“The Art of the Escape” Highlights 15th Eugene O’Neill Festival

Two American Masterpieces:

*The Iceman Cometh & Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

Continuing its year of celebrating Eugene O’Neill as “Father of American Drama,” the Foundation’s 15th Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival in September will feature the playwright’s masterpiece *The Iceman Cometh* along with a revival of Tennessee Williams’ popular *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

“This fall the Eugene O’Neill Festival focuses on the human yearning for escape. We’re calling this year’s Festival *The Art of the Escape,*” says Eric Fraisher Hayes, who will direct *Iceman.* “Many characters in both plays work very hard to maintain a point of view that is coming into conflict with others and even within themselves.”

*The Iceman Cometh* will be seen for six performances in the Old Barn at the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site from September 19 through September 28. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* will be seen for eight performances in a production by Role Players Ensemble at the Village Theater in downtown Danville beginning September 5, and continuing through September 20.

continued on page 2

**NOTICE TO OUR MEMBERS:**

*For our members, the Eugene O’Neill Foundation is returning to the practice of mailing our Foundation Newsletter directly to you. You’ll have the convenience of a handy guide to Foundation activities and news right at your fingertips. The Newsletter will continue to be posted on our website (www.eugeneoneill.org) for non-members and others.*
“This is a special opportunity to view two important masterpieces of American theatre,” said Hayes. “This O'Neill play has not been produced in the Bay Area for nearly thirty five years.”

“The Iceman Cometh and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof represent two of America’s most celebrated playwrights at the height of their dramatic powers. In these two masterpieces, Eugene O’Neill and Tennessee Williams invite us into the struggle we all experience when the stories we tell ourselves are challenged. At the intersection of truth and fiction, we all struggle to determine what role illusions play in our lives.

O’Neill completed his writing of The Iceman Cometh at Tao House in 1939, but held off production for seven years. The play opened in New York in 1946 and ran for 136 performances. The drifters at Harry Hope’s Saloon are confronted by Theodore “Hickey” Hickman who seeks to divest regulars of their “pipe dreams” and make peace with themselves. The play was a smashing success in its 1956 Off-Broadway revival starring Jason Robards.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams premiered in New York in 1955, directed by Elia Kazan and starring Barbara Bel Geddes, Ben Gazzara and Burl Ives. It is Williams’ best known play and considered his personal favorite. Cat was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1955. Set in the Mississippi Delta plantation home of Big Daddy, a wealthy cotton tycoon, the play examines the relationships among members of Big Daddy’s family, especially between his son Brick and Maggie the “Cat”, Brick’s wife.

The Foundation has arranged the Festival schedule to enable theater-goers who want to see both plays back-to-back on one of the weekends to do so. The full Festival performance schedule is on page 3.

The Festival further explores the desire for escape through an exhibition of visual art, a series of sneak peek previews at local libraries, a scholar/director’s panel, a walking tour of downtown Danville and a special showcase performance. These augment the two major productions, and give added context to the Festival plays. A cost saving “All-inclusive” package for all Festival ticketed events is available again this year until August 15. Details for the “All-Inclusive” are on page 5.
Free Festival “Sneak Peek” Previews

Lafayette Library & Learning Center (3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.) Thursday, August 21 @ 6:30 p.m.
Danville Library (400 Front Street) Saturday, August 23 @ 1:00 p.m.
Pleasanton Library (400 Old Bernal Ave.) Thursday, August 28 @ 7:00 p.m.

