



# THE PLAYER

VOLUME XCVII, NUMBER 5

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

FEBRUARY 2008

## **AMAZING GRACE**

By Player Allan G. Dick

The February (569th) Players Frolic was curiously sandwiched between Punxsutawney Phil seeing his shadow that morning (signaling six more weeks of winter – thank you very much) and the anticipation of Super Bowl Sunday (a far more exciting game than most anyone expected). Yes, it was the dead of winter. But the activities and events of this Frolic would warm the winteriest of nights.

It was a Frolic of distinctive ethnicity, beginning and ending with a decided Scottish flair, surrounding two Russian-themed plays. And then, there was the evening's other show from the kingdom of **Players Habel & Daly**. And with all that, **Player Glenn Scoles**, who doubled as producer and stage manager for the evening, orchestrated an evening of frivolity. Such is Players' wont. Well, Glenn and his crew of off-stage yeomen delivered, with a little help from some on-stage stalwarts and a dynamite afterglow.

The evening commenced for many at the downtown location of Tom's Oyster Bar, proprietor **Player Tom Brandel** having just been honored for his Rochester location making the Detroit Free Press top ten restaurant list for 2007. It always seems to be a struggle to get away from Tom's hospitality, even when warm glow of the Playhouse is beckoning. This was no exception; but not to worry – the show would not start without the late-arriving crowd – because El Presidenté, **Player James Turnbull** was amongst them.

And when our indefatigable potentate stepped from behind the act curtain, he greeted us with his typically subdued Scottish wit and quickly gave way to the singing of the Players Song, nobly rendered by **Player Henry Nelson**, accompanied by last minute replacement pianist, **Player Greg Thom**. Good job, guys.

Off to the kingdom of Habel & Daly. You may recall that this very dynamic duo has been responsible for a number of memorable productions, ranging from *The Three Stooges* to Afterglows featuring

Achmed and Faisal to the early installments of their *Frontier Accountant* Trilogy. This evening's offering was the finale in that Trilogy, *Wasting Away*, written principally (in this case) by **Player John Daly**, while **Player Mark Habel** was arranging for our new travelers, through a generous donation from Mark's mother. Thank you, Mrs. Habel. They look great! John and Mark did share the directorial duties.

The show opened with a unique bit of staging (Scene 0) down front in the auditorium flashing back to a group of friends gathered just before finals around a table at Casa Dominick's, an Ann Arbor landmark. **Player Brian Bawol**, as CPA-to-be" Christopher Smith, the principal character in *Frontier Accountant*; ad-man Aaron Jones, the central figure in *Thunderbird*, played by **Player Andrew Turnbull**; and environmental activist and engineer, Deborah Kelly in the person of **Player Ed Priebe**, the subject of this evening's final installment, commiserate on their final round of finals and their pending careers, leading to Deborah's story.

But first, there is a fourth party at this table with his back to the audience, silent through this opening scene, until the others leave. At this point, new **Player Darren Brim**, in his first Players performance, who portrays the author, provides us with a brief history spanning the years from this cocktail gathering to the present day, setting the stage for the finale of the trilogy. Nice touch and welcome Darren.

When the curtain rises, the aforementioned Ms. Kelly is visiting the office of Bob Burns, President of B & C Manufacturing, brought to life by none other than **Player Geno Pirrami**. Ms. Kelly is trying to sell Mr. Burns on a costly environmental clean up plan; but Burns claims to be lacking the money to do so, having been swindled by his former partner Chas Chambers. Needless to say, Burns is bitter.

Next, we find Burns at home being attended to by his housekeeper Edith Johnson, the ebullient

**Player Mark Habel.** Burns' health is apparently failing, and he is visited by his nemesis and former partner, Chas Chambers, played by **Player Greg Thom.** Chambers has become a very successful manufacturer, but has learned of Burns' poor health and is perhaps feeling a bit guilty as he sees his old partner faltering.

The last scene finds Chas now behind the desk at B & C Manufacturing, having purchased the company from Burns. Enter Deborah Kelly, who apprises him of the need for the environmental deficiencies, after he has paid top dollar for the company. Of course, Burns (miraculously cured) has flown the coop to enjoy a tropical retirement. But, Chas takes it all in stride, figuring he had it coming.

