

Volunteering Has Its Moments

Ann Barham Pugh





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We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!

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VOLUNTEERING HAS ITS MOMENTS!

One-Act Comedy for Senior Actors

by

Ann Pugh

Author of the popular *Christmas Coffee* comedy and Award-winning *The Day They Kidnapped Blanche* both published by ArtAge

Cast: five females

Options: If male actors are available the role of Megs Abbott, TV Hostess, can be changed to Mark Abbott, TV Host. The role of Tony Stein can be played by a male without name change.

Playing time: approximately 20 minutes.

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MEGS ABBOTT, is a popular TV personality in her own right, but is much at ease subbing for Opal, the famous TV talk show star. MEGS is a congenial senior, stylishly dressed in pants-suit with handsome accessories and fashionable glasses used when referring to notes on her clipboard.

SYLVIA ARMSTRONG, vocalist in the Palm Springs Senior Follies and former 'Miss Nevada of 1955,' is striving to retain her 'Glamour Queen' appearance in spite of her age. She is vain, but has a warm sense of humor, winning personality and broad smile. She is well made up -- with artificial eye lashes and blonde wig in the bouffant or 'big-hair' style. Sylvia's wardrobe suggests she clings to theatrically faddish fashions for many seasons: from her gold or silver spike heels to her plastic purse on a gold chain and big chunky jewelry. Sylvia is loaded with stage savvy. If she had a role model it would be Ethel Merman.

ALICE MADISON is a retired secretary, eternal perfectionist and office subordinate (*who brought coffee to her boss*). She wears a prim tailored suit. Her neat blouse has a ‘Peter Pan’ Collar. She has no jewelry, and off-the-face hat, non-stylish reading glasses and practical shoes. Her hair is untouched; white or salt-and-pepper. She carries a thick twenty year-old leather briefcase. One might imagine her as a nun.

WANDA GARRISON is a retired CEO of her own Fortune 500 Company, and proverbial head honcho. She wears a tailored pants-suit with Gucci or Prada silk stole and understated jewelry. Her hair, probably styles in a 5th Avenue salon, is colored henna. Not a smidgen of gray shows. Her stilettos and matching shoulder-strap handbag are Italian leather. She is one bitch.

TONY STEIN is an athletic, casual, free spirit in old jeans, oversize t-shirt boldly emblazoned with ‘*Independence Speedway*’, carelessly untied and worn-out sneakers, sports cap turned backwards (*a national or local team*), gray pony tail bound with rubber band, and small ear rings in pierced ears.

* * *

To add to the fun: The director can have ‘Plants’ scattered among audience to applaud on cue, etc. and assure lively audience participation.

Simple staging: At center stage is a rectangular conference table parallel to footlights. When conference table is not available, two card tables can be linked lengthwise parallel to footlights. Downstage side of table has a sign reading: ‘THE OPAL SHOW’. Upstage are five desk chairs, preferably swivel type: four behind table and one stage left. On the table is a sign with a handle. It reads: ‘APPLAUD’. An overhead upstage banner declares: ‘SENIOR VOLUNTEER WEEK.’

Hand props: applause sign, clipboard, old thick briefcase, cell phone, BlackBerry, legal tablet, *Reader’s Digest* page, red rose in bud vase, laptop and four body mikes created by using top halves of ball point pins with clips for lapels, etc. Lengths of black wire are attached to clips.

You can find suggestions about how to do a readers theatre production following the script.

* * *

Time: Afternoon, the present

Scene: Network TV Studio

(Megs Abbott with broad smile and a clipboard is center stage, addressing TV Audience. (the actual audience))

MEGS: Good afternoon! I'm Megs Abbott standing in for Opal! Welcome to our final segment saluting twenty-seven million seniors over the age of fifty-five, who, according to an AARP survey, volunteer over four hours a week! *(pointedly)* Wow! Twenty-seven million of you!

(Megs scans audience with sign reading: 'APPLAUD')

Audience applauds.)

Your monetary value is over seventy-one million dollars a year! *(pointedly)* Seventy-one million! That's mega bucks!

(Megs scans audience with sign reading: 'APPLAUD')

Audience applauds.)

