

TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

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What an honor it is to have spent my life among talented, intelligent, creative and interesting "theatre people." For me it is a place for life-long learning, discovery and for giving back. To borrow a thought...Theatre improves lives one person at a time.

- Ginger Heath, Charlotte, NC



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PLAYBILL



Volume 9, Issue 4

APRIL 2012

COMING SOON

It's a murder/mystery with many twists and turns, a dramatic romp through the mind that will keep you guessing at every turn. *The Perfect Crime* by Warren Manzi, is New York City Theatre's longest running play.

Pictured are Angie Cotter as Marget Thorne Brendt, who is an accomplished Connecticut psychiatrist and perhaps a cold-blooded killer. When her cook reports a murder, she gets caught in the middle of a terrifying game of cat and mouse with a deranged patient and the handsome detective determined to prove her guilt. Dylan Gamble is Inspector James Archer, Michael Johnson is W. Harrison Brent, Nickolas Rice is Lionel McCauley, and Stephen Enenbach is David Breuer.



Michael Johnson (L). Angie Cotter (M), and Dylan Gamble (R)

The Perfect Crime, directed by Stacy Tiffin, and assisted by Bill Simpson, opens on May 4th and runs through May 20th. Tickets sell for \$11 on-line or by phone reservation and will cost \$13 at door. Reserved tickets will be held until 30 minutes before curtain. The Box Office will open every performance day two hours before performance. There will be a complimentary wine and cheese on Opening Night.

Letter From the Chairman by Michael Johnson

Thank you playhouse family for the condolences during the loss of Debbie's mother. She was 91 and doing pretty well until a fall brought on a serious heart attack. Very unexpected.

I have been on a smash course on Playhouse Leadership and the differences with business leadership. I can't threaten anyone with their paycheck! We ALL are volunteers and are here for different reasons. I am still trying to figure out what some of yours are.

There are so many obstacles to any creative endeavor that hinders progress. Unexpected setbacks, unforeseen expenses, time killers, deaths in the family that are dropped on a team. "Life Happens" someone quoted. It is during these times that the personalities and "Reasons for being here" start coming to the surface. Some unite us and some are cause for conflict. Some just want a voice, some want an audience, some want recognition, some purpose, others an appreciative outlet for their talent .. there are as many reasons as there are members.

That being said, I want to encourage all of us to keep the Twin Lakes Playhouse's "Prime Directive" at the fore front of our priorities. It is in our By-Laws.

1. To promote non-professional theatre and to encourage non-professionals to participate in all phases of the production of plays for their enjoyment and growth in their theatre skills.
2. To promote this knowledge and appreciation of theater for all residents through educational training.
3. To acquire and administer funds as necessary which, after payment of necessary expenses, shall be devoted exclusively to the furtherance of the purposes set forth above."



Cont'd from Page One

So the rest is secondary: meetings, budgets, who gets comp tickets, who has better leadership skills, who is going to be the next "Diva" (... K. M. of course!) where are the paper towels, where did they put the props from the last play, where are we going to store all this stuff...

Ninety-nine percent of the time, you will find me on the problem SOLVING, educational, fun side of any issue. I'm not really interested that my opinions are always acted upon, rather that once a direction is chosen all hands are on task to get'er'done. We need "all hands."

I need you, the members, to go back and review why you joined, remember what areas of involvement you checked when you filled out the membership application and sign up to put those skills into action. If you do not feel you have a theater skill yet look at the list again. We will train you in every and all areas in which you may want to experiment. This is the place. We are NON-professionals, but we sure can put on a PROFESSIONAL show ... just take a look at our recent history ...!!!

Find your spot and get in it. You will have a great time and you will help us meet our 'Prime Directive!'"

Doo~Wop Wed Widing Hood

AUDITIONS!

Auditions will be held for the children's show, *Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood*, a musical comedy with class. The three princes are now ready to wed so they must pick a girl to woo. Funny, but they all have the same person in mind, Little Red Riding Hood. The King and Queen don't know what to do. Red's parents are also in a quandary as they rely completely on Red to do the baking and delivering cookies to Grandma. They call upon the Evil Queen to set a challenge– the princes must pass all three challenges to win the right to woo Little Red. Meanwhile, there is a Fairy Godmother (isn't there always?), a Big Bad Wolf (duh), Red's two older sisters, Big Blue Riding Hood and Medium Purple Riding Hood, who are after the princes, too.

