

TWIN LAKES PLAYHOUSE

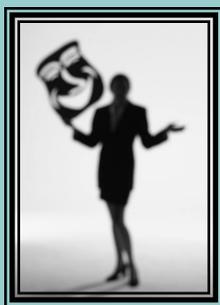
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PLAYBILL

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SEPTEMBER 2012



The Dixie Swim Club – Wahoo!

What a remarkable cast and crew we have working on The Dixie Swim Club! This is yet another successful show for the playhouse— one that will be talked about in the community for a long time. It is always a pleasure to watch women with such impeccable timing, commitment, and overall joy being with each other as on this production. There was hardly a rehearsal that went by where someone didn't crack up the rest of the cast, creating infectious laughter throughout. Paula and I almost fell off our seats several times. If you weren't able to make it to members' night, you should make a point of seeing this show. Some people are already watching it for the second or third time.

Thanks to the crew: Assistant Director Paula Hill, Technician Dylan Gamble, and the ladies backstage: Denise Jones, Yvonne Gehrke, Lynn Lawhon, and Tammy LeBrelle. Thanks also to my building crew: Stacy Tiffin, Monroe Schmidt, and Michael Johnson, the set painters: John Eberhard, Pam Cook, Margie LeFevers, Don & Deb Stanuch, George Smith, Paula Hill, Frank Midkiff, Dylan Gamble, and the amazing scenic artist, Anne Johnson-Loftis. I love you all and greatly appreciate your work. Deb Smith



Chairman's Letter by Michael Johnson

Hello TLP friends and family!

WOW what a group can accomplish when we work together! Have you checked out the building lately? On August 25 several loving/caring members came to give the Twin Lakes Playhouse building a thorough Season Opener Cleaning! Many thanks to the following: John Eberhard, Frank Midkiff, Margie LeFevers, Debbie Johnson, Barbara Dugger, Shirley Spitzer, Monroe Schmidt, Lisa Hammett, ...

This fine bunch made a list of needed clean-up items of both inside and outside items. Things like: Pick up around the outside of the building, cut out the brush in the flower beds, trim the low hanging limbs on the way to the parking area (thanks John E.), pick up the rocks in the grass, junk by A/C unit. On the inside the list included fix up the bathrooms, paint the lobby, clean/replace/repair the seating in the auditorium, clean up the shop, clean up the Green Room ... and the list went on! Then this same group dug in and just about knocked out the whole list ... took several weeks ... AND!!! ... the first impression for our patrons coming to the opener was fabulous! The Gang of Three (Debbie J, Margie L, and Barbara D) attacked the

two bathrooms with a vengeance and WOW is the only word I could come up with! Very classy ... Great Job Ladies! The Lobby looks so much better with the new lights, the beam that spanned the lobby that was rain damaged has been veneered and painted, new trim around the Snack Bar entrance (thanks Monroe).

I want to remind everyone that there is a show currently playing at the playhouse! "Dixie Swim Club" It is Awesome! ... so funny ... such comedic talent coming from our mostly dramatic ensemble. "I laughed 'till I cried ... then I cried" ... It is your pleasure/duty to come support your fellow thespians at the playhouse! Otherwise why join? One day it will be you that gave your precious time, talents and sacrifices on the boards. It is a beautiful thing, the synergy of a production. Come get caught up in it! <Smiley Face>

I also want to mention the County Fair is going on and we have a booth there. Please drop by and stay a while to greet passers-by. Encourage them to Join-In (Not just join) ... it takes more than a \$5-er to be a part of the playhouse. It takes enthusiasm, positive input, time, talents, skills which are all rewarded with a huge sense of pride and accomplishment. Help at the Fair Booth to pass on the message!

One last opin' for the newsletter. Our next offering on stage may be, by far, the MOST beloved movies/plays of the holiday season!! Deb Smith has agreed/volunteered to direct "It's a Wonderful Life." What a wonderful opportunity for first-timers and old pros alike to join in together for a Wonderful time of producing "It's a Wonderful Life" for OUR Home Town ... ZuZu will be proud ... Clarence will put in a good word for you too <Smiley Face>

Love you all!

Mike "Most Blessed To Be Your Chairman" Johnson



Soliloquy by Deb Smith

I'm getting nervous! I am just starting a very complicated play, "It's a Wonderful Life!" I want to applaud the author of this adaptation and stay true to his wishes but Yikes! He makes parallels to not only Dickens's "A Christmas Carol," of course, but also to Dante's "Divine Comedy" and several other short stories. He also wrote a six-page dissertation about the play and why he chose certain symbols to better tell the tale. That, plus 49 music cues, 24 sound effects, and who knows how many light cues—this is turning out to be a technical nightmare. I am now asking, "What did I get myself into?"

