



Twin Lakes Playhouse

Twin Lakes Playhouse, 600 W. Sixth Street, Mountain Home, Arkansas 72654 870-424-0444

www.twinlakesplayhouse.org

JoEllen Miller- our 2008 Scholarship Winner!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER
- 1 DIRECTOR'S NOTES
- 2 SETTING THE STAGE
- 3 TALK OF THE TOWN- AN INTERVIEW
- 4 THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
- 4 DIRECTOR'S WORKSHOP
- 5 MEETING MINUTES
- 5 MEETING TIMES
- 6 FROM THE EDITOR
- 6 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"To go into acting is like asking for admission to an insane asylum. Anyone may apply, but only the certifiably insane are admitted."

Michael Shurtleff, "Audition"

As you know, each year Twin Lakes Playhouse awards a performing arts scholarship of \$500 to a deserving and dedicated individual. There are many areas in which the scholarship committee takes into account when choosing this person. Mainly, it is based on educational merit- GPA and scholastical achievement. However, there are so many other facets considered, such as career plans within the performing arts, community involvement, and theatre activities.

This year we are very proud to bestow this award to one of our own, JoEllen Miller. She not only qualified scholastically, she has performed on the TLP stage in numerous productions, such as: *LOVE, SEX & THE I.R.S.*, *GODSPELL*, *BUS STOP*, *NUNSENSE*, and *WASH YOUR TROUBLES AWAY*. JoEllen has given her time and her talent to the playhouse. She was also active in the Education/Outreach program, participating in a skit taken to the kindergarten classes in 2006.

JoEllen will be attending Arkansas Tech in Russelville in the fall. She will be majoring in history with a minor in theatre arts. We will miss her sparkling face around the playhouse but I'm sure she will come back to visit us in the near future.

JoEllen also wanted to express her appreciation for the scholarship.



Director's Notes

By Deb Smith

The Spitfire Grill is based on the film version of the 1997 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Audience Award. The screenplay was transformed by James Valq and Fred Alley into a musical for the stage and won the Richard Rogers Production Award presented by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. First produced in New Jersey in the fall of 2000, *The Spitfire Grill* moved to Broadway in September 2001, playing only 3 performances before the Twin Towers

disaster occurred. The show lasted four weeks longer in a city devastated by tragedy, but has since enjoyed many productions across the country.

In Old Testament times, a bush producing the resin from which healing balm was made grew so plentiful in Gilead (Israel) that the balm came to be known as the "balm of Gilead" (Jeremiah 46:11). This allusion supports the themes of healing and hope that is found in *The Spitfire Grill*. A traditional folk song expresses: "There is a balm in Gilead that makes the wounded whole./ There is a balm in Gilead what heals the sin-sick soul." The story of *The Spitfire Grill* is an honest account of an outsider who changes the lives of strangers through her actions. Percy, an ex-convict, decides to start a new life in "a place for leaving, not for coming to-" Gilead, Wisconsin. She goes to work at the Spitfire Grill, owned by Hannah Ferguson. Soon after she starts, Hannah is injured and is forced to depend on Percy. Percy is assisted in the Grill by Shelby, frustrated by Shelby's husband, Caleb, courted by Sheriff Joe, and gossiped about by the townspeople. By story's end, both Percy and Hannah achieve freedom from their individual "prisons," which becomes the play's resolution.

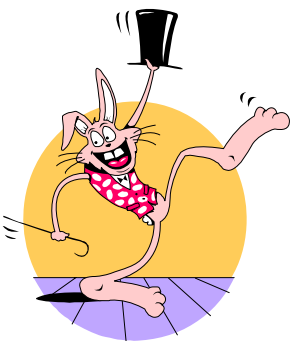
The Spitfire Grill is a slice of Americana, a modern folk tale. The lyrics have a conversational tone and the music transports the characters from inside the café' to the great outdoors which is Gilead. To show this transport, our set became very complicated. Play action needed to occur in so many areas- the grill, the back porch, the forest, main street...Some of our playing areas are multi-functional and will be more defined through lighting effects. The grill is portrayed as realistically as possible. Mastering set design for the TLP stage is extremely difficult because of the limited stage space. Hopefully, the audience will appreciate the work that went into designing and building this set. We got together on Saturday, August 2, to do the Dutchman process and will paint the set Saturday, August 9. After that it's on to detailing the playing areas and dressing the stage. So far, it's been a delight as we've had some terrific help. I thank all those involved.