Our series has honored American Red Cross disaster volunteers, Foster Grandparents, Abused Women Shelters, Aids workers, and dozens of dedicated groups, but today we present some of those rare amusing moments experienced by volunteers. You know about your *(taps on applause sign)* cue to participate. *(places sign on table)* When we go on the air our cameras *(points to right and left areas of rear of theatre)* will often be on you, but please ignore them. Ladies, *(very discreetly)* if you need to use the restroom, go now. Our producer hates to see empty seats, and we don't have folks hired to slip into them like they have at the Oscars. Okay?

(Plants' in Audience respond: "Okay".)

Before our producer signals *(does hand signal)* 'You're On', let's have a sneak preview of our guest panelists. *(consults clipboard)* First is Sylvia Armstrong, vocalist with the Palm Springs Senior Follies. Some of you may remember her as Miss Kansas of 1965! *(turns to stage right, and calls off stage)* Meet Sylvia Armstrong!

(‘APPLAUD’ sign business)

(Audience applauds.

Sylvia, the seasoned showgirl, hurries on flashing broad smile and waving to Audience.

Audience applauds.)

SYLVIA: Hi! *(strikes a self-assured showgirl pose next to Megs)*

MEGS: *(to Audience)* Next is Alice Madison, ‘The 1968 Secretary of The Year!’ *(turns to stage right, and calls off)*

(Audience applauds.

Alice enters clutching briefcase, gives shy nod to Audience.)

ALICE: *(insecurely, barely audible)* Uh...*(awaits further instructions)*

SYLVIA: *(warmly, in a stage whisper)* Come on, Honey!

MEGS: Yes, Ms. Madison. Next to Sylvia, if you please.

(shyly, Alice moves over next to Sylvia.)

MEGS: *(to Audience)* Now guest number three! Wanda Garrison, recently retired Fortune 500 Female C-E-O of her own company! *(turns to stage right, and calls)* Ms. Garrison! *(waits a beat, calls again)* Ms. Garrison! *(repeats ‘APPLAUD’ sign business)*

WANDA: *(enters business-like, but ignoring audience and focused on cell-phone conversation, orders firmly)* Right! E-mail my committee! Remind them we begin promptly at seven-thirty pm. *(beat)* Roger! Seven-thirty! *(commanding)* Bingo waits for no one! *(clicks off cell-phone, moves over next to Alice, and views her wardrobe with an air of superiority)*

MEGS: Last, but not least: Tony Stein, a name you’ll recall from the 1980 Indianapolis-- *(interrupted)*

(Tony's spunky entrance steps on Meg's introduction. With a grin and fistful of loose typed pages, she faces audience smiling with arms out-stretched and thumbs up, like a victorious athlete. She accidentally drops six or so pages.

Sylvia smiles patiently.

Alice scampers over to pick up the pages and arrange them neatly)

WANDA: (disgusted with Tony, growls to Sylvia) Did they have to book an old Hippie?!)

(Tony, good-naturedly shrugs off the slur.)

Alice hands pages to Tony, who nods her thanks.)

MEGS: *(to guests, indicating chairs)* If you'll be seated, I'll get your body mikes. Be right back. You might review your E-mails. We're on in fifty-five seconds. *(dashes off stage right)*

(Sylvia digs into purse, pulls out eight or so typed sheets clipped together, plus a compact with mirror and a lipstick. She primps, checking her hair, applying lipstick and getting psyched up by singing to herself.)

SYLVIA: *(sings or talk/sings to herself)*
There's no business like show business,
Like no business I know!
Let's go with the show!

(Wanda glances at Sylvia in disgust.

Alice unlocks brief case, pulls out typed pages and legal pad, and sets them neatly on her table space.

Wanda removes a BlackBerry from her purse and deposits it on her table space.)

SYLVIA: *(glances over at Wanda)* Didn't you bring your typed scripts?

WANDA: (*smugly, taps BlackBerry*) It's here on my--

SYLVIA: (*interrupts with bubbling enthusiasm*) Oh, you have exactly what my grandson has! When he visits me, he's constantly on that cute little uh... uh...Raspberry!

WANDA: (*flatly*) BlackBerry.

SYLVIA: (*shrugs*) Whatever, it's cute!

(Wanda is dissatisfied with her chair and signals Alice to switch chairs. Alice politely obliges.

(Alice digs into briefcase, pulls out a bud vase holding a red rose, and places it on her table space.)

WANDA: (*sarcastically, to Alice*) Did you forget your laptop?

ALICE: No. Ma'am! (*pulls laptop from briefcase*) I promised to take notes for the ladies in our Secretarial Society back home in Omaha.

