

# THE JOURNAL

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## Sehlmeyer named 'Citizen of Year'

A local citizen was named 'Citizen of the Year' by the Luzerne Chamber of Commerce at their annual Installation Dinner-Dance held Saturday evening at the Caddyshack Restaurant in Lake Luzerne.

Community leader Richard Sehlmeyer was chosen for the honor this year.

Influential in the activities of the community for nearly thirty years, Dick is credited with boosting commerce in the Luzerne region.

As he received his award, Dick Sehlmeyer commented, "I feel very honored that you have come to share this moment," noting that credit was due to other members who worked hard on chamber activities. He said, "It's the work that you have done that makes me look good." He continued, "It's your success story, not mine..." He warned people not to "take the quality of life, that we all enjoy, for granted." He noted that there exists, more than ever, an urgent need for volunteers.

Installed as new members of the Chamber's Board of Directors were Robert Drake, Robert Edwards, and James Schreiner. Re-elected Director is Richard Wilbur, who will join present Board members David Norton, Loren Tromblee, Elizabeth Valente, Barbara Perry, Ray Perry, and Patricia Below.

Continuing as Chamber Secretary/Treasurer is Helena Hala. Retiring President Elizabeth Balente was presented a service award for her 2 years as president. The presidential post of Executive Director.

In accepting her award, Elizabeth observed that her tenure was "a real learning experience", and that she would continue to be active both as a director and will exert her influence actively on the Lake George Regional Convention Bureau.

Retiring Chamber officials recognized at the event include Mark Johnson (former vice president), a past directors Crieg Reukoff and George Conable, who received a special award for his service, which included positions as vice

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Hadley-Luzerne thespians appear in a scene from last year's "Cheaper by the Dozen", one of the many productions conducted by Director Don Racette, who has announced his retirement from this aspect of his career. Left to right: John Decker, Prudence Young, Tammy Hayes and Shawn Allen.

## Final production set for HLCS Director

The upcoming dramatic production at Hadley-Luzerne High School marks a milestone in the career of HLCS Dramatics Director, Don Racette. The play, "Our Miss Brooks," will be the last he intends to direct, as he has announced his retirement from this aspect of his career.

Racette notes he is "Going full tilt" in his instructional duties which include classes in Mass Media and General Math. In addition, he coordinated the audio-visual needs and programs of grades K-4 and 9-12.

After school hours, he is active taking photos and writing news releases regarding the school as part of his public relations work. Seniors are continually checking in with him regarding the school yearbook, as he is yearbook advisor. The innovative local Cable TV 10 which serves the communities of Hadley, Lake Luzerne and Corinth is his "baby", and he helps students run the cameras, editing TV tapes and other tasks as part of his duties as Coordinator for the school channel. In his spare time (?) on Sundays, he can be heard on W.W.S.C. radio during daylight hours as a deejay featuring music from the 50s and 60s. Additionally, each Autumn weekday afternoon, Don is in the auditorium directing rehearsals for

the annual school play.

### A labor of love!

For the past 16 years, Racette has been the Director of Drama at HLCS. He notes that it "always has been a labor of love." Labor is certainly an appropriate word, as Racette molds his thespians into shape, determining every stage motion (blocking) and working and reworking lines to polish the actors' characterizations. The fruits of this labor are evident however, as Don observes, "My pleasure comes from each actor or actress discovering their in born talents...as they experience that new 'bolt of confidence'--which they'll retain for the rest of their lives."

### Current play significance to Racette

This year's school play is set for Thursday and Friday, November 15 and 16. "Our Miss Brooks" is a three-act comedy about life in high school in the 1950's. Appropriately, Racette is happy to end his directing career with this show, which was "The very first school play he saw as a 7th grader at St. Mary's Academy in Glens Falls in 1949." "I fell in love with theatre as a result of that first show," said Racette.

Don says he is giving up this phase of his work due to other professional and personal respon-



Richard Sehlmeyer

## Corinth budget shows 4% tax increase

The latest draft of the preliminary '85 budget of the Town of Corinth was released Monday afternoon. Several minor changes are expected for the financial plan, subject to review of the Town residents at the public budget hearing scheduled for Thursday Nov. 8 at 7:00 p.m.

The proposed budget at this point lists total appropriations as \$1,044,970; less estimated revenues of \$489,970, less an unexpended balance of \$89,870, leaving an amount to be raised by taxes of \$464,890, representing a projected approximate 4 percent increase in taxes.

Supervisor Joseph Hughes notes that this increase is not only below the prevailing inflation rate, but includes the construction expenses of a new roof for the Town Hall, as well as a new salt shed, and the investment in a new highway truck. Salaries for Town employees will increase by 5 percent, according to Hughes.

Town residents are encouraged to attend the budget hearing on Thursday evening, which will be held in conjunction with a special board meeting adjourned from the regular October date.



