

A historical look at the Schmeckfest musicals: 1967-2024

With complete program information from every show!

All proceeds go toward Freeman Academy

The Author's Introduction

My introduction to the Schmeckfest stage was somewhat unique.

Back in 1977, when I was a freshman at Freeman Junior College (FJC), if you were a college student and wanted to only be in the chorus of a Schmeckfest musical, all you had to do was sign up on the sign-up sheet at school and show up for the first practice. Not only had I never been on stage, I actively avoided it throughout my high school years, but FJC student Gwen Doerksen wrote my name down along with Tony Waltner, Steve Mendel and Stan Ortman (her future husband). I have no idea why but we all went to the practice for "The Gondoliers," and while the other guys were in and out of a few other productions, I was hooked. Now, 46 years later, I haven't missed one. So depending on my mood I either give Gwen credit or blame for the situation.

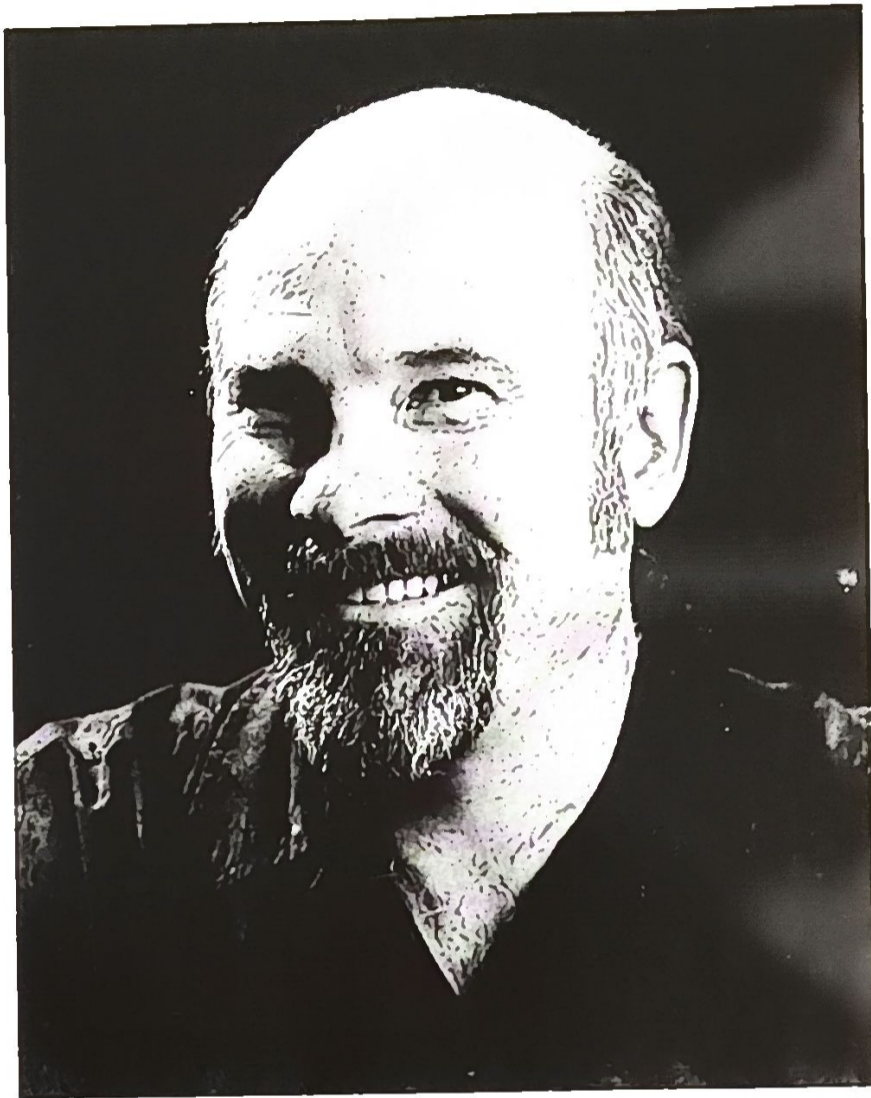
When I had done an astronomical total of 10 or 12 in a row I had some young people brag that they would beat my record. Well, they learned two things:

1. They grow up and get a life, and;
2. I have to stop before they can start catching up.

One of my favorite things is when the cast gets to see the program for the first time at dress rehearsal and how many turn to the crossword page to check if they made the puzzle. The smiles and excitement from some who are in it help offset some of the disappointment from those who didn't make it. All I can tell them is go out next year and maybe it will happen. I have had people request to be in it, and while I keep it in mind, I can't make any promises. The requests and disappointment came to a head in 2017's "Brigadoon," so I created a super-sized crossword which included every cast member in either the clues or the puzzle itself, which I made available to everyone at the cast party. This is included in this book as a Bonus Puzzle.

As for the crossword part of the Schmeckfest program I had been in a number of musicals when someone who shall remain nameless created one for the program. And while I have always loved crossword puzzles I had never created one but I knew I could do better. So after talking to the Program Committee they let me do one in 1986 for "110 in the Shade." And while looking back at it now I can see how crude it was I am still proud of it.

I have had a few crossword connoisseurs who tell



Monte Waltner's headshot from 2009's "Into The Woods."

I am not making them correctly (one and two letter answers; no duplicating blacked out squares) but my goal has always been to get as many starred clues (*Answers can be found in the program) to make the audience read through the program while waiting for the show to start. I have gone from less than 20 starred clues in the early years to usually in the mid 40s currently. And with this Crossword Puzzle Book and you having access to all the past show information available I have even exceeded 50 starred clues a couple of times, that's with an average of around 63 total clues per crossword.

