

Phyrst Phamily first stop on Saturday night

By DIANNE GARYANTES
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

For the last 12 years, a Saturday night tradition has been growing in State College, though many people may still be unaware of it.

No, it is not Rocky Horror — that is too new.

No, it is not the weekend's drunken bedlam — that is too unreliable.

What has become a Saturday night tradition is Ernie Oelbermann and his band, stepping up on stage, tuning up their guitars and banjos, fixing up the sound and proceeding to turn the Phyrst into a foot-stompin', hand-clappin', good ol' time sing-a-long.

"When Franco came in, they started singing the Steelers' Fight Song," Prokay said. "And Matt and Eric will sing together."

"Their favorite is 'Hello Dolly,'" he said.

The Phyrst is usually filled to capacity every Saturday night, Prokay said.

"The more beer you drink, the better they get," Matt Lettinger (12-recreation and parks) said. "But they're good anyway. There's nowhere like it."

Leta Miller is a Penn State alumnae who was back for the weekend and came to the Phyrst for another Saturday night.

"It is absolutely the greatest bar in the world," she said. "I only come on Saturday nights because of the Phyrst Phamily."

Alumni like Miller come back to the Phyrst all the time. Wayne Prokay, the Phyrst co-manager, said that the more renowned alumni, such as Franco Harris, Matt Bahr and Eric Cunningham, come back fairly often.

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"You don't know anyone and once the Phyrst Phamily starts playing you know everyone."

—Dave Wirth (9th-chemical engineering)

"It seems that anyone who comes once will come again," he said. "I just think that everyone has such a damn good time."

"The Phyrst is the most people-oriented bar in town and the Phyrst Phamily is probably the reason why," said Prokay.

The Phyrst Phamily is not really a family, as many people believe, although you could say there is one in the making. Two of the band members, Bob and Vicky Becker, are expecting a child. Vicky is still strutting away with the band, despite being six months pregnant.

The Phyrst Phamily's sing-a-long style was first formed back in the summer of '67 by Terry Counterme, who wrote the Phamily's theme song "Saturday Night."

"I went down there every Saturday night to watch Terry," Oelbermann said. "It was my favorite night there."

Oelbermann is the only original member of the band left since the actual Phamily was formed in 1968. Since then, the band has been through more than 25 regular members.

"We do have standard songs," Oelbermann said. "But we could go all the night with the songs we know."

The band has played at various places and events, including the Arts Festival, the Ethnic Festival, the Centre Hills Country Club, Totrees, fraternities and even the Sons of Italy Mercy Hospital.

"We played for nuns (at the hospital) and had them doing the hokey-pokey," Oelbermann laughed.

The Phamily plays every St. Patrick's Day, New Year's Eve and, of course, every Saturday night at the Phyrst.

"There are traditions you don't ignore," Bob Becker said.

Vicky agreed and said that if the group was not there on a Saturday night, something terrible would happen.

"There'd be a revolution," Oelbermann said.

"Everyone would be bitterly disappointed because people get into it," he said.

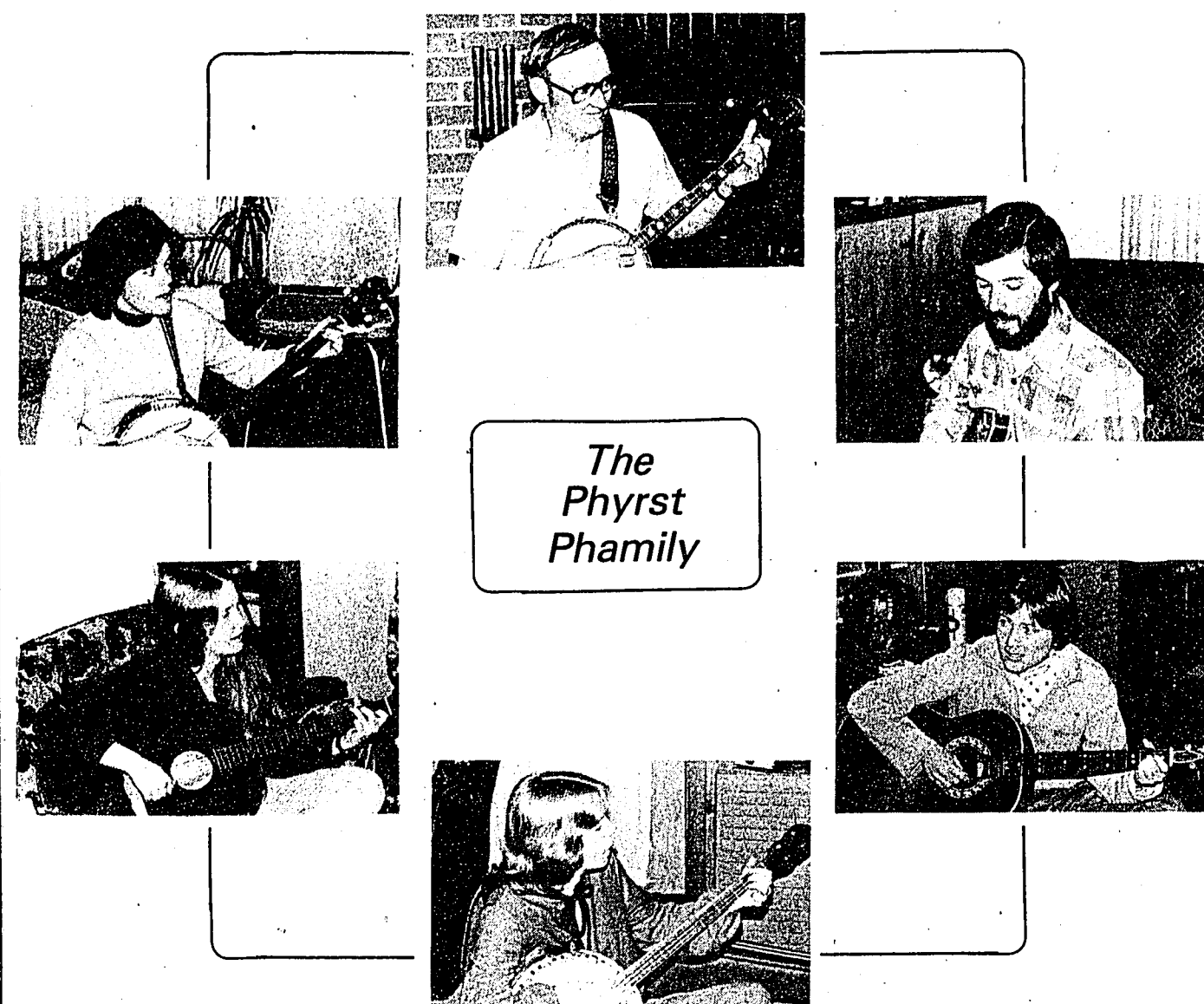
Miller, a "Phamily fan," is proof.

