

HAMPTON PLAYERS IN FIFTH YEAR

The Hampton Players, who derive their name from the strolling players who frequented the Hampton Court palace during Shakespeare's day, have produced a total of 16 plays since their first production, "The Silver Cord," in 1951. At that time a group of Hollywood Riviera residents organized the group and appointed Bob Farnsworth director. Last year they adopted a rotating director policy. Von Hershey, Torrance high school instructor, just finished directing "Seasons in the Sun."

Best Character
Carl Rodgers, who starred in "Seasons," won the best character actor award in the 1955 Pacific Coast one-act tournament for his role in "Day Before Yesterday." It was then presented before a Hotel del Coronado audience, Coronado, California. Others from the Hollywood Riviera district in the play were Mickey Hauser, Bruce and Miriam Wilson, Rodgers and Mrs. Dorothy Tunis, secretary of the group, co-starred.

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Manhattan Players In New 'Home'

After ten years of Little Theatre production in the beach city area, the Manhattan Players are at last in a playhouse of their own which opened with "Picnic" in May of this year. The El Camino Real Playhouse, 526 S. Irena, Redondo Beach. No contributions were made to finance the project. Proceeds from past productions had been set aside for that purpose.

The unique theatre was at one time a pottery factory which the Players renovated and rendered it serviceable and practical for a community theatre. It seats approximately 100.

According to June Roisman, talented actress and director with the group for many years, the aim is to have a playhouse which is as comfortable as possible, with the best lighting and sound equipment available. With each succeeding production additions are made to provide a professional but intimate atmosphere for theatregoers in the area.

"Come Back Little Sheba"
Mrs. Roisman and Ed Siani.
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PV PLAYERS ARE OLDEST GROUP HERE

The Palos Verdes Community theatre organization is the oldest of the little theatre groups in the area.

In 1934 Mrs. Ripley Dorr started the original players but it wasn't until 1943 that they established a "theatre" atop Walt Reese's Drug store in the PV Plaza. It amounted to one large room with a seating capacity of 70.

Alethea Brown, well-known local theatre personality who will direct the next Player production, was one of the original directors when the Players performed in the Plaza. Today, (Continued on Page 11)

Local Little Theatres Lure Actors and Playgoers Alike

(Editor's note: This is the second of a series of articles dealing with cultural activities in Torrance.)

By DURFEE PARKINS

Line, please . . . How many flats will we need? . . . You're on in five minutes . . . What about the teasers and tormentors? . . . Make it a down stage right . . . You weren't on cue . . . curtain . . .

Any of these terms sound familiar? If you are a theatre goer they should, if you are an actor they'd better, but if your mind draws a blank, it's not too late to become enlightened.

The cure is easy, painless and most enjoyable. It's as simple as this—attend or, if you are so inclined, participate in. The Little Theatre productions currently being staged in the area.

Non-Profit Theatres

Today, hundreds of Little Theatres exist all over the United States strictly on a non-profit basis to afford theatre-minded persons an opportunity to work together. The work is rewarding, stimulating and an interesting cultural outlet. The time element involved is only a minor consideration to those who love the theatre, recognize the need for a high level of dramatic entertainment, and want to take an active part in the cultural growth of the community.

In the Torrance area the desire for such cultural activity can not only be explained by the number of people who belong to the five little theatre groups in the vicinity, but by the large audiences that these productions attract. The Accent theatre in Torrance is the only local group, but whereas it draws members and audiences from the outlying beach communities, by the same token the Hampton, Chapel, Manhattan, and Palos Verdes players attract Torrance theatre goers and actors.

The Little Theatre movement as we know it today grew out of the enthusiasm follow-

ing World War I when labor began to shorten its hours and people had more leisure time. They welcomed the chance to express themselves and gradually were able to guide these pent-up emotions into cultural and artistic channels.