It's a good thing that I am determined to put on a good show no matter how little sleep I get and how much I have to delegate. No one can direct this show alone. Any show can't be done alone. You hear this all the time. It takes a village to put on a show. I think I need the entire state of Arkansas. But...it will be done. I am committed. Now, who wants to be a part of this adventure with me?

I know a lot of the actors want to be in the play— don't blame you, I'd like to, too. Even though there is a huge cast of characters, I'm opting for the smaller cast version where many of the actors have to double up. We'll still have between 18-20 cast members instead of the possible 30-40. But we'll be moving furniture in and out of the backstage area, which takes lots of room and lots of hands. We also need to make those props. If I hadn't been so darn busy with all the other things I've done at the playhouse this year, starting with Patsy Cline, I would have spent more time working on this show— at least planning it out and delegating positions months ago.

So, here I am, very late in the game to start this project but knowing it has to be done. This play will be such a great bridge between us and our audiences and community. And we have a commitment to give the best production we possibly can. I take that to heart. I want to continue building great relationships with our patrons and audiences. We have really moved forward in the last few years. We are offering better and better plays, our talent pool has grown, we've added some very keen new directors, and the more mature directors are doing interesting, provocative, funny, and charming plays— ones that fit with this community. We are so much more consistent with our choices. The audiences comment on it all the time. We've started selling season tickets (finally) so that should help us better budget our money. We had our first fundraiser, "Always...Patsy Cline" which brought in triple what we usually make on a production. We do need more plays that we can use to increase our building fund.

With all this fine work behind us, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must keep fighting to bring the best of the best.

Sooo, I need to rally as many capable, dedicated crew members as possible. If you are interested in working in the technical booth, please let me know. Andrew, our technical director, is willing to teach you if you don't know how. It would be great to have 4 people signed up for that so no one has to work every show. I'll need good backstage people who can give 100% to each production. I'll need prop builders, costumers (Tracy Hogan will be back to help with this show) because many costumes will be needed to span the years between the 1920's and late-1940's. I need organized people who can devote their time before the show opens so we can bring it all together on time.

If you want to be a part of this, please come to the auditions Saturday 9/15 and Sunday 9/16. We can chat, you can let me know what you can do, I'll have a rehearsal schedule there so you can see what we're working with, and you can let me know if it works for you. I hope we have lots of good actors and support people show up. This is an important show for all of us.

Did I mention it will be a lot of fun and you'll be a part of a great team? Well, it will be. Guaranteed.

SETTING THE STAGE *by John Eberhard*

Selecting Your First Play to Direct



Carol and I watched a production of *Barefoot in the Park* in Little Rock this weekend and it struck me what a perfect play this would be for a first time director to direct. What makes it so perfect?

So many times I have seen novice directors select their first play because "I always wanted to do this show" or "It has such deep meaning for me" or some such similar reason. These are really very poor criteria for selecting a show to direct as your first directorial effort. I suggest you pick your first show using a number of different criteria. Get some experience, get your feet wet, gain some knowledge, and learn some pitfalls. Then, later, direct your always beloved show AFTER you have the expertise to give it the good job it deserves and you have the hard earned ability to turn out the good quality show you hope to have.

What makes *Barefoot in the Park* an example of a good play for a beginner? First and foremost, it is well written by a renowned playwright. It is so well written, in fact, that it removes the potential burden of meticulous, detailed, and complex script analysis. Good script analysis is very hard even for experienced directors; it is almost impossible for beginners. That isn't to say the beginning director shouldn't undertake a detailed script analysis on their first show; it is to say that scripts like this one are so well written that they are very forgiving when you fall short in your analysis. A truly well written script will almost direct itself as far as tempo and rhythm are concerned.

A second reason *Barefoot in the Park* an example of a good play for a beginner is that it is technically simple. The set is a basic one room with a standard fourth wall convention. The costumes are contemporary enough to be easy. The properties list--large and small props-- is relatively small and easily obtained. Set pieces are few. The light and sound cues are straightforward. Music is optional.

A third reason is that it is easy to cast and to block. Six characters covering a wide age span is all you need. Trying to master new found blocking skills is so much easier with two to four people on stage than a cast of thousands. Working with a small cast in general is easier than working with a large cast. This show avoids the casting difficulties of finding a large group of men, or a herd of males or females in the 25-35 age range, and so on. This show has a couple in their late 20's, a couple 45-60, and two guys 20-60. No singing roles. No special abilities (example: juggling or playing an instrument). It just doesn't get much easier to cast than that.

A fourth reason is that it should put plenty of butts in the seats for you. It is a well known "name" play that has been a movie and was written by a playwright whose named is recognized. It is a comedy. All of these things help to stack the deck in your favor for attendance.