The show flowed well, except, perhaps, for the beginning of that last scene, which seemed odd. But, we later learned the explanation for that minor flaw. Apparently, Andrew Turnbull was to double as the female assistant to Chas in the final scene, but got so absorbed with the costume and make up change, he missed his cue to go on. Greg Thom and Ed Priebe covered that reasonably well, and Andrew did manage to take a curtain call in drag – somehow fitting for Habel & Daly production. That flaw did not distract from an otherwise entertaining show – very enjoyable. And now we know the rest of the story.

The evening's second show was *The Major and the Slipper*, adapted by **Player Joseph Ajlouny** from a collection of stories about Josef Stalin by Yuri Krutkov. Joseph, who also directed the show, was ill and thus absent this evening. Too bad – the show was tight and tasty. The setting was Josef Stalin's dacha (villa) in 1949. Stalin was played by, who else, **Player Michael Mongan**, who seems to be making a career of playing political heavies of the past – Saddam Hussein, Herman Goehring and now Josef Stalin. Oddly, they all seem to sound a bit alike ... not that it's a bad thing.

Stalin had a well-established reputation of paranoia regarding his own security, as well as being ever vigilant as guardian of the revolution. This paranoia led to the persecution or execution of many loyal to the revolution and Stalin himself. This is one such story. Military and pugilistic hero, Major Petor Shoposhnokov, has been rewarded for his accomplishments and assigned to be Stalin's personal bodyguard. Poor Major Shoposhnokov. He has no idea what he has gotten himself into. And, as dedicated as he is to his job and to Stalin, Shoposhnokov is just as devoted to his wife and family.

So, the Major proudly wears a pair of new slippers sent to him by his wife. But, Stalin convinces himself that the silent footsteps the Major could make in those slippers make him a potential assassin. So, Stalin persecutes Shoposhnokov, demanding that he confess to his intentions of plotting against Stalin and the revolution. The loyal Major is bewildered, left to submit his signed confession to NKVD security chief (the forerunner to the KGB), Laverenti Beria. Beria, Stalin's closest confidant, understands. He has seen this scene played out repeatedly. One suspects that Beria will see to it that the Major will be shipped to a somewhat favorable destination, notwithstanding Stalin's condemnation.

The role of Shoposhnokov was played naively and enthusiastically by **Player Stuart Johnson** in only his second Player performance. I suspect that he developed his Russian dialect by studying Saturday Night Live episodes with Steve Martin and Dan Akroyd as "two wild and crazy guys." It was very entertaining. Switching to a male role after the first show of the evening, **Player Ed Priebe** played Security Chief Beria with aplomb. This was another fine effort!

The final show of the Frolic focused on another Russian political icon in *Variations on the Death of Trotsky* by David Ives. It is set in Coyoacan, Mexico on August 21, 1940, the day that Leon Trotsky died as a result of an assassination by a Mexican gardener and political miscreant named Ramon Mercader. Directed by **Player Eric Christian**, this show consisted of eight humorous retakes of a basic scene where Trotsky is seated at a desk, seemingly impervious to the fact that a mountain climbers' ax is imbedded ("smashed") in his skull. His wife enters the room and engages him in conversation about the events, which have left him in this predicament. Her source of information – the encyclopedia. "It says here that you die on August 21, 1949." "What time?" "It doesn't say." Bizarre? Absolutely. Funny? You bet.

And much of that humor is attributed to the delightful performances by **Player Fuzz Corey** as Trotsky, **Player Bob O'Leary** as Mrs. Trotsky, and **Player Chris Nesi** (a last-week replacement) as Ramon Mercader. I was trying to recall how many times I had seen Fuzz die on stage – intentionally or otherwise. This certainly had to be a record, even for him. Clearly, he and Bob-O were enjoying themselves. And we enjoyed it with them. A short snappy play, it was an excellent closer – Bravo. But wait, there was yet more to come. [Continued on page 4 ...]

## Frolic 570

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2008

CURTAIN AT 8:30 PM

PRODUCERS ALLAN DICK AND WILLIAM L. ROBINSON, JR...