During the 1920's the Little Theatre became a creative laboratory for entertainment on all levels. They were well established before the motion picture industry introduced its first "talkie" in 1928. Even the schools began to regard acting as a profession rather than an itinerant pastime.

Invasion of Mars

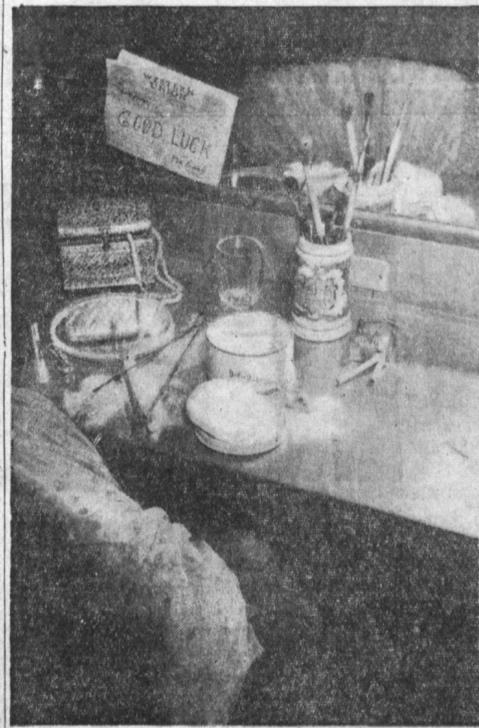
Orson Wells' Mercury theatre was an outgrowth of the Federal Theatre established during the Depression and was an example of the realistic and imaginative nature of acting then and now. His radio show "Invasion From Mars" was so realistic that many people committed suicide, moved, or prepared themselves for the worst.

Despite the fact that little theatre organizations are continually confronted with technical and financial problems—either they don't have a proper place to rehearse, or the budget is too small—they are able to give amateur productions which not only compare favorably with professional shows but, in some instances, surpass anything done professionally. Due to the limited facilities, actors and directors alike must necessarily give vent to imagination and creativity. In other words, their limitations are their assets.

Habit Forming

For those of you who have never attended a community theatre production, check the page for information about current and future plays in the area. You won't regret it. In fact, it might become a habit.

(Next week: What does Torrance have to offer musically?)



ON STAGE, EVERYBODY
A change of costume, an empty water glass, a dusty powder puff, some costume jewelry. The scene now shifts from a disheveled make-up table to the backstage wings where someone is waiting her "hour upon to the stage." Press Photo.

Chapel Actors Busy During Third Year

Three years ago, Steve Sand and Don Gish, members at that time of the Manhattan Players, acquired a double garage at 1613 Gould ave. in Manhattan Beach and organized the Chapel Theatre with an intimate seating capacity of 50.

BEST ACTRESS
In the first year of its existence they entered the Pacific Coast tournament and won second prize for the Welsh play, "A Husband for Breakfast." Gert Beard, who has been active in many Little Theatre circles, in recent years, won best actress and best character actress for her performance.

With an original rewrite of the Chinese story, "Betray No Trust," the Players again came in second in the Coast Tournament last year. It had been adapted by Lavada Weir, drama

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Accent Theatre Does Just That

Accent Theatre, an unusually ambitious group since its inception last year, exists for the promotion of theatre and theatre arts in Torrance. The name Accent, broken down into its component parts provides the key to its existence—Cultural Civic Enterprises Needing Theatre. In other words—Accent on theatre!

Original Thirteen

Thirteen local residents gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Boswell in February, 1955, to establish a civic theatre that would not only serve its own cause of bringing theatre to Torrance but lend a hand wherever needed. The

original thirteen included Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Heinlein, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Harestad, Dr. and Mrs. M. A. Bauman, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Norris, Miss Betty Kissler, Mrs. Lou Dyer, Jack Hudson, and the Boswells. Before a constitution and by-laws were adopted, almost eighty persons from Torrance and the South Bay area were members. Numerous others became patrons.

