

March 2017

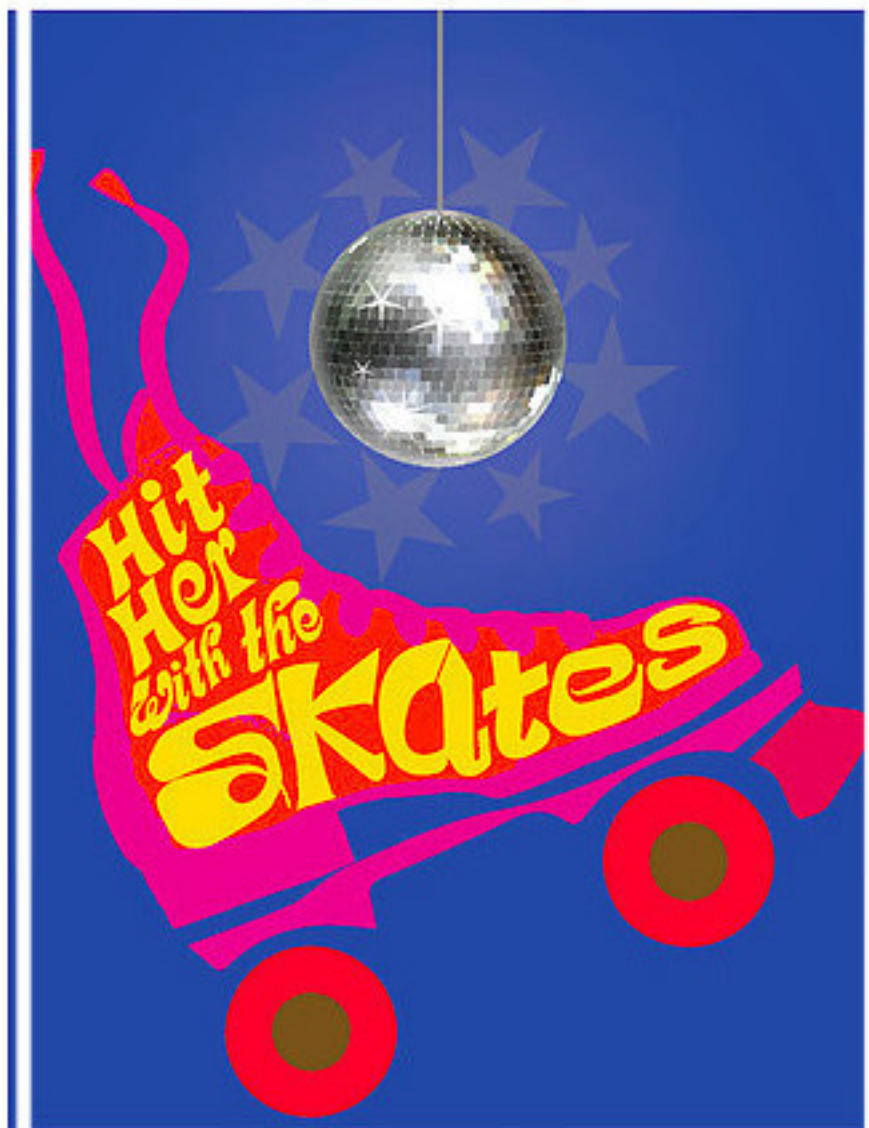
Richie Rebel says, "Hey, William!
Let the good times rock 'n' roll!"

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Life & Times of the Rebels of '69

Thornton Fractional Township High School South Class of 1969, Lansing, Illinois



Curtain Going UP!

Lansing Inspires Rock & Rollin' Musical



by **Christine Rea** (TFS '87)

The Beginning... Grease paint is in my blood. My performing and producing career began July 4, 1977. A crowd of family and friends gathered in my parents' backyard on Wildwood Avenue in Lansing, Illinois, for what I dubbed "Independence Day Spectacular."

I tapped my best friend, Karen, to sing "Yankee Doodle Dandy." I saved the showstopper, "You're a Grand Old Flag," for myself. It was a pyrotechnic success complete with costumes, flags, and sparklers.



I grew up with the coolest aunt on the face of the earth, **Marilyn Rea Beyer** (Massachusetts). She inspired and encouraged my theatrical instincts—first with a subscription to *BackStage* magazine on my 13th birthday, and second, sharing her best friend **Pat Wozny** (Illinois) with me. Aunt Marilyn and Pat cheered me on, schlepping out to see me perform wherever and whenever. And so, the die was cast...

The Career... Upon graduating the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana, I moved to Chicago and began auditioning. It was there that I landed the role of Mary Magdalene in the National Tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar* with Ted Neeley & Carl Anderson—the dudes (aka Jesus & Judas) in the Norman Jewison film. For two years, I crisscrossed the U.S. & Canada. Afterwards, I landed in the Big Apple and began pounding the pavement. This led to additional tours (National & European), regional theater gigs, and Off-Broadway. I cornered the market on hippie pop rock musicals, adding *Godspell*, *Hair*, *Tommy*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and *Beehive* to my resume.

