



### **Double Nickel Member Michael Doan**

“Sometimes I think I got on a train just as it pulled out of the station and jumped off just before it crashed,” Mike Doan says in his book, *Riding The Media Wave*. In the sixties the news business was on the rise with many profitable newspapers with hefty advertising revenues, but it “all ground to a halt with the advent of the Internet, free Craigslist ads and many new sources of information.” After writing for the Associated Press, U.S. News & World Report, and the Kiplinger Letter, Mike says that he doesn’t miss being in the news business, but as a reporter or editor for 46 years, he always felt relevant then. Now, in retirement, as partner with his wife

Pickett in the Oak Grove Bed & Breakfast, grandfather, pianist, singer, actor, and South Boston newspaper columnist, his relevance is equally unquestioned.

Beginning as a ten-year old publisher of his California neighborhood’s mimeographed newsletter, his choice of career was never in doubt. From the University of California, Berkeley, “a great place for a student journalist with all the ideological fervor going on constantly,” to big city news in Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., journalism afforded him a front row seat to some of the biggest stories and scandals of the twentieth century. In between all of it, his job with the AP in Las Vegas provided opportunities for celebrity introductions and interviews where he made sure that what happened in Vegas did not stay in Vegas.

It was in Washington where he met his wife Pickett Craddock and her eight-year old son Chris. As the years went by, the family was joined by Sara, adopted from Honduras as an infant, and later by numerous foster children. By the time Mike retired in 2009 he was a member of several choral groups in the Washington area and playing piano with a combo at Twins, one of Washington’s finest jazz clubs. Pickett had inherited the family farm in Cluster Springs near South Boston where they began spending their summers and where Mike was cast in six Prizery Summer Theatre productions, singing and acting. When the pandemic made big city living less desirable, Pickett and Mike moved permanently to Southside Virginia and reopened Pickett’s homeplace, Oak Grove Bed & Breakfast. Mike brought all his pre-retirement interests and accomplishments with him and added Clarksville’s Double Nickel Players where he was last seen playing piano and singing in the group’s *Sunday Funnies*. While his schedule doesn’t allow participation in *Murder On The Last Train To Clarksville*, he promises to share more of his original comic songs at the 2024 *Sunday Funnies*. ~ Written by Nancy Barden



### **Crew Member for**

### *Murder on the Last Train to Clarksville*

Holly Stadtler made her stage debut when she was 7 years old with Halifax Little Theatre as a street child in *Oliver*. Her mother was Nancy in the play, and her father was building the set. She and her brother were in the cast, making it a family affair. Holly was awed by the talented adults; however, she was not bitten by the acting bug! She enjoyed being part of shows throughout her HS years but being someone other than herself never appealed to her. The thing

she most enjoyed about the theater was the cast parties held at their home. Her mom made a delicious dip for chips, (still her favorite) that she only got at cast parties. It was great fun being around the actors celebrating, usually late at night.

Holly grew up in South Boston in a family of four and enjoyed a happy childhood, but she was eager to leave South Boston upon graduation. She wanted to experience the world. Holly and her husband Terry, have done just that. They have lived in numerous cities in the US, as Holly's career as a documentary filmmaker progressed. She was a Production Manager for NBC News before working on over 100 hours of television at the Discovery Channel. From there she went on to direct &/or write 15 documentaries. Holly loves telling a story and getting it right. She also discovered she has leadership abilities, and loves pulling together a team, and she enjoys the diversity and challenge of managing a project.

When Holly decided she wanted to leave her job at NBC News, her husband, Terry, who was in landscaping, told one of his customers they might be moving to Atlanta for Holly to look for work. That customer turned out to be the VP of Human Resources for The Discovery Channel (when they were small); and as fate would have it, they were hiring. Consequently, Holly got her foot in the door just as they were beginning to grow. She had been working there for several years when she got the chance of a lifetime. Her unit was producing their first theatrical film with Hugo van Lawick (Jane Goodall's husband) about a leopard growing up in the Serengeti. The movie was being shot in Tanzania, and her boss told her he wanted to make a behind-the-scenes film for the channel. The producer he had picked turned down his offer so Holly offered to produce it herself, and that began a most intriguing adventure to Africa, Germany and Holland. Have her tell you about it sometime.

She went independent in 1997 starting Dream Catcher Films, Inc. and has since made films for Animal Planet, TLC, Discovery, TBS, independent films, and several documentaries for National Geographic taking her to intriguing places around the globe. In 2015, she and her husband sold their home & nearly everything to begin a 5-year odyssey full-time RVing around North America before settling in Clarksville, VA in January with her mom Nancy Barden.

In our murder mystery, Holly is not one of the characters, but is the group's publicist & will be tending bar. Holly enjoys the Double Nickel Players because the members have developed special bonds working so closely together; and they have a lot of fun! She is quite proud of the fact that *Murder On The Last Train To Clarksville* was written by a committee of DNP. She hopes to see it get copy written at the Library of Congress and placed in catalogues across the country. ~ Written by Anne Smyre



**Crew Member for**  
*Murder on the Last Train to Clarksville*

Betty Jack Ligon, one of the newer members of the Double Nickel Players (DNP), was born and raised in Clarksville. Her family home was located on Buggs Island Lake at the exact spot on which the BIB now stands. She majored in English and added enough drama classes to enable her to teach drama also. She retired earlier this year and returned to Clarksville.

