



# Winging It

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

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

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Don't forget to like us on  
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The museum is open  
from Memorial Day  
to Labor Day  
Tuesday through Sunday  
10:00-4:30

During the winter months  
the museum is open by  
appointment.

Volume 18, Issue 1

Winter 2013

### The 2013 Theatre Conference is April 19, 20 & 21

The 2013 Theatre History Conference sponsored by The National Society is set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. In addition to the conference, the Society is celebrating its 45th anniversary and the opening of the museum 40 years ago.

As well as the educational and informative papers there will be good food and good cheer plus the former troupers will present a play written for the conference by Advisory Board member, Roberta Wilkes, herself a former trouper.

Please use the registration form on page four.

Now is the time to make your plans to attend the Annual Theatre History Conference.



### "A Trip Back To Memories"

By Mickey Lacey

Well, I gave myself an early holiday present the last weekend of September, 2012. I made the trip to Parsons, TN., (an old Bisbee's regular show town). I caught the opening night of Mark Tubbs and Shane Bridges "Rivertime Players Show" on the original stage of the old Colliers Comedians tent show. In fact all but the new top and sidewalls were from the original Colliers outfit. Stage, bandstand, poles, chairs, stakes, footlights, even the backstage steps. What was almost as pleasant to see was a complete full house. Full house in a town of about twenty two hundred people on the same night as a homecoming football game! What a sight.

I also made it to their show year before last when they were using the original top and sidewalls. Needless to say to anyone that knows canvas and as old as the Collier outfit was, the new was long overdue. But, man, the old really smelled good when I walked under it. I remember, I got goose bumps. The goose bumps came again when they asked me to stand and introduced me as a long time member of the Bisbee show. I couldn't believe the number of old timers that came up to me and shook my hand. Questions, questions, questions. Who was that? How did that guy raise that woman off the floor? They set that tent up next to my house, etc. etc. etc. The outfit was donated to the city of Parsons by Dawn Larsen. The lot still proudly shows the original 1942 trucks as well.

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Year before last Mark was telling me that he and the Mayor were working on getting money acquired to purchase a new top and walls. At that time, it was still in the early stages and just “kicking tires” if you will. However the Mayor of Parsons Mr. Tim David Boaz has really been a strong supporter and promoter in helping the cause. He also remembers the Bisbee show and its reputation. I loaned him an old Bisbee’s handbook from about 1947 showing cast members and histories of each, etc. He copied the whole book.

After a lot of haggling (I suppose), they finally negotiated a satisfactory price from a company in Florida and made the deal. New top and walls. However, it’s not canvas. Rather, all vinyl. Mark said the closest thing to canvas would have been about twice as much money. I don’t know enough about the vinyl as far as its tolerance to storms. However, I personally was so tickled that Mark stayed as close to the old canvas color as possible. Not the red and white or green or blue and white striped. I was so afraid it was going to look like a fireworks stand. “Whew....what a relief”! It looks great sitting out there on the city hall green grass.

While walking around the tent, I called Dick Ellis. “Wish you were here pal”.....smile. Dick said, “Tell Mark to just hold the curtain for about three days, and I’ll be right there.”

I know, he really wanted to be there. I also called Roberta Wilkes from the lot and she was disappointed that she couldn’t be there. Maybe next year, kid.

The dedication Mark and Shane put into that show is really outstanding. I never saw two guys work harder than those guys. From dawn to dark.....daily. It’s the old story for them; everyone has opinions, everyone is gung-ho until.....then, there stands Mark and Shane; Right up till curtain. Troupers.....yes. Boy, I wish had that energy again.

The show was called “Driving Miss Crazy.” A takeoff on the popular Driving Miss Daisy film. Shane Bridges wrote the script and directed. He did a good job directing the local people. I must add that the people involved with the show are really dedicated as well. It’s not just a chore for them.

The show had a cast with about four or five small kids, as well as some teens and adults. Matter of fact, I really don’t remember just how many members there were. I spent most of my time watching faces and reactions in the audience. The show got some good laughs and applause however. It appeared the crowd stayed right with the script. Believe me....they loved it.

It is so good to watch these young people take hold of a bygone institution and work tirelessly in the attempt (and successfully I might add) to keep it alive. It makes this old trouper very proud. I know I wouldn’t be alone if other old troupers saw it too. Hell, just seeing the outfit all setup on that green grassy lot and a full house will put a tear in your eye.

Mark tells me they are working with (or on) the city once again to have a deserted air hanger “donated” in order to build an opera house out of it as well. HMMMM...that sounds kind of familiar too, doesn’t it. Anybody for “circle stock”!!

No, they are not Bisbee’s, Schaffner’s, Sadler’s, Slouts, Brunks, I.W. Swain or Chick Boyes. No, they’re not using Toby scripts, they don’t feature professional vaudeville acts and they don’t have a six- or seven-piece band to open with. I know some would have comments to make. But, it’s been a long time since I’ve seen so much dedication. Especially to show just two weekends out of the year, (for the love of it). They are “The Rivertime Players.” Making a niche and creating their own following in great little show town and surrounding area.

If you get the chance, make the trip. Old troupers, get a tear in your eye as well. Keep the memory alive Mark and Shane. Great job! Also a big thank you to Mayor Tim David Boaz and the community from old dogs such as me and others for their tremendous support for them.