“The Art of the Escape”

Village Art Gallery (233 Front St.), Danville August 28 - September 28
Two and Three Dimensional artwork influenced by the Festival theme. Presented by the Alamo-Danville Artist Society & the Town of Danville. Gala Opening and Artists' Reception, August 29 @ 5:00 p.m. Free

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams

September 5, 6, 7*, 12, 13, 14*, 18, & 20 Village Theater, 233 Front Street, Danville.
Produced by Role Players Ensemble & directed by George Maguire
Tickets $28. * = post show discussion

The Iceman Cometh by Eugene O'Neill

September 19, 21*, 25, 26, 27, 28* The Old Barn, Tao House
Produced by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation & directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes
Tickets $35. * = post show discussion

Danville Walking Tour: “The Secrets of O'Neill in Danville”

Saturdays, September 6 @ 10:00 a.m., and September 27 @ 1:00 p.m.
Downtown Tour led by docents from the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Meet at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley on Railroad Avenue. Free

“Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams and The Art of the Escape”

Saturday, September 13 @ 2:00 p.m. at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley
Panel discussion by an O'Neill expert and Williams expert focused on the Festival theme. Tickets $12.

“Truth, Lies and Illusions”

Saturday, September 20 @ 2:00 p.m. Saturday, Old Barn at Tao House
Showcase of short scenes by local theatre companies exploring the theme of escaping or creating realities and illusions in an effort to cope with one’s circumstances. Tickets $25.
**The Art of the Escape**

on view at Village Theatre Art Gallery

Complementing the 15th Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival, the Alamo-Danville Arts Society, in cooperation with the Town of Danville, has planned an exploration of the strong human need to imagine alternate realities. The art exhibit reflects the theme of the O’Neill Festival - “The Art of the Escape.”

Opening on August 28 and continuing through September 28, “The Art of the Escape” provides the opportunity for visual artists -- working on canvas, paper, and in photography, in sculpture and other mediums, as well as the written word in poetry -- to focus on the role that illusion plays in our lives.

The exhibition in the Village Theatre Art Gallery at 233 Front Street, Danville will have a Gala opening and artists’ reception on Saturday, August 29 at 5:00 p.m. There is no admission charge.

Like the two Festival plays - *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Iceman Cometh*, the exhibit explores the struggle we all face when stories we tell ourselves are challenged.

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**Exploring the Theme: “The Art of the Escape”**

Two special events are on tap which will focus on the Festival theme, “The Art of the Escape.” These programs will look, from two perspectives, how both Eugene O’Neill and Tennessee Williams explored “illusion” and “pipe dreams” which challenge each of us during our lifetimes. Using *The Iceman Cometh* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* as reference points, a discussion panel, “Eugene O’Neill, Tennessee Williams and The Art of the Escape” on September 13, and a showcase of scenes on September 20 will be available to O’Neill Festival-goers.

The Panel Discussion on Saturday, September 13 at 2:00 p.m. at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley in downtown Danville will be moderated by Dan Cawthon, Professor Emeritus of St. Mary’s College in Moraga, and long-time O’Neill Festival Board member. He will be joined by other scholars to discuss what Tennessee Williams learned from the plays of O’Neill and how the two noted American playwrights addressed this desire for escape in their plays. Tickets are $12, and can be reserved online on the Foundation website.

“Truth, Lies & Illusions”, on Saturday, September 20 at 2:00 p.m. will look at these issues by way of selected scenes performed from works from a variety of playwrights. Several Bay Area theatre companies have been invited to participate in this afternoon showcase to be held in the Old Barn at the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site. Travel to the Site is by National Park Service shuttle from the Museum of the San Ramon Valley on Railroad Avenue. Tickets are $20.

Reservations for both events are available online at www.eugeneoneill.org. Both events are included in the O’Neill Foundation’s special All-Inclusive Festival Package. See details on page 5.
All-Inclusive Festival Package

You can enjoy all the events during the 15th Annual O'Neill Festival – and Save 25%

$75.00 per person includes it all!
✓ Reserved seats for Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at Village Theatre
✓ Reserved seating for The Iceman Cometh at Old Barn at Tao House
✓ Guaranteed seating for Special Panel discussion: “O’Neill & Williams – The Art of the Escape” at Museum of the San Ramon Valley
✓ VIP seating for “Truth, Lies & Illusions,” a showcase of scenes at Old Barn at Tao House
✓ A glass of Festival wine during your performance of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

$100. Value for only $75. (Early Bird Special Available until August 15!)