WANDA: (*sarcastically*) Correction! The term Secretary is archaic. You were an Administrative Assistant.

ALICE: (*firmly*) No, Ma'am! (*proudly*) I was a secretary! (*places laptop on table space, and arranges it as if setting up office desk while happily whistling: 'Whistle While You Work.'*)

SYLVIA: (*politely interrupts Alice*) Don't whistle!

ALICE: (*confused*) Oh?

SYLVIA: Bad luck before a show.

ALICE: (*shaken*) I'm so sorry. I uh...didn't know.

SYLVIA: (*good naturedly*) No reason you should, (*taps Alice's hand*) but now you do.

ALICE: (*genuinely grateful*) Yes, thank you. (*typing*) I'm making a note of that.

WANDA: (*scoffs impatiently*) Show business!

(Megs returns with body mikes. She clips Sylvia's at neck and runs wire down back of her dress.

It tickles, and Sylvia giggles.

Reviewing her typed sheets, Tony is comfy, leaning back in chair and resting her feet on table.)

WANDA: (*glaring at Tony's messy sneakers*) So uncouth!

(Megs offers to attach Wanda's body mike.)

WANDA: (*waves Megs away*) I can handle it. I'm an experienced public speaker.

(Alice is squeamish about mikes wires on her body as if Megs was a nurse with a painful injection.

Tony obligingly lifts the front of t-shirt for body mike wire, and exposes her psychedelic-type wildly colored bra.

If role is played by male, he has a large chest tattoo.)

WANDA: (*to Sylvia, repulsed by Tony*) Typical of one who wasted her youth as a damn Hippie!

TONY: (*shakes head and grins politely to Wanda*) Four years in Africa. Peace Corps. Three in Israel installing irrigation on a kibbutz.

WANDA: (*half-heartedly*) Sorry.

TONY: (*good-naturedly with blaze's shrug*) No problem.

SYLVIA: (*to Tony*) Did I hear in the Green Room that you're one of America's outstanding volunteers?

ALICE: (*nods enthusiastically*) Yes! I read all about her in the AARP Magazine.

SYLVIA: (*genuinely*) Interesting! Tony dear, what claims most of your volunteer hours?

TONY: (*genuinely modest*) Golly, I reckon it's Habitat For Humanity, Shenandoah Mountain Search And Rescue Group, and Katrina where I've been-- that's why I'm-- (*indicates clothes*). But I promised to be here.

SYLVIA: You look fine, dear. It's what you do that counts.

WANDA: (*shrugs*) Never heard of that Shenandoah Mountain thing.

ALICE: (*types, eagerly to Tony*) What is it?

TONY: We search for kids lost in the mountains, who wander off after an animal or something. And adults with Alzheimer's. Or those who are off their medications and wander away.

SYLVIA: (*impressed*) Did I see on the News last winter that you rescued Boy Scouts lost in a blizzard, but are okay now?

TONY: (*modestly*) Yes, ma'am.

WANDA: (*dismisses Tony, turns to Sylvia*) What do you do?

(*Alice is typing.*)

SYLVIA: (*chirps*) Sing.

WANDA: (*flatly*) Yes, Ms. Armstrong, I heard you're in (*demeaningly*) some sort of musical revue. But what do you do that's important? What volunteer work?

SYLVIA: (*nods head*) I sing.

WANDA: (*impatiently*) For what? Where?

SYLVIA: For the Stoke Activity Center. In hospitals, rehab centers, nursing homes. And in the Paul Newman Theatre that he build for Stoke patients.

ALICE: *(enthralled, typing)* Oh, my! A celebrity doing that! Do you sing opera or popular tunes?

SYLVIA: Whatever the patients like. They may have lost their speech and mobility, but many are learning to smile and laugh again.

(Tony, Alice, and Megs applaud Sylvia.

Wanda is not impressed.)

TONY: *(politely to Alice)* What's your volunteer job of choice?

ALICE: *(modestly proud)* Meals-on-Wheels and Hospice.

TONY: Thank God for you folks! My family leaned heavily on you when Dad was at the end. *(after quick nostalgic sign, turns politely to Wanda)* We haven't heard about you.

WANDA: *(arrogantly)* I am Supervisor of All City Volunteers in my metroplex. It is my policy that volunteers operate at maximum efficiency. Twenty-four-seven!

(Sylvia rolls her eyes. Tony refrains from laughing out loud.)

MEGS: *(to guest, energetically)* Folks, it's air time! *(beat)* Ready?