Auditions will be held May 12 at 12:30 p.m. at the playhouse. The cast consists of 14-20 , all age groups. Directed by Angie Cotter, this should be a laugh out loud, romping musical event. The show runs one weekend, June 29, 7:00 P.M., June 30, 2:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M., and July 1 at 2:00 P.M.

SETTING THE STAGE by John Eberhard

BASIC ACTING TIPS

Early on in the rehearsal process I try to develop a special walk for my character. Doing so provides a quick way to physically remove me from myself and to move into the skin of my character. Developing a walk will also impact how my character moves, stands, and generally his overall physical comportment.

Remember that the stage is an ILLUSION of reality: that it is meant to LOOK real but not necessarily to BE real. What goes on onstage needs to be LARGER than life. One of the things I do is to try to imagine that my character is part of a race or group stereotypically considered to "talk with their hands".....examples might be Italians, Greeks, or Jews. This is how I find my gestures, by attempting to talk with my hands on every line. I keep the gestures that seem to work and delete the ones that don't. The point here is that with the stage being larger than life, the actors need more gestures than in normal life.



Speaking of gestures, be careful not to confine your gestures to that little square box extending from your chest to your naval and out to your ribs. Seek gestures that will get your arms and hands out from your body, above your head, and below your waist. Again, you can delete the ones that don't work.

Every gesture should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Start it, do it, finish it. Try working with your fingertips for nuances.

Be careful not to have "happy feet". When you finish a cross, plant your feet: don't shuffle, sway, or fidget. That will distract the audience from what you--or anyone else---is saying. By the same token, make your gestures say something, emphasize something, or describe something. Be careful not to wave them aimlessly or repetitively just to be gesturing. Learn what it means and how to counter cross.

Play with words and lines. Stretch them, speed up parts of them, change tone within them, try placing emphasis on different syllables and on different phrases. Seek new and different ways to communicate.

Finally, do not worry about being too big or too over the top. It is much better (and easier) for a director to bring you down from too much than to pull a character out of too little.

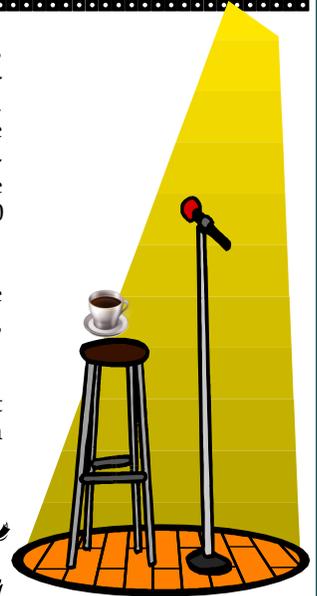
Twin Lakes Playhouse opened its bohemian-type coffee house featuring live entertainment from the locals on Saturday, March 24, at 7:00 p.m. We had about half a house although some people left after their friend or family member finished their act. Otherwise, the show was great. But, as with all that is new, a few tweaks need tending to and Anne Johnson-Loftis, the producer, is right on it.

ON THE BOARDS CAFÉ

We had so many acts and some of them took a long time so the show ran over quite a bit. Also, our intermission was twice as long as had been planned because it was important to let The Blackbird Café make some money on their goodies and coffee. The price was a little out of touch, too. Most people couldn't see the need to pay an extra \$5 to sit on stage and eat and drink while the performance was going on. Perhaps goodies could be sold before the show and during intermission only. Again, Anne has it under control so we'll see what she comes up with for our next one scheduled for May 26th at 7:00. Auditions will again be held for new acts on May 16-17 at 6:00 p.m. at the playhouse.

We'll need help setting up the stage that next week before the performance. And Anne will be holding a sound/lighting check one day the week of May 20th. Cleaning the theatre, setting up, ticket-taker, and one usher should do it.

If you would like to audition, help with the performance in any way, or help with passing out flyers and doing publicity, all that work will need to be done, too. Let's all pitch in what we can because all proceeds go toward our building fund. You can call Anne at 870-421-0927 directly.



