



Twin Lakes Playhouse

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

www.twinlakesplayhouse.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 TEEN ACTING WORKSHOP
- 2 LETTER FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN
- 3 EMMA THOMPSON CHAIR
- 4 SETTING THE STAGE
- 5 DIRECTOR'S NOTES
- 6 THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
- 6 MEETING MINUTES
- 7 MEETING TIMES
- 7 SPECIAL RECOGNITION
- 7 FROM THE EDITOR
- 8 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Teen Acting Workshop

Again, Twin Lakes Playhouse's Education/Outreach Program offered a teen acting workshop at the Baxter County Library on June 25th. This year, our instructors were Carol and John Eberhard, Steve LeBlanc, and Deb Smith.



The workshop is designed for beginning actors, presenting information in three separate categories: pantomime, voice, and improvisation. The students then are asked to participate in acting exercises so they can use these new skills to create characters in a drama (or comedy, whatever the case may be). Even though attendance was less than

last year's workshop, once the students got up on their feet and participated, they became extremely inspired.

Believing ethics to be of great significance in the success of the theater, Stanislavski said that even very talented actors should be sacrificed if they could not contribute to the harmonious atmosphere of the group. Since the art of the theater is collective work, it is essential that everyone in the group work for the benefit of the whole performance and not solely for himself."

In the improvisation section of the workshop, the students did two scenes (one set in an airplane and one in a bank vault after the door locked them in) that had the instructors rolling in the aisles! The students were animated and showed wonderful signs of creativity. One character was a little old lady, another was a crazy woman. Other characters included a pregnant woman, a janitor, and a popular teen rock star. Each had a motivation and each character was well-defined.

When the workshop began, the body language of some of the students read "bored, shy, not happy to be there..." But after some exercises it was apparent they actually *enjoyed* their time in the workshop. As one woman wrote, "I just wanted to let you know that my grandson LOVED the workshop. He was whining about having to go and now he just wants to know when he can do it again! Let me know if you have any other activities that he could participate in. Thanks!"



Twin Lakes Playhouse

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

www.twinlakesplayhouse.org

And, after all, that's what it's all about, right?

For more information on the Education/Outreach Program, please contact Deb Smith at ozarktootsie@centurytel.net.

Letter from Your Chairman

By Anne Johnson-Loftis

Pitfalls of Community Theater

Below is a list of organizational "don'ts" based on observation and experience with a number of organizations, both theatrical and non-theatrical, along with a list of "thou shalt nots." You'll find explanations of what kind of problems these scenarios can generate and why you should avoid them.

Pitfall #1 - Too many board members

An ideal board for a community theater should be anywhere from 5-9 members, and always an odd number. More than that and discussions and decision-making can get bogged down, leading to inaction.

Pitfall #2 --Too few board members

Fewer than 5 board members lead to perception problems. A board must have enough people to assure diversity of opinion and thought.

Pitfall #3 -- Too much detail dealt with at the board level

Committees should be used to spread the work around. If a board spends too much time dealing with minutiae, important decisions get short shift. Let committees of members handle the arguments and details and, if necessary, bring recommendations to the board.

Pitfall #4 - Un-empowered committees

Make sure committees have enough authority to do their jobs without having to come to the board for every decision.

Pitfall #5 -- No budget for individual committees and shows

Budgets allow committees and productions to spend money without board approval, up to certain preset levels. This again allows the board to deal with more important issues than how much to spend on toilet paper for this month.

Pitfall #6 -- Non-member decision making

Avoid this one like the plague. Create a membership standard and invest the membership with certain privileges, such as voting for the board, borrowing items from the theater, etc. Make sure that members are aware of the rights and privileges that come with membership. Do not allow non-members to become a part of the decision-making process.

Pitfall #7 --Inactive members voting for board members

Be sure your bylaws spell out the voting requirements and make sure they go beyond paying dues. Require attendance at a set number of board or general meetings in order to vote. Require participation in other ways such as backstage or committee work. The privilege of having a say in how the organization is run has to be earned.

Pitfall #8 -- Inactive board members

If your board is composed of members of your theater company, a majority of them should be active members. A board composed mostly of people who no longer work on shows runs the risk of being out of touch with the needs and wants of the members down in the trenches.