Growing up, She enjoyed being a part of plays presented in her church and school. However, she fell in love with the theatre after attending a performance of *The Imaginary Invalid*, by Moliere performed in the Historic Barter Theater in Abingdon, Virginia. She was in high school at the time, and was so enthralled with the Barter theater that she chose to attend Emory & Henry College in nearby Emory, Va. During her college years she took any job at the theater available and was also in the National Honorary Dramatic Fraternity. After graduation, she chose to teach at a school in Abingdon for four years and continued her association with the Barter Theater. She later taught at a small school in Appalachia, and a small school on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. She enjoyed the smaller schools because more students could participate in drama programs.

Betty Jack is excited to be a part of DNP because her love of the theater and theater people has only grown over the years. She wants to work in all areas of our performances. In our upcoming murder mystery, she has been working on the set and enjoying every minute.

We are thrilled to have another enthusiastic, talented thespian join the Double Nickel Players. ~ Written by Anne Smyre



**Crew Member for**  
*Murder on the Last Train to Clarksville*

Danny Runyon got started in theater arts when his wife Karon joined the Double Nickel Players (DNP) 12 years ago and as one of the 5 founding members who's still involved in the group. Although Karon was interested in acting, Danny joined the crew team and helped design and build sets for various productions by Clarksville Community Players. His favorite production to work on was *Oklahoma*, when the crew was challenged to build an entire house for the play!

Danny spent over 40 years working for a chemical company but picked up some construction skills and worked on the side. He even built two real houses along the way. After he retired, he worked as a handyman, so his experience and interest in construction blended well with him joining the set crew.

Danny enjoys being a member of the Double Nickels, especially for the people and friendships he and Karon have made as part of the group. Although Danny and Karon recently moved to Chester, VA they have no plans to give up their membership in the DNP. ~ Written by Monica Walter



### **Crew member for *Murder on the Last Train to Clarksville***

Monica Walter recently joined the Double Nickel Players (DNP) after meeting Leslie Pipan at a quilting group, and so far she's helped backstage with costumes and sets and anything that's been asked of her. A graduate of Temple University, she began her college experience as a Theatre Major; however, she switched to the Department of Community Recreation Leadership. But her interest in theater never left her. She has lots of experience having worked for 10 years in the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Dept., working with children in theatre as well as arts, crafts and sports activities.

Having recently retired, Monica was looking for ways to become more involved in the community and the DNP have enthusiastically embraced her and her husband Gary's talents. The two met at a bar in Philly and found a shared interest in recreation; they both took the test for entry level leadership with the department and ended up working at different parks, but both in Philadelphia. Monica got to work at the park where she had played, while growing up. She was involved with many productions that oftentimes had a cast of 50-80 children and shared costumes and sets with Gary at his park in a lower income neighborhood. In fact, the whole Walter family (3 children) also took part in community theatre, and Monica even started a summer theater camp at a Catholic School that's still going strong. After spending 30 years in Philadelphia, the family moved first to VT, then to San Diego, CA and finally to NC. During these years Monica turned to nursing. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and a Master's Degree as a Nurse Practitioner focusing in Gastroenterology. In 2010, she landed at Duke Regional Services and worked as a Director in the Perioperative area while pursuing her Doctorate in Nursing at Duke University. It was stressful work coordinating the pre-op area, operating room and recovery area, but she enjoyed working with the operative team, and as Monica says, "My recreation degree certainly prepared me to be in those situations and as a friend says, 'your success is getting everybody to play well on the playground.'"

For many years, her husband Gary had wanted to own a farm, and after the kids were in college, Monica agreed. First, they had a small farm and "started accumulating dogs" as Monica says. Then they decided to get chickens, followed by goats. Pretty soon, they needed more room and luckily for Clarksville, they found the farm on HWY 15 near Stateline Rd. and now have 26 acres, home to 30 chickens, goats, horses, a donkey, cows, turkeys, and 15 dogs (the Great Pyrenees dogs work to protect the goats, cows & horses). The family also loves music, and Gary has a music studio in one of the barns. But Monica says they began making music videos for FaceBook some years ago and then their son got involved with editing the pieces. This soon turned into short films posted to YouTube and the acting, directing, producing fed their theatrical leanings. In fact, you can find one fun short film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxNxCuzd-nc&t=91s>.

Now, in addition to working behind the scenes with the DNP, Monica has landed a role in the upcoming CCP production of *Hallelujah Girls* which will open 11/16. When asked what it is that Monica enjoys about theatre production, she replied: "Just the effort that goes into it - everybody coming together. I

love to watch the evolution of it: beginning it and then how it turns out is just really a magical place. It's just something that touches my heart." ~ Written by Holly Stadler