

**The Northwest Chapter of the Mississippi Coon Club  
presents William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream**

By Gregory T. Burns

## NOTES

Who hasn't seen, been in, heard about, or read about a bad production of William Shakespeare? With that in mind, meet five members of The Northwest Chapter of the Mississippi Coon Club, a club dedicated to hunting raccoons for recreation and sport. The club's disastrous attempt at mounting a production of the Bard makes for some uproariously funny, yet memorable moments. This play should be performed by a male and entered in Humorous Interpretation. This is a difficult play to perform, as the actor has several difficult tasks at hand. First, he must create a mental picture of each character in the play. There are no ages listed for any of the characters; therefore, it will be up to the performer to decide the age of each character. Playing late twenties to as elderly as early seventies will not only elevate the difficulty of the performance, but it will also highlight the contrast between these five, very different men. Next, it will be important for the actor to have both the vocal and physical talents necessary to create five, lively, fiesty, slightly country gentlemen, who made the horrible decision to put on a play in order to raise funds for their men's club. The simplicity, universal honesty, and quirkiness of the situation and characters should make this play an actor's dream.

### Cast:

**Cletus**, President of the NW Chapter of the Mississippi Coon Club

**Wylie**, the Club's Secretary

**Norbert**, Vice-President of the Club

**Hank**, the Treasurer of the Club

**Wilmer**, the Thespian of the Club

**Cletus:** All right. All right. Settle down and have a seat. I hereby call this meeting of the Northwest Chapter of the Mississippi Coon Club to order. Wylie, could you please tell us the first and only order of business tonight?

**Wylie:** (*Reads from his notes.*) The first and only order of business tonight is the disastrous attempt of our club to dabble in something as difficult as drama, because it was a stupid idea for us to even consider and especially because none of us has had any dramatic training to speak of, except Wilmer, who portrayed the role of Carrot

in his first grade PTA play, sir!

**Cletus:** Thank you, Wylie. I see that the majority of our members are absent tonight.

**Norbert:** Cletus, as Vice-President of the Coon Club and in charge of membership, I am sad to announce that Slim, Wimpy, Tyler, George, Chuck, and Thumper, have all transferred their membership to the *Northeast* Chapter of the Mississippi Coon Hunters Association.

**Cletus:** I see. Well, Norbert, that doesn't surprise me. Hank, as Treasurer, could you please remind us *why* we put on this little fundraiser in the first place?

**Hank:** Sure thing, Cletus. We were broke.

**Cletus:** *Because?*

**Hank:** We didn't have any money.

**Cletus:** And *why* didn't we have any money?

**Hank:** We spent all of our funds.

**Cletus:** *On?*

**Hank:** Beer.

**Cletus:** *And...?*

**Hank:** *Funions.*

**Cletus:** *Why???*

**Hank:** Because we all agreed if we bought *Funions* instead of chips, we wouldn't have to spend money on dip.

**Cletus:** Norbert? Whose brilliant idea was it to put on a *play* to raise money?

**Norbert:** That would be my idea, Cletus.

**Cletus:** And would you refresh our memories as to *why* you thought putting on a *play* would bring us the needed funds to replenish our bank account?

**Norbert:** Well, the elementary school put on a play this fall. My daughter, Twila, was one of the leads. They did an original play entitled, *Fruit Salad is a Salad Made with Fruit*. Twila played a kiwi. The teacher said that the play raised enough money for them to buy new playground equipment. I just saw how professional everyone was up there on that stage. Well, golly, those little kids made it look easy! At the end of the play, everybody was standing up and clapping. I just figured if a bunch of kindergartners could make a ton of money as Talking Fruit, I thought maybe we could *really* cash in by putting on a *classic!*

**Cletus:** Norbert, tell us this. What gave you the hair-brained idea that *us* tackling *William Shakespeare* would be the most appropriate vehicle for the *talent* you see before you in this room?

**Norbert:** Well, I had heard that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a comedy, and no one seems to understand Shakespeare anyway. I just thought that meant no one in the audience would know if we messed