"I came here on New Year's Eve and it was closed," she said. "Depression — total depression."

There is one "Phamily fan" who has been coming to the Phyrst every St. Patrick's Day for 8 years. He has traveled back to State College from places as far away as Baton Rouge, La., to Saudi Arabia.

"I went up to him and said, 'Bob, what can I do for you?'" Oelbermann said. "And he said, 'Just let me do it again next year.'"

We at Penn State are lucky — we can do it again every Saturday night.



The Phyrst Phamily

The Phyrst Phamily in rehearsal (clockwise from top): Ernie Oelbermann, Bob Becker, Gina Bolan, Vicky Becker, Judy Naginey and Bobbie Sherman.



Judy Naginey, Vicky Becker and Ernie Oelbermann performing at the Phyrst.

"The Phyrst is the most people-oriented bar in town and the Phyrst Phamily is probably the reason why."

—Wayne Prokay, co-manager of the Phyrst

Aqua-ballet in works tonight

By CHRIS KILEY
For The Daily Collegian

Take a little dance, some swimming and gymnastics and what do you have — synchronized swimming. And there will be a lot of it going on in McCoy Natatorium beginning tonight at 8 p.m. with a special student preview of the Penn State Naiads' "Water Works." Regular performances begin tomorrow and will continue through Sunday.

The Naiads will present their annual show performing twelve student choreographed routines using a variety of music and themes. Each routine ranges from approximately three to four and a half minutes. The number of swimmers in each composition varies from duets to trios to large groups of twelve and fourteen.

"Synchronized swimming is a blend of gymnastics, dance and swimming," said Anne Bellair, one of the student choreographer-swimmers who has been with the Naiads for three years. Bellair has choreographed three of the twelve routines to be performed.

"Everything is choreographed to beats of music; it flows from beginning to end," she explained.

And flow it does. As the name implies, synchronized swimming incorporates movements in sync with music and changing pattern formations. Success in this activity requires — among other things — counting beats to music (even under water), an awareness of the position of body extremities (often difficult when one is turned upside-down under water), and a considerable amount of flexibility," Bellair said.

"Water Works" will display individual abilities of strength and endurance as well as flexibility — all blended creatively by the choreographers and swimmers to achieve a demonstration of synchronized swimming complete with costumes and lights.

The Naiads present a show both entertaining and innovative. Their movements seem to be executed effortlessly, but that is indicative of the time and energy already invested in making the show a success.

During auditions, the Naiad group searches for basic dexterity in the water. Usually, if a person is water-oriented and can use their muscles well in the water, she will fare well in the audition, said Bellair.

"If you've had dance in the past, it will show up in the water," said Bellair. Though there are no men on the team, the Naiads welcome any interested.

The Naiads offer an entertaining program for all ages — a program of creatively choreographed water routines sure to please.

