

# GCT's 'Crucible' opening tonight

By WALT GLINES

Gilroy Community Theatre's production this weekend of "The Crucible" promises to be one of the best plays put on by the local theatre group which has enjoyed a number of resounding successes.

Opening night performance begins at 8 tonight at the Gavilan Theatre followed by a punch and cookie reception at the college hosted by Theatre Angels Art League.

Tickets, good for any of the four performances, are available at Crispino's, Dick Bruhn's, Plaza Drugs, Music Tree and cast members. Reduced price ducats are available for students.

The play will also be presented by the 25-member cast at 8 p.m. on March 19, 25 and 26. Director of Arthur Miller's work based on the Salem, Mass. witchcraft trials of the 1600s is Kathy Kurz who served in the same capacity last year for the highly acclaimed presentation of "A Man for All Seasons."

The cast has been in rehearsal since mid-January. "The Crucible" is a fictional story based on authentic characters gleaned by Miller when researching original transcripts of trials held in the Puritan community.

Miller wrote the play in the 1950s when Senator Joe McCarthy was conducting well publicized hearings into what was termed the pervasive influence of communism in the United States. Many persons of that time drew a parallel between the witch hunts in the late 1600s and McCarthy's efforts at exposing communists in high government offices.

Puritans of that time interpreted the Bible very literally and believed the devil actually lived in the forest and Indians were the devil's agents.

The play opens with a night scene where only outline of the actors may be seen by the audience. Tituba, the Rev. Parris' part Negro and part West Indian slave who is versed in voodoo and the occult, is joined by a group of adolescent girls from Salem.

Tituba is played by Yolanda Parra who also designed the set and was in charge of its construction. Leader of the young girls who become caught up in dancing in the forest is Abigail Williams, played by Rosalind Farotte.

Abigail is Rev. Parris' 17-year-old niece, and in the beginning accuses others of witchcraft to cover up her own misbehavior (dancing in the woods), but later becomes caught up in the general hysteria sweeping the community and is convinced she is bewitched.

Rev. Samuel Parris (Ron Williams), minister of Salem Village, is a vain, narrow-minded man who believes he is being persecuted by others throughout the play. He comes upon the girls dancing in the forest and becomes convinced something is amiss.

His daughter, Betty (Kim D'Arcy), is the first of the youngsters to become afflicted by witchcraft.

The girls, to protect themselves against the unfounded witchcraft charges, start spreading stories about witchcraft. The girls were actually "just sporting" when dancing in the forest.

The plot thickens in the second act when the audience learns Abigail and John Proctor (Jim Maya) had at one time been lovers and she attempts to revive the affair to no avail.

Proctor is a farmer, an intelligent and honest man and very skeptical of the witchcraft accusations. He becomes a target of witchcraft charges by Abigail during a tense courtroom scene and eventually is executed.

In the courtroom presided over by Judge Hawthorne (Russ Hendrickson) and Deputy Governor Danforth (Joe Brown), Mary Warren (Robin Koller), the Proctor's servant, confesses the witchcraft accusations were a sham to divert attention from their dancing in the woods.

However, in the next scene which takes place in the courtroom, the other girls involved act out their hysteria and Mary literally goes crazy and accuses Proctor, who had convinced her to testify, of being the devil.

Danforth who is a very gullible man and taken in by the girls' story, promptly claps Proctor in jail.

Elizabeth (Helie Rock), Proctor's wife, who is known to never tell a lie, takes the witness stand and lies about her knowledge of the former relationship between her husband and Abigail.

Rev. John Hale (Brad Ryder) first appears at the request of Rev. Parris who is seeking help for his daughter supposedly under a spell. He is the minister from a neighboring community and an expert in witchcraft.

In the third act he begins to suspect that the accusations of witchcraft and occult are a fraud, and he denounces the court and tries to persuade those accused to confess their nonexistent guilt therefore saving themselves from execution.

Many of the play's characters are eventually executed because they do not admit to witchcraft. Those falsely admitting guilt are spared.

In the end Proctor is coerced into signing a confession but refuses to hand it over to Danforth for posting on the church door.

Proctor tears up the confession and is led off stage for his execution.

