

Long Island

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NL

It's musical teen-work

By WILLIAM MEADOWS



NO MIGHTY HARDLY THINK that a variety of teen-agers could be used to teach each other. But in Port Washington, a group of teenagers is doing just that. They are working on a project that is both educational and fun.

The most notable in this category is the "New York State Teen-agers with the World's Best" program, which is a production of Frank Loebner's Broadway 33 musical, "How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying." The work is a part of the New York State Teen-agers Theater program.

For the last two years — who are 15 to 18 years old and over — involved in the program are local teenagers, teachers, and other people helping to organize it. The program also serves as a sort of mutual exchange of ideas between the two groups.

There's a warm feeling among the participating teenagers that seems to come to full bloom at the opening scenes, says Pamela (Pat) Meadows, the 21-year-old director who, with her husband, David, 40, have guided the fortunes of the "New York State Teen-agers Theater" since its inception in 1977.

It's a special dynamic among these youngsters, says Meadows, who produces the show. She says the teens' dedication is an example of their own resolve to make success as a productive member.

Pat Meadows, whose only child, Christopher, 13, will be receiving the lights in this year's show, has strong roots in the community and her local friends of the Play Troupe of Port Washington, a "Stage Musical" group that co-sponsors the teen theater.

Some of the children, like the 16-year-old, are old enough to shoulder some responsibility but still too young to get summer jobs, so they get involved in the teen theater as a way of getting their earnings, and whether they are students, in the theater or behind the scenes, they develop a spirit of responsibility and mutual respect that is truly refreshing in our city, she said.

The Meadows said casting calls went out last May through newspapers, flyers, word-of-mouth and notices in the local newspaper, and the rehearsal for the musical will be completed Aug. 10.

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Two help keep act together

FOR MEADOWS' DAUGHTER to be an August show, a cool summer breeze carried his face while the remaining dozens of teenagers (like the town's main drug store) were his number. No, he knew they weren't the "New York State Teen-agers Theater," but the local high school and college-age kids were his and held parties in the evening, creating what, eggs and homemade champagne was an exhilarating scene.

But Meadows had other thoughts on his mind as he lay in his hospital bed, the stars down by the town dock.

It was a self-appointed watchdog, keeping a watchful eye on the show and Meadows' wife at the time, Patricia Susan Meadows, had been seen everywhere in the initial stages of the Celia Porter musical, "Anybody Can Be a Star." It was 1977, and the latest Port Washington Teen-agers Theater production was about to launch its first production.

Pat Meadows was not about to let anyone else say the word.

"I was so excited yesterday, I wasn't the best of athletes and I would've preferred being in bed at home, but it was a blessing. As it happened, the show had to learn to produce their own show in the role of the musical."

That was eight years ago, and the touring troupe of talented teenagers and college-age adults have moved, thanks to the assistance of Schermer High School

on Campus Drive, off Port Washington Blvd., where they will stage the musical "How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" for four performances next month.

Pat Meadows, director of the program and programming at Publishers Clearing House in Port Washington, and his wife, Pat, a playwright and certified teacher in speech and theater, are living legends in local theatrical circles. For the past eight years, they have produced a yearly show for and by grade-school children at the Main St. School in their community. They also have done over the years in the Play Troupe of Port Washington, founded in 1977, which blends adults who produce children in production designed for family audiences.

Do NY musical every summer

"The Teen-agers Theater" was launched in response to children involved in the winter productions who wanted something to do in the summer," Pat explained. "I did, over 1,000 youngsters through it, and some of them, of course, have participated in the show. We do a big Broadway musical each summer, and each production has the support of parents and the entire community."

She said the summer operation is self-sustaining in that the youngsters raise the cost of sets, repairs and

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