

The Rivertime Players

By Mickey Lacey

What a great weekend for the "old" troupers of yesteryear! The terminology of "You are always welcome on the lot" became very true to Dick Ellis, Roberta Wilkes, Mark Peper and myself when we all invaded Mark Tubbs, Shane Bridges and the cast and crew of the Rivertime Players Show on the 17th and 18th of October in Parsons, Tennessee.

For the fear of sounding overly dramatic, these young troupers and their audiences made us feel young and accepted again as the professional and sought after performers we actually were in the business (if I do say so for ourselves.)



The laughter never seemed to stop for their show.

Although the weather was a headache for the crew for the first two of four weekends for the troupe, the tradition of "The show must go on" took force. They worked for full houses each weekend. Including the weekend we were so graciously invited to work with them.



Roberta played piano for their intermissions and the candy sales with her own compositions and songs with the sounds of the old Rep Shows. Dick and I did a few bits and songs from the glory days. Gotta tell you folks, the corn is still selling strong. We all were very well accepted. I have to add the timing and delivery that Dick used in the routines as what I'll call a *G-String Toby*, is still as sharp as ever (We really didn't want to exit.)



Where did the weekend go? It all seemed to pass so quickly. I for one, didn't want to leave. I wanted to milk the moments forever. After our last performance on Saturday night the 18th I left the lot to return to my room at the motel. I have to say I hardly slept a wink that night. The following morning Dick, Roberta and I (by chance) ran into each other in the parking lot of the motel for a last, 'See ya later.' It reminded me of a show closing for the season and everyone was heading out to catch a deadline for circle stock, school assembly booking or club dates for the winter months. Didn't want to leave them either. Didn't want to lose the moment.

As we drove our separate ways, I got probably a couple miles out of town when the urge to quickly turn into a strange driveway to turn around and head back to "the lot." Which I did. When I got back to the lot the morning mist was still on the grass and top. I got out of the car and slowly just walked around the tent. Every once in a while grabbing a guy line to make sure it was taught. I finally raised the sidewall and stepped under it into the tent. I seated myself in the back of house in one of the original "soft pine" chairs and just gazed at the stage front.

My memory seemed to carry me back to the glory days of troup-ing. "I have to get out of here. I'm getting too sentimental." As I drove away, I couldn't help but look in the rearview mirror one more time. Didn't realize at the time I guess, just how much I loved the business. I hope I can come back again.

Thank you Rivertime Players...thank you! The memories were beautiful. Please carry on.

Mickey Lacey