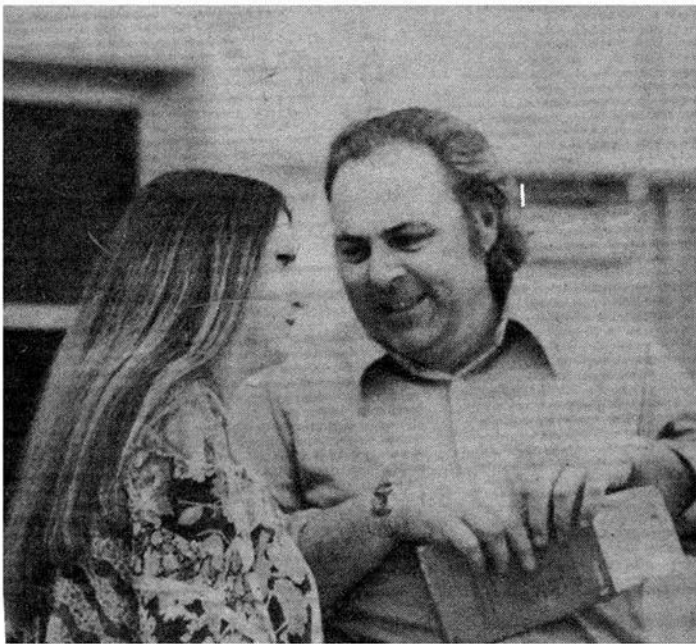
Others in the cast are Dr. James Neilson as Thomas Putman, who has a vindictive nature and believes himself the intellectual superior of most men around him; Cal Schlesinger as Giles Corey who also refuses to admit guilt and is "pressed to death" offstage; Walden Sampson as Francis Nurse; Walter Von Tagen III as Marshall Herrick; Frank Vanella as the jailer; Shelly Andrews as Susannah Walcott; Betty Brown as Rebecca Nurse; Linda Talluto as Anne Putman; Lillian Buck as Sarah Good and Kathy Filice as Mercy Lewis.

Completing the cast are Laura Almada, Tonie Berry, Susan Blumberg and Janet Periot, all of whom play the parts of the young girls.

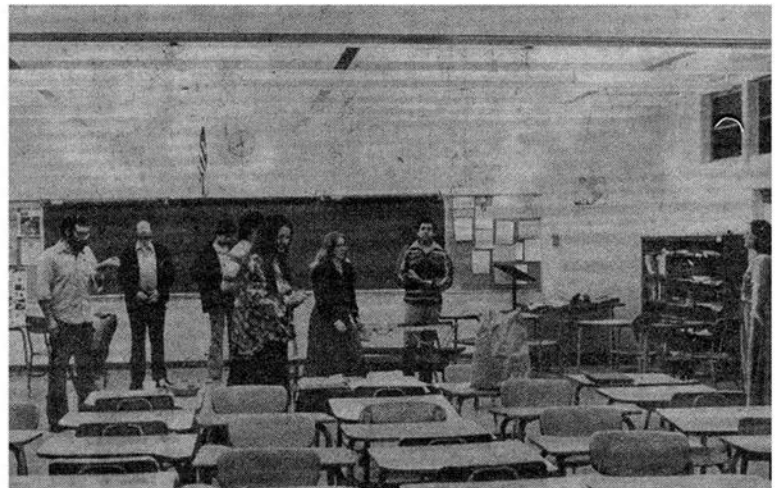
**ART OF ACTING** — One must fully understand the depths of one's role, explains director Kathy Kurz, San Jose drama major who is directing Gilroy Community Theatre's "The Crucible" now in rehearsal. Cast is being prepared to bring the horrors of Salem Village to life on stage at Gavilan College Theater March 18-19 and 25-26.



## Behind the scenes before audience views the play



**HOURS OF PREPARATION** — At left director confers with Cal Schlesinger, in a pensive moment, above, and her "stage" for the moment below at Gilroy High School.



Photos by Kai Lai

# Crucial times

**GILROY** — Gilroy Community Theatre's current production of "The Crucible," now in rehearsal, will open at Gavilan College Theatre March 18 for a two weekend run. Curtain time is 8 p.m.

Director is Kathy Kurz, a San Jose drama major who is working with a large cast of men, women and children in recreating the fearful witch hunting days in early colonial America.