(Sylvia, Alice, Wanda and Tony nod 'yes', clear their throats, and sit at full attention, as if ready for inspection.)

You look great. We're on in three seconds. *(counts)* Three! Two!
And...*(brightly, into offstage cameras, with increased audio)* Good afternoon! I'm Megs Abbott substituting for Opal, home with a bout of the flu, but she's watching us. Let's wave and wish her well. *(like a cheer leader, stirring up Audience to wave and join in greeting)* Get well, Opal!

(Audience waves and calls 'Get well, Opal!')

(to Audience) To close Opal's week-long Salute to Senior Volunteers we will share some lighter moments from the thousands of E-mails that you viewers submitted. Here to read your entries is a delightful panel of dedicated volunteers whose names were submitted by their co-workers. *(turns to panel)* Panel, are you ready?

SYLVIA, TONY, ALICE & WANDA: *(simultaneous)* Yes! You bet! *(etc)*

(Above replies are with varying degrees of self-confidence and enthusiasm. Sylvia smiles broadly and throws up both arms in a gung-ho victory gesture. Alice manages a shy smile. Tony grins and salutes Megs. Wanda nods with dignified self-assurance)

(indicating Sylvia) From the Palm Springs Senior Follies comes the favorite entertainer of countless stroke victims, Sylvia Armstrong! *(waves 'APPLAUD' sign)*

(Camera savvy Sylvia winks and throws kisses to Audience. 'Plants' applaud, encouraging Audience to join them)

Sylvia, you have the first E-mail one from *(consults clipboard)* Beverly Dennis of Saint Louis?

SYLVIA: *(perky, waves typed pages overhead)* That's right! As in the popular Judy Garland movie! Remember? *(talk/sings with lively movement)* 'Meet Me in Saint Loo-ey, Lew-is! Meet Me at the Fair!'

(Alice types enthusiastically. Her lips read 'Cute!')

WANDA: Oh, spare us.

MEGS: *(good naturedly)* Let's hear what Betty Dennis submits.

SYLVIA: *(reads from typed page)* My Alter Guild has a transportation service for the elderly. I was to take a ninety year-old man to his doctor. I knocked on his front door, and a young guy opened it. The family was watching replays of The World's Series. The guy pointed down the hallway. I found the gentleman waiting in his room. He was proudly wearing his

Cardinal's baseball cap! *(beat)* But nothing else! *(beat)* I mean he was naked as a jaybird!

ALICE: *(aghast)* Oh! Oh, dear! *(uncertain if it's too risqué to type)*

(Megs, Sylvia, and Tony snicker. Wanda is not amused)

MEGS: you can bet the Alter Guild heard about that. *(beat)* Did you know almost thirty percent of all volunteer work is church or synagogue related? *(indicates Tony)* Our panelist Tony Stein was suggested by thousands of New Orleans church and synagogue volunteers, who praise her work with Operation Katrina. *(waves 'APPLAUD' sign)*

(Plants' applaud, encouraging Audience to join them)

Tony, don't you have an E-mail from Rabbi Joseph Simon of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles?

TONY: Sure do!

MEGS: We're all ears!

TONY: *(reads from typed sheet)* When the earthquake struck Northridge we needed boxes to load belongings of displaced folks. We phoned a box company to buy cartons. Understand our community was without power. A man answered and said: 'Our computer's down. I can't do business without a computer.' *(beat)* We called a second company where a young guy said to come on over. He could sell boxes. He said he was happy to help anyone, but would someone please turn off that damn burglar alarm!! *(beat)* You see the earthquake alert triggered his burglar alarm and it had been screaming since four AM when the first earthquake hit!

WANDA: I have no patience with--

MEGS: *(politely cuts Wanda off)* Later, Wanda *(indicates Alice)* Panelist Alice Madison of Omaha, Nebraska, received her hometown's greatest honor as 'volunteer of the year' – not for one year, but for this her twentieth year! *(waves 'APPLAUD' sign)*

(Plants' applaud, encouraging Audience to join them.)

Sylvia and Tony applaud with enthusiasm, pat Alice on the back.

Alice ducks her head shyly.)

Alice, I believe you have a message, but it has no name or address?

ALICE: I assume he or she prefers to remain anonymous.

WANDA: (*mutters sarcastically*) Brilliant assumption!

MEGS: (*ignores Wanda*) Let's hear from our anonymous friend.