Pitfall #9 -- Not keeping members and patrons informed

An uninformed membership tends to drift. They don't feel as if they're a part of the organization. The same goes for patrons. Publish a periodic newsletter for everyone, letting them know about important board decisions and upcoming productions and auditions. Make your board minutes available to the membership. Keep them involved in what's going on.

Pitfall #10 -- Policies shared by word of mouth

How does one get to be a director? What are the producer's responsibilities? Write 'em down and make sure they're available to everyone. Policies are not bylaws. The board has to have the flexibility to change them as circumstances change, but they should not be changed on a whim.

Pitfall #11 -- Non-member directors

Unless you import and pay for directing talent, this could spell trouble. An outside director doesn't know the unique situations within your group and yet represents your group to new members and to patrons. Make sure that your directors have experience with your group as participants, not just observers. Not only will they be more in tune with the members and the audience, you'll be more likely to keep them around.

Pitfall #12 -- Having one person selecting plays for a season

I know that's how many groups with an artistic director work. However, it doesn't allow for more than one person's preferences and interpretations. I am familiar with one situation where a group's artistic director decided to do a season of "cutting edge art shows" and nearly put the group out of business. It was just too much for the audience. Put together a diverse play reading committee, with members who range from very conservative to very cutting edge. Don't forget the moderates. This committee should make recommendations to the board. Dissenting opinions about shows should also be presented to the board. Let the board make final decisions on the plays and the season. That's what you have one for. At Twin Lakes Playhouse the bylaws are very specific about how to choose a season. The membership must vote on the final slate of plays but the board can make recommendations and do most of the foot work prior to voting.

Emma Thompson Chair

By Marjorie Rock

We were trying something new with producing the show *WIT* here at TLP and I was discussing this with Debby Stanuch - what can we do to help bring people in for this show? She said, "Wait! Let me call this friend of mine, she might have a signed canvas for a director's chair - signed by Emma Thompson!!!" Deb said she and a group of friends used to do a 'Celebrity Chair' auction in Chicago and they had gotten two chairs signed by Emma Thompson; she believed there was still one chair canvas left. We hung up and shortly after, Deb returned my call, saying, "We got the chair!!".... and so, to our delight and gratitude, after a few weeks the chair arrived.

Meanwhile *WIT* was in rehearsal and there was a lot of drama going on within the drama. As it turns out there are always a lot of people who have been touched in their lives by the ravages of cancer. Our Patty Brown had just lost her dear friend, Karen Winkler, to ovarian cancer this past March, just before we started our rehearsals. Patty had

auditioned for the role of Susie Monahan BSN and was a little concerned about her ability to handle her emotions during this show. Patty did a great job in this role and her "nurse" caring for Rose Mary Sullivan, who was brilliantly playing the lead role that Emma Thompson had played in the HBO movie, was so touching. Every night when Patty closed the curtains, to close the show, there were tears running down her face.

Meanwhile, we were selling "opportunity tickets" for the chair and now it was the last performance!! TA DA!!! It was time to draw the ticket. We found someone to pick the ticket - the basket was held up high and what name should be picked?? Patty Brown! We all applauded Patty, happy for her and the job she had done. But WAIT - Patty took the chair and gave it to Rose Mary Sullivan!! To me, this is what community theatre is about - Love come Alive!

Setting the Stage

By John Eberhard

HOW WE CHOOSE PLAYS



Our Reading Committee has a list of plays that have been pre-approved for production here or a director may submit a play for the Reading Committee to read and approve.

Approved play /director combinations are submitted to the Board of Directors, who in turn recommend a slate to the membership to be approved by majority vote.

What does a director consider in choosing a play? Well, he (or she) should consider a LOT! The facility is sort of a basic start. A small stage such as we have is not well-suited to a Cecil B. DeMille "cast of thousands" production. Something that needs a trap door won't work here, either. Need to "fly" scenery? Nope. So, the **physical limitations of your facility** is a factor.

Costume and wardrobe. If it isn't everyday modern dress, do you have the budget or the personnel to make the costumes you need? In *Love, Sex, and the I.R.S.*, Leslie had to have a bedraggled copy of the dress she wore in one scene. If you don't have someone to make the copy or if you can't buy two matching dresses and trash one of them, then you shouldn't choose that show.

Sound and lighting effects. Some shows require specific, complex special effects. Make sure you have both the equipment and the personnel to operate it.