### The Addams Family Meet a Beatnik

Original teleplay by Henry Sharp & Sloan Nibley

Story by Jack Raymond

Based on Characters Created by Charles Addams

Directed by Player Larry Smith

Gomez..... Player Tim Cordes  
 Morticia..... Player Eric Christian  
 Uncle Fester..... Player William Robinson  
 Lurch ..... Player Leon Hart  
 Wednesday..... Player Christopher Nesi  
 Pugsley..... Player Steven Flum  
 The Thing..... Player Michael Sherwood  
 Rocky..... Player Patrick Coon  
 Cartwright..... Player Allan Dick  
 Detective..... Player Michael Sherwood



### THE THIRST

By Flann O'Brien

Directed by Players Thomas Conley & William Volz

Setting: An after-hours pub in the 1940's

Mr. Coulihan..... Player Leon Hart  
 Jem..... Player Roy Jendrzewski  
 Peter..... Player Chuck Steltenkamp  
 Sergeant..... Player Henry Nelson  
 Pub Patrons..... Players Thomas Conley & James Foran



### MUTE IT

By Eric Coble

Direct by Player J. Robert O'Leary, III

Setting: A Hotel Room in Downtown Detroit – Present Day

Charlie..... Player Tom Starynychak  
 Emmet..... Player John Yavruian



Afterglow: "The Way It Is" by Kim Carney

Performed by Player Darren Brim



He went, like one that hath been stunn'd and is of sense forlorn: a sadder and a wiser man he rose the 'morrow morn.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, 1798*

### AMAZING GRACE [... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3]

After bowls of spicy, vegetarian chili and/or the carnivore's counterpart ("skidmark chili"), prepared by **Players Henry Nelson** and **Greg Thom**, respectively, we sat back and enjoyed almost an hour of the pipes and drums and Scottish dancing, courtesy of the award winning St. Andrews Society Pipe Band, led by legendary Pipe Major David Martin, who regaled us with a variety of stories between songs. The tartan-clad musicians were joined by Tim Monzo, a fine young Scottish dancer, who dazzled us with the famous sword dance, among others. The St. Andrews Society of Detroit, we learned, is the oldest benevolent society in America. But listening to their fine pipe band never grows old! What a treat, and a glorious way to end this wonderful evening with the haunting strains of *Amazing Grace*. *Amazing Grace* indeed! What a way to spend a winter evening. Who cares about the damned groundhog anyway? ☺

### HERE'S YOUR CUE

*"When my cue comes, call me and I will answer."*

### NOTES FROM THE OFFICE:

#### Lab Coats

The mystery of the missing lab coats remains unresolved. Can you help?

#### March Family Invitational

Tickets are going fast! Give me a call to make your reservation.

#### Leaving the Playhouse

Recently, more than once, lights have been left on at the Playhouse. When you are the last to leave, please make sure to turn off lights.

#### Office Remodel

I am still looking for a few items: a small round gathering table & chairs and hanging light fixtures. Let me know if there is something you'd like to donate. Cash is always good, too!

Remember, Players is a 501(C)(3) organization and your donations are tax deductible.

Ph: 313-259-3385 ~ Fax: 313-259-0932

Email: [players-office@sbcglobal.net](mailto:players-office@sbcglobal.net)



### THE PLAYERS' PLAYHOUSE WISH LIST

We continue with the "Players' Playhouse Wish List." Started by Past President Player Chris Monley, we hope it will generate needed funds and/or items to benefit our "Beautiful Lady." Please peruse the list and see how you may fulfill the wishes of your club! To whom it matters, please be reminded that all donations, cash or useful items are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.

Wish	Est. Cost	Donations to Date
New loading dock doors	\$5,000	Challenge Grant! \$2,500
Smoke door cupola- flashing	\$5,000	
Business office remodeling	\$10,000	
Oriental Rug, 10'4" x 11'10"		
Auditorium Step Lights	\$3,800	\$500.00

If any Player has a suggestion for inclusion to the Wish List, please contact any Board member. ☺

### WHERE'S THE CALENDAR?

It's on line! On the new Players' web site! Go to [www.playersdetroit.org](http://www.playersdetroit.org). Still a work in progress, but reviews have been positive! Look elsewhere for the "411."

### MARCH PRE FROLIC DINNER

The location of the Pre-Frolic Dinner for February is Opus One ([www.opus-one.com](http://www.opus-one.com)) 565 E Larned Street, Detroit, MI 48226. For \$30.00 (all in) you'll get a splendid meal at one of Detroit's finest establishments. Cocktails (Cash Bar) @ 6'ish, dinner following no later than 7:00 PM. Please call the office to let us know you'll attend, s'il vous plait. ☺

### [HTTP://PLAYERSDETROIT.ORG](http://PLAYERSDETROIT.ORG)

Don't forget about the new web site! Access/update your profile; read about the latest news and events; download the latest "The Player" online; see schedules for plays and dress rehearsals; check out and upload pictures from various functions; see where pre-frolic dinners will be and get directions; download events to your outlook calendar!