ALICE: (*reads from typed pages*) I can't tell you how often well-meaning volunteers stamp invitation envelopes without an address! They get to yakking and don't mind their business. While sending DVDs to our troops, we packed large boxes for everyone on four submarines. One eager volunteer, who didn't understand the instructions, unpacked a box and returned the DVDs back to the shelves, undoing hours of work!

WANDA: (*firmly*) Wouldn't happen on my watch!

(Sylvia and Tony look at one-another meaningfully)

MEGS: (*politely firm*) No, Wanda, I'm sure it wouldn't. (*smiles, indicating Wanda*) It isn't surprising that panelist Wanda Garrison has done a remarkable job coordinating volunteerism for a large metro plex. She was CEO of her own fashion company. (*waves 'APPLAUD' sign*)

('Plants' applaud, encouraging Audience to join them.

Wanda responds with the sedate nod of Queen Elizabeth)

Ms. Garrison, don't you have an E-mail about someone we all know?
Submitted by Bonnie Keller out in Hollywood?

WANDA: Correct.

MEGS: We're listening.

WANDA: (*scrolls BlackBerry, reads*) All profits in our Thrift Shop go to Breast Cancer Research. Our most generous contributor is Jane Withers--

(*Alice, enthralled by celebrity name, types away busily.*)

the former child movie star. Although she's known for saving everything from her childhood doll and Teddy Bear collections to costume jewelry and wigs, Jane brings us loads of contributions every single week. (*beat*) And returns each week (*beat*) to buy them back!

ALICE: (*types*) Ms. Garrison, does she have the darling little Teddy Bear that Eleanor Roosevelt gave her?

WANDA: (*mutters*) Who cares?

MEGS: (*ignores Wanda, turns quickly to Tony*) Tony, you have an E-mail from Linda Seymour of the Manhattan Emergency Response Team?

TONY: That I do!

MEGS: May we hear it, please?

TONY: (*reads from types pages*) Since Nine-Eleven we have fire drills in our building, and I'm responsible for evacuating my floor. I checked the office of my boss, a film producer. He was at his desk sipping a martini. When I told him it's a rule that everyone exit the building, he said, 'I'm too busy creating special effects to bother with that stuff, and it would be a good career move for you to skip my office.' (*beat*) I replied, 'Okay, and when your office is on fire, I'll shrug it off as a mere special effect!'

MEGS: Touche! Linda told him off!

(*Alice nods in agreement while typing.*)

WANDA: (*firmly*) My policy would be to file an official complaint with--

MEGS: (*interrupts*) Not now, Wanda. (*beat*) Moving right along! Sylvia, you have an incident from Eileen Murphy of Catholic Charities in Philadelphia?

SYLVIA: That's right. (*reads from typed page*) Last spring during our picnic for underprivileged youngsters an eight-year-old boy sat on a bench next to a man and asked him, "Mister, why is your collar turned backwards?" The man replied, "Because I'm a Father." The kid shrugged and said, "My dad is a father, but he don't wear his collar backwards." The man smiled and said, "But I'm a Father to hundreds." The boy gasped, "Hundreds? Golly, mister, maybe you oughta wear your pants backwards!"

ALICE: (*shudders*) Oh, mercy! (*shakes head, not typing it*)

(*Megs, Tony, and Sylvia snicker*)

MEGS: Alice, tell us what Winnie Gilbert says about an incident in her Chicago non-profit store called 'Better to Give'?

ALICE: Yes, ma'am. (*reads from typed sheets*) We give Chicago youngsters free school supplies, so we rely heavily on second-hand, donated computer equipment. We have a used cash register keyboard with keys that pop off now and then and have to be glued back on. One day I was working at the register, trying to check out a long line of youngsters. As I whacked away at the keyboard, one of the keys flew off. A fourth-grader picked it off the floor, handed it back to me and declared, "Lady, you lost your control."

MEGS: Wouldn't Art Linkletter love that? (*to Audience*) anyone besides me old enough to remember 'Kids Say the Darndest Things?' How many?

(*Sylvia shrugs and raises hand, signals Audience to join her as Alice and Tony raise hands. Wanda dodges their eyes, busily arranging her stole.*)

(*'Plants' encourage seniors in Audience to raise hands*)

MEGS: Next, an E-mail from Beverly Cardona of Fort Worth, Texas. Read it, Tony.

