

59 Edgewood Road  
Port Washington, NY. 11050

Councilman Jerome Weinstein  
Town Hall  
Manhasset, N.Y., 11030  
(Hoffstot Lane, Sands Point,  
N.Y., 11050)

Dear Councilman:

During the winter of 1972, my wife, Pamela, directed PETER PAN, the annual children's show presented by the Play Troupe of Port Washington and the Main Street School PTA. In her casting, she included several junior and senior high students. After the show was over, a delegation of several of these teenagers came to our house and brought to my wife's attention that there was no theatre activity for them in the summertime. They wondered if the Play Troupe couldn't sponsor some small activity in which they might participate. At that time, as now, I was a member of the board of the Sousa Band Shell. I suggested the idea of using the Shell for a musical show open to all the junior and senior high students in town to the chairman of the board, Mrs. June Mackey, and she, on her own authority, authorized a show to be performed one weekend at the end of July and one weekend at the end of August (so scheduled as to include the maximum number of eligible participants) and all rehearsal time necessary at the Shell and handed me a full set of keys. We selected the Cole Porter musical ANYTHING GOES. We cast the show, built a platform for a stage, rented a piano, built backdrops, installed a 220V 60amp line, raised over \$1000. in donations from the community, and put on our first show the last weekend of July 1972 with a cast, including production, lighting, and a five piece band, of over fifty kids and five adults (the adults were Pam Meadows, my wife, Director, me, as Producer, our friends, Miss Clarke, as Stage Manager and Mr. Raymond, Sound, and a neighbor of the Shell, Mr. Loeb, as Production Assistant). In two nights, we entertained nearly eight hundred people without any major difficulties and everyone was quite pleased and looking forward to the August production with a revised cast. Mrs. Mackey was then subject to a considerable number of complaints which apparently emmited unoffically from the Sewer Commission, owner of the park in which the Shell is located. She called a board meeting, expressed her doubts and problems, and received a vote of confidence from the board for her original decision, particularly from Mr. G.A. Christopher, Mr. James Connern, and her husband, Floyd. So, the second show was cast, largely, as it turned out, from the members of the original cast, often voted in on open challenges by their own peers. Although we were rained out on Saturday and had to do an extra performance on Monday, our attendance was well over a thousand in total for the weekend and, this time there were even more in the cast.

During the winter of 72-73, Mrs. Mackey received more "unofficial" complaints. We met and decided, given the proven money-raising capability of the teenagers, that we could commit ourselves to rented rehearsal space for all but one night a week, early evenings on Sundays, so as to minimize our exposure to complaint. Mrs. Gay Pearsal fondly remembered that casts of mixed ages seemed to work well in the old Town Dock Theatre and my wife had always wanted to do BYE BYE BIRDIE with all the parts cast more nearly at their proper ages, so, also in the interest of placating the Sewer Commission further, we decided to include some ten adults in the cast for 1973 and to only do one weekend in mid-August of three performances, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Although there was a certain initial resentment among the teenagers that certain parts were foreclosed because of adult casting, we carefully selected people who worked well with kids and the show was a tremendous success. Our attendance totaled nearly two thousand, there were no incidents and we also built a very warm relationship with the members of the PAL Corps (they had been cool the year before). Apparently we did too well. Mrs. Mackey really started to catch it: Nothing official, you understand, but all kinds of inuendos and threats of reductions of privileges. Since the status of the Shell is so tenuous, and since we seemed to be well established, she finally felt that the pressure was such that she would have to ask us to discontinue our use of the Shell and make other arrangements.

I went to Amy Pett, one of our earliest and staunchest supporters and she suggested that we ask you directly, as I did, for Town participation. While I realize that, relative to your usual long term planning, this is late in the season to ask, I will do as you suggested and ask for my ideal requirements in hopes that something can be arranged. This summer we would like to return to an all teenager cast. Our usual rules are that a participant must be, at least, just out of sixth grade or, at most, just out of twelfth grade. We make no restrictions on the basis of school and have had kids from Manhasset, Buckley, St. Mary's and St. Peter's as well as Port in the shows. We require that each cast member raise at least \$20.00 and that no donation exceed \$10.00. In the past, we have provided two seats at a specified performance in the front section for our donors but have decided, instead, to invite them to a private dress rehearsal. We plan to do a version of Cole Porter's RED, HOT AND BLUE, which my wife and two of the students are rewriting (at the request of the trustees of Mr. Porter's Estate) and which will include additional music from Mr. Porter's OUT OF THIS WORLD. We would like the following from the Town: The portable band shell, an audio system, barricades and crowd control, two nights on the south end of the Town Dock on one weekend and two nights in the Manorhaven park parking lot on the following weekend, three rehearsal nights in the week before the first performance in the

Manorhaven park parking lot in the shell and, in both locations, at least 60 amps of power (either 110 or 220 volts will do). You will notice that we asked for paved areas. This is because we find that keeping a crowd in place for three hours in auditorium-type conditions is just too tough on the grass.

Since I'm asking for the moon, I might just as well lay out a tentative schedule:

Rehearsal in shell in Manorhaven Park  
7PM - 11PM Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
August 12, 13, 14

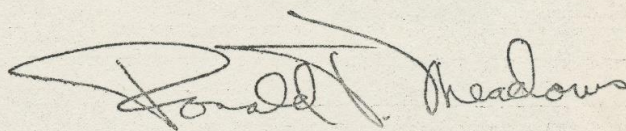
Performance at Town Dock (8:15 PM Curtain)  
7PM - 11PM Saturday, Sunday  
August 17, 18

Performance at Manorhaven Park (8:15 PM Curtain)  
7PM - 11PM Saturday, Sunday  
August 24, 25

I discussed the concept of two performance weekends at two locations with Ms. Pett and she felt that it would open up the show to a larger segment of the Town, particularly given the huge capacity of the parking lot at Manorhaven Park.

We anxiously await whatever response you are able to give us and hope that you will make it possible for us to continue this project, which has certainly been a worthwhile and rewarding one for us.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald T. Meadows". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Ronald T. Meadows