THE CAPITOL STEPS

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, the Capitol Steps began as a group of Senate staffers who set out to satirize the very people and places that employed them. In the years that followed, many of the Steps ignored the conventional wisdom ("Don't quit your day job!") and although not all of the current members of the Steps are former Capitol Hill staffers, taken together the performers have worked in a total of eighteen Congressional offices and represent 62 years of collective House and Senate staff experience.

Since they began, the Capitol Steps have recorded 27 albums, including their latest, Springtime For Liberals. They've been featured on NBC, CBS, ABC, and PBS, and can be heard 4 times a year on National Public Radio stations nationwide during their Politics Takes a Holiday radio specials.

The Capitol Steps were born in December, 1981 when some staffers for Senator Charles Percy were planning entertainment for a Christmas party. Ronald Reagan was President when the Steps began, so co-founders Elaina Newport, Bill Strauss and Jim Aidala figured that if entertainers could become politicians, then politicians could become entertainers! Their first idea was to stage a nativity play, but in the whole Congress they couldn’t find three wise men or a virgin! So, they decided to dig into the headlines of the day, and created song parodies & skits which conveyed a special brand of satirical humor that was as popular in Peoria as it was on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Most cast members have worked on Capitol Hill; some for Democrats, some for Republicans, and others for politicians who firmly straddle the fence. No matter who holds office, there's never a shortage of material. Says Elaina Newport, “Typically the Republicans goof up, and the Democrats party. Then the Democrats goof up and the Republicans party. That's what we call the two-party system.”

ALTHOUGH the Capitol Steps are based in Washington, DC, most of their shows are out-of-town or for out-of-town audiences, whether it’s the National Welding Supply Association, a University audience, High Schoolers, or State Legislators. In fact, the Capitol Steps have performed for the last 5 Presidents (6, if you include Hillary). The only complaints the Steps seem to get are from politicians and personalities who are not included in the program!

The material is updated constantly, whether it is the Democrats’ current infatuation with Barack Obama in "A Leader Like Barack" (to "The Leader of the Pack") or the latest opinion from Ann Coulter ("Loonies of the Right") or on the international side, President Bush and the Prime Minister of Japan reconciling their differences in the touching "Stand By Japan." No matter who's in the headlines, the Capitol Steps are equal opportunity offenders.

Brian Ash

"Once more into the cow suit!” exclaims Brian Ash as he prepares for his 18th year with the Capitol Steps. Brian graduated from Brandeis University in 1987 and worked for an online database covering Congressional activities before deciding impersonating Dick Cheney was the correct career path for him.

When not performing, Brian handles production details for all performances of the Capitol Steps from inside Capitol Steps World Headquarters. If you think it’s fun to coordinate the flight plans of four touring casts in an election year...then maybe you should consider applying for his position. Big shout out to my wife Darlene and my dog Zoe. Carthago delenda est!

Bari Biern

Bari Biern has been Stepping since 1993 and has appeared in several Capitol Steps off-Broadway runs. A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, Bari has performed on stages in and around the DC area and currently reviews plays and videos for "Metro Connection" on WAMU-FM. She is also a playwright/lyricist. Her first musical, A Dance Against Darkness: Living with AIDS, with music by Roy Barber, was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award as Outstanding New Play.

She has collaborated on several children’s musicals with fellow Steps Lenny Williams and Emily Bell Spitz. Bari, Mike Tilford and Lenny Williams have also completed a musical comedy adaptation of Titus Andronicus. In January 2006, the InSeries will present Mozart’s
The Marriage of Figaro: the Las Vegas Version with Bari’s lyrics and book by Elizabeth Pringle. Thanks to Scott, multi-talented husband/actor/artist/teacher extraordinaire for his love and support.

Bari recently recounted to the *NY Times* the bizarre real-life adventures of carrying props through airline security.

