteson-Hughes, Mark Highland, Jayne Ball Saret, Therese Supple Kincade, Bob Kincade, Tim and Gail Mason, Lewis Whitrock, Bonnie Lashomb James, Pat McGurk, Patricia Gaines Poulter

The Menaechmi **March 2006**

This wild and wacky farce was full of color and comedy even though the original play was written in 184 B.C.

Jerry Eisenhour's adaptation and direction led Scott Podraza, Garin Jones, Jake Senesac, Cory Vogt, Katy Hawley, Stephanie Leasure, Abigail Carter, Brian Aycock, Amanda Lynn Miller, Wm. "Chris" Wiebler, Brendan Hughes, Justin Hillstrom, Rocco Renda, and Ryne McCormick through the streets of Epidamnus confused by the mistaken identity of twin brothers.



The Menaechmi

New Opportunity for Student Director - Children's Tour Show

Senior Theatre major, Mike Denofrio, will be directing the Children's Tour Show for fall 2006 under the supervision of Mary Yarbrough.

Mike states, "...with wanting to be a teacher in the future, it would be good for me to have this chance to see what I have learned thus far. Not only will I learn the course work of advanced directing and what it's like to put on a show and design a show, I will also learn what it takes to take a show out on the road."



Aladdin

On-Campus Children's Theatre renewed with *ALADDIN*

The Children's Theatre experience on campus was resurrected April 17 through April 21 with the production of *Aladdin* under the direction of John T. Oertling. In addition, there were two public performances on Friday, April 21 at 7:00 and Saturday, April 22 at 2:00.

Over 700 students and 10 schools participated by busing in children for this 50 minute participation play. In addition, several pre-schools were invited to bring students to the Monday afternoon rehearsal to whet their appetite for theatre.

Plans are to continue the tradition of a children's performance with a week of daily performances at the Village Theatre. Spring 2007 *The Frog Prince*, will be presented April 16-21.



Bishop Creek Grade School
"Hats Off to Education Day"
inspired by hats in *Aladdin*

Lucina "Lucy" Paquet Gabbard



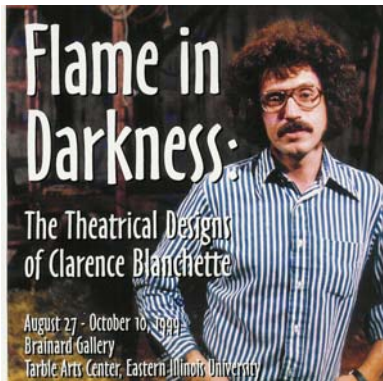
Lucina Paquet Gabbard, 84, died peacefully of lung cancer on May 23, 2006. She lived an extraordinary life as a mother, a teacher, a scholar, and an actress.

She married Glendon Gabbard in 1942. Both taught at Eastern Illinois University, he in Theatre Arts and she in English. After retiring from the Eastern, she worked regularly as an actress in Chicago, IL and Houston, TX.

She is survived by her husband, Glendon Gabbard; her sons, Glen O. Gabbard and Krin Gabbard; her daughter-in-laws, Paula Beversdorf Gabbard and Joyce Davidson Gabbard; and her four grandchildren, Matthew, Abigail, Amanda, and Allison Gabbard.

The family has requested that, in lieu of flowers, those who wish to make a contribution send it to the Lucina Paquet Gabbard English Scholarship or the Glen Gabbard Theatre Scholarship at Eastern Illinois University. Checks may be made payable to the EIU Foundation, with the name of the scholarship written on the memo line of the check, and mailed to the EIU Foundation, 860 W. Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920-2405. A credit card gift may be made by calling the EIU Foundation at 217-581-3313.

**Own a Piece of
EIU History
Clarence Blanchette's
"Flame in Darkness"**



This DVD presents Professor Blanchette explaining set design, drawings, and related works for theatrical productions designed for Eastern Illinois University Theatre Arts Department on display at the Tarble Art Center in 1999. While at Eastern, he has been involved in approx. 150 productions as Scenic Designer and Technical Director, including a production of *The Seduced* which was selected for presentation at the American College Theatre Festival at the Kennedy Center in 1982. Professor Blanchette has been at Eastern since 1973 and this retrospective of his theatrical designs are presented in anticipation of his retirement.

Get your copy now - \$20.00 postage paid. Send your request and payment to EIU, Theatre Dept. - CB, 600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, IL 61920 or if you have any questions about the DVD, contact dklewis@eiu.edu or jmsain@eiu.edu. Make checks payable to: Eastern Illinois University.