But being in the spotlight was not what inspired me as a teenager doing shows at TF South. I cared about the ensemble and original work I experienced performing in

high school Readers Theater/Group Interpretation competition. I longed to create something that was truly my own. And so, I dove back into my childhood for the inspiration for my new musical, *Hit Her with the Skates*.



The Roller Rink... There was no place I'd rather spend my weekends than the roller rink. The school week dragged on forever in anticipation of Saturday afternoon. I'd pack up my flower-printed sleeping bag and head to my best friend's house. Giggling into the wee hours, we wondered, "Would the cute boy we'd seen the previous weekend be there again? Would the rink DJ take our song request this time?"

Orange shag carpeting, disco ball a-twirling, and 1970s music a-pumping. I was eight years old, but I felt light years ahead of my age on All-Skate Saturday at the Lynwood Roller Rink. It was my favorite place to be.



As magical as the rink was, it was also dangerous. Kids would cut you off with razor-like motions and purposely sabotage your groove. One fateful Saturday, some kid tossed a piece of shrapnel that made its way into my soft—celluloid-ish wheel. I shot the perpetrator one of my famous "Oh no you don't! This is WAR" looks.

Now he, along with two of his cronies, corralled me to one of the carpeted shag blocks. He snarled, "Kid, I've got a jackknife in my pocket. And I'll use it." It wasn't the first time that my devil eye had incited rage in a skater. And, it wasn't the first time that I'd been threatened at the rink. But something about the way that kid's hand sat in his baby-blue satin jacket pocket made me think he meant business. I

never returned...until 1982.

The Magic... I'd just wowed Heritage Middle School audiences as Rosie Alvarez in our acclaimed production of *Bye Bye Birdie*. I was riding a newfound wave of popularity. My 7th grade self had suddenly been catapulted into fame! Despite having only slightly above average mathematical skills, my adoring student body voted me Treasurer of the Student Class.

Our fearless teacher, Mr. Cronkite, oversaw the student council transition. All agreed that a skating party at the Lynwood Roller Rink was a fitting inauguration. The only trouble? I couldn't go back to the rink—no way, no how! The conversation went something like this—

MR. CRONKITE: Chris, you're the Class Treasurer. You have to attend the rink party.

CHRIS: You don't understand, Mr. Cronkite. Bad things always happen to me at the rink.

MR. CRONKITE: Don't be silly. Nothing bad is going to happen to you at the rink.

I really didn't have a choice. I threw on my Jordache jeans and a sweater with shoulder "wings." And when I walked through the roller rink vestibule, it all came rushing back like a long lost friend. I'd missed this place. As I whooshed across the rink floor, I fell back into a familiar rhythm and basked in the magic.

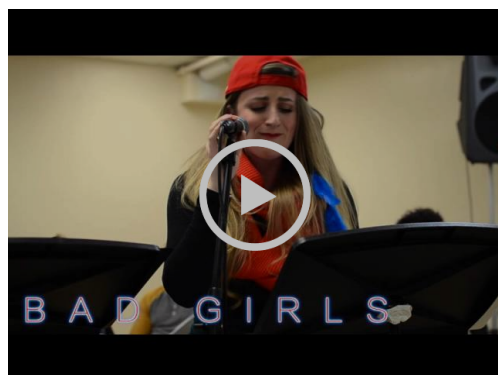
The Show... *Hit Her with the Skates* is pulled directly from that fateful Student Council Skate Night. You may recognize a bit of yourself and your loved ones in there, because it's the characters I grew up with who are the inspiration behind the show.

Hit Her with the Skates is *Grease* meets *Hairspray* with a sprinkle of *Xanadu*. It's All-Skate Saturday 1994 and rock star Jacqueline Miller is returning for a hometown concert at her beloved Windy City Skates. When complications hit her head on, Jacqueline comes face-to-face with her 12-year-old self and the golden age of the

roller rink in 1977. From the wisdom of the Ouija Board to the power of Smarties, *Hit Her with the Skates* explores the magic and hope of finding your one true love.



Christine introduces Hollywood star Tom Hanks and Minneapolis producer Mary Beidler Gearen to her new musical, *Hit Her with the Skates*.



[Click Here](#)
to experience the music of
[Hit Her with the Skates](#).

Christine Rea wrote the book and Rick Briskin composed the music. Together they wrote the lyrics. The show is currently in development with an eye towards an open-end Broadway run.

March 10, 2017 Feinstein's/54 Below, New York City

May 12–27, 2017 Hamilton Stage (UCPAC), Rahway, New Jersey

Hit Her with the Skates www.hitherwiththeskates.com

Christine Rea hwts@icloud.com

The Rea Women Share a Flair for Drama

by **Marilyn Rea Beyer** (Massachusetts)

Right from the first, my niece Christine Rea-Briskin (TFS '87) knew how to make an entrance. She was born the night Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, six weeks after our TFS class of '69 graduated.