**Howard Breitbart**

Following a brief stint as Arnold Schwarzenegger’s body double, Howard joined the Capitol Steps as staff disciplinarian and pianist. During his 12-year tenure with the Steps, he has become particularly adept at laughing heartily at routines he has heard hundreds of times, and, even more spectacularly, not falling asleep during the spoken bits. He is currently working on a book entitled *Gyms of Small Town America* based on his travels with the Steps. Oh and by the way, he has also been musical director/pianist for Washington, D.C. productions of *The Last Five Years*, *Closer Than Ever*, *Romance, Romance*, *A Broadway Christmas Carol* and dozens of concerts for the Smithsonian Institution.

**Mike Carruthers**

After working for Congressman Joseph Minish (D-NJ), Mike toured in several shows including *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* as Frank. He appeared as Hysterium opposite Nipsey Russell in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Mike also appeared off-Broadway in *Unzippin’ My Doo-Dah*, *It Ain’t Over ‘Til the First Lady Sings*, *When Bush Comes to Shove*, and *Between Iraq and a Hard Place*.

**Andy Clemence**

Andy joined the Steps in 1996, and has spent the last five years trying to keep his frightening portrayal of President George W. Bush from rubbing off in real life. He appeared Off-Broadway in the Steps productions of *Unzippin’ My Doo-Dah*, and *It Ain’t Over ‘Til the First Lady Sings*, for which he was described as “ready for prime-time” by Variety magazine. Previous roles include Tony Whitcomb in The Kennedy Center’s *Shear Madness*, Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Ford’s Theatre), John Proctor in *The Crucible* (Patuxent Theatre), and Arnold Epstein in *Biloxi Blues* (Petrucci’s Main Street Theatre). If you watch the Discovery Channel, you’ve most likely heard his voice on many of their documentaries and specials. Andy holds a Fine Arts degree in Acting from Catholic University and began his career on tour with the National Players. He is currently writing music and lyrics for an original musical *Alias Jimmy Valentine*, based on an O’Henry short story.

**Jenny Corbett**

Jenny Corbett moved to DC from Chicago four years ago, where she studied improv and comedy at the Players Workshop of The Second City and did endless children’s theatre productions, including - but not limited to - every single fairytale known to humanity. DC has given her the privilege of working as an actor and a teaching artist with several local theatres such as Rorschach Theatre, Round House Theatre, Imagination Stage, Cherry Red Productions, Alden Theatre and Madcap Players. Jenny currently makes an uproarious living mocking our political leaders (and stupid people in general) in the Capitol Steps.

**Kevin Corbett**

Kevin has been working with the Capitol Steps for 5 years, including two off-Broadway runs at the Houseman Theater. His other recent stage credits include *Personals* (where he played many characters, including horny high school boy), *The Santaland Diaries* (a Macy’s elf), *Forever Plaid* (Sparky), *Wait Until Dark* (Mr. Roat), *Beyond Therapy* (Stuart), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seymour), *Mere Mortals*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare - Abridged*, and his one-man show *I’m Paranoid*. His feature film credits include *The Replacements*, and *Sleep Furiously*. 
Nancy Dolliver

Nancy Dolliver started out part-time with The Steps, while working full-time in television production. Production Management duties on shows such as The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour and for political clients on Capitol Hill often put her in contact by day with the politicians she parodied by night with The Capitol Steps. Fearing that these two careers would one day collide with disastrous consequences, she now works full time with the Steps. She has also appeared as Amy in Company at Signature Theater and starred in American Century Theater’s production of Laughter at Ten O’Clock, appearing in skits made famous by her favorite comedienne, Carol Burnett.

Morgan Duncan

Morgan Duncan holds a BFA from Howard University. He has appeared regionally at the Arena Stage in Washington, DC, the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, MN and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, OR. He has served as a company member of the Washington Stage Guild and on the faculty of the Round House Theatre School. Morgan appeared in the Capitol Steps 2003 production at the Houseman Theater, Between Iraq and a Hard Place.

