



Historical Echoes

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A Word from the Editor – Donna Becker

At Historical Echoes, we are looking forward to introducing you to more “mover and shaker” women through our first-person performances. In these newsletters, we will feature upcoming performances in order to pique your interest in learning more about women who helped us get where we are today.

What’s Coming Up

Next up is a Crème Tea on May 4 at the McPherson Opera House. Irene will bring you Eleanor Roosevelt in a reprise performance. Cost of Crème Tea tickets are \$31 at the Opera House.

July 13	Crème Tea	ARB
Aug.24	CrèmeTea	MOH
Sept.14	Light Tea	MOH
Sept. 22	Light Tea	ARB
Oct. 19	Light Tea	MOH
Nov. 9	Crème Tea	ARB
Dec. 1	Holiday Queen’s Tea	MOH
Dec. 15	Holiday Queen’s Tea	ARB

All performances are from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

MOH = McPherson Opera House

ARB = Dyck Arboretum, Hesston

What is a Crème Tea?

Traditional Crème Teas are a pick-me-up time mid-morning or as a break from general duties. Our Crème Teas are simpler than our Light Teas. We serve tea and cookies or a scone and do a *full character performance*. The ticket price is \$31 at the Opera House and \$28 at the Arboretum in Hesston. A youth ticket (ages 12-18) may be purchased for

Teas, and graduates of the Historical Performers Institute may give their recital performance at a Crème Tea.

Margaret Sanger, R.N.: Heroine or Villainess?

Our July event is a Crème Tea which will feature Margaret with her passions for women’s rights.

July Crème Tea

This mid-summer event will feature Irene as Margaret Sanger. Sanger was an early feminist, nurse, and women’s rights activist who coined the term “*birth control*.” After seeing many poor women's trauma and suffering from dangerous \$5 alley abortions, she began to shift her attention from nursing to the need for better family planning and contraceptives. Sanger has been maligned for her work to promote safe, effective, and accessible contraceptives for women. She ran afoul of the law and clergymen when her work pushed the moral boundaries of her time. The powerful men determined women should have as many children as possible to supply the industrial/factory and war/soldier needs. Sanger was a colorful and spirited character who will challenge your views of right and wrong.



Irene as Margaret Sanger

Character Costumes

Have you wondered about the costumes worn by our performers? What you see is historically authentic

clothing that represents a significant investment of time and money to find or have made. Take the costume Bonnie wore for her character, Katie Luther, wife of Martin Luther. This is what Bonnie says about it:

“Katharina Von Bora Luther was a matron if the manor during the time we call the Renaissance Age. As a result, I wanted a costume befitting a *Lady of the Manor*. With some research I found a renaissance website that sold historical women’s clothing. With their guidance I ordered the necessary pieces a Lady would wear: bloomers, over dress, stomacher, and over coat. A Lady would also have her hair back in a snood, so we ordered one of those. I went with a simple pair of leather slippers that would be tied. The whole costume weighs several pounds!

Also, since she was a lady of the manor, her housekeeper would help her get dressed. No buttons, so everything had to put on and tied in place.

After researching for Katie and realizing how much she contributed to the local economy plus needing to entertain at the top levels of society, it was only fitting that she be dressed in beautiful velveteen. Wearing her costume, I can understand why Martin said she is the *Lord of the Manor*! I felt her inner strength when I wore it, too. Wearing the costume, made me appreciate why the ladies needed a lady’s maid. Also, I can appreciate modern zippers!”



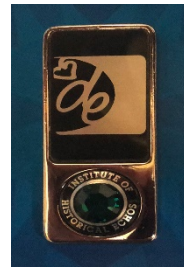
Bonnie as *Katie Von Bora Luther*

Thank you!

Historical Echoes could not do the *TEAs with Personality* without the help of a dedicated group of people who assist with check-in/welcome, set-up, refill the teapots, and do all the clean-up. We’d like to thank **Jean and Frank Ballew, Sissy Potts, Nickie Stevenson, Cristan McHenry, Katie Schmidt and Janice Walker**. You are very much appreciated!

Institute for First-Person Performance

Irene has developed the Institute for Historical First-Person Performers in a workshop format. She designed the Institute according to professional standards and created a multi-tiered certification program. As a graduate, I highly recommend the Institute for anyone who loves history and would like to tell the stories of persons who have led the way of progress generations ago. Students learn much about themselves and about the art and craft of this unique way of storytelling. See the website, Institute.Historical-echoes.com for information about the upcoming workshop scheduled for May 3 and 17 in Lindsborg. (Note the change of date.) The Institute pin is beautiful!



