

## TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

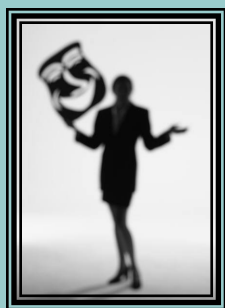
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# PLAYBILL

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### IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE! - Another Success for the Playhouse

After sold-out performances and many standing ovations, we can now deem this show a success. Audiences are still talking about it.

One of the things I tried to include in my opening speech was the process of putting on such a complicated production as this one proved to be. I wanted the audience to realize what the experience was like for us and how determined we were to push through that and bring this show to the Twin Lakes area- what our little playhouse was able to accomplish with hard work and dedication. I told them that this production called for a stage 3 times the size we had, with a large backstage to store all the many props and furniture required. I told them of the doubling up on actors (this could be done with 30-40 people, we did it with 18). I explained that the actors were setting up each of the 30 scenes them-

selves, that we had prop people making a car, a toll bridge, a piano, and so much more. I even told them how very busy our tech crew was as they had over 50 sound cues and 30 light cues.

But the main thing I told them was the Twin Lakes Playhouse was not afraid of bringing in large, complicated productions such as this because we wanted our audiences to experience them. In the past few years we've done a lot of complicated, large cast shows. We've done musicals as well as drama. We've done classics (and will hopefully continue to do them), newer productions, and children's shows. Time and again I've gotten feedback from the audiences. They are thrilled with our choices in plays and excited to see what we'll do next.

Which brings me to the end of the 2012-2013 season. In January or early February we will start out with a play written by one of our own, Lloyd Lowery. Then we go into production for "Twelve Angry Men," a classic drama. Nothing has been decided on the second slot but there is talk of perhaps doing three one-act Anton Chekhov comedies. That would be a wonderful way to get the classics in again. And to finish off the season, the children's play, "Hyronomous A. Frog, the Frog Prince" will take center stage.

And look what we have in store for 2013-2014! These are in no particular order right now but on the books is the comedy "Over the River and Through the Woods," "Still Life with Iris" (another very interesting, newer play that should be a huge hit,) "Little Women" (another classic), and "The Importance of Being Ernest" (a great comedic classic.) This last play still doesn't have a director so we'll see what happens there. I haven't decided on the children's show yet but I'm sure I can come up with something fun. There's so many wonderful plays out there for children. I'd love to do another musical but we'll have to see.

So be ready to work! We need to keep building up our name in the community, getting involved when possible, and sharing our wonderful talents with others. Thanks for all you do. Merry Christmas!

### Lions, and Tigers, and Bears. Oh, My!

Twin Lakes Playhouse was involved in this year's Christmas Parade on December 7th. Deb and Don Stanuch generously offered their BMW convertible which held Glynda, the Good Witch, with a Flying Monkey running along side the car. We also had Mr. Toad, Beauty and Mrs. Potts, Jasmine, a dancing Dragon, Scarecrow, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and a Clown. There were squeals from the kids on the sidewalks as we passed out candy, gave lots of hugs and kisses, and gave \$2 Off coupons to some of the families who had never been to the playhouse. It was fun, exciting, and so well worth the effort. We hope to do it again next year- maybe we can conjure up a float next time!



## Theatre Rocks *By Chris Wheeler*

*Chris Wheeler is an independent writer in the Denver metro area. With degrees in both Theatre and Film Studies, he has been a long-time patron, lover and philanthropist of the arts. He is glad to be a part of Pioneer Drama and their online theatre community*

We all have stories. He got into acting when his drama teacher spotted him goofing around at the lunch table with friends. She was the choir student who would put on plays with the neighborhood kids. Their parents worked all the time and needed something to keep them busy and out of trouble. For each story you've heard, there are dozens more.

I have my story too. Some of us will flirt with theatre and remember it fondly, while others will marry it and head off into the sunset. Either way, theatre means a lot to us all. Sometimes more than we realize.

For the stage and me, it was not love at first sight. The very first production I was in was a Christmas play at church, and I played "boy who cries for parents in audience." I was a stubborn, shy little boy who was perfectly content to play with action figures and Lincoln Logs alone in his room. Theatre? Acting? Big crowds of people? Forget it!

Luckily for me, a group of people I was about to meet had other plans for me.

I say I'm the lucky one in this situation because truly, I would not be the same person today without my time in and around the spotlight. In many ways I am still that same shy and certainly stubborn little boy. And at the same time, we're completely different.