If anyone has sold or would like any raffle tickets for the "Night On the Town," please call me at 870-421-6099 and we'll make arrangements to meet. The drawing is set for August 15th so I'll need to get them before then.

Setting the Stage

By John Eberhard

CURTAIN CALL



There is more than one way to skin a cat and there is certainly more than one way to stage a curtain call. One of the facets of a good curtain call is to recognize that it is part of the show and that it should always be rehearsed. It must also have definite form and rhythm.

Traditional curtain calls usually start with the player(s) of the least important role(s) coming on stage, acknowledging the applause with a quick but gracious bow, and taking a set place on stage. He is quickly followed by the second least important character, and so on until the leading players have been applauded and the entire company is on stage. Then, joining hands—usually held out to the cast by the leading players—the company takes a well-timed and coordinated bow all together. The curtain call is where the ACTOR, not the CHARACTER, is recognized.

Untraditionally, especially at the end of a comedy or a mystery, the bows can bring into play all of the director's ingenuity and whimsy. He can even improvise additional bits of business that carry the action through the curtain calls with the actors staying in character. This is all to the good if not carried so far as to seem strained or cutesy.

"Taking a bow" is the actor's acknowledgment of the public's approval and should always be executed as graciously as possible, befitting acknowledgment of a compliment.

Some tips: All actors should enter evenly from left and right stage together. They should arrive together at center stage, smiling with high energy, and then moving quickly downstage for their bow. Curtain calls must be very quick and to the point. Short and sweet is the operative word. You don't want to drown a great production by a long and boring curtain call. Curtain calls need to be upbeat or at least a notch above the overall tone of the play, so you don't bring the audience down. Instead you bring them up to a fantastic performance. If the curtain call is for a musical, have the orchestra play music throughout the curtain call. The

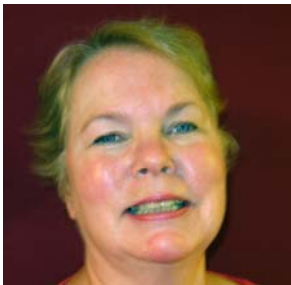
music should be upbeat and appropriate. Bring the curtain down immediately or bring the lights down to black. Actors leave the stage quickly.

bows. A good curtain call is like an exquisite dessert at the end of a delectable meal, leaving the diners---your audience---totally sated. Bon Appétit!

Timing is all important. Keep them clapping and keep the applause building to a crescendo when the company

TALK OF THE TOWN

By Deb Smith



An interview with one of our newest members to the playhouse, Lynn Lawhon

DS: First of all, let me welcome you, Lynn, to our membership. I know you recently moved from Mississippi. Please tell our members what brought you to Mountain Home and, specifically, how did you come to Twin Lakes Playhouse?

LL: David and I have been vacationing in Arkansas for 20+ years, mostly in southern Arkansas as we lived in the Shreveport/Bossier area of Louisiana for 27 years. We started coming to Mountain Home about 7 or 8 years ago for the great fly fishing and were equally attracted by the mountains and the friendly people we met. We got tired of the heat, humidity and hurricanes of the Mississippi coastal area and longed for a place with four seasons and great fishing, so.....upon David's retirement we moved here. I asked my realtor about any theatres when I was looking for a house and she took me by yours and sent me your brochure. We moved here last October and I saw *Grace & Glorie* - it was great!

DS: You jumped right in as stage manager for *The Spitfire Grill*. I know you've had lots of experience with community theatre. What other roles have you played within the theatre and which is your favorite?

LL: Actually, my active community theatre experience is only about 8 years but it was almost constant. I jumped in right after retirement and haven't stopped. I have been on stage, backstage many times, lights, sound, concessions, tickets, Asst. Director and have directed two plays. I was also on the Board for all 8 years as Membership Director and did newsletters, programs, flyers, marketing, etc. I love it all and like to switch around for variety.

DS: What resources did you and your directing peers use to choose the plays for your season? What was your criterion for choosing specific plays? Did you have space considerations, low stage ceiling, maybe other concerns?

LL: That is an easy one. We have a phenomenal person in our Picayune On Stage theatre, Gladys Hughes, who, at 82, is still going strong with 60+ years in theatre. As a retired teacher of drama and speech, she took her students to local, state and national drama competitions. Plus she has more energy than any of us. She has led the play selection committee for years and has a library full of great plays and is constantly reading new ones. Of course you know comedies are always a hit but we tried to do at least one drama per season and a musical every other season (due to the cost). We had a great little theatre that seated 101 with wonderful acoustics until 2004 when the city tore the building down to put up more soccer fields (sports trumps arts yet again). Our stage was 40' wide by 30' deep and had a high ceiling too with a broad apron. After we lost the theatre, we performed one or two shows a year for a couple of years at the senior center, the high school auditorium, etc. until we found a small space downtown and built a tiny stage 16' wide by 15' deep and could only seat 48. Needless to say, we had to look for plays with small casts. I did recommend *Grace & Glorie* to Gladys after I saw your production and she plans to do it this fall.