There’s more: You’ll receive special invitations to other Festival events at no additional cost –
✓ Attend a Library Festival Preview in Danville, Lafayette or Pleasanton
✓ Join the Walking Tour for “Secrets of O’Neill’s Danville”
✓ Visit “The Art of the Escape” exhibit and reception at Village Art Gallery, Danville
✓ Attend post-performance discussions following all Sunday matinee performances

1) * Choose your Performance for Cat on a Hot Tin Roof:
   ___ Friday September 5 @ 8:00 p.m.   ___ Sunday, Sept. 7 @ 2:00 p.m.   ___ Thursday, Sept 18 @ 8:00 p.m.

2) Choose You Performance for The Iceman Cometh:
   ___ Friday, Sept. 19 @ 7:30 p.m.   ___ Sunday, Sept. 21 @ 2:00 p.m.   ___ Thursday, Sept. 25 at 7:30 p.m.

3) Reserve seating for the O’Neill/Williams Panel Discussion on The Art of the Escape:
   Saturday, September 13 @ 2:00 p.m.  YES or NO?

4) VIP seating for “Truth, Lies & Illusions” scenes:
   Saturday, September 20 @ 2:00 p.m.  YES or NO?

* Already a Subscriber to Role Players Season? Your season already includes tickets to Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Subscribers can purchase the All-Inclusive Package without Cat for $55.

Reserve Your Early Bird All-Inclusive Package Online before August 15 at www.eugeneoneill.org or Mail Your Order

NAME ______________________________________________________  E-Mail ______________________________
ADDRESS ____________________________________________  CITY ________________________  ZIP__________
PHONE NUMBER ____________________________________________

How many All-Inclusive Packages @ $75.00? _____ How many for RPE subscribers @ $55.00? _____

TOTAL AMOUNT $________

Charge to:  Master Card ☐  VISA ☐  American Express ☐
Card Number ____________________ Exp.Date _____

Mail to: Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, P.O. Box 402, Danville CA 94526  Phone: (925) 820-1818
NPS Superintendent’s Column
by Tom Leatherman

The spring events at the site are now only in our memories and we are looking forward to the Festival this September. What an exciting opportunity to see one of Eugene O’Neill’s Tao House plays being performed in the Old Barn, just 200 yards from where it was written.

In addition to working closely with the Foundation on events such as the Festival, the National Park Service spends a lot of time and energy on the preservation, protection and interpretation of the site. Recently we discovered some deterioration of a support post to the upper deck of Tao House. When we actually went to do the replacement work we discovered more extensive deterioration than was originally detected. The picture on the lower right clearly shows the amount of decayed wood that comprised the top two or three feet of the post. There was obviously water infiltration into this area and it probably took several years, but eventually wood exposed to water and oxygen will do what you see. Our skilled maintenance crew did a fine job replacing the post, as shown in the photograph on the upper right, so now it is better than new, with no danger of the deck collapsing due to lack of support.

We are blessed to have such a great staff to help us make sure that the house and grounds are kept in the best condition possible, and hope that when you attend one of the festival events you will take some time to enjoy the grounds and house and appreciate the nationally significant treasures we have right here in the San Ramon Valley.

VISITING TAO HOUSE

The public is invited to tour Tao House and the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site. Visitation is by National Park Service Shuttle only.

Reservations are required for Friday and Sunday tours. Reserve by calling (925) 838-0249.

No Reservations are needed for Saturdays. Meet at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley on Railroad Avenue in downtown Danville any Saturday at 10:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, or 2:00 p.m. for shuttle service to and from the site.

Check the NPS website for more information: www.nps.gov/euon.

We’re Lookin’ for a Few Good Folks!

If you want to feel needed and appreciated, then volunteering for the Eugene O’Neill Foundation may be just what you’re looking for.

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, in partnership with the National Park Service, provides educational and cultural programming at the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site. The Foundation is actively seeking those interested in promoting the legacy of America’s most notable playwright by volunteering with us.