As a member of The Players, you have the ability to stay in touch with the latest news and updates going on within our organization. You can see this information online, real-time, with the click of a few buttons. As a member, you can access your profile and get the latest updates right from your computer. Once you are a registered web site user, your permissions will be approved by a site administrator and these permissions will give you access and functionality to various pages within the site. Go to <http://playersdetroit.org> and see it today! ☺

### THE PLAYER, VOLUME XCVII, NUMBER 5, FEBRUARY 2007

THE PLAYER ... is published monthly from September to April, with *sometimes* a combined December/January issue and *sometimes* a summer issue. The views expressed herein are those of the respective authors and editor [currently, Player Peter W. Dawson] and not necessarily those of the Players. Comments may be made to and back issues may be available from the office, (313) 259-3385 or send an inquiry to [ThePlayer@theplayers.info](mailto:ThePlayer@theplayers.info). The Player is available on the web at [www.playersdetroit.org](http://www.playersdetroit.org). We welcome your contributions and comments. We do, we really do!

**HERE'S YOUR CUE (CONTINUED)****Player's Installs a New Alarm and Access System**

The Board of Governors is pleased to announce the completion of the installation of our new alarm and access system. The new alarm monitors unauthorized entry as before but has the added benefit of fire and smoke detection. The access portion of the system allows entry to the building through the front or rear doors via a card reader instead of a key.

The access portion of the system will make it much easier to gain access to the building for rehearsals and other events as well as the ability to disable "lost" cards without the expense of changing the locks.

To date, the new pass cards have been granted to current key holders such as committee chairs, monthly directors, etc. This is because during the initial prove out of the system we have kept the gate locked at night in case of a system malfunction and entry required both a key and a pass card, however we will soon dispense with the gate and keys will no longer be necessary. We welcome anyone who desires a passkey to purchase one for a nominal fee of \$25. Please contact Claudine at the Player's office.

There will be two levels of entry access granted: Unlimited, for those who require it by virtue of office, committee, or need, and standard for those that require it for basic Player activities such as practice, or visiting the office. The main difference between the two levels is that the standard level of access will not allow entry when the alarm is active or set.

The new alarm system has the same pass code as the old one. Instructions on how to enable and disable the alarm are posted on the wall next to the keypad. Anyone who desires additional information or instruction on the system may contact the Player's office.

We would like to thank everyone for their patience during installation and prove out of the new system. In addition, we are especially thankful for a very generous donation, from a fellow Player who wishes to remain anonymous, which made the purchase of this system possible.

**Water, Water Everywhere, But Nary a Drop to Drink?**

Contrary to rumors, the drinking water in the large jug on our water "cooler" (which actually doesn't cool the water at all) is not:

- a) water that has leaked from the roof
- b) water taken directly from the Detroit River
- c) assembled beads of perspiration from the Stage Crew

The water in the jug really is safe to drink. But it isn't very appetizing. It is tepid at best and the taste leaves a lot to be desired.

Therefore, your Board of Governors has investigated the possibility of installing a purified water system along the east wall of the lobby. This system would offer both cold and hot filtered water.

The problem with doing this is two-fold:

- 1) The unit itself is rather ugly, so we would want build some sort of decorative cabinet around it so it would be esthetically pleasing to the eye.
- 2) These things cost money! The good news is that this project is not an expensive one – only about \$300. But as you may have noticed, your Board has done a lot of work on the Playhouse over the last year or so, and the checkbook balance is being stretched rather thin. A \$300 expenditure for a filtered water system isn't in the budget.

Therefore, if you think having filtered hot and cold water available at the Playhouse on a regular basis is something you would enjoy, consider making a donation to the cause. We'll take any amount -- \$25, \$50, \$100, or even the entire \$300. Just think: You could have the Players' Memorial Drinking Water System" named after you.

Well, maybe not, but you would know that you've done your part to keep your urologist happy. Drop off or send in your check with a notation that the money is to be used for the drinking water system. As always, thanks for your help!

**HERE'S YOUR CUE (CONTINUED)****The Players Presents...****The 2008 Family Invitational**

Saturday, March 1st is your children, grandchildren, wives, Playhouse for a special Family morning of the March Frolic, special preview of that special invitational will include with Henry Nelson and Friends *meets a Beatnik*, a stage television program. Coffee, served.



opportunity to bring your relatives and friends to the Invitational. At **10 AM** on the your guests will be treated to a evening's entertainment. This two presentations; Silly Songs and *The Addams Family* version of the popular juice and pastries will be

**This event only comes around every few years;  
your family won't want to miss it!**

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for age 18 and under.