SOLILOQUY by Deb Smith

. After 2 ½ months of Patsy Cline (an enjoyable experience making lots of new friends), I have been concentrating on the upcoming youth workshops. Since we have changed them up this year, adding more advanced classes, I've had to go back to square one and reorganize the curriculum. This is very painstaking work and takes many hours of research. However, the end result will be a good, overall workshop that will give our students a running start into this wonderful world of imagination and creativity.

Here's the catch. Because I would like to offer a variety of viewpoints from some of the master teachers of acting: Stanislavsky, Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, Stanford Meisner, Strasberg... I have to "go back to school" myself, so to speak, and learn their techniques. So I've been reading like crazy. When I went to college and majored in theatre arts, all the curriculum included was the professor's technique, dabbed with a little quote here and there from one of the masters. But I never read their books, I never took their courses... I sort of adopted what worked for me and starting teaching that.

Now a whole new world is opening up to me. I sat for hours while reading Meisner, mesmerized by his words and techniques. I felt like I was one of his students, as if I were sitting in his classroom among actors like Joanne Woodward, Sydney Pollack, Robert Duvall, Diane Keaton, Steve McQueen, Gregory Peck, Tony Randall, John Voight, and Eli Wallach. I would read a chapter and then sit for a half hour and absorb what I had just read, it was so powerful. Meisner is a different breed of acting teacher- he takes his acting ideas from personal experience and personal daydreams. He feels you can create characters from your imagination (Johnny Depp comes to mind) after you have gone back to basics, lost all your pre-conceived ideas and tricks, and become a pure vessel. He has much, much more to say and he illustrates it beautifully in his book. It is suggested reading if you want to become a better actor.

I'm now reading Uta Hagen's first book. So far, she is much more general in her approach but in her second book she is more focused on the "how to" than the overview. I can't wait to get to that one. And there's a huge stack of more to read. I won't finish all my research by this summer's workshops but I will be able to go into the workshops with more confidence and information than I have before.

We are also adding a creative movement class taught by Paula Hill and a more advanced workshop on Pantomime taught by Michael Johnson. We welcome any experts of other subjects that will enhance the stage growth of our students. Our first workshop starts on May 26th, 9:00-4:00. There will be an On the Boards performance that evening, too. It seems our little playhouse is just growing and growing. How exciting is that?



Teaching Through Validation in Your Theatre Program

by Nathan Hartswick

You're in the middle of rehearsals for your spring production. There are a thousand things to think about — there's all the normal show stuff like props, costumes, sets, lighting, posters, programs, etc., and then there are the concerns more specific to school theater: which boy won't be at tomorrow's rehearsal because of basketball, what parent you're going to find to chaperone dress rehearsal now that Bill dropped out, the gaggle of girls that always chit-chats with each other in Scene 2 because they think the audience can't see them upstage — *I mean, what are they thinking? Is there anything more distracting and unprofessional? Wait a minute, that's not fair*, you tell yourself. It's not all of them; Kelsey is the ringleader. You should have a word with her about it, although she really should know better, and that seems like a waste of time when Scene 3 is completely falling apart and clearly needs an overhaul.

And, you know. More. Much, much more.

As this mayhem reaches a fever pitch, one of your younger actors, a shy boy with wide eyes, approaches you with some trepidation. He speaks low, and only in questions.

"Um, Mrs. So-and-So?" he asks. "I was thinking? You know the blue hat I wear in the beginning? What if I wore it when I came on at the end, too?"

Now, your first instinct is to snap at this poor kid. Doesn't he see you are in crisis mode here? That you are taking on more than any solitary human is capable of handling? That you cannot be bothered with such trivial things right now? That this is the worst possible time for a minor query like this?

Instinct two is to react negatively to his idea. It's a lousy idea. No, of course he cannot wear the blue hat in the second act. He is playing an entirely different character in Act 2 than he was in Act 1. What quicker way to draw the audience's attention to the doubling up of this actor than having him wear the same hat as the hobo that he did as the policeman? Do you know a lot of hobos who wear cop hats, wide-eyed young boy? Can't you see the bigger picture, here?