Mark Eaton

Mark joined the Capitol Steps in 1993. He worked on Capitol Hill for ten years before leaving for the seamy underbelly of life as a lobbyist. His film credits include “out-of-focus man sitting next to boy eating peach in the distance” in a cable access after-school special. Mark is the most spiritually advanced and intellectually gifted member of the Capitol Steps -- he also got to write his own bio.

Michael Forrest

Michael Forrest has been living and working professionally in the Washington, DC area for twenty years, and has been a member of the Capitol Steps since 1996. Michael has also worked at Signature Theatre, Ford’s, Arena Stage, The Kennedy Center, and Shakespeare Theatre. Film and television credits include Homicide, The Wire, America’s Most Wanted, Major League 2, and Syriana with George Clooney. Michael resides in Silver Spring, MD with his beautiful wife, choreographer Debbie Saady Forrest and cat, Boo Radley.

Janet Davidson Gordon

Janet has happily been a member of the Capitol Steps for 13 years and loves traveling the country and making people laugh for a living. Before joining the world of political satire, she enjoyed such roles as Eliza in My Fair Lady, Eva Peron in Evita, Val in A Chorus Line, and originated the role of Aunt Tilly in It’s a Wonderful Life. She also enjoys coming up with new ideas for songs for the Capitol Steps. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with husband, Neil, and cocker spaniel, Holly. It’s a Wonderful Life.

Anne Willis Hill

Anne Willis Hill has been a member of the Capitol Steps since 1987. Her loves (in addition to her family) include music and politics, and the Capitol Steps have provided the perfect wedding! Anne received her Bachelor’s and Master’s in Vocal Performance from Temple University’s College of Music. She began her career on Capitol Hill in 1981 working for Sen. Lawton Chiles (D-FL) on the Senate Committee on Aging(!), Senate Governmental Affairs (!), Senate Budget Committee (!) A liberal Democrat, Anne retired herself temporarily from the Hill in 1995...

She has performed various and sundry roles through her career including Baskin-Robbins, babysitting, oh, you mean MUSICAL stuff-- Magic Flute, Old Maid and the Thief, Guys and Dolls, Hello Dolly!, you get the idea! She is also a long standing member of St. John’s United Methodist Church choir in Springfield, Virginia.
She loves her job with the Steps -- “Where else can I be a Democratic Donna Reed during the day and then put on a red dress and high heels and perform at night?” Lots of love to Robert and Caitlin for their support!

**Marc Irwin**

Despite being a highly educated musician who holds a doctorate in musical composition from Peabody University, Marc has spent the past seven years with the Capitol Steps. During that time, he has discovered that actual musical training is useless in this setting, and has played every song in the show in every key possible and also some in modes not previously heard in western music, in order to accommodate the “preferences” of the singers in the cast. Go Yankees.

**Ann Johnson**

Ann joined the Capitol Steps in August of 1993. (Congress was in recess and it just seemed like the thing to do.) Prior to her seduction into the world of political satire, Ann received two Helen Hayes Award nominations for her portrayal of “Trina” in Studio Theater’s *March of the Falsettos* and *Falsettoland*. Other roles include “Mama Rose” in *Gypsy*, “Sally” in Stephen Sondheim’s *Follies* and the starring role in *A Second Chance*, a musical theater piece written for her by New York playwright, Terry Quinn. Ann hopes to remain in the Capitol Steps long enough to portray the first woman president -- even if she has to use a walker to get on and off stage!

**Dave Kane**


**Mike Loomis**

Michael Loomis, who usually prefers to remain anonymous, is a 19-year veteran of the Capitol Steps. A former staffer of Senator Gary Hart (D-CO), Michael also worked for 11 years at the National Geographic Society as an editor, writer, and award-winning photographer. A trained naturalist, ornithologist, and former U.S. National Park Ranger, Michael is also the co-author of seven children’s nature books. As an operatic bass-baritone, Michael’s theater credits include more than 150 performances in 12 Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Currently, in his spare time, Mr. Anonymous appears as the Big Bad Wolf in the Creative Opera Ensemble’s production of *Little Red Riding Hood*, a one-act opera performed for elementary-school children throughout the D.C. area.