TONY: (*reads from typed page*) I have been a Symphony League volunteer since we began raising funds for our Orchestra over fifty years ago. This year we raised fifty thousand dollars with an auction. Over the years we

have had spectacular fund raisers. Our most memorable one was in 1966!!
We sold (*beat*) Kleenex and made (*beat, proudly*) ten cents a box!

MEGS: How times change!

(Alice nodding in total agreement, types away.)

(turns to Sylvia) Sylvia, you have an E-mail from June Huffman of that same city, right?

SYLVIA: Right! *(reads from typed page)* Our Girls' Service League sends daughters from low-income families to college. This year we had a request from parents who wanted our assistance for their (*pointedly*) eleventh daughter! Our chairman decided the parents must be devout Catholics, but a committee member disagreed declaring, "They could be sexy Baptists (*beat*) like Karen and Me!"

(Alice is shocked beyond typing.)

MEGS: *(laughs)* Hard to top that! But we'll try. Tony, share with us Lou Key's incident from West Palm Beach, Florida.

TONY: *(reads from typed page)* When our hurricane hit, residents had homes and contents totally damaged, windows shattered, roofs demolished! Our Red Cross Team was helping a family load their belongings when we noticed a boarded up window on the neighbor's house. On the plywood, they had written, "The Fat lady Has Sung!"

MEGS: As bad as things are, we retain our sense of humor, thank God! Christine Thomas of the Mennonite Non-Profit store in Indianapolis helps needy folks in Kenya. She writes... well, Alice, you read it.

ALICE: *(reads from typed page)* At a board meeting we were one chair short, so I pulled a crate from the store room to sit on. Out from the bottom popped what looked like a dead rat. I screamed bloody murder and ran out the front door followed by three screaming ladies. An officer in a police car heard our screams, figured it was a burglary and came quickly. With pistol in readiness he darted into the store. But he found it was not a rat at all. It was only a toy woolen sheep that belonged in our Christmas Nativity

display. I tried to apologize to the cop, but he was ‘put out’ with me for wasting his time. Golly, rats scare me.

MEGS: (*shudders*) Ugh! Me, too. (*beat*) Bonnie Pinkston of Phoenix has something for us. Tony, care to share?

TONY: (*nods, reads from typed page*) Ordinarily, all my Meals-on-Wheels deliveries are predictable. However, one day I was unable to cover all of my route and asked my nephew, a college freshman, to help out. His last stop was at the home of an old lady, tucked in bed, wearing a fancy bed jacket and too much make-up. To my nephew’s surprise the old lady invited him into her bed! Actually tried to seduce him! (*beat*) Well, he couldn’t wait to hand her the meal and head for the door. When he reached it and was almost out, she cackled and yelled out loud: “April Fool!”

(Tony and Sylvia snicker.)

WANDA: (*protects*) Not original! I read that in ‘Reader’s Digest’ or--

MEGS: (*interrupts*) Sure! (*pulls magazine page from pocket*) Bonnie admitted submitting it to the magazine and sent us a copy of the published page....Okay?

WANDA: (*sulks*) I suppose.

(Sylvia, Tony and Alice try to hide their smiles at Wanda getting her come-uppance.)

MEGS: Let’s skip to Seattle, where the annual Scottish Dog trials benefit the Children’s Hospital. Sylvia, can we hear Dotty Barnes’ E-mail?

SYLVIA: (*reads from typed page*) A woman tried to enter her cat in our dog trial. When the judges said, “No way”, she defiantly picked up her cat, and (*beat*) personally ran the dogs’ obstacle course (*beat*) carrying her cat!

MEGS: Pardon the pun, but I’d say she was a bull dog (*beat*) from Washington, DC. Let’s hear from Sarah Goodwin, Docent of the White House Gift Shop. Tony, what does Sarah report?

TONY: (*reads from typed page*) A tourist from down south approached me saying, (*southern accent*) “Dar-lin, Ahh needs a dozen Christmas ornaments for mah son’s birthday party. Like the ones of President Lincoln’s son, Todd, on his little hobby horse.” I showed her our hobby horse ornaments and explained the boy was not Lincoln’s son, but he was the son of President Grant. She squealed, (*southern accent*) “President Grant? Why he was an al-co-hall-ic and a Yan-kee! A bad model for young boys, (*beat*) so gimme Jimmy Carter’s son on a hobby horse!” (*beat*) I replied, “President Carter has a daughter, but no son.” That lady stormed out declaring: (*southern accent*) “Hells Bells! Politicians mess up ever-thin!”