The answer is no. To this young kid who has next to no experience with performing, his world begins and ends with his two lines in this production ("Come with us, sir," and "Quarter for a cup of coffee, miss?"). This is a daunting world, and though some of the older kids seem pretty confident that they know how this whole scary process works, they are his peers, and they've steered him wrong before. There's only one person he trusts in the middle of all this craziness — only one person he is confident will have the right answers to things. That person is you.

And so what he has done in approaching you with his question, though it can be extremely difficult to see in the heat of a moment like this, is to give you a tremendous opportunity. If you give in to either of those first two instincts, you're telling this poor kid that his concerns don't matter; you are pushing him back into a frightening world with no means by which to understand and cope with it. But if you take a moment to validate his idea, to gently explain (in a fun, conspiratorial tone) the illusion you're going to create for the audience together with him playing two different characters, then he will learn a valuable lesson, and all the while his dignity remains intact.

The other benefit to this approach is that if you set the precedent of validating everyone's ideas, you will develop the habit of listening to everyone. And guess what? Not all the kids' ideas are going to be terrible. If you are approachable, if the kids know they can bring their ideas to you, they are going to present you with some great ones — stuff you may have never thought of. And that is *really* exciting — not only because it makes the show better, but also because it gives you a chance to praise a student, and to make them feel they contributed directly to the success of the production.

So what happens if a student offers a suggestion that's neither good nor bad? An idea that probably won't impact things much either way? You're going to get input like this, and my advice is to take it whenever possible. Something that's small potatoes to you might be a big deal to a child. If the student wants to enter from stage right instead of stage left and it makes little to no difference to you, why not let the kid do it?

Listening to and validating students' ideas is the single biggest thing you can do to get them invested in the success of the show. If



they feel that you are forcing something upon them and that their ideas don't matter, they will recoil, and suddenly it's them-against-you... the worst possible dynamic. But if you remain open, they will feel invested. As anyone who works in theater knows, *We're doing something great together!* beats *Do what I say, or else!* any day of the week. (Or any other industry, for that matter.)

When we get wrapped up in directing a show with kids, it can be easy to forget that we are also teachers. In fact, we are primarily teachers. As much as you want to present the audience with the best possible final product, what is most important is presenting the students with the most rewarding possible process. And luckily for you those two things aren't mutually exclusive — the more essential students feel, the more they get invested in the process. The more invested they are, the more they learn through doing. The more they learn, the better their performance.

So when you're overwhelmed by the captaining of this merry ship of fools and a dozen different kids approach you during tech week, each wanting to offer his or her own suggestion at seemingly the most inconvenient possible time, as long as their motives are pure (i.e., they legitimately want to help make the play better), take a moment to listen to and validate their input. It will make the students feel better. It will make the show better. But most important, it will make you a better teacher. And when all is said and done, that's what counts the most.

YOUTH ACTING WORKSHOPS

ACTING I (ages 8-12) May 26, 9:00-4:00 May 26

ACTING II (ages 8-12) June 2, 9:00-4:00

ACTING I (ages 13-18) June 9, 9:00-4:00

ACTING II (ages 13-18) June 16, 9:00-4:00

Request a pre-registration form from Deb Smith at twinlakesplayhouse@gmail.org or call 421-6099.

ADULT WORKSHOPS

IMPROVISATION WORKSHOP– (16+) April 21

Education/Outreach Program



To Playbill Editor by Stacy Tiffin

I feel it important to respond to the errors contained in the article, "Setting the Stage," by Mr. Eberhard published in the March edition of *Playbill*.

John erroneously defines "chairman" as someone who only runs meetings. He also compares the chairman of Twin Lakes Playhouse, Inc., to the President of the United States in order to demonstrate the difference in their functions. John is incorrect in describing the responsibilities of BOTH these offices, to wit:

According to the current by-laws of TLP, the office of "chairman" is NOT defined by www.dictionary.com, as John stated. The by-laws themselves describe, define and inform the duties of "chairman;"

1. See that policies formulated by the Board of Directors are carried out.
2. Preside at membership and Board meetings.
3. General supervision of all activities of the Playhouse.
4. Keep membership advised.
5. Represent the membership in all phases of Playhouse activities.
6. Enforce proper rules of debate.
7. Be Ex Officio member of all Standing and Special Committees.
8. Negotiate and sign all written contracts and obligations approved by the Board of Directors or designate another Board officer to do so.
9. Authorized signatory on all bank accounts.
10. Appoint a Professional Advisory Board as approved by the Board of Directors.
11. Appoint Chairpersons of each committee as approved by the Board of Directors.
12. Appoint special Committees as needed as approved by the Board of Directors.
13. Direct activities of the Executive Board.
14. Call special meetings of the Executive Board as necessary.

