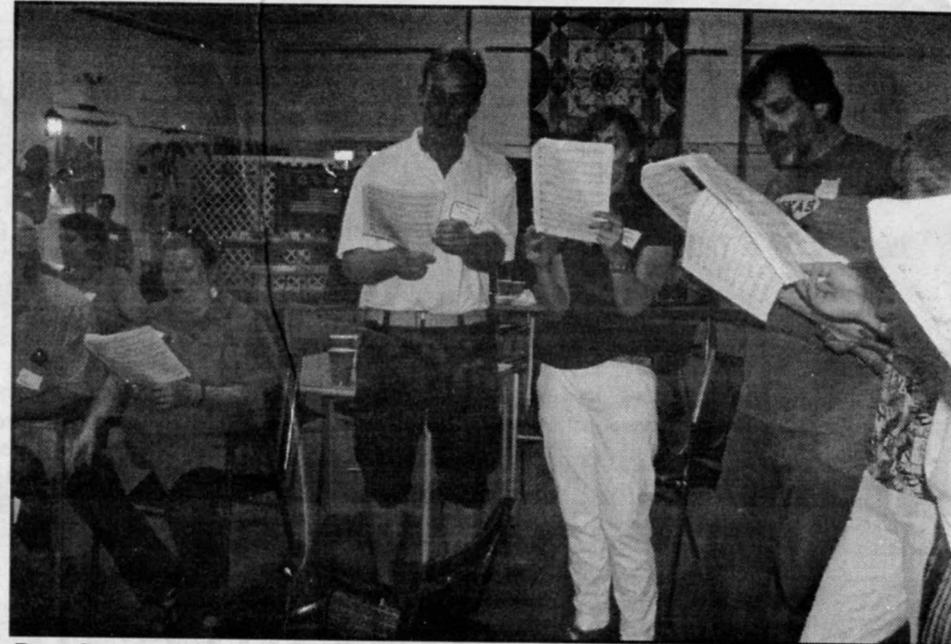




Love Story: the Musical – if there was such a musical produced, the story would undoubtedly center around the husband/wife team Ron and Pam Meadows, who founded the Port Summer Show 40 years ago. Their Pied-Piper characteristics have positively enhanced the lives of hundreds and hundreds of students who have paid tribute to their influence on their lives over the years. Ron passed in August of 2011 after being selected in a cast call in Heaven where he is now playing his greatest role.



Port Summer Show former musical director David Barnett and alumni Greg Thymius lead fellow alumni in a medley of songs from previous Port Summer Show productions. Sixty alumni gathered on Aug. 4 in celebration of the 40th milestone.

Port Summer Show: Tradition Spans 40 Years Of Youth Summer Musicals

BY ANDREA MASTROCINQUE-MARTONE

Many agree that participation in musical productions is intoxicating. The passion, time and talent that it takes to fuse every component integral to a successful live performance is a life form that flows through the body like one's bloodstream. And once it's there, it stays.

Such is the story of one of Port Washington's most successful community traditions called the Port Washington Summer Show. Celebrating its 40th year as the only yearly summer musical of its kind for middle and senior high students, the Port Summer Show has lured thousands of wonder eyed amateur talent to participate, and re-create many of Broadway musicals

that make everyone's heart sing.

Traditions are not a given in America's communities. You have to have the right combination of commitment, enthusiasm, sweat equity and (perhaps the most vital part of the formulation) cross-generational team effort. Traditions also require a vision and that vision was spawned in the back yard of a Fairview Avenue home 59 years ago when a small 5-year-old girl played her first role as Cinderella in the hyper-local neighborhood production.

Her name was Pamela Papisidero, a third generation Port Washington "townie" (lovingly said) whose first "Ah-Ha!" in her life was her realization that there is magic to be had on a stage. Fast forward

40 years later, and she catapulted the magic, bringing it to new heights when she and her husband, Ron decided that Port's youth could benefit from a fun, lively musical production that would simultaneously infuse with self-esteem, confidence and camaraderie skills.