A Dream Comes "Tru"

Joe Allison's (1974) dream came true when he found a way to bring *Tru* to Charleston and performed this one-man show in March 2006 for the Charleston Community Theatre at the Tarble Art Center.

In 1989, Joe saw *Tru* on a PBS station in California. He was fascinated with the story and wanted to someday take on the challenge. Fifteen years later, Joe started looking for the script by Jay Presson Allen. After months of research, he found the agency that handled the unpublished script. A two year process followed to get the script from agency to stage.

"I didn't care who produced the show. But, this has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life – a dream come true (but, I don't think I'd ever do it again 😊.)"



Joe Allison in *Tru*
(Ken Trevarthan, photographer)

2006 Theatre Arts Grads.

Congratulations!!!!
Michael Dwiggins
Rocco Renda
Marissa Tieri
Cory Vogt
Miranda Stone Zerbst

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the Theatre Department.

**An Evening of Student
Directed One Acts
December 2-4, 2005**



In *American Century*, directed by Rocco Renda, a husband just back from World War II confronts his overly protective wife and their neurotic son—who has come back from the 1980s to witness his own conception!



A woman (Fay Vayner, center) introduces her brother (Ryne McCormick, left) to the most recent of a long string of boyfriends (Chris Wiebler, right) in *Dead Man's Apartment* directed by Cory Vogt.



The ensemble share a final dance in Israel Horowitz's *Faith*, directed by Marissa Tieri. In the play, a group of sixties refugees meet 20 years later to try to rekindle the spark they felt as youthful radicals. During the play, they learn how to recapture their "faith."

**What a Difference a Year
Can Make!!!!
Future home of the
Theatre Department in
the new Doudna Fine
Arts Center**



June 6, 2005 – Down went the Health Services building



September 9, 2005 – In came contractors to dig out our "space"



November 11, 2005 – Up go concrete brick walls and foundations.



May 17, 2006 – Up go the steel structures

In addition to administrative and faculty offices and general classrooms, key elements of the new facility will be:

- State-of-the-art computer labs
- Graphic Design drafting labs and studios
- Well-equipped studio space for metals, printmaking, drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics and teacher education
- New percussion labs
- Electric piano, music and keyboard labs
- A new band, choral and orchestra rehearsal studio
- Expanded music library and music practice space
- Renovation of the Dvorak Concert Hall
- Conversion of the main stage theatre to a second recital hall
- A new movement studio
- Expansion of scene and costume shops and related storage space
- A new 275-seat proscenium theatre
- Studio theatre (black box)
- 150-seat lecture hall

**Antoine Predock
awarded 2006 American
Institute of Architecture
Gold Medal**

Mr. Predock is the architect for the EIU Doudna Fine Arts building. He recently won the AIA Gold Medal, the highest honor the AIA confers on an architect. The Gold Medal honors an individual whose significant body of work has had a lasting influence on the theory and practice of architecture.

A.C.T.F.

This year 33 students attended the conference on the Illinois State University Campus, January 10-15, 2006.

Competing were Rocco Renda , Miranda Zerbst, and partners Garin Jones & Katy Hawley, Ellen Daschler & Stephanie Leasure, Vince Dill & Ryan Peternell, Jess Elfring & Cory Vogt, Cari Maher & Ryne McCormick, with Jenni Passig attending in another state for work during her senior year at EIU. Nicole Fleming was selected to compete but unable to attend.

5th Annual Table Reading

Playwrights interested in having scripts considered for a table reading and possible future production should submit scripts to: **NEW WORKS**, Department of Theatre Arts, Eastern Illinois University, 600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, IL 61920

In order to be considered, scripts should be a complete **ONE ACT PLAY** that has not been produced.

Scripts should be prepared in standard format that includes a complete list of characters, their description, an outline of each scene and its setting, and a brief biography of the playwright.

Play scripts must be received by the Department of Theatre Arts by 4:00 p.m., October 31, 2006. For more information contact the Department of Theatre Arts (217) 581-3121.

Where are they now....



John Malkovich & John Tilford (1979) at Roger Ebert's Overlooked Film Festival, April, 2006 in Champaign, Illinois. Fellow alum, roommate and business partner of Malkovich, Russell Smith, also attended the festival.

