

MHS - The Dramatic Side

by Vivian Seyfert Alderfer

High school can involve a great deal of drama... more so for some than others. For those of us from 35 School who began our years at MHS in 7th grade, our appetites were whetted for the stage by plays such as "Our Town", performed in 1961, and "The Diary of Anne Frank" presented in 1962.

In 1963, several of us 9th graders were swept away into the musical wonderland of "Brigadoon" with Ron Fontaine and Amanda Liepins in leading roles. The harmonious village people included Tracy Walker, Susie Daniels, Vivian Seyfert, Norm Gauch, John Seegler, and Betty Norton. The orchestra included Stuart Edelstein.

In 10th grade it was "Tea House of the August Moon" starring Bob Allen, Norman Gauch, Vivian Seyfert, Richard Wyland, Tracy Walker, Tom Johnston, and Bob Donnelly. Kennedy was killed on the afternoon of opening night, so the performance had to be rescheduled. Consequently, the live goat never appeared in the actual performance, nor the highly elaborate geisha hairdo originally coiffed for Lotus Blossom.

That same year featured "The Crucible", with Kay O'Conner carrying the lead. In addition, a Jack Watkins original, entitled "Happily Ever After", was performed for assemblies. It was a fun, frothy, fairytale medley including the likes of Alice In Wonderland, Cinderella, Snow White, Peter Pan, and a sundry of medieval minstrels such as: Bob Donnelly, Harvey Lewis and Bob Gersicoff.

"My Three Angels" was presented in our Junior year with James Thompson, Elaine VanDeMar, Mike Thomas, Norman Gauch, Vivian Seyfert, John Seeger, Harold Feinberg, and Alan Sweedler. Contrary to what our yearbook says, it was "The Apollo Of Bellac" by Giraudoux that was performed theatre-in-the-round by Jim Lawlor, Vivian Seyfert, Mike Thomas, and Tom Johnson.

Assemblies that year included scenes from: "The Lark" featuring Harold Feinberg and Kay O'Connor, "A Raisin In The Sun" with Carl Daniels and Barbara Williams. The winter carnival featured lyrical bits from "Camelot", "The Sound of Music", and "My Fair Lady."

Our senior year saw a dramatic change with a new director, Miss Dixie Whitney. The performances of that year included "Thurber Carnival" and "Ten Little Indians". Miss Whitney enlarged the stage crew and involved more of the drama and public speaking classes in the Wednesday morning assemblies.

According to Shakespeare, *"All the world is a stage and all the men and women; merely players, they have their exits and entrances and one man in his time plays many parts."* For a few brief years at Monroe High, together we explored many parts of ourselves as well as re-enacting parts played by others. It was a fun foundation for our launch into the authentic roles we would be assuming in life. As for those brief years, happily, it was all "Our Town."

Instrumental Music at MHS

by Josh Katzen

I played trumpet in the MHS Junior Band and Orchestra in 8th and 9th grades and in the Senior Band and Orchestra in grades 10-12. I recall that both met during 6th period, Band on M-W-F and Orchestra Tu-Th. I looked forward to 6th period every day since both Band and Orchestra were the most fun I ever had in classes.

My best music friends were Stew Edelstein (French horn), Doug Posner (trombone) and Miriam Barkin (flute). One of the prettier girls in the orchestra was Phyllis Rugg, who was a year behind us and played cello. A lot of the guys envied her cello.

Mr. Fraser was the conductor for both organizations, and I think he had grown pretty tired of the job by the time I got there (he retired after our junior year). He stuck with pretty much the same repertoire through all the years: the orchestra played Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* (which I still sing along with when I hear it), *Die Fledermaus*, and Bizet's *Farandole*, and the band played *Victory at Sea*, the themes from *Hennessy* and *Ben Hur*, and a few medleys from Broadway shows. But the band also got to play at MHS football games, so we practiced marching in formation on the playground behind the cafeteria and playing Sousa tunes like *National Emblem* and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, which had great parts for everybody.

Football games were a blast: we loud brass players worked up the Utica Club jingle (featuring Schultz and Dooley – “*Utica Club.....the natural beeeeeer!*”) and some rock and roll riffs (*boom, boom, boom, boom-de-boom, boom, boom, boom, boom-de-boom, boom, boom, boom, boom-de-boom*) leading up to the crowd shouting “*Go Monroe!*”

The band also got to march in the Memorial Day parade every year. We wore heavy wool red and blue MHS uniforms in 90-degree weather and almost fainted by the time the march was over. One year it was so hot that my sneakers melted and stuck to the street.

The reason I know that Mr. Fraser had lost interest in conducting high school music was because one day the band was playing a piece in F Major, in which all the Bs have to be played B flat, and the brass section (at my instigation) played the whole piece with B naturals. It sounded terrible, but Mr. Fraser didn't seem to notice.

