

PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 2 MARCH 1990

More stupendous than the first! Yes, it's the second edition of Project Update! (Any suggestions for a new title will be greatly appreciated).



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*Glen Jenkins and Carl
Capotorto hard at
work on 'How The Unicorn
Earned Its Horn'*
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REPLAY CORNER

Fresh from Christmas vacations, we organized our Replay playwrights (whose works were last featured in "The Spring Thing") and with the theme of "Heroes", we high-tailed it off to Fran McDormand's house for our playwriting weekend away. Under the leadership of Mary Kane, adults Susan Willerman, Cindy Lou Johnson, Laura Maria Censabella, Pam Tyson and Project newcomer, Carl Capotorto, served as dramaturgs for writers, Latanya Godfrey, Michael Schiff, Tina Vamvoukakis, Jill Barbosa and Glen Jenkins. The extra challenge that Replay offers is to write a three-character play for one adult and two kids. The added proviso that one of the characters be "non-human" brought the playwrights' imaginations to life, and suddenly dogs, unicorns, ponds, shoes and a conscience came to life on stage. Casting kids from the Drama Club - Rashawn Jenkins, Kulondi Frier, Brandy Minott, Yolanda and Evelyn Maldonado, Iesha Blount, Kazmel Minott, Victor Rojas, Felicia Allen, Oscar Solano and Samona Squire - we got to see the next wave of Project kids perform. Adult actors included Kathy Hiler, Paul Butler, Pam Tyson, Paul McCrane and Hugh Sinclair. The performance on Friday, February 2nd, played to a packed theatre of P.A.L. kids, families and friends.

FAMILY STORIES CORNER

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Immediately following "Heroes", we geared up for The Triple Play Club's "Family Stories". Willie returned from his "hiatus" to artistic direct. For the frantic week of rehearsals beforehand and the two weeks of performances, 28 actors, 8 directors, 8 writers and 7 crew members, put in long hours and lots of laughs towards what turned out to be a very successful run. With the exception of an unexpected cold snap that hit the city, as well as our reservation book, every show was filled to capacity, with people standing in the back and sitting in the aisles and on laps. "Family Stories" included many "firsts" - first time for our new modular furniture, designed to go with the Colorforms set (thanks to Kevin Roach and Neil and Gene from

Hudson Scenic) - first Project production to run for 10 performances - first time for kids to write lyrics for songs (with Henry Krieger's compositions and at the piano) - first time for a concession stand (run by the kids, with lots of advice from the adults - and yes, they did make a profit) - first time for Project veteran, Jose Soto, to work as sound designer and crew - and, last, but not least, first unveiling of The 52nd Street Project T-Shirts!

T-SHIRT CORNER

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Available in 7 colors - Black (not available in extra-large), White, Kelly Green, Aqua, Peach and Coral (Small and Medium only), the T-Shirts suddenly became the hot fashion item in the New York clothing scene. The Shel Silverstein logo will be a "must have". To avoid being scorned by your friends, you may order shirts, through the mail, by sending in a check for \$12.00 to cover each shirt and an additional \$2.25 (for each order up to two shirts) for postage and handling (i.e. for three or four shirts, an additional \$2.25, and so on). Please specify size and color (include your phone number so we can call if there's a problem), and remember, \$6.00 per shirt is tax deductible. You are also welcome to stop by our office, anytime, to visit and/or buy shirts! Special thanks to Beth Williams who helped underwrite the purchase of the shirts and gave us the impetus to be the last ones in New York City to have one.

CORNER OF CLASSES

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Although we have joined the fashion industry, our main future still lies in theatre. There are the continuing drama classes at the P.A.L., now being taught by intern, Julia Crozier, staffperson, Mina Hammer, and volunteer, Claudia Tracy. Thursday's Drama Club is now meeting on the 6th Floor of E.S.T., thanks to Curt Dempster, which gives the kids a more "professional" atmosphere in which to work. We welcome anyone who wants to join in - any Thursday, from 3:45 - 4:45 (do call in advance to confirm). On March 7th, the Young Playwrights Festival School Tour made a stop at E.S.T. to do two readings of plays (by kids) for all of the 8-to-12-year-olds from the P.A.L. The readings, and particularly the discussion afterwards, were a great success. The Project's newest young playwrights will be emerging from Daniel Sklar's Playmaking class for 8 kids who have been asking weekly, since the last class ended, "When does the writing class begin?" Eight weeks of classes will be followed by a weekend away in early May and two performances on Sunday, June 3rd at

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the Mitzi Newhouse Theatre at Lincoln Center (thanks to all of our friends at The Lincoln Center Theatre Company for making this possible). It also looks as if "The Today Show" will be following the progress of this class and will run a piece about the Project and Playmaking around the time of the performances. In the area of the Project on-the-air, Karen Myrie, Ariiba Fortune and Shamine Gibson were featured in the pilot of H.E.L.P. which aired on ABC on February 24th.

TheatreSports Corner



TheatreSports
members Hugh and Martha with the
Drama Express, Jose, Alex, Tie,
Paula, Fran-Marie, Kulondi and
Karen

TheatreSports returned on March 13th, much to the excitement of all involved. Our valient team, Drama Express, took third place in the city-wide tournament on February 10th, and they are training for another go-around on May 19th. Coaches Martha Kearns and Kenn Adams will be joined by team veterans, Alex Bess, Fran-Marie Fargardo, Kulondi Frier, Karen Myrie and Virginia Vargas and newcomers Shamine Gibson, Mikey Lugo, Richard Myrie and Felicia Allen.

TRIPLE PLAY CORNER

With a whole new group of kids with three plays under their belt, The Triple Play Club now includes two separate sections, which will meet on alternate Fridays. Decisions about what they will do will be made by the kids with input from the adult instructors. Stay tuned to find out what their next projects will be.