J. Kenneth Barnett (1990) added a new member to his family. Samuel Kenneth Barnett was born on Feb. 2, 2006.

Jen Corrington Whittington and her husband Kevin welcomed twins, Andrew Dieter and Aaron Bailey into the world on December 20, 2005.

Scott Gardner (1985) passed away on February 5, 2006 in Indianapolis, IN. Scott was employed by a series of television stations in Decatur, IL and Tampa, FL as a member of the production department of news teams. Scott was in *Count Dracula* and *Working* while at EIU.

Nathan Smith (1999) – I'm living in the Los Angeles area working as a shopper and set dresser for both TV and film. I've worked on a couple of independent features last year as the Set Decorator. Another film

got me into the IATSE Local 44 union and I've been working on some larger scale projects. Last spring I worked on a couple of sitcom pilots which led me to my current set dressing job on the new NBC sitcom *Four Kings*, with Seth Green. It's a wonderful job and I hope the ratings are good so it will be picked up for a second season.

Matthew Fear (2000) – stopped by the office earlier this year to let us know he would be leaving the country. "I am currently working for a company called Camp Leaders that is based in Liverpool, England. At Camp Leaders, I help recruit students to come to the U.S. to work at Summer Camps. The last two summers I have worked as the Drama Director at Camp Shane and look forward to many more years of Summer Camp."

Thomas Kee (1988) – is currently (1/2006) appearing in the Festival of New Works at Mill Mountain Theatre. This is his third production at MMT. Some of his favorite regional credits include: *Pugilist Specialist* and *Dog Problem at Wellfleet* at Harbor Actor's Theatre, *God's Man in Texas* at MMT, *A Skull in Conemara* at the New Repertory Theatre, *Of Mice and Men* (which earned a Boston IRNE Award nomination), as well as *Dinner With Friends* at the Vineyard Playhouse. He has appeared on *All My Children*, *As the World Turns*, and *Days of Our Lives*. He holds an M.F.A. in Acting from Brandies University. While traveling for regional theatre, Tom teaches Theatre History online for the State

University of New York, Oswego. He owes his acting career to Clarence Blanchette and money to J.

Seth Berry (1999) – Since graduating, I moved to Lake Worth, FL and worked at a small community theatre. After about a year and a half, I applied and got a job with Celebrity Cruise Lines as an AV Technician. After a couple contracts, I was promoted to AV Manager. While on the ship, I traveled into Europe, including Russia, Sweden, Norway, German, Denmark and a few other places. I have also toured all over the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal and up the West coast of the country and up into Alaska. I finished my last contract in June 2005, and received some work from Gary Musick Productions in Nashville. In October, I started working as a dresser/wardrobe staff for the Radio City Christmas Spectacular at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Currently, (01/2006) I am unemployed but have a meeting with Gary Musick next week to discuss possibilities. Wish me luck!!!

Casey McLain (2005) – I am doing great in New York. I work part-time for a small theatre company as their Tech. Assoc., and I am free-lancing the rest of my time with other technical jobs. The theatre company I currently work for is building a theatre as well, so I am learning about all the trouble that can cause. Currently, (01/2006) Zak and I are looking for a good theatre to do summer stock with on the East coast.

Katie Sullivan (1979) - has been a theatre professor at Saint Mary's College in South Bend, IN since 1992. She primarily teaches classes in acting, voice, movement, and improvisation. She does get to teach an oral interp course, too, using all the things she learned when Eastern's dept. was heavily into interp. Katie is a single mom to a 5 year old daughter (Rory), adopted from China in 2001. She has remained very close to Theresa Sparlin who was a theatre grad from 1978.

Laurie Bielong (1979) - I'm teaching English at Belleville West High School. I do the school newspaper (something that happened to me early on in my career to keep a job, and I never quite gave it up after that). I do two plays a year: the fall play (a full-length drama or comedy) and the contest play in the spring (a 40-minute traveling show which competes). Good old EIU gave me a great foundation for what I do now. I have so many wonderful memories from my time in the theatre.

Craig Ratcliff - I would love to come (to the Reunion), unfortunately I cannot, I have obligations for events during the period here. It is ironic that I was just back in the states two - three weeks ago on my annual pilgrimage to visit my family in Decatur, and I was trying to make time to come to Charleston with my wife and son. They are Macedonian and have never been there before, I wanted to share with them, but it just didn't work out.

In all honesty, I was taken aback! I reminisce from time to time about my short acting career and bore my wife with it as well, but it always brings fond memories and thoughts to the forefront. I started theater to get out of writing a paper for Dr. Silverman, I can't thank him enough for forcing me to expand my limits!