Tickets are now on sale from cast members and local box office outlets.

**PUTTING ON AN ACT** — Rosalind Farotte in her role as Abigail succeeds in influencing the court of the guilt of innocent Salem Village residents. Behind her is Joe M. Brown checking lines.

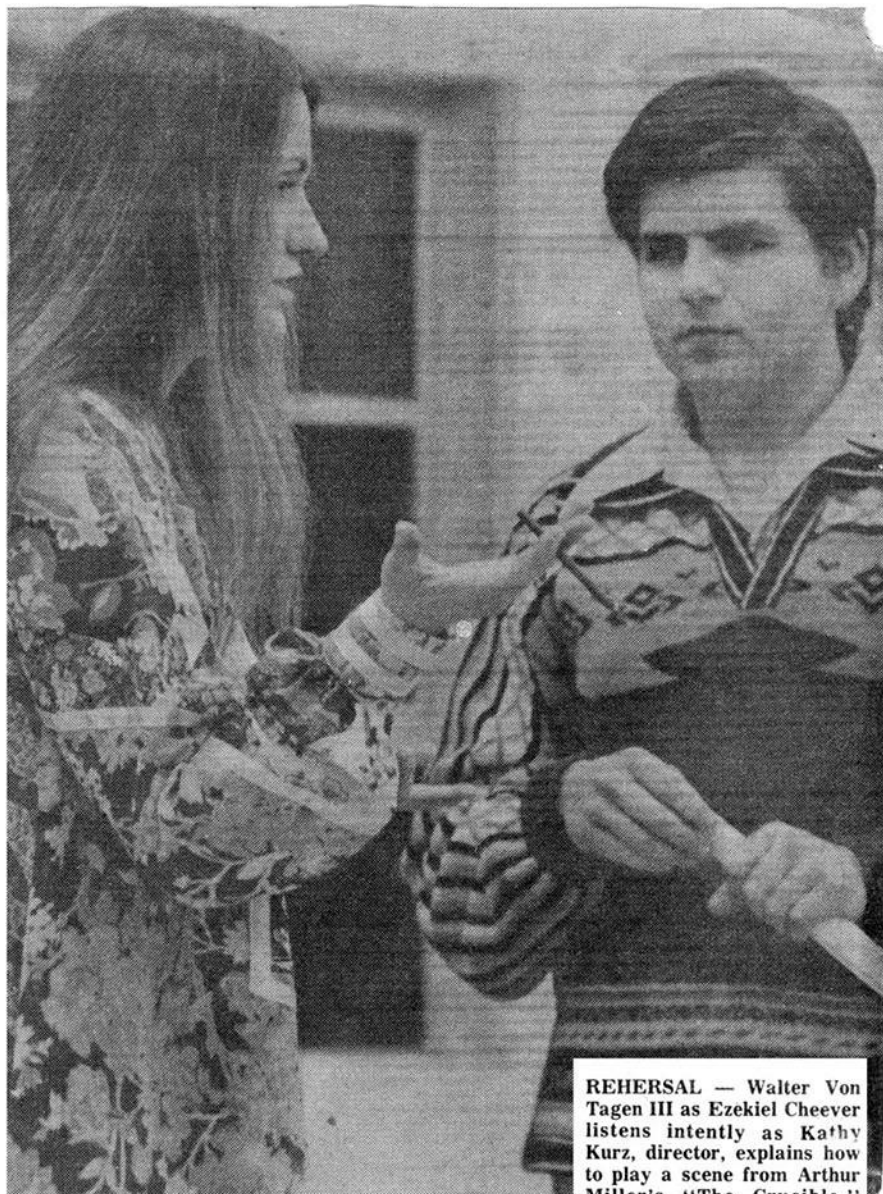


**WEEKEND PRODUCTION** — Gilroy Community Theatre's production of "The Crucible" at the Gavilan Theatre begins at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday following very successful presentations last weekend. Above, the Rev. John Hale [Brad Ryder] questions Tituba [Yolanda Parra] about her connections with witchcraft. In the background is Gilles Corey [Cal Schlesinger]. The play by Arthur Miller is based on the Salem Mass. witchcraft trials of the 1690s. Director is Kathy Kurz. Tickets for the remaining two performances are available from cast members and at the door on a first served basis. Reduced price tickets are available for students.



