HUGHIE BEGINS NEW YEAR AS PLAYWRIGHTS’ THEATRE OFFERING

For the sixth year in a row, the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House returns to the Museum of the San Ramon Valley as the venue for the first of the Playwrights’ Theatre series of staged readings for 2015.

O’Neill’s one act play, Hughie, will be seen for only two performances on Saturday, January 10 at 8:00 p.m., and on Sunday, January 11 at 2:00 p.m. Following the overwhelming response to the Eugene O’Neill Festival production of The Iceman Cometh last September, theatre-goers will want to reserve seats early. Seating for both performances at the Museum is limited.

Reservations for Hughie are available online at the Foundation website www.eugeneoneill.org or by phone at (925) 820-1818. Tickets are $25.00 per person.

“Hughie is a great complement to last September’s production,” says the Foundation’s Vice President of Programs Eric Fraisher Hayes. “Like Iceman, Hughie also tells the tale of the lonely, late night struggles of a traveling man. In this case, he spends the midnight hours with the world’s most disinterested lobby clerk in a small New York hotel in 1928. Hughie provides a lot more humor than most playgoers expect from O’Neill”, says Hayes.

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FOUNDATION SALUTES TWO CHAMPIONS AT 40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The setting was the Eugene O’Neill Room at Crow Canyon Country Club in San Ramon. The event was to celebrate the Foundation’s 40th Anniversary and to honor Congressman George Miller (11th District of California), and the East Bay Regional Park District.

“Without the efforts of Congressman Miller and the Park District, there would be no Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site, and probably no Tao House,” said Board Co-President Trudy McMahon.

continued on page 4
Scenes from O’Neill Foundation’s 40th Anniversary Celebration & Awards Dinner — October 28, 2014

Honoring Congressman George Miller & East Bay Regional Park District

George Miller visits with Margaret Hornbecker Steele, sister of EBRPD’s land acquisition specialist, late Hudet Hornbecker

Congressman Miller & Beverly Lane with East Bay Regional Park District’s Robert Nückel, Carol Johnson and Erich Duhakler

NPS Superintendent Tom Leatherman with EBRPD’s Beverly Lane

Mac McAuley, Ed Best, Carol Sherrill & Linda Best celebrated the evening

Supervisor Candace Anderson presents a County Proclamation for O’Neill Foundation’s 40th Anniversary to Co-President’s Trudy McMahon & Gary Schaub

Congressman Miller visits with student Dominic Gulley of Skyline High School, and teacher Keith Coppage of Mt. Diablo High School

Our “Tao House Hero” — Congressman George Miller

Diane Hedler of the Rosie the Riveter Trust joined guests from John Muir Association & Friends of Port Chicago Memorial at the Anniversary Dinner

Photos by Gary Schaub
Hughie's Long Journey to Tao House

The Eugene O'Neill Foundation owes much to Hughie and to actor Jason Robards. Written at Tao House between 1940-42, as part of a series of shorter plays envisioned by the playwright, Hughie is the only one of those to survive. But, it took several years before Hughie had its U.S. Premiere.

Hughie had its world's premiere at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, Sweden on September, 1958, attended by King Gustaf Adolf and Queen Louise. The play was scheduled to have its American premiere in New York in March 1960, to be paired with O'Neill's The Emperor Jones. At Carlotta O'Neill's request, however, the production was delayed.

The official English-language premiere was at the Theater Royal in Bath, England in June, 1963, starring Burgess Meredith. The production later was moved to London.

Hughie finally has its American premiere at the Royal Theatre in New York in December, 1964 with Jason Robards cast as Erie Smith. In July 1975, Robards and Jack Dodson traveled to California where they recreated the U.S. premiere of Hughie as originally stages on Broadway by director Jose Quintero. The performance was at Zellerbach Auditorium at UC Berkeley. All the proceeds from the evening went to preserving Tao House.

According to her early history of the O'Neill Foundation, co-founder Lois Sizoo notes that “the success of the Berkeley performance caused Robards and Dodson to perform Hughie for two weeks in Los Angeles at the Westwood Playhouse for the Foundation’s benefit.”

Their efforts contributed greatly to the O'Neill Foundation success in raising sufficient funds to take title to Tao House and the adjoining property in 1976. After establishment of the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site later in 1976, the property was turned over to be owned and operated by the National Park Service.
Hughie was completed at Tao House in 1942, although it did not receive its Broadway presentation until 1963 with Jason Robards as Erie Smith and directed by Jose Quintero. Robards received a Tony nomination for his performance.

Aaron Murphy, who portrayed Hickey in the September production of Iceman returns to play the role of Erie Smith In the Hughie production. He will be joined by Dirk Alphin as the lobby clerk.

“Audiences loved Murphy’s Hickey,” says Hayes. “They’re sure to find him quite engaging in this January production.”

The Playwrights’ Theatre series was begun in 1996 to provide audiences with the opportunity to become more familiar with some of O’Neill early plays. Playwrights’ Theatre also presents works by other playwrights who influenced the Nobel Prize winning playwright or by dramatists who were influenced by O’Neill.