Volunteers assist with programs, with hospitality, and helping to coordinate educational projects like Student Days and the O’Neill Studio Retreat. Foundation volunteers also assist with stage productions in the Old Barn. You might even have an interest in joining us as a member of the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

If you’d like to talk about volunteering for the O’Neill Foundation, or just want to get additional information, let us know with an e-mail to taohouse@eugeneoneill.org. Check out the Foundation’s website (www.EugeneOneill.org) for more details on what we do.
Forty Years of Preserving the Legacy of America’s Greatest Playwright in Danville

In the fall of 1974, a small group of Tri-Valley residents came together for the first meeting of what was to become the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House. That was 40 years ago, and the focus then, as it is today, was to preserve the home of “The Father of American Drama,” in the hills above Danville, where playwright Eugene O’Neill wrote his most significant plays.

Tao House was saved because of their efforts, and now is maintained as the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site by the National Park Service. The site is open to visitors and offers programs that celebrate O’Neill’s work and his impact on theater in America.

Tao House and its environs provided the peace and solitude that the playwright needed to work, and remains a place of inspiration and beauty to all who visit even today.

Here’s a brief Chronology of those early efforts and successes in preserving this national treasure -

1937 - Eugene O’Neill and wife Carlotta move into Tao House.  
1944 - Tao House sold to the Carlson family.  
1965 - Attempted sale of Tao House and the expanded area around it known as Corduroy Hills Ranch is prevented and the property remains in litigation, reverting to original owner.  
1971 - Tao House placed on the list of U.S. National Historic Landmarks.  
1974 - East Bay Regional Park District purchases 1018 acres of Corduroy Hills Ranch with a 18-month purchase option on a 14-acre parcel including Tao House to give more time to preservation efforts.  
1974 - The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, is organized and incorporated as a non-profit organization to raise the funds for the Tao House purchase.  
1975 - Rep. George Miller (Dem, CA) and Senator Cranston introduce legislation in the 94th Congress calling for the establishment of the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site.  
1975 - Jason Robards & Jack Dodson star in O’Neill’s Hughie at UC Berkeley to benefit efforts to preserve Tao House.  
1976 - The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, takes title to Tao House, subject to a deed of trust due in January 1978. Cranston’s bill passes the U.S. Senate. State Assemblyman Daniel Boatwright introduces urgency legislation providing for the purchase of Tao House with Collier Park Preservation Funds by the State of California. It is signed into law.  
1976 - Public Law 94-539 (Miller, CA) passes the House of Representatives. President Gerald Ford signs SB2398 establishing the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site.  
1977 - Public hearings for purpose of creating a General Management Plan for Tao House are held. Moon for the Misbegotten performed outside the Old Barn.  
1978 - Eugene O’Neill Foundation board of directors approves Interim Agreement with NPS pending resolution of access.  
1979 - Contra Costa County zoning administrator holds public hearing concerning access roads to Tao House.  
1980 - The National Park Service signs an Interim Agreement which stipulates that the NPS is responsible for building and grounds operation, maintenance, restoration and public interpretive programming, while the Eugene O’Neill Foundation is responsible for artistic programming.  
1980 - AB1953 (Boatwright) is signed into law by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. The bill transferred ownership of Tao House from the State of California to the federal government. The NPS decision of access road is again postponed. Mediation is undertaken.  
1982 - Work begins on restoration of Eugene O’Neill’s study, dressing room and bedroom. Funds are raised by the Foundation, with work implemented by the NPS. Further discussion of the General Plan. The council members of the newly formed Town of Danville appoint eleven-member advisory committee to study proposed access routes.  
1983 - With funding from the San Francisco Foundation, the Eugene O’Neill Foundation hires a planning consultant to assist with creating a five-year plan. Board approves hire of a part-time executive director.  
1984 - The NPS announces an agreement reached with residents allowing limited daily public access to Tao House. This is an interim agreement pending resolution of final access road.  
1985 - Tao House opens to the public, with a celebration; Helen Hayes is guest of honor.  
1989 - First Tao House Award presented to Jason Robards.  
1991 - Student Days at Tao House established, now in its 23rd year.  
1996 - Playwrights’ Theatre program established initiated by Prof. Travis Bogard to enable staged reading of O’Neill’s early plays, and the works of playwrights O’Neill influenced.  
1998 - Foundation Library renamed “Travis Bogard Reading Room”  
1999 - First Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival held in Danville  
2002 - Structural and seismic retrofitting of Tao House by NPS.  
2005 - Dedication of the O’Neill Commemorative in Danville’s Front Street Park, designed by artist Michael Manwaring.  
2008 - O’Neill Studio Retreat initiated for emerging high school writers.  
2009 - Long term Master Facility Plan developed by Mark Cavagnero Associates.  
2014 - Travis Bogard Artist in Residence program is initiated.  

