

**The Theatre of
Western Springs
Presents**

***The Effect of Gamma Rays on
Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds***

By Paul Zindel

Directed by Kurt Naebig

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Tillie Hunsdorfer

..... **Hannah Bulger***

Beatrice Hunsdorfer

..... **Patti Roeder**

Ruth Hunsdorfer

..... **Kristie Denlinger***

Nanny

..... **Mary Ellen Druyan**

Janice Vickery

..... **Caroline Dost***

*CTWS student

Setting

The play takes place in the
Hunsdorfer home

Time

The late 1960's

ACT I

Scene 1 Morning, before school

Scene 2 Two weeks later

Scene 3 A few weeks later

Scene 4 The same night

Scene 5 A few weeks later

ACT II

Early evening, before the science
fair judging

There will be one fifteen minute
intermission.

Acknowledgments

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from Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

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The Fruit Store, Western Springs and
Hinsdale, for providing apple cider at
cost with free delivery.

Terry and Cassandra Locke for having
once kept rabbits.

The photographs illustrating this
program are from The Theatre of
Western Springs' archives.



Charron Traut, Kevin McGrath, Linda Lee Cunningham in

Surviving Grace

TWS, February, 2006



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sponsored by a grant from the
Illinois Arts Council

Director's Corner

By Kurt Naebig

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds is a drama that excites me for several reasons.

First, it's a well-written Pulitzer Prize-winning play (1971). Directors love to get hold of a show like this that has something "meaty" to it. This one is a relationship play and a lyrical drama. It may remind you of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* in some respects.

It also has great roles, lots of conflict, and a family that loves each other deeply but seems constantly compelled to hurt one another. I have always been attracted to plays that make me laugh one minute and want to cover my eyes in horror the next, all the while knowing that the people onstage care for each other.

Finally, this show excites me for one more reason: it's an opportunity for three talented Children's Theatre of Western Springs students to work in tandem with TWS Actives.

I hope you enjoy the production.

About the Director

Local Guy Makes Good

Kurt Naebig was born in Chicago to parents Arthur and Christine. He spent most of his formative years in the cities of Chicago, Cicero and LaGrange. Growing up, Kurt was always



business oriented: he had numerous paper routes, worked at flea markets, and sold produce door to door.

At age 11, Kurt got on his first skateboard -- and his life changed. He began competing around the Midwest and winning multiple events. At the same time, he was selling skateboard equipment out of his house. Eventually, sales got too great to continue from home, and he and friend Tim Schutt opened up a store in Oak Park, Illinois. Kurt was 13, Tim 15 years old at the time. Kurt and the store were written up in many papers and magazines including: *People*, *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, *National Geographic World*, and *Weekly Reader*. Television coverage followed, too, from local news shows to "Good Morning America." In the midst of all this, like so many other kids, Kurt attended school at Lyons Township High School and graduated from there in 1981.

After the skateboard boom ended in the late 1970's, Kurt turned his business interests to the Chicago Board Options exchange. As if his days were not filled enough, he began taking classes in the evening. It was here that he discovered he wanted to be an actor. Kurt first studied acting in Chicago, under the tutelage of Jane Brody, who encouraged him to work professionally and to continue his training. Kurt auditioned for, and was accepted into The Juilliard School (New York), where he studied from 1986-1990.

In 1990, Kurt graduated from Juilliard and married his wife, Myra. He returned to Chicago and began working in film, TV, voice-over, and on stage with Steppenwolf, Chicago

Shakespeare Theatre, Portland Stage, and Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, of which he is still a member. Shortly after this, Jane Brody offered the use of her school, The Audition Studio (later named “Acting Studio/Chicago”) to Kurt and Rachael Patterson. Kurt and Rachael ran the school together for six years. Kurt still teaches acting there today.

Kurt continues to work in many areas of the business of acting and performance, including teaching, acting, directing, and doing voiceovers and commercials. Additionally, he works on many of the movies that shoot in Chicago -- for instance being featured as a member of the FBI team who shot John Dillinger in the Johnny Depp/Michael Mann production of *Public Enemies*. He’s also managed frequently to co-star in such television series as *ER*, alongside such celebrities as George Clooney! Yet, somehow, Kurt still manages to get out to the local skate park a few times a year.

So, say hello and welcome back to someone “from the neighborhood”!

Dramaturg’s Diary

By Jon Mills

The Things We Say and Do

One of the exciting aspects of bringing a play to life is right after it is cast, when the director and crew chiefs meet. At TWS this is known as the pre-production meeting. It is when all in attendance get to reconnect with old friends as well as begin to learn new names, faces and backgrounds. Typically, it is also when the director gives his or her thoughts about the play, the approach to be used during rehearsal, and starts to set overall

expectations for everyone to strive to attain. Finally, it is when the play is read aloud for the first time as a group, resulting in what will become a constant stream of questions and discussions in the quest to make the production real. This is where the dramaturg, which is what I am for this show, gets involved. Think of me as a live version of Google. If someone needs to know something about the production, it’s up to me to get them an answer.