Because of his background, Michael also supplies all the animal noises heard during Capitol Steps shows.

**Elaina Newport**

A founding member of the Capitol Steps, Elaina has been with the group since 1981 (for those of you trying to figure out her age, she began as an ovum). Elaina worked for seven years on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Assistant to Senator Charles Percy and then, after his untimely defeat, for Senator Alfonse D’Amato, who was also defeated. Although she has worked for two Republicans, Elaina considers herself an extreme moderate, and although she is married to a former Clinton appointee, she denies responsibility for having caused any of the scandals which later became song material.
Richard Paul

Before joining WAMU (Washington, DC public radio station), Richard was National Affairs Press Secretary for Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Press Secretary for the Senate Subcommittee On Children, Families, Drugs And Alcohol. He has been a member of The Capitol Steps for 21 years.

Jack Rowles

Jack began squinting his eyes to play Donald Rumsfeld for the Capitol Steps about four years ago and has never looked back. He performed in Between Iraq and a Hard Place at the Houseman Theater in 2003. Other off-Broadway credits include: Clue -- The Musical, Finnegan’s Farewell, and Equinox (York Theater). Regionally: All I Really Need to Know (Asolo Theatre Company); Li’l Rascals (Goodspeed Opera House); Forum (Theatre Virginia); Playground (Lewis Allen, Producer); Guys and Dolls (Shenandoah Summer Theater) as well as numerous productions at Kansas City Starlight, Music Theatre of Wichita, Mill Mountain Theatre, Totem Pole Playhouse and Allenberry Playhouse. Directing: Forever Plaid (Cumberland Theatre) Stage Management: The Civil War (National Tour).

Ann Margaret Schmitt

Ann Margaret Schmitt made her stage debut at the ripe old age of four. Favorite roles include Electra in Gypsy, Helene in Sweet Charity, Peggy in Godspell and Nita in Captain’s Paradise. She appeared in the NBC-TV movie "Murder in Music City" and has enjoyed singing the National Anthem at Giant’s Stadium and Madison Square Garden. She has appeared Off-Broadway several times with The Capitol Steps and in other productions. In a review from "Variety" of the Off-Broadway production "It Ain’t Over Till the First Lady Sings" it reads, "...Ann possesses a better singing voice than many musical-comedy performers residing on Broadway."

Emily Bell Spitz

Emily Bell Spitz is a musical director and accompanist in the Washington area. She received her Masters of Music in Musical Theatre Direction from Arizona State University and has worked for many area theatres and dance companies in addition to accompanying the Capitol Steps. In collaboration with fellow Stepper Bari Biern, she has written two children’s musicals which have been performed in Washington, DC.

Tracey Stephens

Tracey has been seen in two previous Capitol Steps off-Broadway runs, When Bush Comes to Shove, and Between Iraq and a Hard Place. Previously, she has been seen as Molly (Unsinkable Molly Brown), Eve (Children of Eden) and on Troika’s national tour of Fiddler on the Roof, to name a few. She is on the original cast album of the new musical Rasputin and appeared as Grete in Franz Kafka’s Metamorphosis on the Discovery Channel, where she was assaulted by a giant bug. Tracey would like to thank her family and Kevin and Robbie, for all their pushing and pulling to the city.