MONDAY, DEC. 13

Auditions for Gilroy Community Theatre production of "The Crucible," Gilroy High School band room, 7:30 p.m.



REHEARSAL — Walter Von Tagen III as Ezekiel Cheever listens intently as Kathy Kurz, director, explains how to play a scene from Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." Produced by Gilroy Community Theatre, the drama is set in the year 1692 at the Salem witch trials. It will be presneted at Gavilan College Theatre on March 18, 19, 25, and 26.

## 'Crucible' due

Final performances of "The Crucible" begin at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday at Gavilan's theatre.

The Gilroy Community Theatre's production of Arthus Miller's work based on the Salem, Mass. witchcraft trials of the 1690s was well received by large audiences last weekend.

Tickets may be purchased at the door on a first served basis or from cast members.

## 'The Crucible' slated by GCT

The Gilroy Community Theatre's (GCT) first production of 1977 is Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" to be directed by Kathy Kurz who served in the same capacity last year for the highly successful presentation of "A Man for All Seasons."

Performances of the play based on the Salem, Mass. witch trials of the 1690s are set for March 18, 19, 25 and 26 at the Gavilan College theatre. The 25-member cast is now in rehearsal for the production.

Other works for 1977 by the local theatre company are "Sugar," a musical version of "Some Like it Hot" and "Private Lives," a comedy to be presented in October or November. "Sugar" opens on Aug. 19 with other performances scheduled for Aug. 20, 26 and 27.

"The Crucible" is a fictional story based on authentic characters gleaned by Miller when researching transcripts of the original trials conducted in the Puritan community. Miller wrote the play in the 1950s when Senator Joe McCarthy was conducting well-publicized hearings into what was termed the pervasive influence of communism in the United States.

Leading characters for the play are Jim Maya of Gilroy who has been cast in the role of John Procter, a farmer who is skeptical of the witchcraft accusations yet is drawn into the web of intrigue enveloping the community; Robin Koller, a San Jose resident who is Mary Warren, the Procters' servant; and Helie Rock of Gilroy who becomes Elizabeth Procter, wife of John.

Also in the cast are Ron Williams as the Rev. Samuel Parris, minister of Salem Village and who was a vain, defensive, narrow-minded man who believed he was being persecuted wherever he went; Dr. James Neilson as Thomas Putman, who has a vindictive nature and believes himself the intellectual superior of most men around him; and Rosalind Farotte as Abigail Williams, Parris' 17-year-old niece and ringleader of the girls involved in the witchcraft.

Others in the production are Cal Schlesinger as Giles Corey; Brad Ryder as the Rev. John Hale; Walden Sampson as Francis Nurse; Walter Von Tagen III as Ezekiel Cheever; Joe Bereznak as Marshal Herrick; Frank Vanella, as the jailer; Russ Hendrickson as Judge Hawthorne; Joe Brown as Deputy Governor Danforth; Yolanda Parra as Tituba; Kim D'Arcy as Betty Parris; Shelly Andrews as Susannah Walcott; Gerri Armenta as Rebecca Nurse; Linda Talluto as Anne Putman; Lillian Buck as Sarah Good; and Kathy Filice as Mercy Lewis.

Completing the cast are Laura Almada, Tonie Berry, Susan Blumberg and Janet Periot, all of whom play the parts of young girls in the production.



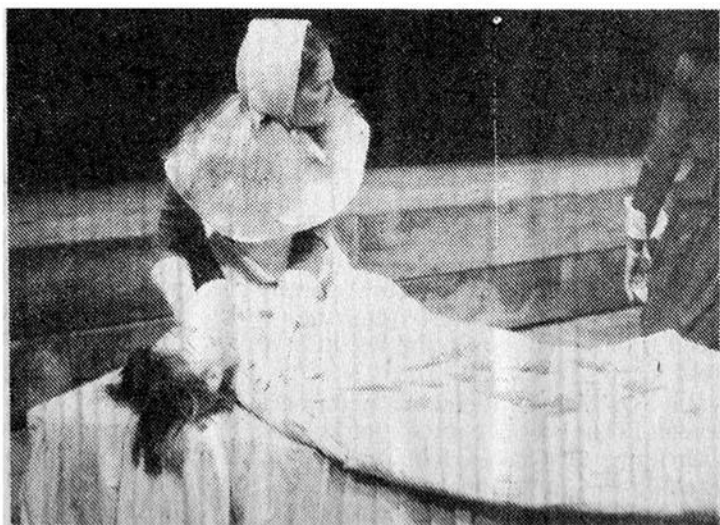
**WAITING** — Susanna Walcott (Shelley Andrews), left, and Abigail Williams (Rosalind Farotte) wait patiently and sew when action shifts to mid-stage.



