

# PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 19 JUNE 1995

## CLUE DO BIG COUP

### *Where Were You on the Night of the First?*

From now on the world's population will be divided into two categories: The four hundred and twenty that were at the Copacabana on May 1st and the five billion seven hundred million that wish they had been. Yes, the world has been abuzz with talk about Jerry Orbach's searing interrogation of Ahmed Attia, Gemma Cooper-Novack's gooey, yet timeless love duet with Victor Rojas as Ms. Carnegie Mellon Idlechatter and Dr. Sandy Sandypants respectively. Nor can a single attendee forget the terrifying image of Sam Waterston besieged by an ancient curse, Roma Maffia's liberal acting style, in which a script seems merely a suggestion, Raymond Harold's hapless tumbler with a low self-image, Oliver Platt's continually expanding cameo as the dry cleaning deliveryman, Eddie Zambrano and Tony Santiago's gun metal outside, cotton candy inside gangsters and Shirley Rumierk's eye-popping Carmen Miranda homage. Yes, it was a full evening of mystery with songs provided by ought to be knighted -- oh what the heck let's knight him right here in the *PU* -- Project Maestro, Sir Henry Krieger and all of this under the delightful, yet oddly Obie-snubbed direction of "Sparky" Mark Linn-Baker.

The event planners soberly decided not to mention the gift bag treats that were received by each partron in order to stem what would have been a mob-like rush for tickets. Now it can be told that the goody bag included sensations for the body and soul such as: Flyer Chocolate bars (two kinds!), Kiehl's skin preparations, Vassilaros coffee, Clifford the Big Red Dog cups from Scholastic and Revlon fragrances. The only question is: If people are saying that they were treated to the most extraordinary event of the season, can the event planners outdo themselves next year? Only time will tell.

WR

## RHODES SCHOLARS MOVE OVER! STREET SCHOLARS ARE HERE!

### *52nd Street Starts Annual Scholarship Fund*

The Board of Directors of the Project has approved the establishment of a scholarship fund for alumni of the Project. The Artistic Director, finding himself in a positive cash flow situation for the first time since his days as a lawn boy in Jersey has committed a little chunk of his fellowship money to create a base for the fund, as *Continued on next page*

### *Figure it out*

"Get A Clue," the Project's whodunnit gala, was not only a smashing bash due to the participation of Project kids and celebs, but hundreds of volunteers, benefit committee members, donors and especially splendid co-chairs Becky Browder and Karin Barry, who all contributed in making it the Project's most successful benefit ever (no amount was disclosed by the aforementioned sober event planners). The revenues received will support the establishment of the Project's first permanent home in the neighborhood. Speaking of which, see the related article on the next page.



TV Detective Jerry Orbach and "Fez Boy" Ahmed Attia try to uncover the mystery of the missing Two (not at left) at the Copacabana.  
photo by Stephanie Berger

## RISQUE THEATER

Bet you don't know what this year's theme for the One-on-Ones is. Well, you might if you caught the flyer attached to your *PU*. But, nobody pays attention to fliers, so we'll bet you double or nothing. Oops...we gave it away. That's right, "Double or Nothing - The Risky Plays" is what we're calling our summer shows which are made possible by the trusty Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. Look for 21 of your favorite Project kids to be paired up with volunteer actors and writers such as Evan Handler, Bill Wrubel, Juliette Carillo, Lewis Black, Lili Taylor, Roma Maffia, Rusty Magee, Jerry McGill, Henry Krieger, Tim Nelson, Lisa Benavides, and many others, all of whom are in danger of forgetting their yet to be written lines as they fill EST's stage with songs and lots of laughs and risks galore.

Performances will take place on July 13 - 16 and August 10 - 13. For reservations, call the Project's reservations line at (212) 642-5052.

*Project scholarship continued from page 1* have board member Laura Valeroso, and ex-Project honcho Marsue and her husband Peter MacNicol. The dough will be evenly divided among eligible kids. The deadline for application is June 15th and the winners will be announced in July. There will be an awards presentation party featuring refreshments provided by the late, great Bill Duff-Griffin. Party guests will be invited to make a contribution to raise booty for next year's kitty. WR

## YALE RISKS LOSS OF ACCREDITATION: HIRES TWO NUTTY PROFESSORS

In a bold move, Stan Wojewodski engaged Willie and Carol to teach students at the Yale School of Drama the Project's programs and methodology. It was rumored on campus that they were hired only after they proved able to spell Stan's last name. The students showed up and did their homework and with the help of Daniel Judah Sklar are now planning a summer Playmaking show with the kids from the Dwight Edgewood school in New Haven. This newest replication is being headed by star student Ric Morris. Boula boula fifty toulou! WR