For a fuller picture of EBRPD’s role in preserving Tao House, see Beverly Lane’s article “EBRPD & Tao House on our website.

www.eugeneoneill.org

Click on “About Us” and scroll down.
HOW IT ALL BEGAN: LOIS AND DARLENE

“It is safe to say that the preservation of Tao House and its designation as a National Historic Site would not have been possible without the able leadership and perseverance of Darlene Blair and Lois Sizoo.”

These words were spoken when they received the Open Gate Award in 1992 lauded as “individuals whose vision and dedication while serving as directors of the Foundation have been invaluable to the preservation of Tao House and its realization as a living memorial to Eugene O’Neill.” Together with Thalia Brewer they formed the Eugene O’Neill Monument Association in 1968.

The “dynamic duo,” or “Bobsey twins,” as they were often called, were founding members of the Foundation, serving as directors for 20 years in many different capacities. Each was president—Blair 1976-78 and Sizoo 1979-80 and 1987. Lois was the first board secretary and Darlene the first special events chair.

Most importantly, it was the courage, tenacity and iron-will of these two women in the 1970s in the halls of Washington DC and Sacramento, as well as in our local community, that raised the necessary funds and secured legislation to guarantee the permanent preservation of this precious resource.

“A pint sized dynamo filibustering Strom Thurmond and the Senate” and “a fiery little angel” is the way Jason Robards described Darlene when she appeared before the US Senate in 1976. When the federal bill to designate Tao House a National Historic Site stalled because of lack of funds, Darlene and Lois turned to Assemblyman Daniel Boatwright for help. He introduced an urgency bill which provided State funds for the purchase of the house allowing President Ford to sign the bill into law on October 19, 1976.

After retiring as directors, Lois and Darlene served as members of the Advisory Committee. Lois was an active member of the Rossmoor Auxiliary and Darlene served on the first International Conference Committee. The couple were awarded the Contra Costa Lifetime Achievement award in 1997.

Fellow founding board member, Linda Best, said she “witnessed the extraordinary progress under the leadership of gifted leaders, Lois and Darlene, whose accomplishments resulted in Tao House being preserved for future generations.” President from 1982-94, Linda followed Darlene and Lois’s example after leaving the board. Linda now serves on the Advisory Board and Artist in Residence committee.

Craig Dorman, first Superintendent of the National Historic Site, speaking following Lois’s death in 2001, said, “As I look back on my twelve years working at Tao House...it’s Lois and Darlene who first come to mind when I think of the protection and ultimately, the preservation of Tao House. This site has become a very special unit of the National Park Service, but it was the persistence and determination of Lois and Darlene to save Tao House that surpassed anything else...Craig said, “Lois’s dreams, her superb strategic planning skills, and her able leadership inspired many and resulted in both a special addition to the NPS and an important contribution to the area and the nation. The NPS regional director, my boss, frequently told me that if you can satisfy Lois and Darlene then you must be doing ok.”

Darlene continued to support the Foundation until her death in 2002.

By Wendy Cooper
Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program Underway

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation’s long-anticipated Travis Bogard Artist in Residence program received its official launch in June during the 9th International Conference on Eugene O’Neill, held in New London, CT - site of the playwright’s boyhood home.