At our pre-production meeting, a very simple question was asked: “Is there really a Man-in-the-Moon marigold?” I guess the flip side could be, “What effects do gamma rays have on it?” I don’t know about you, but science was never one of my best school subjects. So, I had to start digging, so to speak.

Yes, there really is a Man-in-the-Moon marigold, a tall African variety that bears an abundance of solid, round, carnation-like blooms composed of broad, crispy, ruffled, taffeta-like, pale moon-yellow petals with lighter highlights. Additionally, gamma rays are electromagnetic radiation of high energy that is produced by sub-atomic particle interaction. That may be more than you wanted to know! However, I am familiar with the principle that every effect has a cause and every cause has an effect.

Okay, off science and on to theater and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. Written by playwright and former science teacher, Paul Zindel, it premiered in 1964 at Houston’s Alley Theatre, and later won the 1971 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. In 1972, Paul Newman directed his wife, Joanne Woodward,



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in the screen adaptation for which she won the Best Actress award at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival.

In an introduction for a 1997 production of this play, Zindel talked about the direct cause-and-effect parallels between his characters and his upbringing by a single parent – his mother. In this lyrical drama reminiscent of Tennessee Williams' style, we are introduced to a dysfunctional family that tries to cope with its abysmal status in life through Beatrice Hunsdorfer, a single mother, and her daughters, Ruth and Tillie.

Shy Tillie is determined to win her school's science fair by experimenting with marigolds raised from radioactive seeds. She is, however, constantly thwarted by her self-centered and abusive mother, and by her extroverted and unstable sister. As

the play progresses, the themes of loneliness and shattered dreams become apparent. As our director, Kurt Naebig, noted: think of Tillie and Ruth as the marigolds, and Beatrice as the gamma ray, and then decide the effects they have on each other.

This is considered Mr. Zindel's best known play. He is said to be pleased that it continues to speak to audiences years after he wrote it. Today, the realistic portrayal of the struggles of young adults resonates with new audience members. Long time TWS patrons may remember two other Zindel pieces performed here: *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* (Forum, 1978) and *The Secret Affairs of Mildred Wild* (Mainstage, 1984). If you liked those, you should like our current offering. And remember, what you say and do will have an effect on others.

Production Credits

Director

Kurt Naebig

Technical Director

Thad Hallstein

Stage Manager

Karen Arnold

Assistant Stage Manager

Cathy Van Horne

Box Office Crew

Ed Barrow, Lori B. Proksa, Mary Ellen Schutt, Marilyn Wilson

Costume Designers

Linda Bremer, Debby Mills

Costume Crew

Stephanie Williams

Dramaturg

Jon Mills

Hospitality Chair

Arlene Page

Hospitality Crew

Linda Auer, Jan Benedict, Vicki Blair, Hedy Bosch, Carol Clarke, Philip Conway, Carol Denlinger, Marcia Fay, Janet Gassman, Bonnie Hilton, Karen Holbert, Karla Hudson, Natalie Jones, Jason and Stacy McCargo, Tara Kathleen Melkerson, Pat Rotz, Kevin Slattery, David Valenta, Susan Valenta

House Managers

David Bremer, Jack Calvert, Susan Cardamone, George Dempsey, Harry Hultgren, Bill Hurley, Donna Kanak, Kevin McGrath, Jon Mills, Denny Wise

Lighting Designer

Cal Turner

Lighting Chair

Jim Gary

Lighting Crew

Bonnie Hilton, Karin Kramer, Jim McBride, Mary Ellen Schutt

Makeup Designer

Mary Ellen Druyan

Makeup Chair

Courtney Cordova

Makeup Crew

Linda Auer, Eileen Crow

Production Coordinator

Ann Marie Hultgren

Program Production

Denise Marie D'Asto

Properties Designers

Mark Cunningham, Tim Feeney

Properties Crew

Patricia Huth, Mary Pavia

Publicity Chair

Rhonda Telfer

Sandwich Sunday

Crew

Jason McCargo, Stacy McCargo, Liz Steele

Set Construction

Chair

Jon Mills

Set Construction

Crew

Ed Barrow, Anne Cahill, George Dempsey, Bob Erck, Mike Huth, Jason McCargo, Fred Sauers, Rob Snyder, Peter Sonnenberg

Set Designer

Mike Huth

Set Dresser

Mary Pavia

Set Painting Chairs

Ann Marie Hultgren, Kathleen Kusper

Set Painting Crew

Peggy Carlson, Elyse Hultgren, Natalie Jones, Laura Leonardo Ownby, Rowan Leonardo Ownby, Rob Snyder, Amy Turner

Sound Designer

Ed Barrow

Sound Crew

John Brackett, Nell Fisher-Agnew, Fred Sauers, Rick Snyder