The cast and crew of Hadley-Luzerne High School's 1983 dramatic production "Cheaper by the Dozen" includes: (front row) Angie Backus, Christine Bormann, Julie Philips, Tracey Clothier, 'Peanut', (row 2) Holly Stanton, Dawn Allen, Cindy Ziegler, Shawn Allen, Tammy Hayes, John Decker, Jenny Jo Parsons, Tara Tremaine, (row 3) Tracy Waite, Helen Smith, Prudence Young, Ward Philips, Stephen Abbott, Richard Backus, Robyn Wilber, Don Racette (Director), Ed Bennett, Mark Racette, and Betsy Wilber (proprietor and makeup). (photo/Randall)

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**Comedies, classics and musicals**

Racette reviews the past 16 years with fond memories "enough that I could write a book" he notes. His past productions include family classics ("All of the shows I've ever done have been plays for the entire family, never anything to embarrass anyone") such as "Meet Me In St. Louis," "Cheaper By The Dozen", and "Pillow Talk".

Racette has directed two musicals 'Bye Bye Birdie' and 'The Boy Friend.'

"The Boy Friend was my all-time favorite play to direct" says Don; "My wife Elaine and I talked about producing that show for ten years" before the circumstances were right to produce it in 1977."

Aside from musicals and comedies, Racette one year directed 'children's theatre' with "The Hobbit." Serious drama such as "Twelve Angry Jurors" "The Night of January 16th" and "The Death and Life of Larry Benson" have been performed.

Two shows were taken on the road: 'Dear Ruth' and 'Twelve Angry Jurors' were performed not only a HLCS but the cast, crew and sets were moved to Indian Lake, Horicon, Warrensburg, Chestertown, and Bolton Landing. In 1976, the Hobbit was performed at an elementary school in Greenfield Center by Racette's theatrical group. Several unique theatrical productions have been directed by Racette.

"We did The Mousetrap in 1969" Don says. "The cast had to learn two endings to the show. 'Mousetrap is the most famous of the Agatha Christie shows. It has been running for 22 years in London. Early in the show, you select a jury of people from the audience. They sit on the stage throughout the play and listen to the trial proceedings as well as seeing backflashes and then have to decide whether the defendant is guilty or innocent. One of two different ending

scenes are presented, according to the verdict of the participants." As both Director and actor, Don has participated in 10 years of Lions Club sponsored shows. "They were great" says Don. "The whole community got involved in acting as well as backstage." Neil Simon fans, Don and his wife Elaine were featured in a number of Neil Simon shows such as "Plaza Suite" and "The Odd Couple."

Racette's first high school play was "The Mouse That Roared." The show was so successful that Racette repeated it with innovations in 1974. "Ask Any Girl" and "Everybody Loves Opal" were two shows he recalls with fondness. "The student who starred in *Everybody Loves Opal* created such a characterization, that for the rest of the year, everyone called her Opal rather than her real name." "In *Birdie* the guy playing the Elvis Presley-type character was asked for autographs for two weeks after the show whenever elementary students saw him in the halls"

**Anecdotes remembered**

Reminiscing, Racette related anecdotes about his experiences over these 'sweet 16' years. For instance, when in Bolton Landing the cast had a tight schedule. As the curtain closed, a school bus and equipment truck were idling at the stage door. The set was taken down in record time; meanwhile, in front of the closed curtain, the Bolton Landing principal was speaking praises about the just-completed production, and he called for the curtain to open "one more time" in appreciation of the fine cast. The curtain opened and the stage was empty, except for two students sweeping the remains.

Don also has been active over the years, presenting one-act plays. One summer, he had students from Corinth as well as Lake Luzerne participating in two one-act shows. Summer stock, the shows were presented in each of the towns. Don laughs as he recalls that while helping his cast and crew carry large set flats from a truck into the Corinth school, the superintendent mentioned "Cecil B. DeMille never carried in his sets." Don retorted, "DeMille was not a high school teacher and director." He then pressed the superintendent into helping grab one end of a flat and take it to the stage. Don has also written his own one-act play which he calls *Debbie's Diary*, about teenagers at a high school in the 50's.

**Thanks to all those involved**

Don comments that he may "get itchy" next Fall, and wonder if he made the right decision about stepping down. He concludes "I am grateful to the School Board, administrators, teachers, parents and students who have stood behind me and with me throughout the years." He notes, "It's time for me to get out of the fast lane and at least start to slow down."

Although Don says he plans to 'slow down', those who know him report that he'll pursue his full schedule of activities with the same dedication that has characterized his dramatic career.

**Card party set**

A public card party has been set for Thursday November 15 to benefit the Corinth Emergency Squad. The event will be held at the Squad's headquarters 101 Sherman Avenue, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Door prizes, table prizes and special awards are planned. Refreshments will be available. The public is welcome to attend.

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Wed., Nov. 7, 1984 Warrensburg-Lake George News-19