**DENOUNCED** — Tituba (Yolanda Parra) reacts fearfully after she is denounced by Abigail as forcing the girls to take part in the witchcraft including drinking of chicken blood.



**RELIGIOUS HELP** — The Rev. John Hale (Brad Ryder) holds the hand of Betty Parris (Kim D'Arcy) upon first arriving at the Parris home after being summoned by the afflicted girl's father, also a minister. Hale is known for his knowledge of witchcraft and was supposed to be able to recognize if spittits were within the girls body.



**HYSTERIA** — Mercy Lewis (Kathy Filice) bends over Betty Parris (Kim D'Arcy) who is feigning hysteria. The two girls were among those caught dancing in the woods which in the minds of many Puritans was the home of the devil.



**RINGLEADER** — Abigail Williams, the Reverend Samuel Parris' 17 year old niece, is played by Rosalind Farotte. Abigail is the ringleader of the afflicted girls and later in the play believes herself to be bewitched.



**DISBELIEVER** — John Proctor [Jim Maya] is an intelligent, even-tempered and honest man who becomes accused of witchcraft and ultimately executed. Proctor is a disbeliever in witchcraft but is forced to falsely confess.



**COVER UP** — Mery Lewis (Kathy Filice) left, and Abigail Williams (Rosalind Farotte) forcefully cover up Betty Parris (Kim D'Arcy) in an attempt to convince her to go along with the witchcraft sham.




NOT ALL MAGIC—Gilroy Community Theatre's cast of "The Crucible" are at Gavilan College Theatre nightly emoting but also constructing scenery until midnight, then trying to follow daytime jobs and pursuits without undue fatigue. Some find it easier than others. Joe Bereznak, a fifth grade teacher who plays "Herrick," paints fireplace. (Photo by Kai Lai)



## 'The Crucible'

Robin Jones Koller, as Mary Warren, and Jim Maya, as John Proctor, rehearse a scene from Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" in preparation for the Gilroy Community Theater production of the play. The show opens Friday night at the Gavilan College theater, with performances scheduled Saturday, March 25, and March 26. Curtain time is 8 p.m. The play dramatizes the Salem witch trials of 17th-century Massachusetts. Tickets are priced at \$3 general admission, \$2 for students. (Kai Lai photo)



GILROY  
COMMUNITY  
THEATRE  
PRESENTS...

**..The Crucible..**  
by AUTHUR MILLER

**MARCH 18, 19, 25 & 26, 1977**  
**GAVILAN COLLEGE THEATRE**

DIRECTED BY  
**KATHY KURZ**

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT  
Dick Bruhn's, Crispino's,  
The Music Tree,  
Plaza Drugs

