

Men aren't picky eaters

Wives tend to be extra sensitive about germs and bacteria and any unseen microorganisms that can hurt their family members. If a perfectly good T-bone steak gets a little paint on it, or a handful of mashed potatoes drops onto a gravel driveway, they quickly scoop them up and throw them into the trash. Men are much more resilient. If food is relatively chewable and more or less in the same range of color it started out in, they'll eat it. And they'll eat it quickly, before their wives confiscate it. Many wives are good police. Many husbands are repeat offenders. And the biggest law that separates the two sexes is the "Best Before" date. How many tons of perfectly good food have been thrown out by a food cop just because it reached an arbitrary date, stuck on there by some marketing genius who realizes that once it expires, you'll need to buy more. Whenever you see a man in the middle of the night, sitting alone in a chair with the fridge door open eating everything in sight, you know at tomorrow is "Best Before" day.

DELEGATING DECISIONS

Many people have difficulty making decisions. They find they have too many choices in life and aren't able to compare one to the other, because they can't foresee all of the outcomes at once, or they're deathly afraid of making a mistake, or, even worse, they don't even care enough to think about the decision. Well, what you need to do is to force other people to make the decision for you. The simplest way to do that is by making outrageous demands. There is no quicker way to find out how much a person, or a company, cares for you than to ask them to do things they don't want to do. If you've a \$50,000-a-year job and another company is offering to lure you away from it, tell them you want \$300,000-a-year or a \$100,000 signing bonus. It may seem a little over the top, but at a certain point in your career you have nothing to lose. Instead of demands, send a message to the company that you've a lot of confidence in them and you're worth a lot of money. They don't need to know the truth about the company you've ever worked for thought a lot more of you at hiring them than they did once you started working there. You have to take advantage of that. You're the bride at a Baptist wedding - you hold all the cards. If the new company says "no," you're no worse off than you were. If the new company says "yes," you're in great shape.

Unging the praises of the Little Sandwich Theatre

Local theater celebrates 20 years of area entertainment

BY JIM PROTSMAN
HTR Correspondent

This summer marks the twentieth anniversary of Ron Kaminski's Little Sandwich Theatre, a warmly cherished institution occupying an important place in the Lakeshore Area's cultural life. One of Kaminski's frequent artistic collaborators, Evelyn Keith, says someday she will write a history of LST, but until then this brief sketch will have to do.

Kaminski is a visionary with a restlessly creative mind and a flair for the dramatic, all of which became a matter of public record in 1961 when he was president of Lincoln High School's senior class. He proposed placing a statue of Old Abe in front of the school. Practical-minded people shook their heads and said it couldn't be done.

Undismayed by the nay-sayers he cut through the difficulties and found a way to bring this dream to fruition. Now, along with the tower, Old Abe has achieved the hallowed status of symbolizing Lincoln High and its rich traditions.

Another creative milestone came in 1978, during the early years of a successful law career, when Kaminski opened the Sting on Buffalo Street (now the site of the Wallstreet Grill), creating what for Manitowoc was a new kind of food-and-spirits establishment, catering to those who like good conversation and fine dining in a quiet atmosphere of tasteful decor. Wife Sharon Kaminski was largely responsible for the appealing interior design. During the summer the Sting became the site of an annual outdoor jazz festival.

Later the always civic-minded Kaminski spearheaded the campaign to save Manitowoc's Capitol Theatre. His efforts helped restore this architectural jewel to its former grandeur, and it now prominently anchors the performing arts in the Lakeshore Area.

In March of 1982 he was becoming a Masques' regular, gifted in the art of three-dimensional character depiction and in love with the adrenaline rush of opening night. At the time he was treading the boards as a hot-blooded Italian lover in the comedy "Under Papa's Picture." The show was a good one that sent audiences out into the cold spring night convinced that Manitowoc theater was a cut or two above community theater elsewhere.

During the run of the show, at a cast party at Kathie Bundy's house, he proposed an idea he had been mulling over, a Manitowoc dinner theater, designed

for small audiences, intimate atmosphere, with food and beverage served. Ideas for imaginative, work-intensive projects are often eagerly embraced at parties during consumption of spirituous beverages, but they usually die in the cold, gray dawn of the following day. But not this time.

