

## ASC Centennial

**Name: John and Barbara Larsen**

**Department: Theater and Student Activities**

**Dates Employed: John-1960 retired 1991--Barbara -1964 retired 1993**

The Larsen Theater Era began shortly after Mort Clark left the position. John n was hired by ShirleyWurz ,Dean of Women to work primarily with the Phys Ed area and the girl's teams and cheerleaders. Soon after that he was asked to direct a few plays. Doing this he had the opportunity of working with Doc Scofield, who was a master of making props out of trash or nothing. All of the theater happened in the old gym at the top of that long long hill,. That gym was brought to the campus board by board from the old Sampson Base. It was a fun area to work in because we could stage plays and musicals any way we wanted to,  $\frac{3}{4}$  or in the round proscenium , or in the new method which John developed, called stadium staging. This was written up in the National Playbill magazine of the Theater Fraternity. We also worked with Bill Havens and Vince Trotta, and Joe Canale I remember one time during a performance of Oklahoma, one of the characters shoots off a shotgun. Apparently Doc misjudged the amount of powder or wadding he should put in the shotgun, and we managed to blast one more hole in that leaky roof. In some performances, the audiences were surrounded by buckets used to catch all of the rain water. This also added greatly to the musical content of the shows.

In the 70's we began the first dinner theater in the area, using students and faculty in the productions. Pete MacDonald was one of our key performers. We all got old and grey doing performances of The Fantasticks. The Student Theater Productions won many awards for their work at the State Theater Festivals held in Corning. We were , during that time period , the only winning 2 year school in the state .

We had theater on the Wellsville campus also for 3 or 4 years. Summer Theater, using students and also New York City professionals. With both of us operating theater upstairs in the new activities center and also in the small black box theater downstairs, where the fitness center is now, we managed to produce 7 or 8 shows a years. Too numerous to list

Well Mary, I'm not entirely pleased with what I've written. There is just too much to try to remember from that period. I know I've missed a lot of worthwhile memories. Most of us are gone, who were familiar with it.