Mr. Fraser retired at the end of junior year and was replaced by Mr. Snook. This changed the entire atmosphere- and raised the standards - of both groups. Mr. Snook was demanding and didn't hesitate to call out publicly individual players for missing notes or not playing with enough feeling. He once stopped a rehearsal in mid-theme to say, “I want you to play like Katzen. He plays wrong notes, but he plays them loud, and better to play the wrong notes loud than the right notes that you can't even hear!”

Mr. Snook finally changed the repertoire. He brought upbeat jazz and rock tunes to the band – and even started a stage band the year after we graduated (too bad for us). He also had the orchestra play Stavinsky's *Firebird Suite*. This was an extremely aggressive piece to program for a non-audition orchestra, but he so motivated – or terrified – us that we actually pulled off a reasonable performance.

Although band and orchestra were some of the happiest times for me at MHS, there was one aspect of my high school musical life that still terrifies me to this day. By the time we were seniors, I had advanced to the position of principal first trumpet and, accordingly, was obliged to play Call to Colors before the opening of the school-wide assembly every Wednesday morning. I was so nervous about playing this relatively difficult and extremely exposed solo in front of everyone that I couldn't sleep on Tuesday nights, and the Wednesday walk to school was like a death march for me. My buddies, Jon Tomson, Tom Johnston and some others sat in the front row, immediately next to me, and each week, they thoughtfully eased my nerves by saying things like "Do you think he'll screw it up again?" or "Here it comes!" just before I had to play.

If there were 36 weeks in the school year, which meant I had to play Call to Colors 36 times, I think I got it totally right maybe once or twice. All the other times, I managed to produce at least one wrong note – impossible to disguise in a solo trumpet – to the general laughter of the entire audience. It turned out that music is entertaining for everyone, even non-music lovers.

Vocal Music at MHS

by Victor Pinzon

It is a pleasure to comment on the impressive music program that enhanced the lives of so many students at Monroe High School. As a transfer student from Bishop Kearney, I was amazed to discover the wealth of music and drama programs available. There was even a big band exploring the music of Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey. The school assembly was a terrific showcase for MHS talent, often in very creative settings. I can still hear the applause from appreciative students enjoying band performances, vocal talents ranging from classical renderings to more contemporary offerings. The eclectic mix of music and dramatics produced an appreciation of the arts that no longer resonates very well in society today. We were the lucky ones.

I remember Mr. Leonard moving his baton directing the large ensemble of voices with his usual smile of enthusiasm. I was always amazed when he could figure out when I was singing flat or sharp while listening to so many voices at the same time. How I remember Mrs. McManus at the ivories and her sometimes motherly words of encouragement. Mr. Leonard moved on to another position. Enter Mr. Donmoyer, Choir Director, and a very talented Mr. Volpe, who helped me sing a German lieder piece by Richard Strauss. The people involved in teaching music and voice at Monroe cared a great deal about the music, but more importantly, they cared about each and every student who walked into class.

I must also mention Mr. Carpenter, who worked primarily with the lower grades. He introduced me to a wonderful girl named Patti Austin, and he combined our talents for a charming duet, Button Up Your Overcoat. It turned out to be my most enjoyable experience at Monroe. It was just one of those special moments that one never forgets. Who can forget the folk music banjo and guitar of the late Norman Gauch. Close to my heart, the lilting gentle soprano of the late Chrystal Palmer, who also performed with Howard Severe's all girl singing group. There is so much more to say, and so many more memories that continue to bring me to a place of giving thanks and counting blessings. Wishing all of my friends from those magical days at Monroe High School a joyous 50th Anniversary celebration. With love and appreciation, Victor

MHS 1966 - Publications

by Betty Lew Ankrapp and Susie Daniel – editors Monrolog 1966

There were lots of “activities” at MHS – student government, orchestras and bands, choirs, drama, careers, sports and language clubs, aides, Redcoats and Bluecoats, etc. But perhaps the largest activities, which targeted the whole school population, were the three MHS publications: the yearbook - *Monrolog*, the newspaper – *MonroeLife*, and the literary magazine – *Kaleidoscope*.

Each publication served a specific purpose but all were outlets for recording, presenting, and expressing the students’ life at MHS. *Monrolog* provided the year’s overview; *MonroeLife* presented daily & ongoing events; *Kaleidoscope* unleashed the creative thoughts and ideas trapped within individual minds.

Those of us involved in each of these publications spent many hours making them happen. For *Monrolog* we saw ourselves as joint editors – trying to complement each other with the unique skills we each brought to make our publication the best it could be. If there was any competition among the three publications, it was to win and receive awards from each respective national association to fill Monroe High School’s trophy case.

Our work on the yearbook began with selecting and recruiting classmates who would undertake their “jobs” with our same excitement and commitment. Mr. Zemel, our advisor, was new to MHS and did his best to guide us. He probably was brow beaten by both of us, and wondered if he would survive the year. And our staff was no doubt equally exasperated with our micro management! We hope they weren’t permanently traumatized and remember only the good times while laboring late into the night to meet deadlines.