MEGS: Time for just one more E-Mail. Sylvia, read us about Kathy Brazington of the Bargain Box in Toledo, Ohio.

SYLVIA: (*reads from typed sheets*) Our non-profit clothing store had three new yuppie volunteers sorting a pile of contributions. One held up a read nylon night gown and teased, “I bet she was one hot mama in this!” The yuppies burst into giggles, but a dignified elderly volunteer was not amused. She whispered, “That was my favorite nightie.” (*beat*) That same day we came across a (*beat*) G-string!

(Sylvia and Tony roar!)

ALICE: (*falls back in chair*) No! Merciful heavens! No! (*throws up arms, shakes head, not about to type it.*)

TONY: (*laughing*) Bet nobody in Toledo confessed to that! Wonder if the IRS allows a G-string as a charity deduction?

MEGS: (*laughs, rolls eyes*) Don’t want to go there! (*beat*) Never knew you Seniors were so (*beat*) Racy! (*shrugs*) Sorry, folks that’s it! Time’s up! (*turns to Sylvia, Alice, Wanda, Tony*) Take a bow, folks! You were great!

(Sylvia, Alice, Wanda, and Tony bow, wave to Audience.

Sylvia tosses kisses to Audience.

‘Plants’ lead the Applause.)

(to Audience) You were great, too. Remember to watch Opal on Monday!

And as Opal would say, if you aren't volunteering already, why not start now?

(Megs, Sylvia, Wanda, Alice and Tony ad-lib: "Was fun," "You were terrific," "You, too" etc..)

WANDA: *(to Megs, etc.)* After hearing all these "Volunteer Moments," I want to apologize for being so negative. *(sighs)* Tony, those tennis shoes really are okay. *(genuinely sorry)* I don't know what got into me!

TONY: *(warmly to Wanda, pats her shoulder)* Maybe a little stage fright. *(kindly)* Wanda, we all have our demons.

ALICE: *(politely)* If I was curt to anyone--

WANDA: Alice, you were a dear when you should have kicked me in the butt! *(to Sylvia)* Sylvia, your self-assurance made me green with envy.

SYLVIA: *(warmly, winking)* Honey, I'm a big-time fraud.

WANDA: What?

SYLVIA: I was booed off the stage when I was ten, so I learned to fake all this show-biz self-assurance.

WANDA: I can't believe it. You're so smooth.

TONY: What do you say we all grab a bite at that corner pizza grill?

SYLVIA: Terrific! I'm starved after dieting for this show. You know TV *(slaps hips)* puts pounds on you!

TONY: Let's go!

WANDA: *(meekly)* Me, too?

TONY: *(pats arm around Wanda)* You bet! *(turns to Megs)* And will the glamorous TV star join us?

MEGS: (*laughs*) Count me in, guys! You're the stars! And you've just proved that volunteerism has it's really precious moments!

(All exit, laughing, arm-in-arm)

#

Suggestions for Readers Theatre

This comedy is designed for five female readers, including the role of Megs, with option for one or two roles played by males.

Megs (or Mark) may also serve as narrator, introduce the time and setting, cast in order-of appearance if there is no printed program, and describe necessary stage business.

Each actor has a comfortable barstool that swivels and has a back. Each actor has a comfortable foot rest to avoid restless dangling feet. Swivels allow actors to have natural body reactions to one-another.

Each actor has a music stand for script in black loose-leaf notebook.

When the actors enter they take her/his seat on barstool.

Megs may swivel around with her back to audience to suggest her exit and swivel around to face then audience upon her return saying the line: "I'm back to attach body mikes: Sylvia, first."

Otherwise, Megs may narrate the exit and entrance business and remain seated with eyes down and on script during her period offstage.

At the end of the TV show, the four 'guests' can swivel around with backs to audience to indicate their exits and then back to face the audience for the additional lines.

Cast wear black pants and black turtle necks. Accessories worn above the waist suggest each character: wig and chunky jewelry for Sylvia; hat and glasses for Alice; fashionable jewelry and silk stole for Wanda; red neck bandanna and *Dallas Cowboys Cap* for Tony. (*Option: cap of any popular sports team*)

Loose-leave notebooks make page turning smoother. Folding down right-hand top tip of each page guards against mistakenly turning 2 pages; each actor should highlight her/his own lines in yellow, cues in pink. Then have fun!