Actually the idea of a formal, linen-napkin dinner theater serving seven courses and fine wines with a lot of fuss and clattering of plates did not appeal to him. He wanted to keep it simple and casual, so he decided the food would consist of a well-constructed, tasty sandwich, with chips, and a medallion of Beersten's chocolate to top it off. This led to the new enterprise being called The Little Sandwich Theatre.

ash in an animated, cork-popping champagne party in honor of premiere night. Many of the first-nighters were theater folk with extensive experience in Lakeshore productions. One of the well-wishers was Marge Miley, the Herald Times Reporter then editor, who spoke glowingly of how important it was to nourish our cultural life with artistic ventures like this.

Tickets were a modest \$5 and bought a seat at a small table in the cozy dining room, which held an audience of 40 to 45. Every seat was filled. Getting out of one's chair to go to bathroom required careful navigating through closely-packed bodies. The stage was smaller than small, but adequate for the two one-act plays

day Jezebel who favors a style which brings out the caveman in her suitors." The laughter was after-shaking loud.

After intermission the second offering, "Sociability," started the laughter rolling again. Evelyn Keith, Jim Tisler, Randy Leifer, and Donna Gordon engaged in wacky buffoonery in a tale about keeping up with the Joneses. As the actors took their final bows, enthusiastic applause washed over them, and it was obvious to everybody present that we were witnessing the birth of something special.

The Sting was not designed to accommodate a theater, so in the early days conditions for the actors were crude. Evelyn Keith remembers that costume changes were made "in the small kitchen, the basement, and upstairs. Running around outside from the kitchen to make an entrance from the back door onto the stage could be quite an experience. We suffered through rain, cold weather, ice and snow."

In 1990 the LST moved to the roomier, refurbished Historic Forst Inn in the heart of rural Tisch Mills, and here it was able to maintain its loyal Lakeshore fan base while gaining many Green Bay patrons who turned into devoted regulars. The Inn's stylish, high-ceiling interior, its many creature comforts, its barroom decor dominated by dark wood, gleaming glass, nostalgic artifacts and well-chosen antiques, its performing space with wide-open sight lines and seating close to the stage—all of these things contribute to a perfect night of make-believe.

In 1991 the musical comedy "Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?" started a long summer run. Popular demand brought it back for countless performances, summer after summer. This spirited story about growing up Catholic never seems to lose its ticket-selling power. The director has been Frank Birr, who also portrays the solemn father confessor.

For years the lead role of Eddie Ryan, a lovable, mixed-up troublemaker, was played with an expert blend of comic touches and light-hearted sentimentality

by Keith Shaw. But time marches on and Shaw decided to retire this year from the role. In the current LST production of the show David Burgeois ably launches his own tradition as Eddie.

One of LST's great triumphs occurred in 1997 with the production of the audience-participation romp, "Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding," a comic masterpiece. It starred David Burgeois and Rhonda Schnell as the cooing and feuding wedding couple, with memorable performances by Samantha Meneau as a smoldering pussycat, Damian Schmitt as a grammar-fracturing, tough-talking Italian, and Kathy Jerovetz as a nun who lost her inhibitions on the dance floor. The imaginative staging seduced ticket purchasers into feeling like they were wedding guests.

For a long time it was the hottest ticket around, and LST set nightly attendance records. Some patrons had previously seen the show staged by professional actors in Chicago and Minneapolis and they were unanimous in declaring the LST production superior to those. Over the years, because of the high quality of LST productions, many patrons made the mistake of thinking it was a professional company, when in fact it is a company of gifted amateurs.

Kaminski and Keith appeared together in many shows, but never was their chemistry better than in D.L. Coburn's "The Gin Game" in 1999. They played two feisty seniors in an old folks' home who penetrate each other's protective exteriors during card games that turn into verbal fencing matches with lots of comical thrusting and parrying.

Over the years LST has given plenty of work to Lakeshore actors and did much to encourage developing talent. In the latter category, Todd Cornils comes to mind. His remarkable LST apprenticeship in the 1980s earned him an enduring place in Chicago theater. Another LST standout, Emily Trask, is now studying theater at Grinnell College and doing summer stock. Show by show she is building the foundation for a professional career in

See SANDWICH, E2



From left: Vida Martin-Voysey, Barb Krueger, Frank Birr and Karen Fries get into the habit of singing during a performance of "Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?"



The cast of "Patent Leather Shoes," from left, Barb Krueger, Karen Fries, Vida Martin-Voysey, Ryan Stokes, Jon Netzler, Deanne Stokes, Tom Gahl (seated left) Beth Hoyt and Alicia Birr causes some Catholic mischief on the set.

