

**TAOS's Performs**  
*Anything Goes*  
by Karen Britton



During the first 2 weekends in May, *Theatre at Old South* (TAOS) will be performing the musical comedy *Anything Goes*, written by Vinton Freedley. The music is by American songwriter Cole Porter, whose witty and sophisticated lyrics in a variety of popular musicals – from “Kiss Me Kate” to “Can-Can” --symbolized his real zest for life. Familiar songs from *Anything Goes* include “I Get a Kick Out of You”, “It’s De-Lovely” and “Friendship”. Porter’s score has been called “one of the most glorious in the history of the American Musical Theatre” and many of the musical numbers are accentuated by tap-dancing.

“Anything Goes” was first envisioned by Vinton Freedley when he was hiding from creditors on a fishing boat in the Gulf of Panama. His original story was based around an ocean liner facing a possible shipwreck. However, after he returned to the U.S. (and began paying off his debts), the SS Morrow Castle sunk off the coast of New Jersey, and 125 passengers lost their lives.

Obviously, following such a public disaster, Freedley’s script had to be rewritten. The circumstances under which this second draft was written were somewhat desperate, primarily due to the tragic nature of the real-life shipwreck, and also because Freedley was confident that the first script would have reversed his dwindling finances. Eventually, he came up with a new story, which no longer revolved around a shipwreck but did retain many of the same characters.

After the final draft was completed, the show was named “Anything Goes” as a reference to the way in which this final script was put together. “Anything Goes” opened at the Alvin Theatre in New York City on November 21, 1934 and was transferred to the 44th Street Theatre in October, 1935. It ended up being the longest running musical of the 30’s, running for 420 performances, and was also revived at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre in 1987 with Patti LuPone playing the leading role. In addition, a screen version starring Ethel Merman and Bing Crosby was produced in 1936, and a revised book was written by Timothy Crouse and John Weideman.

“Anything Goes” is the always-pleasing tale of “boy meets girl” and the “complications” that occur as a result. This lively, romantic story takes place on a luxurious ocean liner heading for England. On board are Reno Sweeney, evangelist turned bar hostess, who has fallen for and followed Billy Crocker to persuade him that it is she he wants to marry, not Hope Harcourt. The first twist to this tale is that Hope herself wants to marry Sir Evelyn Oakleigh, not Billy Crocker. A second twist is that Billy has boarded the ship without a ticket and as a result has been forced to take on a variety of disguises. All this occurs on a ship where Reverend Dr. Moon, whom the FBI has named “Public Enemy 13”, is also on board; Moon aspires to be designated as “Public Enemy #1”. When the ocean liner reaches England, Hope is informed that she has become an heiress, so she drops Sir Evelyn Oakleigh and agrees to marry Billy. At the same time, Oakleigh discovers Reno Sweeney, and Reverend Moon discovers that he is no longer considered dangerous, and thus not even on the FBI list! Joining these main characters throughout their journey are Reno’s beautiful angels and a variety of passengers, gangsters and Chinese men and women. -- It is a fun-filled journey that you are sure to enjoy! †

**TAOS's production of *Anything Goes* premieres on Friday, May 5th at 8 p.m. with additional evening shows on May 6th, and May 11-13th. Sunday matinees are at 2:00 p.m. on May 7th & 14th.**

**Tickets are \$15.00. Please make reservations at the Narthex Desk or by calling the church at (617)536-1970.**

**Theater At Old South:  
*Does Anything Go?***



***A Reflection by Lael Murphy***

Serving as the ministerial liaison to the Religion & Arts and TAOS committees, I’m privileged to be a part of the discussions that lead to such a variety of artistic expression and experience here in our community. From the exhibits held in Gordon chapel throughout the year to workshops like Maddie Burke’s print-making class held last month, the artistic spirit is alive and well here at Old South.

Our two theatrical productions each year are an important part of this creative expression. These plays not only provide a way for us to offer acting and entertainment opportunities to members of our congregation, but they

also give us a chance to reach out to the larger Boston community. From attracting actors, directors, set designers and members of the general audience, each production opens our doors in a way that's different than any other outreach activity we have here. Between the two shows held each year TAOS brings in over five hundred men, women and children that may otherwise not be comfortable entering the doors of our church. From this vantage point you could say that the performances are a part of our ongoing "public relations" effort.

That's why we take so seriously the theatrical choices we make. The Committee discusses not only the script but also what kind of opportunities the show will provide to those in and outside of our church walls. From casting considerations to other community theater events going on nearby as well as production and set design possibilities, TAOS members discuss each play carefully, selecting one that will help to reflect our presence as a welcoming, vibrant Christian community.

This spring's offering of *Anything Goes* is a great example of such thorough consideration. Realizing this is a show that offers a wide casting call for people who like to sing and dance as well as to act, plus having a member of the committee already experienced in its direction and choreography, this play seemed to be the logical choice for our spring performance.

But then there was a cultural consideration that needed to be taken into account. "What about the racial stereotyping that is an integral part of the plot?" was the question in our minds. "Do we want to put on a play that portrays Asian characters in such a negative way?"

While this production was first introduced in the 1930's before this kind of awareness was prevalent, we had great concerns over present day interpretation. After much discussion and reflection, the Committee decided to go forward with the following assurances: 1) that the related scenes would be directed with sensitivity; and 2) that an all-church forum would be held so that the realities of racial stereotyping in this play and other media can be discussed in a timely and relevant manner.

