

PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 9 FEBRUARY 1992

*Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
Here's The New PU.
You'll be sick of Jingle Bells
Once you've read this through*



Follow The Leader Follow Up

Our last production, *Follow The Leader*, lead its way into over 400 people's hearts in December at the spacious, bodacious Vineyard Theatre. Eight new writers (aged 8 - 12) premiered their plays about what it's like to be a leader, or to be pushed around by one. Strangely, three of the plays were show biz stories (that's where most of the pushing around occurred). The *Follow The Leader* kids were Gemma Cooper-Novack, Nyita Hanley, Rachel James, Habiba and Rashida Koroma, Annette Myrie, Andre Parks, and Fernando Ramirez. In December the eight writers went with their eight dramaturg/directors to stay at the homes of Wendy Ettinger, Barbara Ettinger and Jack Gilpin & Ann McDonough. There, the kids spent the days working on their plays, and songs (!). One afternoon we took the kids to Western Riding Stables where they got to ride horses. All the kids got a real kick out of the trail ride, but Nyita complained that it smelled too much like "maneuver."



Nyita Hanley works
on her play with
Percy Granger

We are ever grateful to everyone at the Vineyard Theatre for giving us such a beautiful space to present these wonderful plays. And the volunteer crew was, as usual, impeccable.

Inside

The PU Poop on the West Bank Cafe's Revival

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Quiz-O-Rama

What follows is a snippet-quiz. See if you can match the line to the play.

- ❶ Bob (Lili Taylor) to the cop:
"You're a big bazooka."
- ❷ When Jessica (Karen Evans-Kandel) asks Angela (Sharon Washington) why her boyfriend threw her out, Angela replies:
"He threw me out so he can have love all the time and a club with red lights."
- ❸ Some Kid (Maira Driscoll) to Eli (Christopher Dansby Fisher), the lunch-room monitor:
"You are a chicken. Bark Bark."
- ❹ Fred's (Arthur French) answer when Donna (Susan Murray), during their curtain call, asks Fred why he is retiring:
"Donna, I've worked in this theater for thirty-five years. Now I'm telling you, nobody and I mean nobody can stand being in a theater that long."

- A - "At The Principal's Office" by Andre Parks
- B - "The Teaching Actress" by Rachel James
- C - "The Threatened" by Nyita Hanley
- D - "Now We've Got Each Other" by Annette Myrie

(Answers on page 3)

Up Next at the Project

Our upcoming production, *This Land Is Whose Land?*, will be presented at The Ensemble Studio Theatre on (save these dates, here they are in bold so you've no excuse) **March 27th, 28th, and 29th**. In January, this winter's class of eleven 8 to 14 year olds began learning the basic concepts and techniques of how to write a play from Mr. Playmaking himself, Daniel Judah Sklar. In March, we will go away to the homes of Fran McDormand and Barbara Ettinger where they will write their plays. The theme for this set was created to go along with E.S.T.'s 20th anniversary season, entitled "In Pursuit of America." The kids will attempt to explore American themes -- so we're expecting another batch of show biz plays. Thus, our new friend Ken Littlehawk, who is an actor and a member of the Micmac Tribe in Nova Scotia, will appear in all of the kids' plays. If you want to make a reservation, please call (212) 642-5343 after February 22nd, or look for a flyer coming soon.



Who's Followin' Who?

Sometime Later

We are happy to report that our production way back in October, called *Sometime Later...*, went off splendidly. We performed seven two-act plays in a set of two evenings. The program from which *Sometime Later...* evolved is called *Play Back* and was designed for kids who have been through the joys and rigors of all the other Project classes. For *Play Back*, pairs of adults and kids go away and write a play together, the kid writes the first act and the adult writes the second act. In *Sometime Later...*, the second acts took place (can you guess?) sometime later than the first act. The kids who participated were Jessica Cordero, Danielle Ferrin, Shamine Gibson, LaTanya Godfrey, Glen Jenkins, Jessica Soto and José Soto. We were delighted to have their faces gracing our presence, and their presence gracing the stage.

We owe major thanks to several people for making this production possible. First of all, thanks to the Playwrights Horizons Theatre School for giving us the Samuel Beckett Theatre when our original venue fell through. Also thanks to Christopher Dansby Fisher for coming in last minute when an actor fell through. The other adults who participated, making *Sometime Later...* some fun time were Leigh Curran, Jan Buckaloo, Hugh Sinclair, Kirsten Sanderson, Christine Farrell, Peter Francis James, William Wise, Byam Stevens, Carl Caportorto, Daniel Judah Sklar, Demitri Corbin, Mary Kane, Jeff Williams, and James McDaniel.