We chose the theme of “change” for the yearbook – changes confronting us as seniors about to leave the safety of our MHS community, and in retrospect we realize how little recognition we had of the enormity of global changes surrounding us and happening to this day. We wanted our yearbook to contain more than the typical group organization and individual pictures of students and faculty. We tried to include as many “candid” shots that were not widely found in other yearbooks. These strained our budget but we managed to put in as many as we could to show “real” school life. We also decided to ditch the typical cover with the school insignia and went for the “bold” burlap material and simple embossed name of *Monrolog* 1966. Oh, how rebellious we were! – and most likely cost us any chance of winning an award (no bitterness, but only a reflection of our naïve thinking).

Nonetheless it was “the best ever yearbook” for us and also hopefully for the entire staff and student body. When we met up two years ago - for the first time in over 20 years - we both talked about the multitude of skills we each gained from our *Monrolog* experiences which served us well afterwards. We each brought unique perspectives: Betty as the first American-born from an immigrant family; Susie as the last of a long-line of family attending MHS (including her mother and uncles). This mixture sometimes caused hilarious misunderstandings but challenged both of us to find solutions and strengthened our working relationship and friendship, as well as enriching and preparing us for the 50 years hence.

Looking at the yearbook today brings back floods of memories for each of us – people, places, things we did. We hope that it does for our classmates as well – at least for those who still have it hanging around. Not everyone may have initially bought one and those who tried to after it was published were denied. The number of books printed was just enough to fill all the orders; two to submit for competition; and one for archives (obviously accounting was not a strong suit). *Monrolog* 1966 is a

“rare” edition – just like our class!

A brief bit about the other MHS publications:

- *MonroeLife* was under the editorship of Roger Berman (sadly no longer with us). In our senior year there were changes and special features, including: columns from our foreign exchange students and programs; President Bernie Ferrari’s “Across the Desk”, Josh Katzen’s “Omnipresent” and the humorous sports predictions by Steve Geppert.
- *Kaleidoscope* was the literary magazine and was edited by Patti Bennett and produced once a year. It included student compositions and art. There were competitions to enable all students the opportunity to contribute to the final publication.

We have tried to get something to include from Mr. Dave Harrington who was the “Business Adviser” of all three publications – he definitely had a challenging role to keep all of us in line with budgets and good business practices, as well as ensuring we got enough sponsorship.

Monroe High School: The Sports’ Scene

Recollection of my involvement in sports at Monroe High School

by Bob Taylor

What Monroe High School lacked in the latest facilities and playing fields - (Cobbs Hill was it!) – it more than made up for in the many diversified sports it provided. I remember starting school at Monroe in the ninth grade, coming from a small parochial school and how frightened and overwhelmed I felt due to the size of our freshman class and the physical size of the school in general. It was through the sports offered by Monroe High School that helped me lessen this anxiety and find a focus through a smaller team concept that naturally developed. Support, friendship, and teamwork broke down barriers and helped me feel part of a larger process. From there, assimilation into the larger school context became much easier. For me, soccer and basketball were my entry points – initially at the JV level and then at the Varsity level, under the fine coaching of Mr. Peough, Mr. Proper, Mr. Strassner, and Mr. Shapiro.

In the fall, soccer took over, and I remember catching the RTC bus home from school, changing quickly and then riding my bike through the trails at Cobbs Hill, just to arrive in time at the soccer field to begin practice. In the winter, it was basketball for me, waiting our turn to use the gym for practice and finishing after dark in the winter to then catch the RTC bus home.

Through sports, we bonded as teammates and hung out together after school or over at each other’s home, playing pickup games of basketball or going to the fields to play soccer. We would also go watch our friends play in their chosen sports, cheering their teams on to victory!

This is just a minute picture of the sports available to students. From intramurals and club teams, to the different levels of interscholastic competitive sports -developmental, freshman, junior Varsity, and Varsity – students could tryout and join a team of their interest and hopefully thrive on the challenges presented while enjoying themselves as a member of a team, whether it be cheerleading, soccer, football, cross country, basketball, bowling, wrestling, track, tennis, and swimming. Women’s interscholastic sports were still to come, but many women’s clubs were active as synchronized

swimming, basketball, tennis, badminton, volleyball and bowling.

In review of our Monroe Log yearbook, it brought back so many wonderful memories of participation with teammates, from participating directly to just watching classmates star on their respective teams. We all cheered and supported one another, and I can remember how proud we were when we earned our Varsity letter and could show off our big 'M' on our coats and/or sweaters. Belonging to the Varsity club was the best!

In conclusion, sports were an integral part of my time at Monroe High School and enabled me to make new friends while integrating into the larger body of the school. For me, team and school sports were contagious and many wonderful friends and memories were made, triggered by my involvement in the sports program.

Today I continue to coach, and right now have to end this review and hurry down to the soccer field to coach our Honeoye JV Boys' in their soccer match against McQuaid.