TAX-EXEMPT CORNER

After what seems like years of discussion, the Project has been officially issued its own 501(c)(3) or tax-exempt status. We want to thank both the P.A.L. and E.S.T. for carrying us piggy-back for so many years. None of this would have been possible without the help and patience of our lawyers, Pat Murphy and Charles Shays, from Goldstein, Schrank, Segelstein and Shays, and our accountant, Sanford Goldstein, all of whom donate their services to the Project. Thank you!!

BOARD CORNER

With incorporation and tax-exempt status, comes the obligation to form an official Board of Directors. We would like to welcome the following people as Board members:

- Ben Barenholtz
- Wendy Ettinger
- Stephen Graham
- Pamela Lack
- Heidi Landesman
- Frances McDormand
- Laura Valeroso

We are still looking for interested people for our Board who reflect our constituency and purpose, share our dreams and can help raise money. Please let us know if you have any ideas!

REPLICATION CORNER

We use this word to describe taking the Project to other places and other kids around the city and indeed the country. In the past, we have done pilot projects in other facilities for children, and have just started a new one up in Hastings-on-Hudson at Graham-Windham, a foster-care institution. After eight weeks of acting workshops by Project veteran, Cas Hyman, writers will be going up to Graham-Windham to write plays for the workshop kids. Anyone particularly interested in becoming involved with this program, please let us know.

NIGHT ON THE TOWN CORNER

This program continues with Project adult volunteers and kids getting together for excursions to a variety of different events. Most recently, groups have gone to the 92nd Street Y for classical music concerts (through the kindness of the YMHA and Susan Vitucci) and have attended performances of "Driving Miss Daisy" and "Family Stories". On June 10th, we have been given 15 tickets to the National Dance Institute's "Event of the Year" which will take place at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Now that the shut-out has ended, we are trying to get tickets for a few Yankee games, Joann Lamneck has invited us to observe at the New York Giants training camp and have lunch with some of the players. We have also talked with Catherine Eberbach at the Bronx Botanical Garden about having some of the kids get involved in their children's programs again this spring and summer (the Project was Catherine's favorite group last year). Barnum and Bailey is coming into town, and with the summer just around the corner, the whole day, any day of the week, is suddenly opened for trips to the zoo, the aquarium or the transit museum. If you would like to volunteer your ideas, tickets and/or time for future Nights on the Town, please call Mina at 245-1350 and we'll arrange to pull the kids away from their Nintendos and onto the bowling alley, into a billiard room or a movie theatre (now, there are some nice wholesome atmospheres. . .)

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ADDRESS CHANGE CORNER

We have decided to change our address to across the street where our office is located (how unique), so please make a note of the following:

The 52nd Street Project
552 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019
(212) 245-1350

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FUNDRAISING CORNER

New Foundation and Corporate Donors include:

New World Foundation	\$ 5,000
American Express	\$ 1,000
Morgan Stanley	\$ 3,000

And thank you to everyone who made a donation or bought a t-shirt during "Family Stories". We took in over \$7,500! And remember, if ever the whim strikes, you can send a check, cash or money order to: The 52nd Street Project, 552 West 52nd Street, NY, NY 10019.

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NEW STATIONERY CORNER

This is not so much to announce that we will be getting new stationery within the next couple of weeks, but to thank Iris Brown for her tireless devotion to and efforts for the Project. Anything that you receive from us that looks classy, she did. She works late for us and on weekends and we can't thank her enough.



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CHILDREN'S CORNER

For The 52nd Street Project there have been some new kids on the block. The Project has been overflowing with children. We have started many different groups, such as TheatreSports, Triple Play Club and playwriting. We asked Daniel Noonan, a beginner at the Project (age 8) what he felt about the classes. Danny gave drama 10 stars. When Danny grows up he wants to be on the staff for the Project. I am a member of TheatreSports where we play games and act like nuts, but that doesn't stop us. I find TheatreSports fun. Sometimes, too much fun, but only when I'm in a mood. I am also in the Triple Play Club, where the group has written three plays. Our fourth play has just been shown. We also have a new playwriting class. We're busy, busy, busy, but that doesn't stop us.

-Karen Myrie

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N.P.R. CORNER

Under the heading of "late-breaking news", it looks as if The 52nd Street Project will be represented on National Public Radio's live nightly program, "Heat", with interviews and readings of some of the kids' plays. It also looks like the kids will be providing the live sound effects in the studio during the taping. Unfortunately, this program is broadcast nationwide, except in Manhattan, but tapes will be available to anyone who's interested. All of this is thanks to Ellen Dennis, Project supporter and N.P.R. producer.

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WILLIE'S PITIFUL LITTLE CORNER



Hey, did anybody catch the Mimi Kramer, tongue-in-cheek piece on "Family Stories" in The New Yorker? Fran-Marie Fargardo was not amused. She responded by quoting from Paula Myrie's play, "You Just Don't Understand" - "Being educated, and trying to make a point at the same time, doesn't always work".

The "Liar of the Month" Award goes to Lew Black who has promised to play volleyball five weeks running, and has yet to put his Nikes on.

Jim McDaniel is out in L.A. doing a t.v. pilot, but promises that if the series is a hit, he will buy some midtown real estate for the Project.

Rob and I are hard at work on a musical which will be workshopped this spring. If it is a hit, we will buy lunch for Jim McDaniel in midtown.

The t-shirts are moving like hot cakes. Next, we plan to market a garlic press with the Project logo. Other kitchen tools may follow.

-W.R.

That's about it from our side of life. Until Volume 3, take it easy, and if it's easy, take it twice.

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