First effort of Accent was the presentation of "Night of January 16th," a courtroom melodrama, at the YWCA, directed by Jack Hudson. Many Torrance citizens served on the play "jury" from the audience. One night of the performance was donated as a benefit to the Youth Coordinating Council's teen town building fund. A one-act mental health play for the senior Council was offered at the same time.

Next on the schedule was "The Fourposter," with Von Hershey as director, at the Torrance Woman's club. Jack Hudson directed Accent's entry in the Pacific Coast One-Act Play tournament, "The Parade at the Devil's Bridge," and directed the Woman's Club's annual one-act play. Mrs. Boswell acted as co-director, and last spring directed the Woman's Club one-act which placed third in the federation competition. For two years she has been drama chairman for that organization and will again direct this coming spring.

'Rose Tattoo'

"The Rose Tattoo" was the third major production in October, '55, under the direction of Miss Noralee Benedict, for-

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Casting Dates

The time is now. That need for self expression need no longer be suppressed. Little theatre groups in the area always welcome newcomers to try out and read for their productions.

"THE BAD SEED," Thursday, December 27, Chapel Theatre, 1613 Gould ave., Manhattan Beach, 8 p.m.
"THE HEIRESS," Decem-

ber 4, 5, 6, Torrance High school, room 101, 7:30 p.m., Accent Theatre.

"SOLID GOLD CADILLAC," November 19, 20, and 21, El Camino Real Playhouse, 526 Irena, Redondo Beach, 8 p.m., Manhattan Players.

"HARVEY," December 5, 12, Eagles hall, 128 S. Catalina, Redondo Beach, 8 p.m., Hampton Players.

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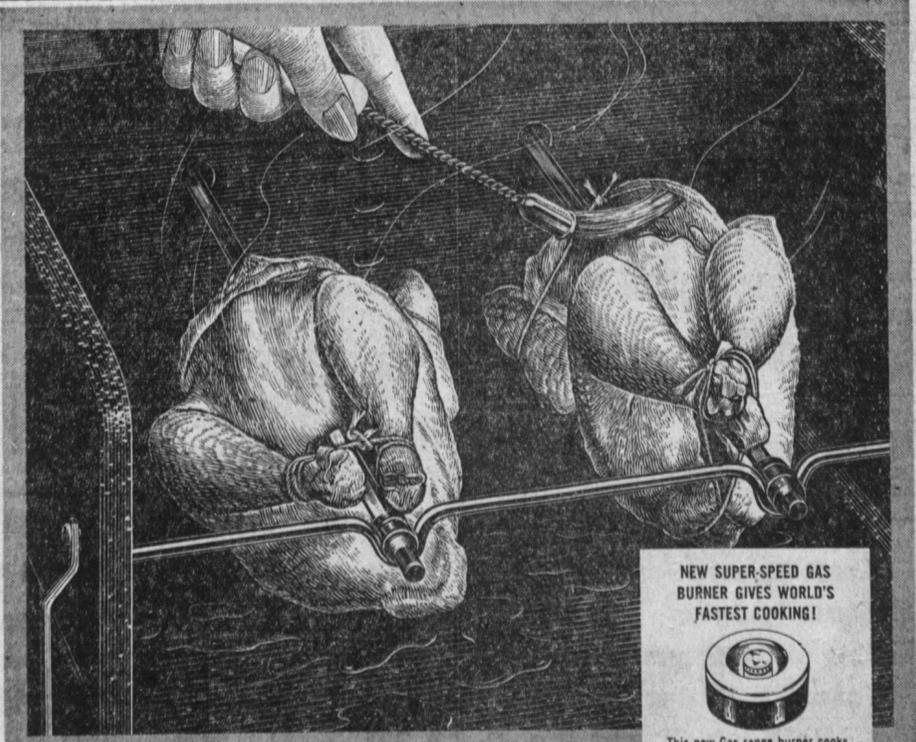
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