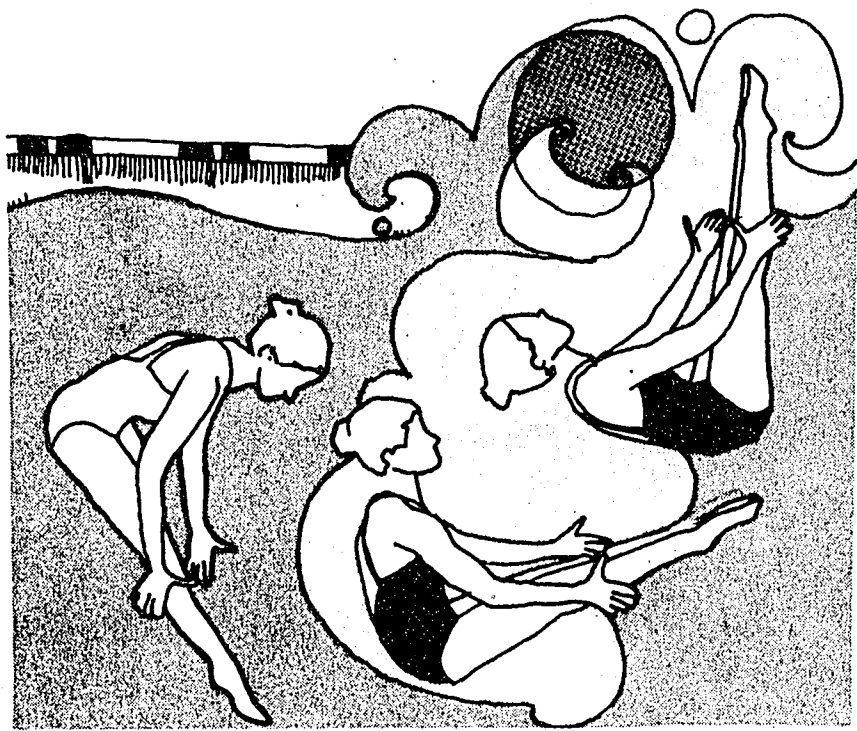


Illustration by Lynda Cloud

Try 'Long Distance' after five

5 O'Clock Theatre presents "Long Distance," an original one-act comedy by Howard Mermel. The takes a humorous look at two roommates whose lives suddenly collide one afternoon.

"Long Distance" opens tonight at 5:30 and runs through Friday in the Pavilion Theatre. Admission is free.

The author Mermel is the editor of Proth, the Penn State humor magazine, and is a writer and performer for WDFM's comedy hour. According to him "Long Distance" is a play in the Neil Simon mold.

"It's good light fun. If there's any message for the audience, it's just laugh and enjoy yourself," said Mermel. And his characters seem to truly invite a good time.

For Alex, a lovable neurotic, the world has come to an end because his girlfriend Marie is angry with him. Meanwhile,

Robert has just received word that he will be notified by phone about an important job he has applied for. When Alex gets it into his head to take the phone off the hook so that Marie can't get through to him, the fun begins.

The 5 O'Clock Theatre is produced by the Penn State department of theatre and film. It presents original scripts written by students and members of the Penn State community. The theatre gives playwrights the opportunity to have their plays go through the production process and be performed before an audience.

"Tickets for 'Long Distance' are available through the University Resident Theatre Company box office or at the Pavilion prior to the performance.

—by Elaine Wetmore



Valerie De Pena and Jeff Kramer

Artists Series upcoming season full and flavorful



Eugene Ormandy

photo by Louis Hood



Suzuki Strings violinist

Spring has sprung over hill and dale, and Artists Series subscriptions will soon be on sale. Beginning April 30, new Series subscriptions for the 1981-82 season will go on sale at the Eisenhower Auditorium box office.

The schedule for the upcoming season is filled with classy, professional shows that will please and delight ticketholders. Subscribers can pick from four mini-series — fine arts, music, theatre/dance and drama — or any combination of them and will get priority on tickets to special events. There are also discounts for subscribers on individual tickets.

The fine arts series begins the season on September 22 with the Juilliard String Quartet, one of today's most highly regarded classical ensembles. On October 15 the young Suzuki Strings of Japan will delight the audience with their fine musicianship.

Flamenco guitarist Carlos Montoya, hailed as one of the greatest of our time, will begin the music series on October 2. Another present-day legend, Eugene Ormandy, will conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra on January 19. Other shows in the music series include Michael Tilson Thomas and the Pittsburgh Symphony on

March 19 and "The Threepenny Opera" in its first fully-staged major tour on April 3.

"Children of a Lesser God," winner of the 1969 Tony Award for the best play, will kick off the theatre/dance series on September 23. The Pilobolus Dance Theatre, an imaginative, versatile and witty sextet, will perform on November 6. Another Tony winning play, "Morning's at Seven," will bring some chuckles to Penn State on January 15 and on February 19 the fresh and enthusiastic Royal Winnipeg Ballet will leap onto the stage.

The drama series begins October 9 with "The Madwoman of Central Park West" starring Phyllis Newman in the one-woman show. Another solo performance will feature Emyln Williams as Charles Dickens on March 26. Five actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company will be in residence January 27, 29 and 30, giving three performances, two of which will be devoted to Shakespeare.

In addition to the regular series there will be three programs for children and special events such as "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."



Pilobolus Dance Theatre



Emyln Williams



Juilliard String Quartet



Royal Winnipeg Ballet

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