

Tawas Bay Players Newsletter

May/June 2009

The big news in this edition is *Sister Amnesia's Country Western Nonsense Jamboree* which will be referred to from this point on as *Nonsense Jamboree*. The full title is just too much to type. Let me say that even if this show didn't feature some of the most talented singers in TBP, the set and props alone are worth the cost of a ticket. Chris & Janie Mundy, Al & Dee Bixby and Mike Merluzzi have outdone themselves with this one. And now here's an update from Janie...

Nonsense Jamboree by Janie Mundy

Everything is going well and the set looks awesome. Everyone has been working very hard to make sure all the little details are finished on time. The show is directed by Chris Mundy and produced by Phyllis Spencer (with Janie Mundy assisting them both). The cast includes Penny Zacharias as Sister Mary Paul, aka Amnesia, Pam Katona as Sister Robert Ann, Pat Casey as Sister Mary Wilhelm, Trisha Evans as Sister Mary Leo, Jeff Chadwick as Father Virgil Manly Trott and features a cameo performance by Tara Western as Reverend Mother. In the pit are John Thomas (musical director), Christine Huebner, Dennis Szatkowski, Jim DiLoreto and Rich Cranston. Tickets went on sale on Friday, April 24th and so you know opening night is near. (Actually the show will have opened by the time you are reading this). Chris, Phyllis (Spencer, producer) and I would like to say thank you to everyone who has helped make the show, the set, the costumes, the props and the music all come together. We couldn't have done it without you. We really appreciate everyone's support; please come out and see the show. Just follow the star...

Performance dates are May 9, 10, 14, 15, 16 and 17. Shows are at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday and at 2:00 p. m. on Sunday.

One more special thank you to June Groff. She stepped off the plane from Florida and right into the theater. The first thing she said, after a hug, was "What do you need me to do?" She left with sewing projects in hand. Luv ya June. Janie



Summer Show Auditions

Auditions for *Two By Two* will be held at the Tawas Bay Playhouse, on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 12th and 13th at 7pm. This is a musical comedy about God asking Noah to build an ark and to take on two of every creature with his family to help him. It has wonderful music and is a heartwarming and funny show. For the cast we need 4 men and 4 women. The show will be directed by June Hudgins and produced by June Groff with musical direction by Chad Robson. Performance dates will be July 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18 & 19. If you have any questions please call June Hudgins at 362-8423. Hope to see you there.

TPB Play Selection by Keith Frank

At their regular meeting on April 28, the Board selected the plays to be produced during the 2009-2010 season. However, we would like to get started compiling a list of plays for the 2010-2011 season now. We invite any member to submit play titles for consideration. Maybe you have seen a great show somewhere and thought it would be perfect for TPB. Perhaps you have a play that you would like to direct. If so, please contact any board member and tell them about the play or plan to attend a board meeting and tell the whole board about it. You don't have to be a director to submit ideas. The board can usually find directors. However, it's a big benefit to the board to have a director submit a show that he or she has an interest in directing. So keep seeing plays and let the board know. The more we have to choose from the better. As the year progresses, I would like to run a list in each newsletter of the plays that have been submitted for consideration. Once you see this list in the newsletter, we would encourage you to make comments or suggestions regarding those play to any board member. Thanks.

TBP Wish List

A group of members have been talking about things that are needed at the theater. We all know how frustrating it is when you're working on a project and you don't have the tools you need. You either must bring things from home or call around to find someone who has what you need. Janie Mundy thought of starting a wish list for the theater. She would like ideas not only about what kinds of things are needed but also the best way to publicize the list. Some items already desired include a sewing machine and battery operated screwdrivers. A couple easy ways to get the news out would be to print a detailed list in the newsletter and to post it on our web site. If you would like, send me your wishes and I will pass them along to Janie. Please be very specific in your wishes. Chances are that TPB members have things at home that they don't need but had no idea they could be used at the theater. The wish list can be a good opportunity to clean out closets, garage, and storage sheds. Also please share any ideas about how to publicize the wish list.

Update on Beauty & the Beast Costumes by Judy Quarters

Carol Kushion is the drama teacher from Cadillac High School, has a cabin on Tawas Lake and is a frequent visitor to our theater. Her school was going to be performing Beauty & the Beast, so she came to see our show last season. She was so impressed with our costumes that she purchased them, which was great since we really had nowhere to store them. She gave us a \$250 deposit and promised to pay the remaining \$250 once the show was over. Well, the other day we got a check from the Cadillac High School for another \$500! They also had loaned the costumes to a high school in Traverse City and told them if they wanted to pay anything - pay it to Tawas Bay Players!

My next project will be to try to sell our 4 - Audrey II's from Little Shop of Horror. If anyone knows any theater group doing that show, let me know.

Never Stand in the Path of a Stampeding Pink Lady by Michal Jacot

A few years ago one of our members demanded we do *Grease* before we all got too old to pass as teenagers. I will go on record as saying that *Grease* is the most fun anyone can have on a community theatre stage. The show is funny, the songs are well-known and contagious, the dancing is great fun to learn; it makes anyone feel like a teenager again. Which was a good thing because we only had one actual teenager in the cast. One of our Burger Boys was a grandfather who got winded doing the backup for "Greased Lightning." As a group of happy-go-lucky teen angels, we asked the audience to cut us a great deal of slack. I liked to call our version "Ancient Grease."