Props crew is not glamorous, yet it was a good place for me to start. Behind the scenes, out of sight, yet often integral to the story. And most importantly, it was a lot of fun. I met some of the first truly accepting, outgoing, kind people I'd ever met. And theatre wasn't too scary anymore. I learned I was all right. Maybe even fun to be around!

A few acting classes later, I had the nerve to audition for my first show. I won't lie and say not getting cast was easy. But at that point, those awkward and self-conscious teenage years, I wanted someone to see greatness in me where I didn't see it. I wanted to be a star and be given a chance to shine. I didn't want to be told to work hard and be patient.

Reluctantly, that was another very important lesson theatre taught me. Yet it was still fun. I couldn't get enough.

I tried again. And again. My first play is a blur. It was middle school, and today I couldn't even tell you the plot, though I remember I got a part as Solider #5/Townsperson #11. It was small, but it was in front of the curtain. I was just one big nerve standing in the background and praying for time to go faster. But things got easier. I learned how to audition, I learned how to stand in front of crowds, I learned a thing or two about humor. Some dance steps, some new songs... I learned that I love doing it all. Working hard at something is fun. Being part of a group is fulfilling. Challenging myself is healthy.

Now, years later when I think back on this time in my life, I think about my parents. How it must have felt to see their shy little boy evoking laughter from a roomful of strangers. Seeing him shout and yell and push the drama forward. Truthfully I had several family friends, familiar with the shy little boy, tell me after shows they couldn't believe I had it in me. It was a pleasant surprise.

To them and to myself.

And to my props crew. My student director. My choreographer. My castmates. My director. And to my community.

But mostly to him, that shy little boy. I think of him fondly from the private little spotlight I keep myself in now. All thanks to the many, many people who came together so that his curtain could rise, who surprised him and taught him things he didn't know he needed to learn. We'll never be the same.



### SOLILOQUY *by Deb Smith*

#### The many hats of a Director

After the hours spent on reading and rereading the show you want to direct, auditioning for your cast so they are just right, designing the set, blocking, rehearsing, gathering props, delegating jobs (costumes, makeup, props, finding and training a crew, publicizing the play, working with the characters, and filling in all the gaps,) the show opens and generally the director can sit back and enjoy the work that was done. This is one of my favorite times. And I watch every performance from the back of the theatre, usually standing right next to the tech booth in case something goes wrong.

That's the standard. Not so with "It's a Wonderful Life!" Our dear little Karen McKaig had a family emergency the Friday of the second weekend. She called and texted me but my phone was turned off so I got a phone call at 4:30 Friday afternoon from Angie Cotter, who informed me that Karen was on her way to Oklahoma because her mother had a serious stroke. She would not be

there that entire weekend. Considering it was 4:30 and the show went on that night at 7:00 with a sold-out audience, I didn't have enough time to find another actor so I went on instead, book in hand, and after apologizing profusely to the audience, we began as planned. The show was a smashing hit, even with Clarence carrying a book around, and we didn't have to cancel any performances. Unfortunately Karen was not able to finish the run.

Karen is a real trouper but there was no way anyone could have predicted this situation. She is extremely reliable. But sometimes LIFE hits us in the face and we have to deal with it. Since Karen was unable to do the rest of the show I continued as Clarence for the final two weekends.

I learned a few things through this experience. I learned to act quickly, to do what it takes no matter what, and that I LOVE being on the stage. I had a blast filling in. I wish my old brain could have learned the lines that quickly but with all that was going on at home, I just didn't have the time. However, the audiences were so supportive and said they didn't even notice I had a book in my hand.

And my hardworking, incredibly talented cast and crew were able to have their day in the sun, too. I could not be prouder of them or thank them enough for moving right along as if nothing had happened.



*Me as Clarence, Angel 2nd-class. Karen was much cuter.*

So, it's safe to say, I am willing to fill in for anyone I can in the future. And maybe I'll even be cast in a part that I actually auditioned for. I miss the stage. I know in past articles I've said how rewarding it is to direct and I still think that. But it's also rewarding to be up in front of an audience, especially in a sold out play with standing ovations, too. It warms the heart to feel appreciated. Once theatre is in your blood, it will be there forever. It took me a very long time to get back to theatre after I quit in 1980 but I've been back since 2004 and I'm going strong. I appreciate everything and everyone for making this an easy transition for me and for helping make my directing look good.

## SETTING THE STAGE *by John Eberhard*

### Security Survey



Seems we have been having some security problems at TLP. Today's column will hopefully provide information on the security system we currently have and a suggestion for making the next one more effective.

I'm not absolutely certain everything in this article is spot on accurate, as it relies on my admittedly faulty memory plus the recollection of a couple of other "old-timers" here and even a little bit of speculation, but I believe it to be substantially accurate.