Replay, Replay, Replay

It seems as though we're always talking about Replay, doesn't it? Well, some people consider replay's instant, but for the Project, Replay is a constant entity to give the kids who've graduated from Playmaking another activity. On April Fool's Day we will present *Triple Threat III* — the third installment of plays written by last spring's Replay class. This event is coined "Triple Threat" because the plays are not only written by kids, but they also act, direct and work backstage. Sound crazy? Well, it is in a fun, whacky sort of way.

And just as soon as you can say "Triple Threat III," we'll be starting up a new Replay class which will consist of kids from the Peace of My Mind and Follow The Leader classes. These classes will begin in March and after eight weeks we will go away to Tannersville where 16 or so new plays which the kids wrote in class will be workshopped. Keep Sunday, May 3rd open for a big Project picnic where the plays will be read and where Willie will workshop his barbeque skills.



Wish List

Plane Tickets to France or an airline contact (see page 4), a printer/publisher-distributor for Replication, a tape drive back up for our Macintosh, a Macintosh computer (ours is lonely), the video tapes with 52nd Street Project TV shows that we give out and that are still sitting on top of your telee, the 52nd Street Project listed in your next bio (thanks Fran, Paul, and Kevin)



Fish List

Mina (the fish) and Sparky III have gone to the big bowl in the sky. We have a new fish that Annette Myrie has named Six. (Six, we think is not only a name but a body count).



Funding News

Speaking of wishes, we'd like to thank the following organizations for helping to make some of ours and the kids' wishes come true by lending their support recently.

D-B Trust	\$4,375
The Hennessey Foundation	\$5,000
Morgan Guaranty	\$3,000
Morgan Stanley	\$3,000
St. Laurents Assoc. (Jill Larson)	\$1,582
Brett Adams Ltd	\$500
The Dramatists Guild	\$750
The Marquis George MacDonald Fdn.	\$500
The James A. MacDonald Fdn.	\$500

Thanks for the great Christmas gifts!



The Cat in the Hat Comes Back

(Good Triumphs Over Evil at the West Bank Cafe)

PU readers may remember how longtime Project friend Steve Olsen was ousted from the West Bank Cafe by his not so silent partners (both are suspected wearers of pinky rings). During Steve's year in exile, business went off 75% and said partners took a much needed bath. Re-enter Steve with nice, new talented partners Mark Linn-Baker and John Heard and the joint is jumping again. During some kitchen modification, new chef Steven Blechner is presenting an abbreviated dinner menu that is anything but abbreviated in the yum department. Plans to present full lunch and dinner menus are in the works as is the re-opening of the downstairs theater.

The Project kids, once again, have a standing invitation to use the performance space as the community reclaims this wonderful asset. Hats off to Steve!



Oh La La!

The rumors you've heard are true: Jane Muddyman, who was introduced to us by Board member Ben Barenholtz, and her family have offered us the most amazing opportunity to be their guests at their chateau in the south of France this summer. We're hoping to take seven Project elders (okay, they're teens, but in Project years they're ancient). Carol is currently flying the friendly fones looking for a generous airline or magnanimous individual who believes that the Project can also be *Le Projet*. The concept for the show we will perform is a musical which Willie and Rob will write in conjunction with said codgers.

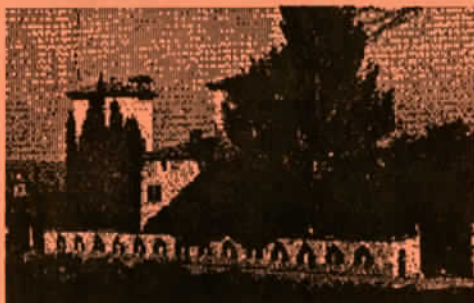


Photo of the Muddyman family's Chateau de Berne in Lorgues, France

Night On The Town

Our friendly neighbors who live down the street from us anonymously donated tickets for five Project kids to check out a concert by Sweet Honey In The Rock the day before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Fran-Marie Fargardo reports:

On Sunday, January 19, 1992 The 52nd Street Project goers went to Washington Irving to see Sweet Honey In the Rock. The group was made up of six women. One of the women did not sing, she was the translator for the deaf. The women did not need big instruments to sing, they harmonized wonderfully. They used some instruments but they were little like an African hand-held drum. I really enjoyed it. If they come back I recommend it to everyone.