Please call or e-mail Claudine at the Playhouse to reserve seats.

Attire is "Saturday Morning" casual.

Phone: (313) 259-3385 or E-mail [players-office@sbcglobal.com](mailto:players-office@sbcglobal.com).

Volunteers are welcome (to serve food, watch the door and clean up). If you can help, please call or e-mail John Daly: (734) 475-6660 or [JohnLDaly@comcast.net](mailto:JohnLDaly@comcast.net)

**A Challenge Grant!**

Gentlemen, the improvements around here just keep coming! An anonymous member has "challenged" us. Our doors behind the stage (the Loading Dock Doors) have been in need of replacement for some time. This member has put up \$2,500.00 in a matching fund challenge. We have until the end of the year to collect an equal amount so we can get them replaced (estimated cost of \$5000). Please look at this as a great way to direct your funds to be tax exempt with the added benefit of having them double immediately! Checks should have the memo line read: Loading Dock Challenge. Please think of "Chicago" voting in donating this election year: early and often!

**LAB COATS MISSING!!!!!!**

Remember last Season's CoatGate? Well, it seems we have another one! A significant number of lab coats, many bearing The Players logo (some hand-stitched), are missing from the Playhouse. Most of these coats are the personal property of Gourmet? Group members. The coats were last seen two months ago hanging on hooks in the stairwell just outside the kitchen. If you took them home to wash them ... THANKS! Now, however, is the time to return them. Since this message did not result in a resolution to the mystery, a small reward for their return is now being offered ... no questions asked. If you have them, return them and wish to receive the reward, respond in confidence to [USTRESAGT@aol.com](mailto:USTRESAGT@aol.com) for your secret identity number. Please, for the "love of Mike," help us out if you know where they might be.

**WHAT'S THAT? SAY WHAT? OR AS HEARD AT THE LAST FROLIC: "LOUDER!?!"**

Well, I continue to think we could put the cries of "LOUDER!" to bed because the long awaited Sound and Hearing Enhancement System ["SHES"] had arrived. Only thing is that no one has asked for it yet, but people keep yelling LOUDER! "How rude is that?" asks Mrs. Doctor Fashion, a veteran thespian in her own right. So please, if you are hearing or otherwise impaired, just ask whomever is doing sound for the Frolic and get a receiver. All we ask is that fill out a card before hand (so we can track the receiver down if you forget to return it) and return the receiver at the end of the night. And be forewarned, the system works great; you'll be able to hear Player Holden Book as never before! Is that "be careful what you ask for, you just might get it?" I hear being muttered? 🗨️

**HE'S BACK! JUST LIKE THAT BAD HABIT!**

Yes that's right, my dear fashion challenged minions, because there is extra space this month, I'm back, like the old habit you never got rid of. Why am I back? Why, to save you from your fashion faux pas, to save you from yourselves my little lambs. Enough banter, here we go to the mailbag for a couple of classics:

Dear Dr. Fashion:

Was ist Tech Nacht? I've heard that it is supposed to be Montag, but don't see anything technical going on that night. Do I need my lab coat?

Signed, Albert Einstein

Dear Alberto Tomba La Bomba:

Tech Night used to be the Monday night before the Frolic, but lately it has fallen into disuse. It is supposed to be when & where the directors go through their scripts with the techies (not *treckies*) to get those special effects and cues down, that special magic that will propel their show into the May Invitational. Yet, it seems, that this is soon to be a forgotten custom, since the stage never seems to be ready on Mondays and the Power Committees in Players (Lighting and Sound) are grumbling and saying they aren't going to show up anymore if the directors and stage isn't ready by Monday of "Dress Week." Now, lately, the stage crew has been more on top of things and the Power committees have been lacking, but that comes after years of abuse by the hands of the others. But what to wear? Nada.

Nunquam Renig, Dr. Fashion.

Dear Dr. Fashion,

The May Invitational is coming up in a couple of months. What would a fashionable young Player wear? What would I tell to my guests to wear? My significant other? How do I get tickets?