Foundation representatives Florence McAuley, Carol Sherrill and Wendy Cooper presented the new Foundation program to a gathered group of scholars and O’Neillians at Connecticut College. The program is intended for established scholars, playwrights and critics of the performing arts who wish to have the time for contemplation, research and study for their projects.

The new program is named for the late Travis Bogard, professor of Dramatic Arts at UC Berkeley and the O’Neill Foundation’s first artistic director, who envisioned the artist in residence program shortly after the Foundation was formed. The program is funded and managed by the Eugene O’Neill Foundation in cooperation with the National Park Service.

“Travis wanted to make sure that Tao House was more than a monument to O’Neill,” said Florence McAuley. “He envisioned an active program where writers and scholars could benefit from the quietness and solitude that inspired O’Neill to write his greatest and final plays.”

The new program gets underway in 2015 with selection of the initial “Tao House Fellows.” Guidelines and application information is available online at www.eugeneoneill.org. Fellows will spend their days at Tao House in comfortable working conditions and live in nearby accommodations. A panel of scholars or theater professionals will review the applications and recommend prospective fellows.

Integral to the fellowship is the opportunity to use the Tao House Library, which contains holdings in the American theatre and materials related to the life and works of Eugene O’Neill which form the core of the archive of manuscripts, letters, photographs and special collections donated to the Foundation.

The Bogard Residency program is supported by members and friends of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation. Donations to support this program are encouraged by contacting the Foundation at taohouse@eugeneoneill.org

Photo by Gary Schaub
Carol Sherrill and Florence McAuley introduced the new Foundation Artist in Residence program in New London, CT during the 9th International Eugene O’Neill Conference held at Connecticut College in June

Planting for the Future and Letting it Grow.

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House established the O’Neill Legacy Endowment in 2007 with the purpose of ensuring the future of the Foundation and its educational and community programs in the years ahead. A contribution to the Legacy Endowment now helps perpetuate the legacy of Eugene O’Neill for future generations.

Gifts to the Foundation - cash gifts, IRA qualified plans, bequests, life insurance beneficiaries, and charitable annuities - are most welcome, and will help empower the Foundation to share and preserve the O’Neill legacy in perpetuity. Funds contributed to the Legacy Endowment are never spent - only the annual proceeds can be used by the Foundation Board to meet its mission and goals.

Your accountant or tax advisor is the best one to assess which type of gift will best serve you and your estate.

Further information is available from the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526 (925) 820-1818.

Welcome to a New Board Member

If you’re looking for someone who consistently looks for ways of bringing the community together, look no farther than Joyce Michalczyk, the newest member on the O’Neill Foundation’s Board of Directors. This Danville resident strives to form partnerships between elements of the community.

Joyce has lived in Danville for almost 23 years, and with husband Bert, is parent to three adult children. While she works part-time, she’s been an active volunteer. The Diablo Women’s Garden Club and the Danville/Alamo Garden Club have had benefit of Joyce’s commitment for many years. After volunteering for the Valley Parent Preschool for six years, she joined the staff for an additional six year period.

She helped out with San Ramon Valley Education Foundation projects, including Primo’s race and Spirit Night, and has enjoyed working with community projects for Discover Danville, including the Wine and Chocolate Strolls and the popular Doggie Night.

“I’m pleased to be part of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation,” says Joyce. And we’re pleased to have her.
Why I’m A Member of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation

Ask Jo Harberson why she is a member of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation and there’s no hesitation. She’s pretty straight-forward about her reasons for continuing her membership for many years.

“I’m a member because of what they do,” says Jo. “Not only did they work to preserve Tao House, but they continually do programs that are important and interesting.”

This Rossmoor resident has been a member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) since the mid-1970s, and a Eugene O’Neill Foundation member for almost as long. She was a Board member for many years, and a long-time active volunteer.

“Students don’t hear much about Eugene O’Neill in school these days” says Jo. “The Foundation helps introduce them to the Father of American Drama in ways that they might not have heard about otherwise.