## PROJECT KID TEACHES DOG TO FLY

Well, I suppose you expected to read an article about a flying dog, but my friends that's not what you get, instead you get a wrap up of our last Playmaking show "Expect the Unexpected." An unexpectedly exciting group of kids went through the Playmaking class and trooped up to Tyler Hill to visit with Project hosts Eric Karpeles and Mike Sell. The kids wrote, ate, bowled, wrote, ate and had a swell time. Back in the city, we slapped together a show at E.S.T. that turned out even better than we expected, and it certainly held some surprises for the audience. We had Michael Imperioli as an artist inviting princess Karen Trott over to his place to see some of his paintings in Stephanie Santana's "Exchange." Lisa-Gay Hamilton got an unexpectedly nice surprise in Mary Vamvoukakis' "The Mystery" as a character named Lisa Jay who gets re-united with her long lost birthmother (played by Jane-of-all-trades Project Production Manager Eris Migliorini). The dark underbelly of New York's Police Department was exposed in the riveting "Burglaries in New York" by Jason Prieto. Tony Santiago showed us that he has the ability to channel Mickey Spillane (a mighty feat considering Mickey's still alive) in his "Bulldog Drummen P.I." Frank Wood gave a searing yet touching portrayal as a dragon with a fiery burping problem in "The Adventures of Strongley the Dragon" by David Dominique. "Jem and Football" by Jonathan Santiago gave a good reminder of familial duties and the compromises all members of a family must make. Judy Agosto showed us that she's been paying close attention to a certain over-publicized trial in a most unexpected "A Comedy About the Death Penalty," and finally Larry Nathanson and Michaela Murphy brought the evening home as a lonely cat and mouse who find love together and plan to have "Babies with a mouth that's a straight line" in Marcsi Mysak's "Speedy and Slowly" (the second "L" is silent). As expected, it was an unexpectedly good time. MB

## ERIS' FIRST ARTICLE On "Eureka" the Second. Yippee!

The Two-on-Twos program—"Eureka II" (yes sir, a sequel to last year's "Eureka" plays) — was yet another totally thrilling Project success. Huge. In it, one adult writes a play for two kids which another adult directs, hence, two on two. Six plays, their casts and directors all headed up to the beautiful homes of Wendy Ettinger and Maria Tucci in lovely Clinton Corners for a pleasant weekend of rehearsals in mid-April. Cut to the chase - IT SNOWED! No dusting, no flurries: four inches in about four hours. Intense. Regardless, a lot of great work, great bowling, and snowball throwing was accomplished. The shows were performed at the West Bank Cafe Downstairs Theatre April 17 and 18, hosted by advisory committee member Steve Olsen and facilitated by their brand new Managing Director, Project love slave Hank Meiman. Raymond Harold and Natasha Soto started off the evening portraying two ruthless, money grubbing, Wall Street business executives who meet on a subway platform, and thanks to the over active imagination of Kevin Roach, there were actual moving subway doors which worked better than the MTA ones. True. Tina Vamvoukakis did a sparkling performance as both Yolanda Maldonado's rebellious and stubborn computer and Rocco the computer repair representative. Kulondi Frier strutted her stuff with a Brazilian dance as she and Victor Rojas left our planet in hopes to create a world where art and business could peacefully coexist. Nice thought, eh? Samona Squire and Dawn Jackson discovered they were twin sisters separated at birth and abandoned in a lime green Chevy Nova with tan upholstery in a New Rochelle K-Mart parking lot. Rough. Jed Clarke and Jennifer Soccaras went adventure-seeking on a quest for the illustrious Stone of Gall. The evening was topped off as Eddie Zambrano and Eric Santoni sang their little hearts out, stating that "If given half a chance, [they] would trade basketball, yes they would trade basketball, yes, they would trade basketball for romance." Touching. And speaking about Eureka discoveries, many audience members re-discovered the joys of root beer floats, which were deliciously donated by D'Agostino Supermarkets and Dr. Brown's, not to mention Steve Olsen's donation of pasta for the performers. Total party. EM

## HOME COURT ADVANTAGE

In late August The 52nd Street Project will vacate its donated offices on West 42nd Street and finally move into a home in the 52nd Street vicinity, thanks (*grazie*) to the generosity of the Ferragamo family. Everyone is eagerly anticipating going back to, and growing, our roots there. Lucky for us, Ronnie Eldridge's Chief of Staff Lisa "Crazy" Gugenheim is committed to finding a space for the Project, even if it means pitching a tent in DeWitt-Clinton park. No matter what space we end up in, we will be calling upon everyone we know to help us make it a good home. So all you carpenters out there, start sharpening your saws, all you rug salesman, start saving your remnants, and if there any antique dealers out there....Seriously, in the coming months, think of us before you throw out anything, cause chances are we could put it to good use in the fall.