Signed, Ralph Lauren

Dear Ralph Malph:

Dr. Fashion has already epistitized the rule, it is that "Black Tie" is "De rigueur." De rigueur? It is a French term, one of the few that is not a synonym for surrender, it means "Black Tie" is the proper dress as prescribed or required by etiquette and custom at Players. For Players, all Players, every time. What does "Black Tie" mean? It usually means a Tuxedo with a black tie and black cummerbund. Generally, you'll see a lot more color in the ties and accoutrements, so it is obvious the rule is treated cavalierly at times, but a tuxedo is a must for members.

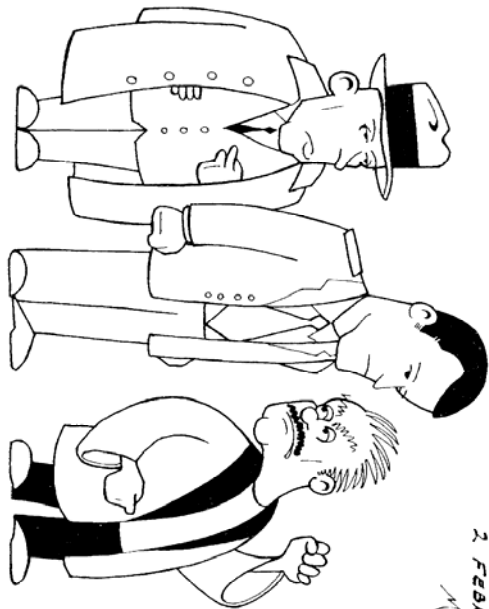
Occasionally, the board will relax the "Black Tie Only" rule and this May will be one of those times. What does this mean? For the ladies, of course, the gentler sex that has a fashion sense that surpasses yours, it means that they will know what to do. For our male guests, it means that they need to make an honest effort. What you talkin' about Willis? I'm talking that there is no real substitute for a tuxedo, but if one has to, one may substitute formal business attire. What is important is to tell your guests what the dress code is and to remember that the final, closing night is traditionally Black Tie "only." That night especially, if someone comes dressed inappropriately, they may be asked to sit in the balcony or leave, not by me, but someone might.

To get tickets? Easy, call the office and make a reservation with Claudine. Remember to arrange payment at the time of the reservation, or it may not be held for you.

Nunquam Renig, Dr. Fashion.

*The Major and the Slipper*

*FRANCIS 569  
2 FEBRUARY 2008  
Nonchalant*



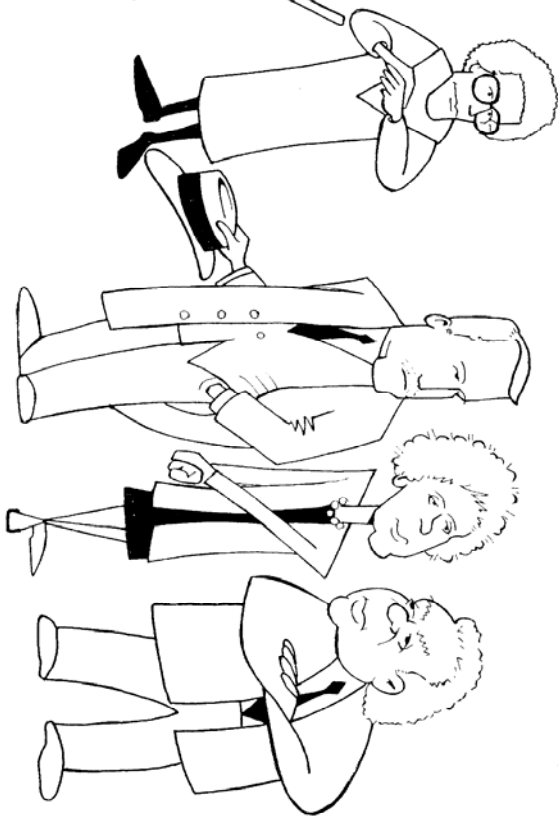
*Variations on the  
Death of Trotsky*



ED PRIEBE    STUART JOHNSON    MIKE MORGAN    GLENN COREY    BOB O'LEARY    CHRIS NESI  
ANDREW TURNBULL · DARREN BRIM · BRIAN BAWOL · MARK LABEL    GREG THOM    Ed PRIEBE    GENO PIRRAMI



*Wasting Away*



Save the Date!  
Saturday June, 28 2008  
**Detroit Dragon Boat Festival**  
Belle Isle Park  
Fun for the family  
Contact Player Denne Osgood to sign up for the Players Crew.