Act Two opened with a high-energy, rocking dance number. And when I say it opened, I mean it opened *immediately*. Lights up, pounding music began, and the cast literally ran onto the stage and began wildly dancing in ways that would make an epileptic say "hey, calm down you guys." The choreographer was happily oblivious to the fact that her over-the-hill cast was barely surviving the show's dance numbers, and kept increasing the pace and energy of the steps. She was well hated by show's end.

The normal routine was for the cast to go backstage at intermission and psych themselves up for the big dance number. Then, when the stage manager gave them the five-minute warning, they would be in their places and as mentally and physically prepared as they could be, ready to tear out onto stage as soon as the music began. I had a small part, which meant I helped with set changes and got in everyone's way. I'm good at that. During intermission, I would shuffle around backstage, not doing much of anything.

One fateful night, the stage manager either forgot to give the cast their five-minute warning or just wanted to see if they were on their toes. In any event, it turned into the biggest chaotic mob scene I've ever witnessed.

Picture it: The entire cast was sitting around backstage lazily sipping drinks and chatting. With no warning at all, the orchestra suddenly boomed to life. The drums pounded a rock and roll beat, the horns began an up-tempo fanfare, and every cast member had the same look on their face: sheer panic.

Drinks flew. Expletives peppered the air. And two dozen people made an insane dash for the stage at once. Cast members who were outside smoking leaped up the outside steps and crashed into the building, still exhaling smoke.

And then there was Tracee. I'll call her Tracee because, well, that's her name. Tracee played one of the Pink Ladies. She was a woman of Amazonian proportions: tall and, as my mom liked to say, sturdy. Tracee heard the music and was determined to clear the sixty feet to the stage in three-point-five seconds.

I was in her path.

When you're standing around minding your own business, only to look around and see a beefy, busty woman in a shocking pink prom dress with a big bow on the butt running at you full tilt while muttering curse words under her breath, well, it's not the sort of thing you forget easily. I knew in an instant that Tracee would not be politely waiting for me to step out of her way. I could see the look on her face -- those wide eyes, those clenched teeth. Her intent was clear: move or become part of the wallpaper.

Well, even I knew better than to stand in the path of a runaway train. I pinned myself as far as I could against the table behind me and crouched down. For good measure, I covered my head with my arms and prayed.

I'm not sure, but I think Tracee leaped over me and, upon landing, swatted a few stagehands aside like flies without even breaking stride. But then, that may have been my imagination kicking in from the shock trauma

of my near-death experience. Incredibly, everyone made it onto the stage in record time, and after doing the fastest sprint they'd done since their high school gym days, they had to start right in with a killer dance number. Everyone wanted a piece of the stage manager, the orchestra, the choreographer, and anyone else they could pin blame on.

But first they had to take a few minutes to catch their breath.

Miscellaneous Note

Greg Dahlstrom, you were worth the price of admission with your performance in the Shoreline Player's musical review. You always leave us wanting more. Janie

What Are They Doing Now?

Please let me know if you are in contact with any former members, youth or adult.

Another Purple Rose Theater Possibility? by Judy Quarters

Last issue I keep you posted on Tristan Peach and I thought I would let you all know that Amanda Jungquist also auditioned last month with the Purple Rose Theater in Chelsea, Michigan. They will keep her audition on file for an entire year and the director thinks he has a part for her this coming season! He noted she was from Tawas and asked her if she knew Tristan. Most auditions don't include singing, but he read that she had been in so many musicals, he had her sing too! We may all have to take a road trip to see her. I'll let you know.

Schauer Meets with Bahama Mamas minus One *, Plus One by Tara Western**

On April eve, I received a surprise phone call, a blast from the past, if you will, from Warren Schauer, a TBP member who was with us back in the 80's. Warren was part of the huge cast of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* in the spring of 1983. Ed and Gloria Sterling brought in not only Warren, but Jon Peterson and George Heffner. With approximately thirty in the cast, this play began the first huge membership surge the Players experienced.

Anyway, Warren and I made a date to meet for breakfast at Patty's Country Kitchen on Wednesday, April 1st and called June Hudgins, Debbie DeBois, and Vincent Weiler. We met at 8:00 a.m. and had a great time reminiscing about the old days. FYI, Warren appeared in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Move over Mrs. Markham*, *Fools*, *Flowers for Algernon*, and *The Music Man*. Warren, located in Escanaba, is a MSU Extension Educator. He works with farmers and agri-businesses across the UP and eight counties in Northeast Michigan.

Here's a fact that many of even the old timers won't remember: Warren, Bill Western, and Vincent Weiler made a TV commercial for McIntosh Chevrolet back in the 80's.

*Sharon Miller-Bailey is the missing "Bahama Mama".

**Vince is our "plus one". In the back of the theater you can find the seat we purchased together.

Editor's Note: Warren, by nature a quiet man, really was the life of the cast parties in the 1980's. He had a collection of silly and wonderfully fun games that we all played. Cast parties haven't been the same since he went back to the UP.

And last but not least a few photos from the dress rehearsal of Nunsense Jamboree...