Shortly after we bought our current building, Pat Eckes used some of the Goller fund monies--a special gift account to TLP--to order our current key lock system from California. The key company had provided security at a hospital he had managed there, so he knew it was reputable. It was quite an expensive set-up due to the fact that the keys (supposedly) could not be duplicated. If you wanted to replace a key, you had to get it from this company.

Different locks were put on various doors so that people who had legitimate business at a certain location---like the sound booth, for instance---could have a key to the sound booth but wouldn't have access to places like the costume or prop rooms, where they had no business anyway. The director's ring had a full set of keys, and the Chairman's key was a master that worked everything. Multiple copies of all keys were kept in the key box in the office, along with the check-out ledger.

The keys we had were individually numbered. A key box was installed in the Board Room and a ledger for checking keys in and out and keeping track of them was kept in it. As long as meticulous attention was paid to keeping the ledger current, it was a pretty good system as we always knew who had keys and to what rooms they had a key. We used to regularly take key inventories to make sure keys weren't floating around unaccounted for.

Over seven or eight years, a couple of keys managed to go missing, but we still had a very good idea of who had keys and who could access the building. I recently checked the key check-out ledger and found only one dated check-in or check-out since 2010. I could find no evidence of a key inventory since January of 2009. It was just a quick skim through the ledger and I may have missed something, but it appears we haven't been taking care of our own security very well. From the looks of the ledger, it appears keys have been distributed without keeping track of them for a couple of years.

Which brings me to the point. If we (again) spend a bunch of money on a security system, we absolutely need to have people, policies, and procedures in place to take care of and to monitor that system so we don't have to spend a bunch to replace that one also. Security systems are only as good as the monitoring of them. If we don't take care of whatever we get, we are just throwing money away.



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## Creating Old Age Characters *By Chris Wheeler*

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You and I both know we're not going to be able to fool anyone. You put a seven year old in a gray wig, glasses and a floral dress and the parents aren't going to really think there's an elderly woman in the cast. That's okay. Part of going to the theatre, truthfully part of going into any story, is suspending your beliefs. As audiences we're okay with taking the plunge. Another part of theatre however, is making the commitment.

Okay. I'm playing someone seventy years older than myself. I have a funny costume, wig and a cane. But what about a little makeup?

Stage makeup, can not only help push the audiences imagination the direction you would like, but also give your actors tools for their trade. Time and time again, you give a child a mask and you give them permission to do their best. You set them free, and some really incredible performances come out!

But, speaking of old age makeup, there's a good way and a bad way to execute it. Your actor either looks like they're playing an older character, or they look like they were attacked backstage with a sharpie. Here are some tips to do it right.

The first thing to keep in mind is: there are no lines on the face. Laugh lines, frown lines are really folds of the skin. The muscles and skin begin to sag or droop over time, and the folds or indentations behind or around the skin make wrinkles. It's important to keep this in mind when deciding where to begin or end the makeup line. For example, crow's feet are not next to the eye, they come from the eye. The natural folds and creases of the skin will give you your starting and stopping points.

Depending on the level of realism you desire, you may also want to add highlights. Dark lines do a lot to imply age, but remember too to add highlight to taut, "high" areas of the face such as the bridge of the nose and the cheekbones. The dark lines themselves are often best as a shade of brown instead of a stark black. Remember also to fade out the end point of the line by blotting it with a finger. You may find only a makeup pencil is required, but if you do decide to add highlight keep in mind that a bit more practicing may be required, at the very least to match an appropriate shade to your actor's skin.

Often the easiest way to add age lines to your actor's face will be to have them make faces. Scrunch their forehead. Smile. Scowl. Use the folds of their skin as your starting point, and focus particularly on the mouth, eyes, and forehead to imply age. Depending on the costume, actor, and goal of the makeup effect, you may also decide to add age lines to the neck, or even to their hands.

Perhaps the most important tool to remember will be makeup remover. A good astringent can do more to remove stage makeup than fifteen minutes of soapy water would. Add some cotton balls and you should be able to keep the mess of clean up to a minimum.

With these tips in mind work with your actors to decide what their comfort level and enthusiasm will be. You may be surprised to find a performer excited to get completely decked out and into character. Or you may decide less is more. Either way, have fun and happy crafting!



### MEETING TIMES

**Board Meeting, December 10, 2012 6:00 P.M.**

**Members' Meeting, December 17, 2012 7:00 P.M.**

**Board Meeting, January 14, 2013 6:00 P.M.**

**Members' Meeting, January 21, 2013 7:00 P.M.**