“I think very highly about programs like Student Days at Tao House and the O’Neill Studio Retreat. They show teens something beyond TV and video fare. To see these young people take on serious and meaningful subjects shows me that the Tao House environment inspires them, as it inspired Eugene O’Neill years ago.”

If you’re not currently an up-to-date member of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, now is the time to join or renew. It’s easy to do online at www.eugeneoneill.org. Just click on “Membership and Donations.”

Remembering Arthur Gelb

Part of the team that has helped us better understand the life and times of Eugene O’Neill has been lost to us. Arthur Gelb passed away on May 19 at age 90. Together with his writing partner and wife, Barbara Gelb, the duo were staunch O’Neillians who enjoyed delving into the important facts of the playwright’s life, and also finding minutia that helped define the Father of American Drama. Arthur and Barbara Gelb were honored with the Foundation’s Tao House Award in 1996.

But, Eugene O’Neill was Gelb’s “retirement job.” He was a dominant figure at the New York Times, beginning in 1944 as a copy boy, and rising to metropolitan editor and later Managing Editor, the post he held when he retired from the Times in 1989, in order to head up the NY Times Company Foundation.

Gelb’s contributions to the Times are legendary. At 6-foot-2, he was relentless in shaping the Times during the seventies and eighties. He conceived and implemented daily stand-alone sections as well as special Sunday magazines. He had a special interest in expanding the Times cultural coverage by giving visibility to a burgeoning off Broadway theater scene, and identifying new personalities in the off Broadway community. His news coverage and reviews helped define the fledgling careers of, among others, Woody Allen, Barbara Streisand, Dick Gregory, Jason Robards, Joseph Papp, and Colleen Dewhurst.

Also legendary was Arthur Gelb’s interest and passion for Eugene O'Neill. “Arthur was a beacon in the cause of continuing and furthering the work of O’Neill, a figure whose story he and Barbara spent so much of their lives laboring tirelessly to tell,” according to Jeff Kennedy, President of the Eugene O’Neill Society.

The Gelbs’ books, O’Neill, originally published in 1962, and the more recent O’Neill: Life with Monte Cristo (2000) are considered the definitive biographical volumes detailing what we know of Eugene O’Neill, his plays, his life and his relationships. Through painstaking research and interviews Arthur and Barbara Gelb have broadened our knowledge of the playwright, and widened our respect for his work.

Equally important, Arthur Gelb was a good friend of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, and participated in many panels, and conferences at Tao House. He and Barbara attended the local preview screening in 2006 of filmmaker Ric Burns’ “Eugene O’Neill: A Documentary Film” for the PBS American Experience series which he and Barbara helped script.
Thank You!

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House is most grateful to you, our supporters for your generous contributions that allow us to provide artistic and educational programs which focus on O’Neill’s vision and legacy. Eugene O’Neill is recognized throughout the world as America’s foremost playwright.

Please join us in recognizing the following donors in their giving categories through July 1, 2014. All gifts and upgrades received after that date will be acknowledged in our next publication.

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Playwright’s Circle
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Director’s Circle

Thank You, also, to our Actor’s Circle, Crew Level and Affiliate Level Supporters

Education Program Grants:  Dean and Margaret Lesher Foundation,  Wood Foundation

* Artist-in-Residence contributor since September 2012

Thank You!
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Robin Taylor

Danville O’Neillians attend the 9th International Eugene O’Neill Conference

O’Neillians from around the globe, including eight associated with the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, converged on New London, CT in mid-June for the 9th International Eugene O’Neill Conference, sponsored by the Eugene O’Neill Society. The Conference theme, “Eugene O’Neill: Hunted, Haunted, Home,” explored a wide variety of topics on O’Neill, his life and his plays, as well as opportunities to visit Monte Cristo Cottage (O’Neill’s boyhood home), and the O’Neill Theatre Center in nearby Waterford, CT. Three members of the Foundation’s Advisory Board introduced the Foundation’s new Travis Bogard Artist-in-Residence program at the conference. (see page 9 of this Newsletter)