SHOW STARTS AT  
**8:00 P.M.**  
Adults '3 Students '2

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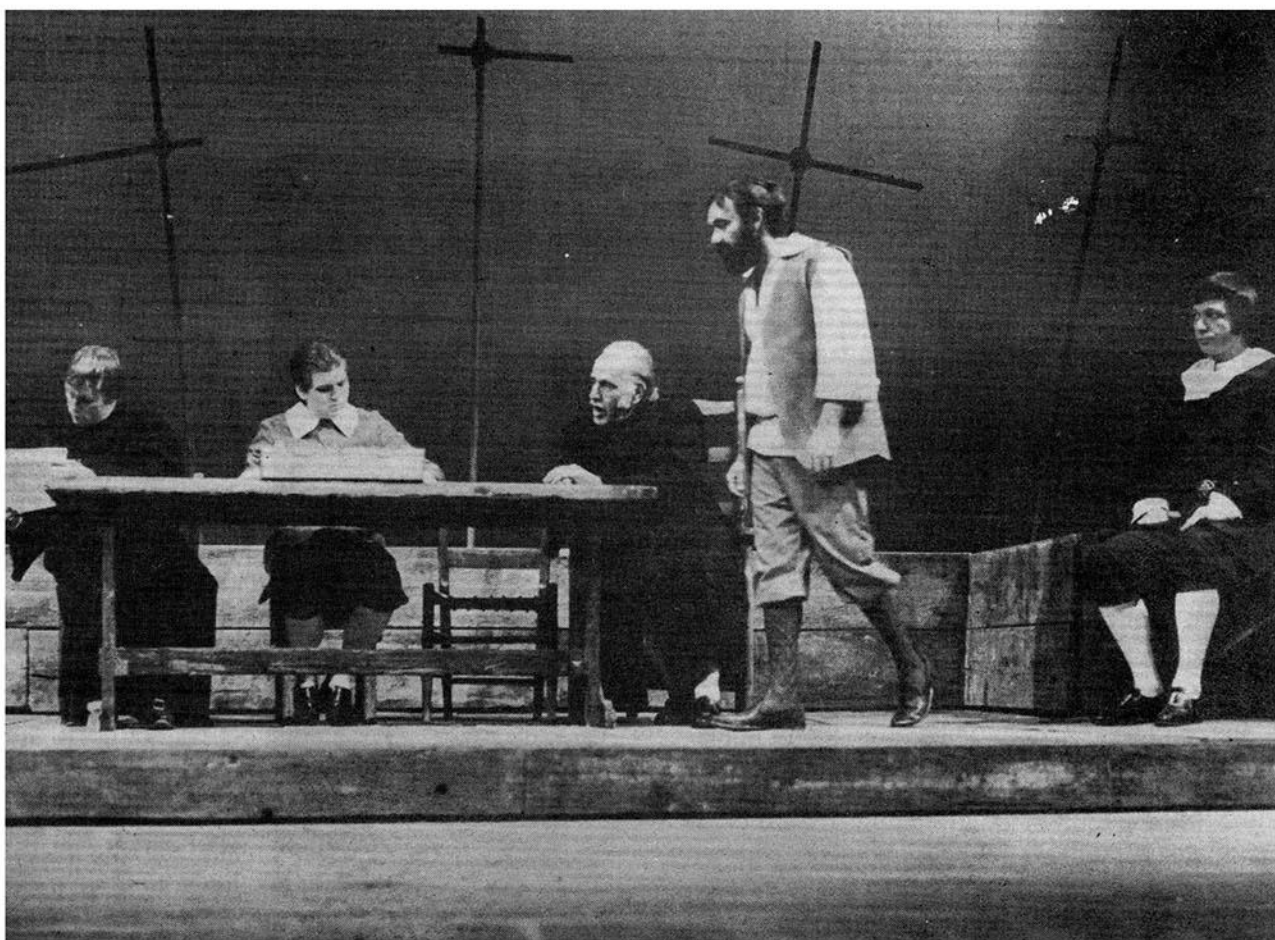
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I wish to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gilroy Community Theatre in the form of a year's  
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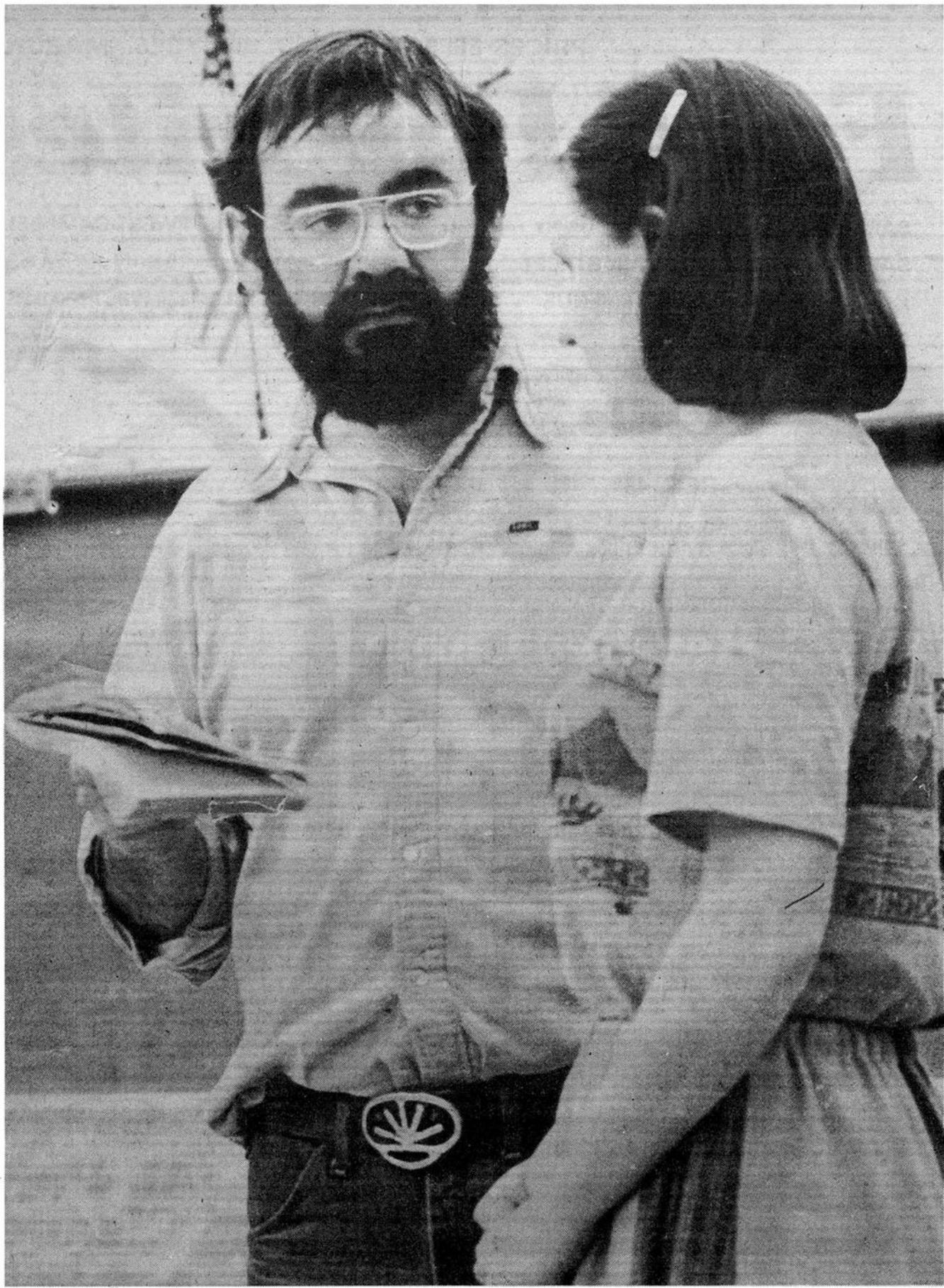