Area-wide Performances

Historical Echoes does performances by contract for a variety of groups and businesses. There are many possibilities for entertainment, fundraisers, celebrations of historic events, etc. We are especially interested in doing performances that highlight a social issue that is relevant today, such as mental illness, domestic and sexual abuse, misogyny, or other types of discrimination. A performance could be paired with a discussion or workshop. Next year is the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment which gave women the vote. We are ready to participate in the celebration of granting women this right, a 72-year-long struggle. Think Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or Carrie Catt. Contact any of us at the addresses on the newsletter masthead. We have developed more than 25 historical women for your choosing.

Modern Renaissance Woman: Irene Nielsen

You’ve seen Irene in her role with “TEA with Personality,” and have enjoyed and been moved by the women she has channeled in performances. But there is so much more! Recently I asked Irene to talk about her life.

DB: Where were you born and where did you live as a child?

IN: I was born in North Platte, NE. My father was a Lutheran Pastor, and we lived in Michigan, Florida and Texas. My growing up years from 5th grade through High School graduation in Dallas were foundational. I loved the southern culture. It set the standards for the rest of my life and my appreciation of real quality. Moving to Minnesota was a culture shock; this was 1957 and geographical regions were culturally very different and divided.

DB: *You are a veteran. Tell us about your service.*

IN: I graduated from college in 1961 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Public Health Certificate. I was commissioned as an Officer in the Army Nurse Corps. Because of my BSN and Public Health certification, I was immediately promoted to nurse in charge of Pediatrics, Immunizations, and Allergy clinics for dependent personnel. After I married and was pregnant, the military required that I be discharged. At the time they could not see a way for women to have children and remain in the military.

DB: *Young people today expect to have more than one career. Tell us about your careers.*

IN: I enjoy the adventure of change. Starting out, I enjoyed being a secretary and PBX operator at Universal Studios in Dallas. In nursing, I've been a Public Health Nurse, a Certified Nurse Midwife, and an entrepreneur in starting one of the first Birth Centers as an independent Nurse Practitioner. I've been a childbirth educator, Certified Tea Consultant, porcelain art teacher, and etiquette consultant. I've been a tearoom operator, a fine-dining restaurateur, a porcelain artist, Historical Performer, and instructor and coach for storytelling. Probably the happiest and most meaningful direct career were the 16 years I worked as a Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) planner. Now as a Psychologist and professor, I find that it all fits nicely as a package to honor and respect others and build a diverse tapestry for meaningful living.

DB: *What is one thing on your "bucket list" that would surprise us?*

IN: I wanted to become an attorney but decided to go in a different direction. I guess if I were allowed

health and unbelievable opportunity, I would like to be a political advocate for healthcare and decency for all. That could be as an elected representative or as a CEO of a Healthcare Corporation. And, yes, I would like to go back and finish my law degree.

DB: *Thank you, Irene, for letting us know more about you.*



We hope to see you on May 4 at the McPherson Opera House. Irene is scheduled to perform Eleanor Roosevelt.

Eleanor was born of material privilege but orphaned in childhood. Her Mother was a noted beauty and regularly told her daughter that she was an ugly duckling. Raised by a strict Grandmother she suffered from a lack of familial affection until she was sent to a finishing school in England. There she found an unconditional regard for herself as a worthy human.

Eleanor in later life admitted she began life fearful of being noticed, sought outside approval in her young marriage, and developed into a woman who feared no one and acted on a clear mission at the United Nations for International Human Rights.

Eleanor had no time for needless or hurtful gossip. One of her quotes of wisdom was:

Grand minds speak of ideas, average minds speak of events, and small minds speak of people.

Visions and National Plans

First, as a *Fellow, Historical Performer* we are required to engage in national contributions to the profession of storytelling and professional performances. Irene is currently Chair of a National Storytelling Network feasibility study to determine possible national review and accreditation for non-institutional programs. The effort is to assure a consumer transparency for a student to judge the program investment for themselves.

Secondly is the vision. Historical Echoes is leading the national way towards a Guild for Historical Performers who seek to share experiences, ideas, and professional, continuing education.

Visit our web site at www.historical-echoes.com. You'll find information about the characters we perform, the dates of upcoming Teas and other events, and a link to order tickets.