First time directors, please do yourselves a favor. Select a well written play with a cast of 4-8 characters that is technically easy. It really is that simple. Give yourself every break you can before you dive into a major production and all of the necessary planning for set design, set construction, blocking, lights, sound, music, set colors and decor, costumes, makeup, props, publicity, playbill, cast party, and so on.

Directing a play is rewarding. It is also difficult. Doing a good job of directing is much harder than just difficult. On your first time out, make it as easy as you can on yourself by following the above suggestions.

Working with Teenage Actors or... How Am I Going to Get Out of This Alive?

By Edith Weiss

Edith Weiss is the author of several published children's plays, including six with Pioneer Drama Service. A lot of Edith's writing time goes into her stand-up comedy routine, which has taken her all over the country and on three overseas military tours. Besides writing, she also acts and directs in both children's and adult theatre.

Undoubtedly, if you're working with teenage actors, you're going to have some rehearsals that get out of hand. But what do you do when one or two kids are so unruly, loud and generally obnoxious that it infects the entire cast and threatens to ruin the show? This is a toughie. Too harsh, and it becomes fun for no one; too lenient, and you lose the kids who are really interested. Either way, you run the risk that the show may be a disaster.

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Michael Johnson



Once, I was teaching at a private school where being in the production was a requirement for all the 8th grade students. I couldn't kick anyone out, no matter what they did, and they knew it. I leave it to your imagination as to how disruptive some of these young teens became! Since I couldn't keep them out of the show, I needed to find a different negative consequence for their poor behavior. I went to the Headmaster and asked permission to use detention. And then, for a couple of days, I "detended" like crazy. This made them take the process more seriously. I also made a couple of calls home. Sometimes this helped, sometimes it didn't, but at least it communicated to these students that I was in charge and aware of what was going on.

At a summer theater school where I directed, anyone paying got into the class. Yes, even though I should have been obligated to cast everyone, one time — but only once — I did ask that a girl be given her money back and sent home. Most of the time, however, I could control the situation by threatening to take away what they all wanted most: stage time. After all, that's why they were spending their precious summer hours there. I found that if I made my expectations very clear in the beginning — that if someone didn't pay attention in rehearsals, didn't show up or didn't make enough of an effort to learn their lines, I would give some of their lines to someone else — their behavior would stay in line reasonably well.

However, at this same school, I had one class where this didn't work. This class was The Worst Class There Ever Was in the Entire Known and Unknown Universe. Sixteen kids aged 11-14. I think they were there because their parents would have paid any amount of money to get rid of them for a few hours. And now I had them. Every hyperactive, snotty, bouncing-off-the-ceiling, disrespectful one of them. Yes, they were all like that. They had become one super-sized malicious organism. Okay, maybe I'm getting carried away here. The point is, I couldn't kick out the whole class and still have a job. So here is what I did out of sheer desperation on the fourth day of a two-week class: nothing. I sat there quietly, looking down at the script. I let them do whatever they wanted. After about ten minutes, they started nudging each other and whispering. After a few more minutes, someone asked, "What's wrong?" "Well," I answered, "since no one listens to me and I'm getting paid anyway, I'll let you do the show without a director. You're the ones up there — I won't be embarrassed (which of course wasn't true) if this show is a giant stinker. You will." And I went back to my reading and totally ignored them. They were abashed and stunned. Within five minutes, they were taking direction. For the rest of the two weeks, my method of discipline whenever they were getting out of control was to get very quiet and start reading a book I had brought. Ladies and gentlemen, it worked.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUDITIONS for "It's A Wonderful Life" are scheduled for **Saturday, September 15 at 12:30 p.m.** and **Sunday, September 16 at 6:00 p.m.** The auditions consist of cold readings for several of the cast. The main characters will play only one character. However, we will be doubling up on the minor characters. And we will need extras for crowd scenes— all ages. And a backstage crew. Contact Deb Smith @ 870-421-6099 with any questions. Hope to see you there!

"On the Boards Café" **AUDITIONS** for their September 29th performance are scheduled for Tuesday, **September 18th at 6:00 p.m.** If you've already auditioned and want to participate in this performance or if you have any questions regarding this venue, please contact Anne Johnson-Loftis at 870-421-0927.

Want to work the TLP booth at the Fair? Contact Barbara Dugger, email: BLD1959@gmail.com.

Want to help with playhouse renovations? Contact Mike Johnson, email: a174298@gmail.com.

MEETING TIMES

Board Meeting, September 10, 2012 6:00 P.M.

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

Board Meeting, October 8, 2012 6:00 P.M.

Members' Meeting, October 15, 2012 7:00 P.M.