**CAST MEETING** — Gathered around a table are members of the cast for Gilroy Community Theatre's upcoming production of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." Present at the planning session are, from left, Helie Rock, playing Elizabeth Proctor, wife of John; Walter von Tagen III, playing Ezekial Cheever; Robin Jones-Koller, taking the part of Mary Warren, the Proctor's servant; Kathy Kurz, director, and Walden Sampson playing Francis Nurse. Jim Maya who plays John Proctor, a farmer who is skeptical of

witchcraft accusations yet is drawn into the web on intrigue enveloping the community, has his back to the camera. A punch and cookies reception at the college hosted by Theatre Angels Art League follows the opening night presentation. The play is based on Salem, Mass., witchcraft trails of the 1690's and was written by Miller at the height of the Senator Joe McCarthy hearings. Tickets with reduced prices for students are available from cast members and at Crispino's, Dick Bruhn's, Plaza Rexall Drugs and Music Tree.



**Stark sets are effective foil for Gilroy Community Theatre's production of 'The Crucible'**



## 'The Crucible'

**TENSE MOMENTS**—Jim Maya in his difficult role of "Proctor" for Gilroy Community Theater's next production, "The Crucible" opening March 18 at Gavilan College Theater, is shown with his stage wife "Elizabeth" played by Helie Rock. (Photo by Kai Lai)