

THE REHEARSAL CLUB Founded 1913

Alumnae Newsletter

"To tell the story of The Rehearsal Club, to preserve its legacy and inspire the future generations of aspiring artists."



**NYC STREET FAIR
&
1ST OFFICIAL RC
FUNDRAISER!
Sunday, June 22, 2008**



Mort & Ray Productions (www.mortandray.com), the oldest and best-known events company in NYC, is hosting our first venture into sales. It's up to YOU to help us fill our booth with YOUR creativity. Do you paint? Sculpt? Design? Write?

Showcase YOUR creativity!



We have our own **exclusive**, logo designed by Terry Baughan, **Rehearsal Club Pins (\$15)**, **hot pink & black T-shirts (logo not shown here), (\$15)**, and many **delectably delightful recipes [BUT WE STILL NEED MORE!]** submitted by your fellow alum for our **Rehearsal Club Cookbook**, *Judith Curcio*, Editor (*price TBD*). We have room for much, much MORE! More recipes! More art! More books! Are you a published author? How about a book signing! Think outside the box . . . For more information, contact:

Judith Curcio - judith.curcio@espn.com



REHEARSAL CLUB 2008 TEAM

\$2,408 Raised to Date!

If you're in the New York area on May 18, 2008 don your RC "costume" and walk with us! We're meeting at the end of Literary Walk, across from the StarWalker tent at 9:30am. Mimosa and quiche after 2pm, hosted by RC alum and newsletter editor, Denise Pence. E-mail deboocks@aol.com for more details. To sponsor: <http://www.aidswalk.net/newyork/> and look up the "Rehearsal Club Team"!

Contact & Support Melinda Tanner on The National Alliance of Mental Illness Walk!



**2ND ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC SCHEDULED
Monday, June 16, 2008 – Delacorte Theater – 6:00 pm**

*Denise Pence – deboocks@aol.com
Newsletter Editor*

New York Steering Committee -

Steering Committee members are available for any questions or concerns from the General Membership.

(in alphabetical order)

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**BOOK PROJECTS**

The House on West 53rd Street (working title) is the first full history of the Rehearsal Club ever written. The book covers the Club's beginnings as a Progressive-Era Episcopal charity in 1913, through the secret patronage of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.; the initially unwanted publicity of *Stage Door*; its heyday as an exclusive safe haven; and its decline and closing during the fiscal devastation of the 1970s.

Sweet, funny and sometimes tart, Rehearsal Club residents spin tales of camaraderie, discipline, joy, despair, rivalries and general aggravation. Nearly all embrace the idea that the Club allowed them to develop a sense of security and independence that ultimately enabled them to leave it -- proving the success of the Club's unchanging mission through its nearly 70 years.

If you would like to be interviewed for this book, please contact researcher/author **Kathleen (Kathy) Vestuto** at katves@aol.com. All interviewees will sign a standard interview release guaranteeing their approval of interview material prior to submission for publication. A percentage of any profits generated by the book will go to The Actors Fund.

4/25/2008 Minutes

Meeting minutes are available upon request from our Secretary, Kathy Vestuto (katves@aol.com). We hope to make them available online soon.

**\$10 Dues**

We're not asking much, but your show of support is priceless. Please check our website or contact Treasurer Terry Baughan (tallrose@aol.com) regarding payments. All dues-paying members' names are listed on the Membership page of the website. Thank you ALL for helping us build our website, brand our existence & stay connected throughout 2007-2008.



Alice Anderson, Phyllis Creore and Denise Pence

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Roots: "Whether you lived at the Club for two weeks, two months or two years, it left its mark on each of us, in our time, no matter what our roots are and what we went on to do, we bonded." (General Meeting, April 2008)

Alice Middleton Anderson
RC 1947-1949



The Rehearsal Club: Untold Stories of the Real Stage Door is a collection of personal memoirs written by former residents in their own voice and arranged by decade (1930s-1970s). We have already lost many of these unique tales, however, this would be an opportunity for the descendants of our RC alum to pass on their heritage. By submitting copyrighted material, *retaining your individual rights*, as part of this collection, you would have an opportunity to allow your mother/grandmother/sister's story to live on. Each contributing author will share equally among all contributing authors upon publication.

Inquiries or full, copyrighted stories (*preferably no longer than twenty pages*) should be submitted to **Lee Kelley** at msleekelley@msn.com or **Denise Pence** at deboooks@aol.com. For those residents who wish to tell their stories but cannot write them, assistance is available.

Upon meeting several RC alum during the holiday season, 2007, and again at the General Meeting, April, 2008, **Phyllis Creore Westermann** (RC 1939-1942) commented on "*the affection that seems to come from you all.*" Phyllis's personal memoir, written by Lee Kelley, is prominently featured in the current book proposal which, according to Sarah Lazin, literary agent, "*There's good stuff here and I agree that The Rehearsal Club is worthy of a book.*"



What A Cookie!