When I decided to put everything together in this book I felt that every Schmeckfest needed to be represented, so I had an additional 20 crossword puzzles to create for the earlier shows. Each crossword takes 5 to 9 hours for me to create and make ready to submit for the program. This book also needed to have all the original programs information available for the starred clues, so there were countless hours typing in *cast, chorus, orchestra,*

Author's Notes

1. Once I got to the crossword puzzle that I did for my first program (110 in the Shade) I took the time to go over it and look for more "Answers can be found in the program" potential clues. With more information in the program and additional productions available then I had at the time I created it, I was able to go from 22 starred clues to 36 with an *. That is staying with the same grid and blacked out squares as in the original crossword. I was always limited on the initial creations by what information was given to me. Now I have the complete library of programs to look for clues. The next year's show, Fiddler on the Roof, I went from 23 * to 38.

2. I take liberties with some standard crossword basic rules: one grid answers. My intention has always been to incorporate as many answers that can be found in the program. Because of that mantra any grid that has only one letter (A or I or a person's middle initial) I include it with a clue. I feel it is just another reason for the crossword solver to look at the program more closely.

3. I started with the Scrabble game — and an old game called Pieces of Eight.

4. It wasn't just creating and putting the crossword puzzles together. I also had to make the program information available for finding answers for each specific musical. I am not a very good typist so inputting 50+ shows has been a huge task for me.

5. Having gone through all 56 shows has been incredibly nostalgic for me. Most people may buy the book for the crossword puzzles, but I am hoping that for people who were involved with the shows by looking at each programs information it will bring back memories the musicals. It has been a wonderful journey for me to recall a lot of stories and people that I experienced over the years. I have tried to take the time to visit with former cast mates and reminisce about the shows and let them know how much I appreciated being on stage with them. It has brought up many memories of people who are no longer with us that I would so love to be able to talk to and share the enjoyment that it was to act with them. I know the majority of the people getting

the book won't react the same way it hit me, but if it brings a smile to someone's face while going through the program information and jogs a memory, it will make me happy.

6. In general I have tried to stay true to each year's information. I have corrected a few obvious spelling errors but it is interesting how some people's names are spelled differently. Example: The Nicolle in Nicolle Hofer-Timmerman has over the years been Nichole – Nicolle – Nicole. I have left the spelling as I found it in each program. So while I am apologizing for spelling error, and I am not naïve to assume that this will be flawless, maybe not all of them are my mistakes.

7. As I was getting close to reworking the final crosswords, I was frustrated having people's names that were in the crossword but not in that years' production, so my clue was "A man's or woman's name." That's about as open ended a clue as you can give. Then it dawned on me that once I have input all the information from all the shows and they will be available to you I can change those generic clues into specific clues referring back to the shows they were involved in. This also worked for words that might be in a song or generic abbreviations that can now be attributed to someone's names or characters for their initials. So when I completed State Fair I went back to The Red Mill and checked every non starred clue to see if I could find that word or abbreviation in any of the 56 program's information. When I was done I was able to add 114 * to the crosswords (just over 2 clues per crossword). It was a lot of extra work but now it will be like you check other shows to complete each crossword.

8. I want to thank Lori Schrag for helping with the first proofs for each crossword after I got them done looking for errors. She made it through 33 crosswords before she said enough is enough. I found out she doesn't enjoy crosswords enough to have me bring her three at a time. Then to Judy Graber who would get the final proof after I corrected what Lori found. Judy was there from The Red Mill to Shrek. It didn't faze her when by the end I was bringing up to four crosswords at a time. I can't believe some of

2. TWILIGHT AUCTION 1968

ACROSS

- *1. Russell Keeler actor
- *2. *The Red* _____
- *9. Sam Moyer; ___ graduate student
- 10. White wine from Spain
- *13. She worked on stage crew (init.)
- *14. Tom Kaufman role _____ Voice
- *18. Warren Miller: ___ Mennonite doctor
- 19. 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- *20. William Freed; ___ young Bishop
- 21. Amino or citric
- *22 Author John ___ Ruth
- *23 German tasting festival
- *26. *Fiddler on the Roof*: ___ Life; song
- *27. Sam, Jacob, Sallie, Diane, and Abram
- *28. Janette Epp role
- *30. *Kiss* __, *Kate*
- 31. Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provisions
- *32. Sallie Moyer; _____ of Sam Moyer
- *35. *The King and* ___
- *36. *H.M.S. Pinafore*: Sir You are ___; song
- *37. Female usher
- 38. African antelope
- 40. Synthetic Transmission Oil (abbr.)
- *42. Sollie Kaufman role
- *43. Andrea Hofer role

DOWN

- *1. Male usher
- 2. All the rage, craze
- 3. Biblical name meaning "People of God"
- 4. _____ Speedwagon
- 5. _____ Destiny: To conquer and control
- *6. *The King and* ___
- *7. Male usher (init.)
- *8. M. Cohn actor
- *11. Author John ___ Ruth
- *12. _____ *Stiff*

- *15. *Twilight* _____
- 17. River in Central Europe
- 21. Automatic Cut Off (abbr.)
- 24. One who accumulate, collects and stores
- 25. Electro Magnetic Energy (abbr.)
- *28. Female usher
- *29. She is on the Makeup Committee (init.)
- 30. Conductor Zubin _____
- *32. *The Music* _____
- 33. A measure of how often an event will occur; playing the _____
- *34. Male usher
- *36. Dr. Irvin Kaufman's character
- *39. *Big River* 2015: Jo Harper actor (init.)
- *41. *Fiddler* __ *the Roof*

*Answers can be found in the program

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| 42 | | | | | | 43 | | | |