In addition, big, warm, mushy thanks to the New York Yankees, Michael Ritchie, Joanne Lamneck, Kevin Roach, Heidi Landesman, and Janet Crawford for the following tickets. Baseball (Yankees v. Indians), Basketball (Knicks v. Bullets), Blue Man Group, From The Mississippi Delta, Secret Garden, The Big Apple Circus. Swell times were had by all.



Jessica Soto Update

(Straight from the Preppie's Mouth)

Hello fellow Project Readers. How was your vacation? I hope you have gotten all the things you wanted out of '91. I have been attending a prep school in Princeton, New Jersey called "Hun." The atmosphere in Princeton is amazing. I haven't seen a bum in ages!!! Not that I would want to see one on the streets. At my school we have good food, classes, teachers, and a great bunch of preppies, which I am part of. Some people think that boarding schools are lonely, hard, and having a home sickness. Well, that isn't true. I made very good friends and I don't feel lonely because I have my best friends who understand boarding life. Well, that's all I can say about Hun, but if you like you can send donations to the Project, and I will write some more information about "adolescence," and how you can avoid it.

*Editor's note: Actually, the Project cannot legally accept donations for Jessie, but if you would like to help support her education or buy her a preppy wardrobe, call Carol at the office for info.

Willie's Corner

Well, the honeymoon is over, the blush is off the rose and the cap is off the toothpaste. Our new Executive Director has been here six months and now I'm ready to reveal:

Bad Things About Carol

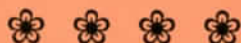
- ① Goes to the office on Saturday and makes me feel guilty
- ② Hair never fully dries
- ③ Has a Nordic Track Trainer
- ④ Uses it
- ⑤ Sells jewelry on company time
- ⑥ Lives way downtown
- ⑦ Plays dreidle too aggressively
- ⑧ Never studied a martial art
- ⑨ Goes to the office on Sunday and makes me feel guilty
- ⑩ As a child, ate Hostess Snowballs (those pink, rubbery cupcakes)

- WR



Project Dirt

Project volunteer and ne'er-do-well **Bill Wrubel** must have his name publicly slighted since he took on the title as a volunteer Department Head for a production last fall and barely lifted a finger. Whereas Icelandic Project volunteer **Magnus Ragnarsson** spent nearly two sleepless days and nights hanging and taking down lights with not so much as a single-line credit. Bill will be given an opportunity to clear his name through volunteering for the next show. Reports have it that he is well-rested. Meanwhile, the *Magnus Plays* are currently slated for next fall, and the movie rights have already been optioned by Paramount.



Tiddly Bits

* Total Artistic Slam: Our Theatresports team, which had only five weeks of classes last fall, came home triumphantly with first place on December 14th. This is a 52nd Street Project first! Kudissimos to team members Victor Rojas, Fernando Ramirez, Danny Noonan and Yolanda Maldonado.

* The Replication saga continues. We recently sent out contracts to all adult Project writers (over 159 contracts were mailed), and we are still in search of a printer). See the wish list for more details.

* Off the Diving Board...And on to the thriving board: The Project welcomes new Board, but not bored, members Rachel Chanoff, Louis Friedman, James McDaniel and Patricia Murphy to help steer us through the nineties and beyond.

* Speaking of additions, there are some new people who have been helping the Project administration out in tremendous ways and who deserve great big gobs of recognition: Susan Vitucci is serving as our development consultant, Karen Myrie has lent her talent and Myrie know-how as a part-time assistant, and Pamela Coady popped over from Bennington College for two months to be a noble Project intern. Their help is invaluable, and frankly, it's kind of nice to look at someone else's face besides Willie's for a change.

* Hey — did anyone see that the Flyer© Chocolate Bar was featured last month in the Best Bets column of New York Magazine? Yup, however they failed to mention that the Flyer Bar was the Official Snack Food of The 52nd Street Project, and that the real best bet is to buy a Flyer Bar at a 52nd Street Project show, where they are 50¢ less than any other retailer in all of New York City. You read it here first, folks!



Jingle Bills

The Jingle Bills Christmas Fundraiser was sensational. We raised over nine thousand dollars (YIPEE!), but what's more, we never knew how many artistes were on our mailing list. We got nearly eighty responses from wanna-be lyricists. We also got another 76 responses from don't-wanna-be lyricists. We are grateful to both groups.