Voila! A tradition was born, and the hit perpetuates today and perhaps takes center stage - along with other community traditions of which this community has become known for: Pride in Port, Harbor-Fest, The Gambol, and The Sousa Bandshell outdoor summer concert series.

Commemorating the 40th milestone of the Port Summer Show, 185 Weber and Schreiber students, Summer Show alumni,

parents and volunteers pooled talent and resources to host *My Favorite Year*, Aug. 2 to 5, a very apropos selection given the milestone timing. It was on Schreiber's stage that perhaps the most talented pool of stars gave their best performance to a packed audience, 60 of whom were former Schreiber students and Port Summer show alumni.

The purpose of the multi-minute standing ovation given by the audience at the conclusion of the show was two-fold: one, to honor the talents and gifts of the extraordinary cast, crew and orchestra; and two, as a tribute to the visionary founders – Pam and the late Ron Meadows, one of whom was present and the other there in spirit.

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Port Summer Show alumni spans 40 years and a reunion celebration at St. Stephen's Church on Aug. 4 attracted 60 alumni who came from all over the U.S. to celebrate the Port Washington tradition.

Port Summer Show

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Pam Papisidero grew up in Port Washington and went through the Port Schools, graduating from Schreiber in 1967. She met Ron Meadows in her senior year of high school (he was a 1957 graduate of Schreiber) when they worked at Publisher's Clearing House. A new chapter in their lives was written when they both realized that they were soulmates with a strong passion for musicals and theater. They participated in the Port Play Troupe (an adult performing group that was active since 1927) – he overseeing the technical aspects of the performance, and she as a stage performer. It was during these days that the dynamic duo heard that the Port Play Troupe had produced a one-time winter children's musical called the Main Street Children's Show that was a big hit in the late '40s, but lacked a director to perpetuate a yearly show. Enter Pam Meadows, who took the reign as director and rallied forces to underwrite the show's costs, find a local stage, and recruit talent. The skills she learned from her Cinderella days kicked in big time coupled with Ron's skills as a committee member for the Sousa Bandshell.

On a hot summer's eve in a torrential rainfall, the first official Summer Show (*Anything Goes*) debuted on the bandshell, with the lawn lined with hundreds of attendees shielded by umbrellas with ear-to-ear smiles on their faces. Fifteen-year-old David Barnett was the show's first musical director, a budding talented musician with a heart that sings – a protégé of Schreiber's music teacher “great,” Phillip Glover. Barnett served as musical director from '72 – '77 before heading to Yale to achieve even greater glory. Barnett

remained very tied to the show emotionally, returning for the 20th anniversary (*The Music Man*) as director, and then as an alumni for the 40th, where he led a group that gathered at an alumni reunion at St. Stephen's Church earlier that day in a medley of songs from previous show years.

Traditions, while rewarding, require funding to perpetuate. Over the years, the funding was provided in part by the Port Youth Council and fundraisers. Challenged by a cyclical, lean economy over the years, the producers of the Summer Show looked to greener and lucrative pastures to fuel their production passions. Robert L. Harding, Jr., a local well-known and respected realtor rose to the occasion, pledging to underwrite costs of producing the show at the high school for a week, and absorbed custodial and other fees. His philanthropic effort continues today, along with help from other businesses in the Port community who recognize a good thing when they see it.

“I love the Port Summer Show and have had confidence in the show organizers over the years, which gives me pride to be a major contributor,” says Bob Harding.

Since Pam “retired” from directing the show, others have seized the reigns of managing the success of the Port Summer Show, including Pat Blumlein, Beth Mulvihill and a host of other Port parents who served as past presidents. This year's show's co-presidents were: Elisabeth Roberts and Susan Hoffman. The director was Jason Summers and conductor Solomon Hoffman.

As a former multi-year president of the Port Summer Show, a Schreiber graduate and a “townie” myself... this year's performance was by far “My Favorite Show.”