The January Playwrights’ Theatre is produced by the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House in partnership with the National Park Service and hosted by the Museum of the San Ramon Valley.

“Foundation Salutes Two Champions “ continued from page 1...

“The roles that they played back in the mid-1970’s enabled the O’Neill Foundation and the community to preserve the home and adjacent property where America’s most notable playwright once lived.”

George Miller was saluted as “Tao House Hero” because he (along with Senator Alan Cranston) proposed the legislation in Congress to establish the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site. The legislation was passed and signed into law in 1976. Miller is retiring from Congress this year, forty years after his first election in 1974, the same year the Eugene O’Neill Foundation was formed.

The Foundation’s Partnership Award was given to the East Bay Regional Park District which agreed to hold title to the property while the legislative process was underway and while the Foundation raised the funds needed to acquire the site. This staved off proposed development of the property adjacent to Las Trampas Hills in Danville, and protected it until O’Neill’s home and 14 acres could be turned over the National Park Service.

Congressman Miller’s cultural preservation efforts were also recognized at the Awards Dinner by representatives of community “Friends” groups from the three other National Parks and Memorials in Contra Costa County-the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Park in Richmond, and the Port Chicago Navel Magazine National Memorial.
NATIONAL Park Service Report
By Tom Leatherman, Superintendent, Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site

It was a pleasure to help honor George Miller, the East Bay Regional Park District and the 40th Anniversary of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation at the annual awards dinner in October. Historically October has been a significant month for the parks in the East Bay and Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site is no exception. Not only is it the month that Eugene O’Neill was born, but on October 18, 1976 the site was established. We continue to have the real honor of working with the Eugene O’Neill Foundation in helping to preserve the site and bring it alive with education and arts programs year round.

In the realm of preservation we continue to maintain the historic landscape and features throughout the site. Eugene O’Neill’s swimming pool was resurfaced this summer and early fall. This project involved removing all of the old plaster down to the cement substrate, resurfacing with new plaster and replacing all of the tiles. With proper care and preventive maintenance, the pool should be good to go for another 40 or 50 years.

Sometimes our work involves taking things away instead of restoring or preserving them. We removed the large redwood trees adjacent to the pool house. They were not historic, and were both shading the pool and were damaged by last year’s windstorm. Twice limbs dropped into the pool, narrowly missing the pool and the retaining wall behind the pool house.

We hope that these changes will help those who have visited before and those new to the site appreciate the historic character and feeling and gain a better understanding of Eugene O’Neill and his time at Tao House.

Welcome: New Board Members

Two additions have been made to the Eugene O’Neill Foundation Board of Directors in recent months. Please welcome Katy Colbath and welcome back Florence McAuley.

Katy Colbath joined the Board last summer and brings a wealth of volunteer and professional management experience to the Foundation. She retired recently as a program specialist for the Pittsburg Unified School District where she managed federal Title III grants, including teacher training, student assessment and immersion programs. She organized and conducted parent outreach, and was selected as District Administrator of the Year for Region 6 in the spring of 2014.

The Foundation welcomes Florence McAuley back to the Board, though she hasn’t really been away. Florence was President of the O’Neill Foundation from 1988-1990 and oversaw programs celebrating the Eugene O’Neill Centennial. She returned as Board President in 1995. In more recent years she has been an active member of the Foundation’s Advisory Board, and actively working to plan and implement the Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program. In her “spare time,” Florence has been a Board member and President of Role Players Ensemble.

CO-PRESIDENTS LEAD O’NEILL FOUNDATION

When one just won’t do – get two! That was the solution for the Eugene O’Neill Foundation when they were selecting new leadership for the organization.

After former Foundation President Barbara Kukelwicz stepped down as President, with no President-elect yet on tap, the Foundation Board reached back to have two former Eugene O’Neill Foundation leaders take over the reins.

Trudy McMahon (President from 2009-10), and Gary Schaub (President from 2007-08) agreed to step forward and handle the leadership chores in the months ahead. Both have been associated with the O’Neill Foundation for over a decade.

McMahon, a former educator, and Schaub, a retired arts administrator, will start off with a Board Retreat in January aimed at strengthening the Board structure, increasing membership, getting the Artist in Residence program underway, and continuing programs in celebration of the O’Neill Foundation’s 40th Anniversary.
BOGARD ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM READY TO GO

A long-held goal of the Foundation Board of Directors and Advisory Board will be realized when the first “Tao House Fellow” arrives at Tao House in the Spring of 2015. Several impressive applications have been received for the initial Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program.

The evaluation and selection process for the first residency period, April 1st-July 31, 2015 will be announced soon.

The program is designed to provide developing or established artists, scholars or critics of the performing arts the opportunity to work in the solitude and quiet which was for Eugene O’Neill the creative atmosphere in which he produced his masterpieces. The length of residencies will be one week to one month. Application forms for and details of, the program are available online at www.eugeneoneill.org

The Foundation’s Artist in Resident 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, soon after the Foundation was formed forty years ago, envisioned Tao House not only as a living memorial to Eugene O’Neill but as an inspiring workplace for writers and scholars.