Bill Strauss

Bill Strauss is a co-founder of the Capitol Steps, dating back to when he was chief counsel of the Senate subcommittee that put on the first show. He is coauthor of six books about American generations, playwright of two musicals (MaKiddo, Stopscandal.com), cofounder of the Cappies high school critics and awards program, and dad to four great kids.
Mike Thornton

Mike has fun doing Bush and Clinton (did I say that out loud??) Off Broadway: *It Ain’t Over Till The First Lady Sings* - Fairbanks Theater & *Unzippin’ My Doodah* - Houseman Theater with The Capitol Steps; Peter in Edward Albee’s *Zoo Story*; John Guare’s *A Day For Surprises*; Chelsea Repertory’s *Madwoman of Chaillot*; and the American Premiere of Blood Brothers. Out of town: Eddie Lawrence and Nick Rosetti in *Shear Madness*; Joe Cantwell in *The Best Man* - American Century Theatre; Colonel Ricci in *Passion* - Signature Theatre. Love and great thanks to my Maria, Fosse and Tess.

Mike Tilford

Mike joined the Capitol Steps in 1992 when they realized they didn’t have anyone quite sleazy enough to portray Clinton. In addition to once working on Capitol Hill (“I was young! I needed the money!”) he has performed roles as varied as the violent Sweeney Todd, the gentle Don Quixote, the obligatory Jud, the questionable Bernardo, and -- inexplicably -- a St. Bernard. Mike has performed in all of the Capitol Steps off-Broadway productions. He has co-authored three musicals and three children, and is currently slaving away creating another. Musical, that is--get your mind out of the gutter.

Brad VanGrack

Equally at home performing Shakespeare in London to musical comedy in Atlantic City, Brad was chosen by *Playbill* on-line as the best featured actor in a musical for the Capitol Steps Off-Broadway at the Houseman Theatre. His favorite roles are Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Vernon in *They’re Playing Our Song* and Leo in *Chapter Two*. In addition to work in commercials, T.V. and film, Brad is an accomplished director.

Delores King Williams

Delores King Williams is thrilled to enter her 8th year with the Capitol Steps! She is a native of Baltimore, Maryland where she began her musical studies at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. She continued studying music and theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. She currently performs “musical political satire” as a featured member of The Capitol Steps.

Ms. Williams is equally at home in theatrical productions as well as concert settings, having performed in musicals, plays, cabaret, commercials, concerts, and video productions. Performance highlights include: international appearances at the North Sea, Montreux, and Vienne Jazz Festivals, a tour of India, performances at the White House and Carnegie Hall, and off-Broadway run with The Capitol Steps, an Australian tour of *Porgy and Bess* with the Washington National Opera, and *Carmen Jones* at the Kennedy Center with the Washington National Opera.

Delores has had the privilege of working with inspiring talents such as Quincy Jones, Betty Carter, The Smithsonian Masterworks Orchestra directed by David Baker, Keter Betts, Rich Matteson, Jay McSchann, Gene DiNovi, Vanessa Williams, and former president Bill Clinton.

Delores is a winner of a *Downbeat* magazine award, a semi-finalist in the Thelonious Monk Vocal Competition, a winner of the “Billie Holiday Vocal Competition,” and a former soloist for the United States Army Band.

In addition to performing, Delores also immensely enjoys her work as a clinician and vocal coach. She can be heard singing the music of Hoagy Carmichael on “Heart and Soul” -- her latest recording with the buselli/wallarab Jazz Orchestra.
Lenny Williams

Lenny Williams is an Emmy-award winning composer who accompanies the Capitol Steps in spite of this fact. We know he doesn't need the money but by his own account, "needs to get out more," and playing for the Steps is the perfect opportunity to get away from that high-brow artistic stuff once in a while.

Jamie Zemarel

Jamie has been with the Capitol Steps since 1994. Before joining the Steps, James appeared as "Gaston" in the National tour of Gigi, and as "Aristede" in Can Can, at Harrah's in Atlantic City with the New York City Rockettes. Other roles in his career have included "Jesus" in JC Superstar, "The Pirate King" in The Pirates of Penzance, and "Henry Higgins" in My Fair Lady, which is where he met his wife, Jeanne, who was "Eliza"!