## COOPER'S PARENTS HOST PICNIC

Rain rain rain rain rain and then the sky parted and the sun came out. Why you ask? The answer: Because it was May 20, the date set for the Project's annual Replay Picnic. At 8:30 in the morning about 60 volunteers and twelve kids gathered outside EST and hit the road upstate to the home of our board prez, Wendy Ettinger and husband heartthrob Derek McClane. While there we performed staged readings of new plays recently completed in the Replay class and then sprinted for the bar-b-que where a bevy of delectables were being grilled to perfection on the brand new Mark "Keoppen Kooker" grill designed by Project volunteer Mark Keoppen. The post-victuals activities included a massive game of volleyball where playing off the bounce was allowed, swinging on the hammock, putting your feet in the stream, and trying to get Cooper McClane to give up the Diet Coke. All in all it was a beautiful day and no one got minutes. MB

## 🚲🚲 BYE-CYCLERS 🚲🚲

You probably have noticed a sense of profound loneliness that has recently descended upon the city. Something just doesn't seem quite right, something is absent, even more than that it's...well...not there. I'm here to tell you that what has left this void is the recent departure of two of the Project's most beloved volunteers, George Babiak and Vanessa Valdes. "Where have these two gone?" you may query. Well, they have taken the road to adventure and excitement are bicycling AROUND THE WORLD. That's right bicycling around the world — on bicycles no less. Please spare the jokes about how are they gonna cross the ocean on bicycles — they just are! We will bring you updates on their progress but right now they are on their way to Calgary (Vanessa's hometown) where they will stay till the end of June and then head down to San Francisco where they will hop a flight to Hawaii and then on to brand New Zealand. They assure me that they will install stationary bikes on the plane that they will pedal furiously as they cross the ocean (okay, I couldn't hold out any longer). If you want to send them a note here is an address, good through July 24th: 530 Memorial Drive, N.W.

Calgary, Alberta  
CANADA T2N 3C5

MB

## CREDIT EDIT

In our last replication update, we were so excited to announce that The 52nd Street Project **Kid Theater Kit** was actually done that we forgot to thank a whole slew of people who were instrumental in its creation. As you probably know these books were five years in the making and many people worked tirelessly and endlessly during that time.

The 52nd Street Project would like to hereby officially thank the following people for their Herculean efforts and significant contributions:

Mary Kane, Marsue Cumming MacNicol, Barbara McCrane and Mina Hammer, Gwyneth Kirkbride, Katherine Lumb, Sabrina Rodriguez, and Barry Singer. CO

**THANK YOU!**



photo: Martha Plimpton

David Harold (far right) humbly accepts praise for his play while being performed by (from left) Daryl Theirse, Rod Alonzo, Jessie Givelber and Willie Reale at the 4th annual Project picnic.

## TIDS 'N' BITS

<Big news in the Reale family. On February 27th, the only Reale sister, Annie Hall (yeah we know, we know), gave birth to behemoth boy Jaixen Hall. And on August 12 former Project intern and production manager Mina Hammer and youngest Reale Tom will be married.

D Frankly, Carol Ochs' family doesn't have much news, except that her not quite seven year-old nephew Micah is getting his second set of teeth. Way to go Micah — keep on chewin!

⊃ Here's the latest in board member news, and it's far from boring...Board Secretary Patricia Murphy, Esq. and Adam Spilka, Esq. eloped in Barbados on April 20. Contrary to what one might think, they didn't met at the bar. Board member Frances McDormand and her husband Joel Coen went to Paraguay and came back with their son Pedro Coen. ¡Hola bebé! Pedro shops at the Big and Tall baby shop and plans are in the works for him to team up with Jaixen Hall to form a tag team for the World Wide Wrestling Federation.

⊂ Isabella Margaret V. Lewis was born on January 30 to Project actress Tracy Thorne and her husband Edmund Lewis. We don't know what the "V" stands for but we're thinking she might be the fifth.

E Commencement announcements: Jessica Soto will attend the College of St. Rose in upstate NY, Cara Lynn Schultz is going to Fordham, Joanne Ramirez will be heading way up North to SUNY Oswego in September, and Shirley Rumierk, somehow managed to suppress her secret identity as a fruit hat-toting night club singer and received a mostly full scholarship to Harvard. José Soto, Jr., reminding us that we have only "One Life to Live," got a recurring role on that day time program, and is attending night school, at night.



In grad school news: Project actress Mary Kane applied and was accepted to five law schools, and will be attending University of Virginia in Charlottesville next fall. Mary is specializing in child advocacy. Volunteer writer/director/actor Charles Dumas has been appointed as an Associate Professor of Acting at Penn State.