Even though we are not a not-for-profit company, upon talking about who we gals of the RC are with Leah Rosch, owner of What a Cookie!, "*The Cutest Cookies Around*," Leah sent those in attendance at the last General Meeting a batch of star cookies to supplement the other generous contributions of wine, soda &

donated by all members of the current Steering Committee. Thank you, Leah!

www.whatacookie.biz

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Special thanks to **The Metro Baptist Church** who have hosted quite a few meetings for us in the past and, because Kathy Conry, our RC Honorary Chair happens to also serve on the Church's Board, they came through for us once again, providing much-needed space for the General Meeting on April 25, 2008. For those of you in the Manhattan area who might be able to volunteer collecting donations for their Clothing Closet, contact Kathy Conry.

LATE NEWS: Frustrated at not working much in the biz yet still wanting to expand on your life experience & continue growing as an artist? CUNY is offering two BRAND NEW masters programs: M.A. in Applied Theatre and/or an M.S. in Educations Theatre. One uses theatre as a catalyst for societal change (info: Lisa Baker, 212.652.2820); the other integrates theater studies and teaching artists into the classroom K-12 (info: Jennifer Strycharz 212-650.6290).

Seeds have been planted for The Rehearsal Club gals to participate in *Equity's 100th Anniversary* which just happens to fall in *SAME YEAR as The Rehearsal Club! 2013!* Stay tuned to see if there might be a way for YOU to participate in YOUR regional arena.



The beginning is half of every action. – Greek proverb

THE SHOW GOES ON! (Former Residents Still Thriving)

NOTE: Watch for our "Goings On" page going up online soon! This will require more constant monitoring of the website so we encourage all our alum to check into our site often for updates.

PAULETTE ATTIE: Visit www.pauletteattie.com for What The Critics Said And Wrote

DOTTIE BELLE - Received an award from American Association of Health Educators at their national convention held in Dallas, TX, as one of the 2008 Outstanding Health Education/Promotion Majors of the University of Cincinnati. "*My diligent studying is paying off.*"

KATHY CONRY – is touring as "Dr. Louise" and "Ruthie" in an original musical, *Unbeatable – a Musical Journey* (www.journeyprojects.com). Watch for her at the theater in Phoenix, AZ; Houston Stages and World Wide Stages, NYC (Oct).

SANDY DUNCAN – opens in the Encore Series, NYC, production of *No, No, Nanette*, May 8 – 12, 2008.

PATRICIA HILL – shot a Bernie Mac pilot on her birthday this year!

MARY JANE HOUDINI – is choreographing *Annie* at Reagle Players in Waltham, Mass (July 9-July20) & playing "Aunt Sue" (Ruby Keeler role) in *No No Nanette* (Aug 7-Aug 17); in Oct at Walnut St. Theatre, Phil, PA, she's choreographing *HAIRSPRAY*

ANNIE O'DONNELL – "*Exciting news! I won the "Best Supporting Actress Award" at the Malibu International Film Festival for my performance as "Avis Dauphin" in "The Recordist"!!! I am thrilled!*" Featured in the New Film Makers Series at the Architecture and Design Museum & at the Malibu International Film Festival.

MELINDA TANNER – is doing *My Fair Lady* at Sacramento Music Circus in July & August and, at the Center for Jewish History on June 2nd, is doing a reading of a new play, *Pariah*, in which she plays "Hannah Arendt," which reflects "Hannah's" coverage of the Adolph Eichmann trial for The New Yorker.

IN LOVING MEMORY by Kathleen Vestuto

FRANCES YEEND was one of the biggest names in opera during an era that marked the emergence of truly great American artists in the field. A Club girl in the late 1940s, she was a close friend and mentor to Mary Jo Carroll Cavanaugh (RC 1944 – 1948), an interviewee for the Club history book *The House on West 53rd Street*. In searching for Frances, I contacted one of her former students, conductor Jerome Shannon, who has sadly informed me that Frances passed away Sunday, April 27, at age 95 in West Virginia.

Frances was known for her stunningly pristine lyric soprano voice and supreme vocal technique. It was while she was at the Club in 1947 that she became one of three young singers specially selected by Columbia Artists to tour the country in concert. The Bel Canto Trio featured Frances (the only girl), the bass-baritone George London, and a tenor named Mario Lanza. All three careers took off as a result. Lanza was picked up by MGM after he and Frances performed at the Hollywood Bowl. Frances became a star at the New York City Opera, the Met, and throughout Europe. Leontyne Price credits Frances' portrayal of *Turandot* as her inspiration to become an opera singer. Frances recorded, appeared in concert, and performed every lead soprano role before retiring in 1966 to teach voice at the University of West Virginia, training and inspiring hundreds of young American artists.

A wonderful tribute to Frances produced by West Virginia Public Broadcasting can be seen at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=utWoF7swe5E>. This features a snippet of Frances singing the duet "Parigi, o cara" from *La Traviata* with Lanza. Opera News' obituary is available at <http://www.metoperafamily.org/operanews/news/pressrelease.aspx?id=1515>. And Maestro Shannon's tribute page to his beloved teacher can be found on his website: <http://www.jeromeshannon.com/id7.html>.



www.rehearsalclubnyc.com

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Newsletter Editor