

# BUCKS COUNTY HERALD

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## Promising comedy opens Playhouse season

By Jean Brenner

A sense of excitement and anticipation permeated the historic Parry Mansion in New Hope a week ago Wednesday as reporters and videographers gathered and waited to meet, greet, and interview the actors, playwright, music composer and crew of "Clue," the opening show of the 2017 season at Bucks County Playhouse.

The morning event was carefully planned, beginning with brief presentations about the Parry Mansion and some background provided about the first play by BCP Producing Director Alex Frasier. Karen Etkoff, docent coordinator of the New Hope Historic Society spoke briefly about the Parry family whose generosity many years ago saved the village, renamed it New Hope and rebuilt the old mill later to become Bucks County Playhouse.

Then, each actor descended the stairs carrying a murder weapon used in the game "Clue," as they hammed up their roles in the play, "Clue," recently adapted from the film, written for the stage and directed by the talented Hunter Foster who introduced each person.

Last to descend was Sally



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*The cast of "Clue" talks in the kitchen of the Parry Mansion. From left are: Standing, Claire Simba, Kevin Carolan, William Youmans, director Hunter Foster, Erin Dilly, composer Michael Holland, Carson Elrod and Clifton Duncan; Sitting, Brian Carter, Cassandra Dupler, Sally Struthers and Lindsay Nicole Chambers.*

Struthers trying to look fierce with dagger in hand. She is clearly admired by the cast of 10 who respect and like her. "She is the nicest person. She is friendly, helpful, considerate, and has a wonderful sense of comedy timing," co-actress Erin Dilly said.

Everyone agreed, and later, during the question and answer ses-

sion in the Parry Mansion kitchen, Struthers' consideration of her co-actors was obvious. She deflected attention from herself and introduced one after another of the actors, always making a kind comment about them and their work.

"I'm 5 feet tall with shoes on," Struthers stated in response to my question, "but my spine is collaps-

ing; I'll be smaller soon," she said, impishly grinning the radiant Gloria Bunker smile we remember from her role in "All In the Family" in which as Gloria, she stood passionately for women's rights for nine years from 1971 to April 1979 and won two Emmy awards.

Struthers who is now 69 years old, travels 10 months of every year and seldom is in her Southern California home. "I've traveled all over the world," Struthers said, "but I have never been to New Hope before. I love it here!" she emphasized. "I should buy a house in New Hope."

The press conference was the most friendly, most interactive, and most fun one I have attended at BCP. The actors' personalities made me eager to see the play on opening night, and I am so glad I did.

The story is about six unique guests plus a butler and a maid who assemble for a dinner party at the home of Mr. Boddy. When their host turns up dead, it is clear that no one is safe. As the guests race to find the killer, the audience is kept guessing and laughing till the end.

The promising first show of the



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*Sally Struthers hams it up as she descends the Parry Mansion stairs.*

2017 season at Bucks County Playhouse, opened last week, and there are many more performances until May 20. Performance times vary during the week except for Mondays when the theater is closed.

Tickets range from \$40 to \$75. Full details are available at [buckscountyplayhouse.org](http://buckscountyplayhouse.org). The box office number is 215-862-2121.

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