Her flair for the dramatic showed up early. As the four-year-old flower girl in my (first) wedding, Christine flourished what she had in her little handbag—a big rubber spider! Heritage Middle School gave her a stage to play on, and T.F. South's drama teacher Henry Hertz brought out her best. Henry once told **Patti Wozny** (Illinois), “She’s like Marilyn, only MORE.” What an understatement!

When Christine launched her professional career I told her, “You’re living my dream, Chris.” She answered, “I’m trying!”

Chris has toured the world playing some of the most coveted roles in theatre. And now, she and her talented husband Rick Briskin are mounting their own show harking all the way back to days at the Lynwood roller rink. Once more, Chris is shooting for the moon!



Speech & Drama in Our TFS Past

In the first photo below, **Jerry Fritz** (Virginia), **Jack Wiers** (Hawaii), **Marilyn Rea Beyer** (Massachusetts), and **Harry Smith** (New York) take top senior year Speech Team honors.



In the second photo, '68-'69 Rebel Players are on tour in Illinois. They took 1st place in the Southeast Suburban Conference with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Front and center on the truck is **Pat Wozny** (Illinois).



TFS **TEAM69** Heard From...

Harry Smith (New York)—“Love” the February installment. [Life & Times 2017]
Feel very lucky to hear the stories of our classmates. I knew about the phony radio station ["Secret Message, Special Love"]. So sweet. Every time I read an installment, I feel lucky to be in the loop. Many, many thanks.

Peggy Peacock Kubic (South Carolina)—Thanks for letting us be part of the February 2017 issue of TF South Life & Times ["Keeping the Best"]. It was fun to read about other couples. You all deserve some special kudos for breathing life into our class with every issue. We are a very unique, closely knit group!

Judy Kaufer Lohr-Safcik (our TFS English teacher)
—Once again a great issue [Life & Times Feb. 2017]. As I get older, my long term memory gets a spark when I read your news. I especially remember Peggy and Ed Kubic’s relationship growing during Rhetoric class and various senior activities. Keep up the good work. By the way, I still live in Park Forest, IL and would love to hear from and/or see some of this class. [Give Judy a shout-out on her Facebook page, *Judy Kaufer Lohr-Safcik*, or email her at jklohersafcik@gmail.com]



Mike Wright (Colorado)—The February 2017 newsletter was a smash; great job once again!

Connie Kats (TFS '65)—That was a good read. I enjoyed it.

Glenn Wierzbicki (Illinois)—I love this. Keep it coming!

Celebrating March Birthdays

Marilyn Stone Weintraub, Ron Schultz, Lawrence Johnsen, Carolyn White Scofield, Ralph Davey, Ken Hanes, Linda Jensen, Debi Owles

Celebrating February Anniversaries

Karen & **George Grote** (Illinois)—26 years

Mario & **Christine Nelson Haro** (Indiana)—28 years

Lee & **Larry Valent** (Illinois)—30 years



Classmates! Dance half the night away with Lake Effect, Saturday, March 4 from 9 to 1 am at The Quest, 1204 W. Lincoln Hwy, Schererville, Indiana. **Bill Hutchison, Dean Groom** and bandmates Terry and Jim hope to see you there!

Help Us Connect with Our Classmates

Help us locate our classmates with whom we've lost contact. Invite them to subscribe to our monthly TFS Class of 1969 *Life & Times* e-newsletter. Classmates can reach us through our website tfsclassof69.weebly.com or email TFSouth69@gmail.com

Here are classmates we are looking for this month—

Jim Hopp

Ralph "Skip" Hoover

Randy Hollis

Bill Hodge

Linda Hill Huggy

Anne Hildebrand Timm

Donna Hielema Slager

Joann Hein Carlson

Patricia Hasting

Nancy Hansen Ledford

Robert Hanink

Chuck Haddock

Sharon Gulley Escalante

Bob Guadagno

Penny Griffin Deren

Tim Greider

Shirley Goluska Hoener

Chris Gallion

Randy Hartge
Tom Harrington

Debra Freeman Adams
Art Fotschky

 Click to forward the Life & Times to Classmates, Family & Friends

Stay in Touch!

Our 205 subscribers stay in touch through our monthly e-newsletter, the *Life & Times of the Rebels of '69*.

Send us your comments, news, photos, classmate re-connections, questions, stories, story ideas, reflections on the past, present, and future to

TFSouth69@gmail.com or message us through our Facebook page, [Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine](#)

For the March *Life & Times*

Photos: Christine Rea, Marilyn Rea Beyer, Peggy & Ed Kubic, Rebel Rouser

Video: Hit Her with the Skates

Editorial Content: Pat Walsh, Cheryl Ridder Woldhuis

Technical/Design Consultant: Bill Hutchison

Snailmail Correspondent: Dave Dickinson


Stage Manager: Bud Jenkins

Remember to Update

Click the update link at the bottom of our newsletter to update your email address with our MailChimp emailing service. And, keep your snailmail and email addresses and phone number current in our TFS Class of 1969 database. Send your changes to TFSouth69@gmail.com.

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Our Mission: To promote and grow our network of TFS Class of 1969 friendships by sharing information and planning reunion events to keep the spirit of the 40th Reunion alive and vibrant.

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