Numerous theater enthusiasts pitched in to launch the new adventure and on Sunday, August 22, 1982, the doors opened at the Sting for LST's debut performance.

I attended the opening with my sister who was in town from Eau Claire since my wife could not attend.

Jean and I arrived at 7 p.m. and found ourselves immediately

chosen for the evening, both hilarious comedies.

"In 'Ike, Ike, Nye, Nye, Nye,'" according to the review I wrote for the HTR, two characters, played by Donna Gordon and the inimitable Jim Bergner, "wrestle with the difficulties of getting to know one another better. He's too shy to contemplate seduction except during obscene telephone calls. She's a modern-

SANDWICH: Theater celebrates 20 years of entertainment

From E1 theater.

Many actors have contributed to the success of LST, far too many to mention here. However, some names not already mentioned who immediately pop into mind for memorable contributions are (females): Sharon Kaminski, Kate Shaw, Mary Mellberg, Chris Kornelly Gerroll, Tina Salzman, Michelle Schmitt, and Mary Kaufmann; (males): Rick Gerroll, Woody Shulander, Phil Kinzel, Kenlyn Gretz, Rob Roidt, Howard Egger, and the late Jack Mountford. When Evelyne Keith writes the history of LST she plans to properly chronicle the artistic contributions of everybody who has ever taken part in a LST production.

Kaminski, 59, is not the type to spend much time looking backward at LST's artistic accomplishments. He likes to set his eyes on the future. Right now, for example, he is planning to replace the lighting fixtures to improve stage lighting. In August David Janoviak, formerly a theater professor at the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc, now a professor at Western Oregon University, will make a much-looked-for return to the area to direct "Flaming Idiots." This fall there will be a staging of the ageless musical "Fantasticks."

The day I visited Kaminski for this interview he had his sleeves rolled up and was busy painting sets. At the end of our interview I asked what artistic goals he still wished to accomplish. After mentioning several, he finally remarked that he wanted very much to play the



Tim Swoboda/HTP

Mary Beck and David Bourgeois are LST actors.

role of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman."

He looked at the stage for a minute and began commenting on the difficulties of squeezing the components of the two-story set there. It seemed like an impossible task. He paused, turned to me and said with a glint in his eye, "But it can be done." Which means someday in Tisch Mills the old shoe salesman, Willy Loman, will be weaving his self-intoxicating fantasies of personal greatness as he shuffles off into the twilight of his life.

But don't make the mistake of thinking this would be Kaminski's swan song. The word "retirement" is not in his vocabulary.

LST began as a theater of innovation, experimentation, and high spirits, with an emphasis upon meticulous craftsmanship, and over the years it has developed into a regionally-respected ensemble that maintained its artistic integrity by doing a wide variety of shows, some of them quite challenging. It is well-known for its can-do attitude and creative risk taking. But the delightful thing about LST is that through 20 years it has always stayed young at heart.

GREEN: Temptations change throughout one's lifetime

From E1

Local won

When Gladys Wagner Weber of Manitowoc was 90 years old, her daughter, Marj Stolz, gave her a book of blank pages and asked her to fill the pages with the story of her life, an autobiography.

That was 10 years ago. All the pages are full and she is well on her way to filling a second book.

Tomorrow, June 24, Gladys will be 100 years old; a major milestone.

Today the family, including five grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren, gathered at the Holiday Inn for a 100th birthday anniversary luncheon. They traveled from Missouri, California, Illinois and cities in Wisconsin to help Granny Weber celebrate her birthday.

Marj Weber Stolz and her husband, Dick Stolz, formerly of Manitowoc, now live in Green Bay. Their children and spouses are Nancy and Hossein Mirhashemi of Green Bay, John and Janeen Stolz of Madison, and Peter and Lori Stolz of Manitowoc.

Gladys' son Alan Weber, died in 1983 at the age of 47. His wife, LaVerne, of Kansas City, Mo., is attending the celebration along with their daughter, Sara Weber of Walnut Creek, Calif., and son, Randy, and his wife Tammy of Camp Point, Ill.

Gladys' sister, Florence "Honey" Wagner Blaha of Carthage, N.C., who is 90 years old, is unable to attend. Gladys was the oldest in the Wagner family of six children, and Honey was the youngest. The other four are deceased.

At her 90th birthday party in 1992 at Stock's Supper Club, Gladys announced she was inviting them (family and friends) back for her 100th birthday.

She wrote in her book, "I hope they can make it. I plan to."

Good prediction!

In an Author's Note on the first page of her book, Gladys

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