DS: Which production was your absolute favorite to work on and in what capacity did you work on it?

LL: It is really hard to choose a favorite. My favorite set was *To Kill A Mockingbird* where I helped construct a tree and the facades of 5 houses - it was fabulous! I think I had the most fun in my first role onstage as the murderess in *Bull in a China Shop*, a hilarious old show about 6 little old ladies trying to attract the attention of the local policeman across the street. It is sort of an *Arsenic and Old Lace* type of show. The cast was terrific and we couldn't wait to get to practice each night!

DS: Would you like to direct at this playhouse in the future? If so, any ideas for a play?

LL: It would probably be quite a while before I would attempt to direct here. I know I would have to take your director's workshop plus I need to acquire a little more knowledge of the area and the people before I would attempt it with my limited experience in that area. I do have quite a list of good plays and can always look to Gladys for more ideas.

DS: What types of marketing did your theatre do? What was the best way to promote your play season? Do you have any marketing suggestions for Twin Lakes Playhouse?

LL: Marketing...hmmmm. Well, first of all, we sold season tickets at various price levels ranging from a student membership to a \$1000 membership for those able to make a tax-deductible contribution. We never did get a \$1000 membership, but we did sell several for \$750. When we had our larger theatre, we had two dinner theatre performances which always sold out. The dinners were prepared and served by different groups (Senior Center, Episcopal Church, Boys & Girls Club) as fund raisers and were held on site before the 8 PM showtime. We also had two critics from Slidell (north New Orleans) who attended our shows regularly and one from the local paper. It also helped that the editor of the local Picayune Item was a big theatre fan and would print anything and everything we sent him - on the front page, if possible! We sent pictures and articles to all the surrounding local papers prior to the opening date, usually by e-mail. We had different ticket prices - \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors 62 and over, and \$5 for students. We also papered the town with flyers as you do here and sought sponsors for various shows.

DS: What are your interests outside of the theatre?

LL: Fly fishing, of course, and I wish the water would go down so we could wade again. I completed the Master Gardener course in Mississippi in 2004 and plan to take the one here in Mountain Home this fall so I can better learn how to garden in rocks. I also read quite a bit and play bridge.

You can learn more about Lynn and her adventures. Just stop her at a member's meeting or catch her at a rehearsal. She's busy but always available.

That's Entertainment

"Theatre does not have to exist within the frame of buying a ticket in a two-hour event," explains Actors Theatre of Louisville Producing Director Jon Jory. "We have to seek other venues, forms and time limits to remain part of the contemporary lifestyle."



In the 1999 Humana Festival, one such experiment with venue, form and time was provided by Richard Dresser's *What Are You Afraid Of?*, a dramatic test

that explores some possibilities of the *Car Play*. In this version of on-site theatre, audience members sit in the back seat of an automobile and watch the play performed by actors in the front seat. The familiarity of the setting evokes thoughts of voyeurism, déjà vu and audience participation. As Judith Newmark of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch explains, "The play challenges ingrained assumptions about what constitutes theatre and about the audience's role in shaping it. Do we just

sit back and say 'Entertain me,' or can we alter the experience if we are more involved intellectually, emotionally, or, in this case, physically?"

What Are You Afraid Of? was presented at fifteen-minute intervals for several hours at a stretch by two different casts. The "set" was an old Lincoln Town Car parked outside the Actors Theatre of Louisville lobby- the car never left the curb. To enhance the play's expressionistic style, Dresser chose musical selections that were controlled by actors on the car's audio system. According to Dresser, "The limitations turned out to give the play its shape...(I had to) strip away everything that is not essential. Not an extra word, not an extra syllable." ---Sara Skolnick

So, at the July Membership Meeting, Carol Eberhard took this concept, set a bare stage with three chairs to simulate the back of a car's front seat, and the two actors, JoEllen Miller and Tyler Williams, took their places for the *Car Play*. Wouldn't it be great to take this type of theatre "on the road?" We could do this at the fair or a festival, charge \$1 per person, make a little money, but more importantly, bring theatre to the masses. Everyone would be talking about it because it's so unusual. We've got the Lincoln Town Car.