Here, finally, after weeks of brooding and singing that dumb song, are the Jingle Bills Contest winners. Each lucky winner received a scrumptious Flyer© Chocolate Bar — The Official Snack Food of The 52nd Street Project.

Grand Prize
(for following instructions):
Dr. Peter and Helen Randolph

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to see
Some plays on Buzzard's Bay -ay

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
What's a hurricane?
Who needs light or water
When performing The Food Chain

'91 is o'er
You must needs complain
Bills are such a bore
And Christmas is a strain (Do S Do S Do S)

We have heard your plea
A gift is on the sled
We hope that it will help to keep
the Project from the red

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Your act is so up-beat
That we've sent a thousand bucks
To Fifty-Second Street

**Lyric That Made Willie
Laugh The Hardest Award:**
Mary Testa

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here's my 20 smackers
Put all the money in a big pot
And take the kids to Puerto Rico

Best Lyric to Another Song Award:
Mrr & Mrs. Howard P. Aronson

(to "Tannenbaum O Tannenbaum")
Mounting bills and bitter pills and winter
chills and so on
Pall a bit, so for your wit here's ten,
and one to grow on

*PU wants to acknowledge Larura Censabella,
winner of the Over-Achiever Award, whose
lyric was too long to fit in this issue.*

Most Noblest Lyric Award:
Scott Waara

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
I'm sending half a grand
(Just to feed my rhyming jones
I'll give more than I planned!)

Best Lyric From One of Marsue's Relatives
Steve Knox

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
I'd like to send you thousands
I'd also like to be six feet five
And own half of Manhattan island

Best Bribe Lyric Award:
Stephen & Emma Hamilton

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here is fifty-four
Cast us in your next shebang
We'll send you fifty more

Most Subtlest Hint Lyric Award:
Golde Chanoff

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here's my twenty-five
Hope the generosity flows
To keep 52nd alive
(I love chocolate)

Best Inside-Joke Lyric Award:
Percy Granger

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Time to get the Hoover
'Cause every time I get the sleigh
It smells just like maneuver

Most Honest Lyric Award:
Patti Schaefer

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
How 'bout thirty-three?
That's a buck for every year
That I've spent being me

Best NY Expatriate Award:
Ruth Cohen

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here's some of my money
No one in El-Lay is
Even slightly funny

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
What will I do here?
Every time I make a joke
They think you're really queer

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Is it in the air?
Or am I in the land
Of the humor-im-paired?

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
The final ir-ran-y
Is that they all work
for comedy TV

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Who gets the last laugh?
While I mourn this waste land
They earn a million & a half

Most Vitriolic Award:
Rusty and Alison Magee

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here's my 20 dollars
Stick a fork in Willie
He's not cooked if he hollers"

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
I don't mind giving cash
But must you patronize me
Asking for this trash?

**Best Total Misuse of
the Language Lyric Award:**
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Benton

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
You make us warm and "pleasury"
We hope this modest offering
Will help your empty treasury

**Best Lyric From an Organization
That's Modelling Itself After Us
Award:**
Leigh Curran & The Virginia Avenue Project

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
From Virginia Avenue
Where we hope when we grow up
We turn out just like you

*David Peterkin also penned this couplet.

Best French Lyric Award:
Gndy Lou Johnson

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
*Je vous donne cinquante
Si je ne donne pas un som
J'ai peur j'aurais honte*

Best Lyric with German Award:
Eric Karpeles and Mike Sell

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Endosed find thirty-six
Because your half-pint *sturm und drang*
Thrills us two old Saint Nicks

**Best Lyric From a Helicopter Pilot
Award:**
Andrea Cornell

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
For thirty bucks you're on
'Cause everything you do is
Twice as good as *Miss Saigon*

Lyric Best Underscored by Violin Award:
Jane Anderson

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Right now I've go the flu
But I will drag my body up
To get this check to you

**Best Least Expensive Use of the Word
"Thousand" Lyric Award:**
Arthur Strimling & Lisa Segal

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here's two thousand...cents
If we were to give you more
We'd have to live in tents!

Most Hi-Falutin' Lyric Award:
Cynthia Nixon

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
Here's a hundred dollars
What say some classical music in the shows?
P'raps some stuff of Mahler's?

Best Recession Lyric Award:
Anonymous

Jingle Bells Jingle Bells
What a lousy year
Instead of sending gifts and stuff
Endlosed please find a tear!

Thanks to all the contestants for making
it so much fun to receive money.

The 52nd Street Project
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