THESE are the duties of the "chairman." I'm certain John, a long-time member of TLP and the "chairman" of the By-Law Committee, is indeed aware of the facts. As to the President, well the President of the United States is NOT a dictator who, as John states: "... is, well, President, and he makes policy decisions".

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Letter to the Editor cont'd

Hmmm. Congress (and the United States Constitution) may have a different view. The President of the U.S. does make policy decisions, but they must be sanctioned by the legislative branch, particularly the upper house, the Senate, who constitutionally must "consent" to the policy decisions he or she makes. Kind of like the "chairman" makes policy decisions with the "consent" of the Board of Directors and the Membership. Once again, to quote Mr. Eberhard, "see the difference?"

John quotes a former "chairman" as stating that this is a "member driven" organization, and it is. But the membership, according to the by-laws, does not carry out the business of TLP, the board of directors is tasked with that function, as follows:

The Membership has the following duties, responsibilities and privileges, once again as defined by the by-laws:

Section B. - Membership Rights and Requirements

Full membership is open to all persons who are at least 16 years of age. Only Full or Honorary Life-Members shall have the right to vote in matters relating to the Organization, to be *cast as actors* in a production, serve as a committee member or committee chair, serve as a member of the Board of Directors or be allowed to attend open Board Meetings. Non-voting membership for those under age 16 may be approved by the Board of Directors. Non-voting members may participate in any capacity at Twin Lakes Playhouse, Inc. except as Board Members or Committee Chair.

1. To attain Full Membership status, an applicant must file an application with the Membership Committee Chairman listing name, address, contact telephone number, e-mail address if available, and date of birth. The membership application must be re-submitted each year.
2. The application must be accompanied by one year's dues.
3. An eligible previous-year Full Member is one who has paid the required dues and submitted a new application no later than the February monthly meeting. This will maintain current voting rights. If a paid application is received after the February monthly meeting, voting privileges shall be the same as that of a new member.
4. A member is ineligible to vote or participate in other Twin Lakes Playhouse, Inc. activities while under investigation for disciplinary action.

Section C. - Recurring Dues and Annual Membership Application

Dues shall be payable on January 1st of each year or upon initial application for membership. Dues are paid for the calendar year ending December 31st. Dues are NOT prorated for new members joining after January 1st.

1. The cost of annual dues are determined by the Board of Directors and approved by the general membership.
2. An applicant will become a voting member on the first of the month following the acceptance of a paid application for membership.

Now, just as the U.S. Constitution defines and limits the power of the President, and also defines the rights and responsibilities of the citizenry, so do the by-laws define and prescribe the rights, duties and responsibilities of both the "chairman" and the membership.

I fully support John's right to his opinion, but I believe he should state the truth as quoted from our by-laws. Personally, when I was chairman last year, I told that because our publication is read by the public at-large, I must revise my Chairman's Letter as it was perceived by you, the editor, as too vitriolic. I complied and toned down the article, but even had I not done so, at the very least what I wrote in that article was FACTUAL. John's is not; therefore, I believe that his vitriol should be toned down as well and he should at least be required to be truthful. I understand that John may feel TLP is headed for destruction because as a long-time member, he remembers when we had no money and no hope. I do not believe that remembering things from the past necessarily make one an expert on how the Board or Membership of TLP must behave. For example, I remember when Pluto was a planet, but that doesn't make me an astronomer!

Thank you for your kind attention. You may choose to publish this letter, or not but either way, I hope you enforce a stricter code of ethics on ALL your contributors.

MEETING TIMES

Board Meeting, April 9, 2012 6:00 P.M.

Members' Meeting, April 16, 2012 7:00 P.M.

Board Meeting, May 14, 2012 6:00 P.M.

Members' Meeting, May 21, 2012 7:00 P.M.