MEETINGS

MONDAY, AUGUST 11, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, AUGUST 18, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

Director's Workshop



Surprisingly, even after attending the Director's Workshop two years previously, I was amazed at how much information I picked up this year. The curriculum is the same but sometimes the way the presentation is given sheds a new light on a subject in just the right way as to make the information new again. Speaking of which, the information given at the workshop is phenomenal. Carol Eberhard packs a strong punch by giving her students years of collected information in one afternoon. The second day is for "playing." We get to apply all that was learned in the first day to a short scene. In other words, we direct our first scene, with actors and stage furniture. It's an interesting process and allows the student to actually CREATE. Having blocked the scene twice before, I bowed out this year. However, I sat in amazement as others attempted. Education is a great thing- observing people using vital tools to make characters and scenes come alive is even more remarkable. I commend all those

who attended the workshop. And I will say again, even if you never have the desire to direct, you should attend this workshop. The amount of information you receive is staggering, the thrill of using tools that were once foreign to you can be uplifting, and it's just plain fun, with a capital F. Kudos to Carol for another successful workshop!

Twin Lakes Playhouse Members' Meeting July 21, 2008

Came to Order @1900

- Welcome to guests and visitors
 - Treasurer's report
 - Minutes accepted as printed in Newsletter
 - Play Reading, Plays' summary will be ready by August Members' meeting
 - Acting 101 report by Deb Smith
 - Report on concrete work out front=
 - Handicap @ \$1750
 - Whole area@2900
 - MOTION, Pave to the street w/concrete-Bill/Jim - PASSED 17-3
 - Maint. Comm., Larry not present
 - Promotions Committee, the Dam Tour featured TLP mentioned many times
 - Jack Ortegale has resigned from the Board, need a new member
 - Scholarship was won by Jo Ellen Miller
 - Presentation about a dinner/Mystery play to be put on for Relay for Life, contact Bill Simpson or his wife Vela
 - "Spitfire Grill" raffle tickets, needs to go through the Board- Deb Smith
 - Going Green-Smaller Waste Can, Recycling, a can for cups and paper recycling, save wood for fireplaces
- Adjourned @ 1945

It is requested and required that each member fill out a new application form when paying this year's membership dues. If you have not done so already, please update your membership. If you cannot attend a meeting, you can download a membership form off the website, fill it in, and submit it and your \$5.00 check to:

Twin Lakes Playhouse, P.O. Box 482, Mountain Home, AR 72654

WE STILL COLLECT BEST CHOICE LABELS
Please return them to Patty Brown or a BOARD MEMBER..

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR: After I directed *A Christmas Carol* in 2006, I swore I would never direct another show that opened in December because of the light attendance to our performances. Now, after working in the heat of the summer, I feel the same way about directing at this time of year. Luckily, we are blessed with a good air conditioning unit at the theatre. The heat has been miserable. It sucks the energy right out of a person, leaving a dried up shell. When I lived in California, where the weather was usually always beautiful and the temperatures fairly mild, I took it for granted. In fact, I couldn't wait to move to a place with seasonal changes, an actual fall and winter. I wanted snow for Christmas without having to drive to the mountains. I still enjoy those seasons but I didn't bargain for the sweltering summers. Wouldn't it be nice to have exactly **WHAT** we want, **WHEN** we want it? I can dream, can't I? Stay as cool as you can and be careful. Heat can make people grouchy and impatient and could cause problems.

Deb Smith

If anyone has any announcements, articles of interest, would like to contribute an editorial or submit a picture, please let me know. This is the membership's newsletter, after all, and it is up to all of us to make it successful. Therefore, please contact me by phone at 870-421-6099 (cell), 870-467-5608 (home), or by e-mail at ozarktootsie@centurytel.net.

***** **Deadline for September 2008 Newsletter is September 1st** *****

Board of Directors 2008: Anne Johnson-Loftis, Chairman; Shirley Spitzer, Vice-Chairman; Jim Smith, Recording Secretary; Lloyd Lowery, Treasurer; Donna Griffiths; Larry Gehrke; Jack Ortegel; and Denise Jones.

Editor: Deb Smith (421-6099 or 467-5608 for suggestions or submissions); Copy Editor: Sally Mollenkopf; Consulting Editor: Carol Eberhard; Contributing Editors: Dave Beauchamp and John Eberhard; Website-Webmaster: Bill Simpson.