I used to go back (to Charleston) for several years, but a few years after graduation I started moving around again, Oklahoma, Hawaii, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Bosnia and now Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo.

We have been fortunate, my wife is finishing a stint as the Macedonian Ambassador to Albania, and I am in my fifth year in Macedonia with NATO.

I had a slow start when I left Eastern, but certainly life has been pretty full recently! I could not have even dreamed of doing this stuff without the experiences I gained in Charleston.

Cindi Switzer Bedell (1979) - I work as a social worker for Child and Family Connections, an Early Intervention program for children with disabilities and delays from age birth to three years. I'm on the Board of Directors for the newly formed MPACT community theatre group in Morton, IL. I think Malkovich is a big pussy, because he snubbed his OLD friends by not joining us for all the fun - after all, we knew him when ... he had hair, and that is a LONG way back - Ha Ha! (You don't really have to put that in there if you don't want to, but you can if you dare!!)

Name That Show

(1st one who e-mails the name of show, the year, and the students performing in the picture below wins a prize)

Send responses to jmsain@eiu.edu by August 1, 2006

Answer to December's **Name That Show:** *Dames At Sea*, June 1995 – Summerfest Theatre. Front row: Jen Corrington, Tracy Ridenour. Center: Kathryn James. Back Row: Stacy Althoff, Matt Goines, Chris Pomeroy, Brett Kashamitz (see website for photo)



Fall 2006 Season

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, is best described as “ancient Rome gone vaudeville”, this madcap musical romp is non-stop action as we follow the slave Pseudolus in his attempts to become a free man. *Forum* will run October 6-10 and will be directed by Jean Wolski with musical direction by Jerry Daniels. Tunes in this riotous musical include, Comedy Tonight, Lovely, and Everybody Ought To Have A Maid. "...Forum" won the Tony Award for Best Musical and is written by M*A*S*H creators Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart. Music and Lyrics are by Stephen - "Gypsy", "West

Side Story", "Company", Into the Woods" Sondheim.

In celebration of Pinter receiving the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature, EIU at the Village Theatre will present Pinter's *The Homecoming* on November 10-14. *The Homecoming* is the story of a family who encounters the return of an estranged son and his wife in Pinter's complex, dark comedy. According to C.P. Blanchette, director, *The Homecoming* deals with patriarchal structure and power and particularly the role of women in a male-dominated environment."

Student One Acts, December 1-3. Seniors Scott Podraza,

Katy Hawley, and Stephanie Leasure take on the challenge of directing their shows on the main stage.

Scott Podraza: *'dentity Crisis*, by Christopher Durang
Katy Hawley: *Haiku*, by Katherine Snodgrass,
Stephanie Leasure: *Take Five*, by Westley M. Pederson.

December 6, 2nd **Annual EIU Undergraduate Theatre Research Symposium** will be held at The Village Theatre, with presentations of students selected from a variety of departments campus-wide who have written papers in the disciplines of theatre history, literature, and criticism.

FRIENDS OF THE THEATRE (donations made after Jan. 1, 2006)

Producer \$175 or more			
Rita, Tony & Clare Esposito	Shirley Moore	Kevin & Nancy Reed	
Jane & Herbert Laskey	John T. Oertling	J. Sain	
Dennis & Deb Muchamore		Bill & Carol Strode	
Director \$125+	Associate Director \$100+	Stage Manager \$75+	Crew \$50+
Jeff & Ann Cross	Bonnie Irwin & Ned Huston	Scott & Penny Crawford	Barry Johnson
David & Tricia File	Dwain & Pam Naragon		Kelly Harper Regnier

Your support is playing an increasingly important role in funding our program and the quality it affords. As appropriations from the state are cut and inflation continues its dizzy spiral, patron support becomes a necessity. Your voluntary donations are necessary to our success in supporting a service to the community, campus and region. Please take a moment to fill out the attached form and return with your pledge or check. Your generosity is appreciated.

Make checks payable to: **Eastern Illinois University** Pledge Amount \$ _____
Mail Checks to: University Theatre, 600 Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920-3099

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We would like to include information about our alums in the newsletter. Take a moment and let us know where you are and what you are doing.

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MAIL TO: Department of Theatre Arts, Eastern Illinois University, 600 Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920 or email cfjto@eiu.edu or csdkl@eiu.edu