

# Winging It

National Society for the Preservation of Tent, Folk and  
Repertoire Theatre

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Winging It

## Troupers Volunteer during Old Threshers

Many reunion guests toured the upper level of the museum for the first time during the 2013 Old Threshers Reunion. The museum was a refreshing escape from the overpowering heat. Temperatures were in the high 90s.

Numerous former troupers had their own private reunion acting as hosts and tour guides. David Ripper, president of the National Society, and his wife, Michelle were present for the first three days. David trouped with Jimmy Davis in 1978 and again in 1983. Mark Peper traveled with the Schaffner Player in 1981, '82, '83 and he stayed four days. Brian Haymond, a long time supporter of the museum was with the Schaffner Players in 1983 and he and his wife Carla Trees covered Friday, Saturday, Sunday. David Wagaman, secretary of the National Society, former trouper with the Sun Players and the Schaffner Players worked two days. Brian Iles, Toby to all recent fans was on stage for four nights in the Old Threshers' Summer Theatre production of Neil & Caroline Schaffner's *Once in a Blue Moon*. Brian trouped with Jimmy & Grace Davis in 1990, '91, '92, '93. He also played the Toby part during the Theatre's summer dates. Brian's sister Kristy Robison who trouped in 1991, '92, & '93 was in the audience as well as their mother Peggy Iles. This was Brian's 13<sup>th</sup> season with the Old Thresher's productions.

Grace Davis who spent a lifetime in show business, handled the traditional candy sale every night. She oversaw the construction of the candy boxes, packing the candy and prizes, and the selling of the tasty salt water taffy.

Dick "Toby" Ellis visited one day. Martha Hayes opened the museum and Claudia Streeter locked the front door after selling tickets for *Once in a Blue Moon*. We had full houses on two nights and  $\frac{3}{4}$  on the other two..

All of you are invited to be museum hosts. We would be glad to see you and it is cool inside.

Claudia Streeter

Dates were taken from Michael Kramme's book *The Schaffner Players*.

## A Chance to Remember

I'm gearing up to make an eight hour trip to visit our friend, Mark Tubbs, and attend a performance by the Rivertime Players, in Parsons, Tennessee. The play will be a play that was used in days gone by in other tent shows. It's called "Meal Ticket." I'm not familiar with the bill. I don't know if my parents ever acted in it. I don't think I ever did, but I know the plot will involve old-fashioned morality along with some belly laughs. I'm sure there will be some singing or dancing – maybe some piano playing.

But...get this...it will be performed in a tent. Now I understand it might not be a canvas tent. Those days may be gone. But it will be a tent, and we will sit on chairs that are probably hard, and the chairs will sit on ground that may be hard, too – or, if it rains, wet. But it will be in a tent. If I have to, I will imagine the smell of canvas – wet canvas, if it rains.

I will sit in my chair and wonder if the actors are peeking around from the dressing room to see how many are in the house. I will sit in my chair and pretend I am in an audience from the '40s, '50s, '60s, eagerly waiting for the first sign of the band coming out to play. I will pretend I am one of those farm women who came, dressed up, to sit with their husbands and children, knowing they would smile, laugh, hope, dream, cry. I will pretend I don't have a television back in my motel room.

Maybe I will pretend it is 1950 and I am eight years old. I could pretend I'm watching my own mother and father up there on the stage – or even our friend, Dick Ellis, or maybe Bert Dexter. Or...and this might even be better....I'll pretend it's 1960 and it's me up there on the stage, along with Mickey Lacey, Ralph Blackwell, Trixie Maskew and Dot and Jess Sund.

Well, can you tell? I'm excited. I'm remembering. I can hardly wait.

Roberta Wilkes, September 7