

## ARCHIVES

Friends of the Pasadena Playhouse

*Presented by Carolyn DiPane*

Several years ago at the Pasadena Playhouse we realized that little attention was being given to the collection and maintenance of an archive department. The founder of the Friends, Ellen Bailey, was also a former student and teacher at the Playhouse and knew the history of the theatre and realized the importance of keeping a detailed record of all the shows that had been performed there as well as the actors that played in them. On her own time she started going through boxes of programs and log books showing the order of the plays, actors, directors involved in plays and events that happened at the Playhouse. She started with a card file and later everything was transferred to computers.

A call was put out to those who had attended school at the Playhouse when they had one and asked them to send us any programs or memorabilia they might have. Little by little, a treasure trove of information arrived. She enlisted the help of some of our members and soon an Archive department was started.

Over the years this department at the Pasadena Playhouse has grown in volume and importance. Time spent in Archives provides another opportunity for volunteers to assist their theatre. Whether it is cataloguing donations of books, programs or photos, filling request for information from other theatres or just answering questions that may arise about their own theatre's history, volunteering in a theatre's Archive department is a very rewarding activity. We get requests for information about the Playhouse from all over the world. It may be just the thing for volunteers who are not able to usher or participate in the other usual theatre volunteer opportunities.

We currently have about 11 people volunteering once a week on various days and they each give 6 hours of their time each week. The cost is very minimal. The Playhouse gives us the space and our cost is the paper we use and the postage to send papers or documents to someone. We do ask for a donation if the request is a large one where a large amount of postage is required. Our alumni do donate a stipend to us each year to help cover any costs. At this point in time, we have one of the leading Archive departments for a theatre in the country.