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Leave 'em Laf-fing: LafFrantics Cast Recalls the Good Old Days

... continued from page B3



From left: Marge Stalker, Melba Luna, Dian Overly, Carol Finney and Dick Smith

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After seeing their first show, Day and her husband went backstage. He saw the look in her eyes and knew she was hooked, saying, "Oh no, you want to be up there [on stage]!"

"I was always in the chorus," said Day modestly, who remembers rehearsing in Lafayette's old Veteran's Hall while her husband babysat their children.

A Tear for Tatters was the Laf-Frantics first production. It ran four nights, and tickets cost \$1.50. The playbill contained more than 60 local ads, including those for Moraga Record Album, Lafayette Sea Food Grotto and Les McFetridge Buick.

In 1986, after a 30-year run, Laf-Frantics called it quits. It was time for the final curtain call. Cast members estimate LafFrantics had 473 participants over the years. The group went out on a high note, still playing to standing-room-only crowds.

"Our group is fast depleting," explained Nelson, who is now 90. Dick Abel felt the group was getting too encore.

old for the rigors of performing; still, his wife Barbara said, "We all cried a lot when it ended.'

CCI never built the community center for which they raised funds. When Lafayette decided to convert a former elementary school into its community center, CCI deeded their parcel at 711 St. Mary's Road to the city. That land is now known as Buckeye Fields.

Fortunately, the saga of LafFrantics lives on in weathered news clippings, photographs and handbills. Former cast members keep their own thick scrap books; some, including Nelson, have donated memorabilia to Lafayette Historical Society.

A 2011video documentary by Paul and Glenda Fillinger shows the LafFrantics camaraderie that continues to this day. Remaining cast members still meet, as they have for 26 years, for an early December reunion brunch. After a 30year run, they certainly deserve an

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LafFrantics Melodramas, 1956-1986

1956 A Tear for Tatters

1958 Come Back, jack

1959 Search for a Penny or Tither's Long Look

1960 Trial La Law

1961 Hello Dere my Fren

1962 Toss Lightly and Serve, or He ain't Done Well by Nell

1963 Her Fatal Beauty

1964 Under the Gaslight

1965 Sheer Follies of 1933

1966 Fireman, Save my Child

1967 Up, Up and Away 1968 Curses on my Fatal Beauty 1984 How the West Was

1969 Curse You Jack Dalton

1970 The Lure of the Lumberlust 1986 One More Time

1971 Bewitched

1972 Curses, Soiled Again

1957 Slippery When Wet or Frost 1973 Camelittle

1974 Three for Jack and Ready

to Go 1975 How the West Was Too

1976 ABCDCIA

1977 Fangs for the Mem'ries

1978 FrantikAntiks 1979 The Lure of the Lumberlust

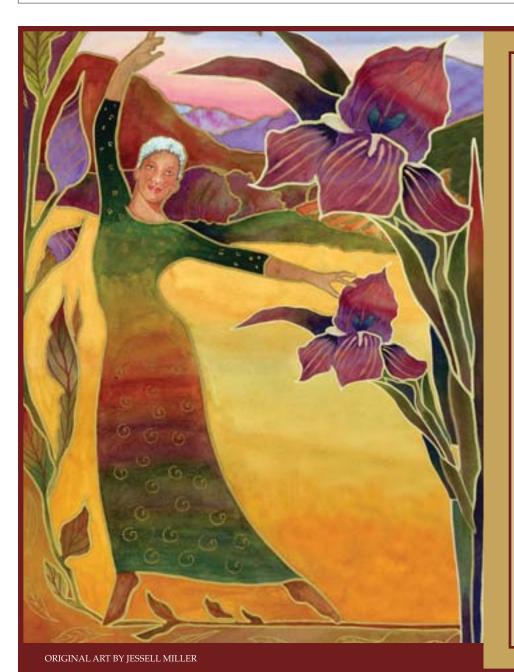
1980 The Matchmaker's Daughter 1981 Tillie the Teller or The

Great Bank Robbery

1982 The Farce be With You

1983 Camelittle

1985 Medic Heir



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