So, does anything go at when it comes to TAOS productions? Absolutely not. When it comes to this latest show, we hope it will provide a time of entertainment and cultural reflection to all who attend. †

*Please check the May Calendar and Sunday Bulletins for the scheduling date and time of the "Does Anything Go?" Forum.*



## Trivia Spring 2000 by the Quizmeister

Last month, the *Quizmeister* posed the question:

***How many Old South Churches can be found in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?***

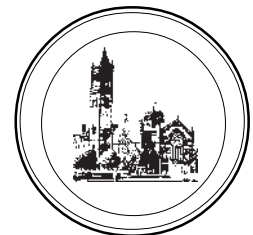
Much to his disappointment, the Quizmeister received no responses. Perhaps he needs to be offering "life lines" *a la* Regis Philbin. However, in the spirit of Christian charity, your QM will do better than a game show gimmick; he'll provide the answer . . . **Three.**

There is our own *Old South Church* (a/k/a the Third Church of Christ in Boston), South Weymouth's *Old South Union Congregational Church*, and the *Old South First Presbyterian Church* in Newburyport. All three congregations pre-date 1800, which means each has truly earned the "Old" in its name. And it is with great pride that the Quizmeister reports that Old South is the *oldest* of the Old Souths.

But that's all in the past. Now, on to the future: our next question.

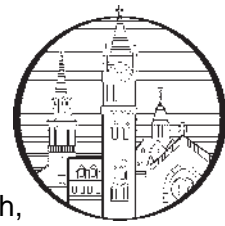
***When the organ was installed in the 1980s, something(s) in the sanctuary had to be taken out for the duration of the project. Back in went the object(s) in question--backwards! What was it?***

Name the mystery item(s) in question and you'll be the proud winner of the World Famous *Old South Plate*, a collector's item Boston, South Weymouth, even in Newburyport. As usual, contestants may submit answers to the front desk in the church narthex or to the *Quizmeister* via e-mail at

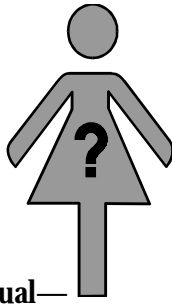


<ssilver@law.harvard.edu>.

## ***The Night Before Council: a Moderator's View***



### **Creed**



All things being equal—  
she thrusts out her arms to either side  
like scales in the balance—  
I prefer a good equinox  
to a common solstice any day.

I like teetering on the edge—  
she wavers on an invisible tightrope—  
knowing I'm about to abseil  
into the abyss of winter  
or scramble  
to the summit of summer.

It's that moment—  
of anticipation and uncertainty,  
of hope and fear—  
that's better than the  
full-blown, in-your-face-ness  
of so much light or dark.

Give me change,  
not certitude.  
Give me a faith based on doubt,  
not assurances.

Tell me—  
she returns thin arms with  
slack skin to her lap—  
Should I send out blossoms and  
rise my sap,  
or gather my fruits and  
shed these used-up leaves?

I twist the cross  
around my neck.  
How can I answer,  
too much in my summer to know?

-- Janet B Eldred © 1998

'Twas the night before Council,  
and all through Old South,  
Not a creature was sleeping, not even a little church mouse.

The Trustees were wrestling with numbers black, not red,  
While visions of long-term financial stability danced in their heads.

The Deacons were planning a way to embrace  
All folks who enter, be they old or new face.

And Jim with Revelations, and Lael with *The Red Tent*,  
Had just settled down for some inspirations on Lent.

When out from the Moderator there arose such a chatter  
All sprang from their stations to see what was the matter!

Yours truly was pacing a circle in the floor,  
While worrying about our meeting: just what was in store?

"There's too much to do!" I cried out in woe,  
"Our committees are stressed from their heads to their toes!"

How can I ask them to give up a night,  
To come and discuss issues with no end in sight?

These people have lives! They have homes to be tended!  
They'll never agree to an evening distended!"

But what to my wondering eyes should appear  
But over 20 Council members — every one in good cheer!

They all sat down with me, read minutes from our clerk,  
Then proceeded to report and discuss and to "perk"!

More rapid than eagles their comments they came,  
After we'd bowed our heads, then I called each by name:

"On Music! On Heritage! On Finance and Arts!  
On Leadership & Operations and Outreach with Housing—both parts!

On Christian Ed and Communications and LRPC!  
On Young Adults and Women's Guild and the By-law Review team!

Though the hour is late and you've jumped through every hoop,  
I just want to tell you that you're an amazing group!

You battle, then agree, then vote with your hearts,  
And make sure that all are heard fairly, all parts!

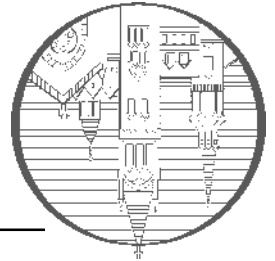
So thank you for coming and listening and seeing,  
Now, go home and ruminate, then get a good night's zzzzzing!"

Then 'ere I heard as they left for the night,  
"See you next month, Pam — and put out the lights!"

-- Pam Roberts, Feb. 2000 (with apologies to Clement Moore)

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**“What are you doing?”  
To which the farmer replied,  
“I look at the Good God  
...and the Good God looks at me.”**

### Old South Online Forum

Keep in touch with OSC this summer by subscribing to our online e-mail forum. (Many services offer local phone access numbers from anywhere in the country -- or the world!) If you have an e-mail address, send a message to **majordomo@world.std.com** and in the BODY of message, write **subscribe oldsouth**

### **Old South Reporter**

*OSC Reporter*, a voice for the extended community of the Old South Church, explores the mission of the church and aspects of the Christian life through news, stories, poetry, essays, and commentaries

#### **Publications Committee:**

*Evan H. Shu, chair; Steve Silver, Linda Jenkins, Henry Crawford, Lois Corman, Eleanor Jensen, Amanda Nourse, Suzanne Woolston, Elisa Blanchard & Helen McCrady.*

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