In the three-year pilot program, a second residency period will begin for the August 1-October 31, 2015 period, with a March 31st deadline for application. The first Tao House Fellows will be chosen from playwrights, scholars and theatre critics. They will live offsite and will spend their days working in a specially designed space in the Trunk House in the courtyard at Tao House, which looks up to the window of O’Neill’s study where he wrote his finest and final plays.

Fellows will have access to the exceptional Tao House Library which has holdings in the American theatre and an archive of materials related to the life and works of Eugene O’Neill, including manuscripts, letters, photographs and special collections which have been donated by Sophus Winther, Horst Frenz, Travis Bogard and others.

Members and friends of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation support this program.

Donations are encouraged by contacting EONF at taohouse@eugeneoneill.org

FOUNDATION MEMBERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

A BIG THANK YOU to all who responded so generously to our 40th Anniversary mailing in September. Your support is vital to the Foundation’s ability to carry out its mission of providing educational and artistic programming. Foundation members receive hard copies of the Foundation newsletter and are the first to know about upcoming events sponsored either by the Foundation or the National Park Service.

If you contributed at the $100-$249 level, you also have reserved seating at these events. At the $250-$499 level, you will additionally be entitled to tickets for one performance. At the Executive Producer Level of $1000 and up, you receive all of the aforementioned benefits plus credit on the title page of the program you wish to produce.

Would you like also to become a volunteer for the Foundation? There are lots of ways, from one-time events to committee work. Here are a few examples: help is always needed at Student Days held in March from as little as a few hours to half a day at Tao House; ushering at performances in the Old Barn at Tao House or other venues; or on one of the Foundation Board Committees (e.g. membership, fundraising events). Lastly, if you would be interested in being considered for service on the Board of Directors, we would love to discuss this possibility with you.

If you would like more information on volunteer opportunities or member benefits, please contact the Foundation at www.eugeneoneill.org by phoning 925-820-1818 or by contacting Membership Chair Florence McAuley directly at fbmcauly@comcast.net
A drama exercise outside the Old Barn on Student Days

“I learned so much more than I ever imagined I would.”  
San Ramon Valley High School Junior

“The Tao House experience has opened up uncharted Territory for me. Student Days allowed me to explore the boundaries of writing.”  
Miramonte High School Senior

The 24th annual Student Days program at Tao House in Danville invites high school students from Contra Costa and Alameda Counties to participate in a day of cultural enrichment in the arts. There will be two separate workshops. On Saturday, March 7, Art and Drama will be offered, and March 21 the focus will be on Photography and Writing. At Tao House, the setting in which Eugene O’Neill penned the most memorable of his plays, students are exposed to professional training and develop their own projects.

After a guided tour of the O’Neill National Historic Site, led by the National Park Service, professionals in each discipline lead workshops. Drama students might take part in a variety of expressive exercises to hone their acting skills, writers may do quick-writes to get the creative juices flowing, and artists and photographers explore the hill-side grounds with sweeping vistas of the valley to find inspiration for their art.

During lunch, students view a live performance based on O’Neill’s plays, and then it’s back to work on their own creative projects. The professionals work beside the students all day as coaches and mentors, encouraging them to stretch their artistic muscles. There is no cost for these experiences. Support for the program has been provided by the Dean and Margaret Lesher Foundation, the Wood Foundation, and the efforts of Eugene O’Neill Foundation members.

The National Park Service provides transportation from downtown Danville and Walnut Creek BART to Tao House and back. In January, students may obtain registration materials at their schools or apply on line at the O’Neill Foundation’s website: www.eugeneoneill.org

The application deadline will be in late February.
End-of-Year-Planning - Don’t Forget Us!

We have no record of a major snowstorm at Tao House when Eugene O’Neill and his wife Carlotta lived in Danville in the late 1930’s. It’s also unlikely that the O’Neill’s erected an annual Christmas tree or hosted a New Year’s party for their neighbors.

But we do know that Gene and Carlotta took time out at the end of the year to be thankful for all they had, and to plan for the year ahead.

Likewise, the Eugene O’Neill Foundation doesn’t have a big year-end celebration, but we are grateful to our members and friends who have helped the Foundation present educational and community programs throughout the past year. It’s also time to plan for the months ahead.

We hope you’ll include the O’Neill Foundation in your year-end giving plans. A modest donation to the Eugene O’Neill Foundation will be a great value to us as we schedule Playwrights’ Theatre and O’Neill Festival productions for 2015. Your help also makes possible our educational programs for high school students during Student Days and the Summer Studio Retreat for aspiring playwrights.

Recent years have been difficult financial times for most non-profits. The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, too, must rely on its members and friends for their financial support. Although we work closely with National Park Service at the O’Neill National Historic Site, we receive no direct government funding for our programs. Our contributors make what we do possible.

Please go on-line at www.eugeneoneill.org to make a special contribution. A gift of $50 or $100 or even more can be of major assistance as we plan for 2015.
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 Wednesday-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 at 205 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/eoun

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Oct. 16th, 2014 — Gene’s 126th Birthday
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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 November 1, 2014. All gifts and upgrades received after that date will be acknowledged in our next publication.

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