Your acting pool. This is NOT a suggestion to pre-cast by any means, but you need to have a reasonable chance of casting the roles. If you pick a show with 50 kids in it, you better be pretty sure you can get 50 kids. If your show absolutely requires a black person, and your group and the demographics of your area make black people conspicuous by their absence, you might think about picking a different show. Can your talent pool handle accents? Southern Yiddish draws usually don't play well. Can they handle poetic language? How about gender availability? If you pick *Mr. Roberts*, with 19 men and one woman to do at this facility, you are probably doomed.

A factor for the Board to consider in regards to the acting pool is whether one show is going to have such a large cast that it "burns up" the availability of your acting pool for the other directors. A large cast can be part of the recipe for a successful show--people want to come see people they know--but it can leave the rest of that year's directors begging for actors.

Your audience. The audience and your personal goals interact on a number of levels. Living in the buckle of the Bible belt, for instance, language and situations should be a consideration. You risk alienating a significant percentage of your group's audience if a show has language that is strong, vulgar, or profane; certain themes run the same risk: explicit sexuality, homosexuality, extreme violence, etc. If your goal is to put butts in all of the seats, a children's theatre show is probably a poor choice. Conversely, if your goal is involvement and education for your community, then a children's theatre show is a great choice. Production quality being equal, a comedy will typically outdraw a drama.

There are plenty of other factors and subsets of the ones mentioned above, but this should provide at least a starting point for anyone seeking to select a show to do.



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

Director's Notes

By Deb Smith

We had auditions for *The Spitfire Grill* last month and I am happy to report our cast is set. Most of the original cast members from the 2006 production are returning to their roles. As most of you know, an unfortunate circumstance led to the early closing of that production. We are reviving this fine musical mainly to restore the opportunity for this cast to perform together and finish their run, but also because this story is so beautifully written through dialogue and song.

The cast is as follows: Sharon Miller-Percy Talbott, the young woman with a past who brings hope to a dying town; Linda Howell-Hannah Ferguson, the feisty grill owner with a heart; Neil Chandler- Caleb Thorpe, Hannah's nephew who must learn to live in the present, not the past; Deborah Phillippe- Shelby Thorpe, Caleb's wife who befriends Percy and finds a new purpose in life; Debby Stanuch- Effy Krayneck, the town gossip; and Mike Baker- Sheriff Joe Sutter, Percy's love interest. We are still looking for The Visitor. Because of set restrictions (we are using platforms in some scenes) the Visitor must be no taller than 5'10". The musical director is Jill Chandler, Assistant Director is Denise Jones, pianist is Kristin Woolbright, and stage lighting design is by Dillion Mincey. Lloyd Lowery and George Smith built our set.

We cast the show early so we were able to participate in the Red, White and Blue Festival on June 28th. Sharon and Debbie sang three songs from the production and Linda gave a fine introduction. Using a pre-recorded CD of Kristin's piano playing, we were able to present a good sample of the music in the show. Those who attended were intrigued and hopefully will be attending performances.



Music & Book
by
JAMES VALCQ

Lyrics & Book
by
FRED ALLEY

Based on the Film by
LEE DAVID ZLOTOFF

AUGUST 29 – SEPTEMBER 14

That's Entertainment

The entertainment for the June membership meeting was actually a sample of one of the exercises Carol Eberhard uses in her Director's Workshop each year. Because director's are hard to come by, we encourage each one of you who has the desire to direct a show to submit a play or, at the very least, let the play reading committee know that you are interested in directing. Every new director who has not directed on the playhouse stage is required to complete the Director's Workshop before directing a show. This workshop is also open to those who are curious about theatre, the ins and outs of directing and the commitment it takes to direct a show. The **DIRECTOR'S WORKSHOP** is slated for **Saturday, July 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday, July 20 from 1-4 p.m.**

TLP Members' Meeting -June 16, 2008

Came to order 1900

- Welcome to guests and visitors, Mike Baker (NM)
- Minutes accepted as printed in the newsletter
- Treasurers report accepted till audited
- The "Emma Thompson" director's chair was raffled with an income of \$155
- Play Reading Committee- We have 9 plays being read for next year and 4 directors for 2009, please continue to submit plays that might be considered for 2010-Jim
- Student Outreach-June 25th @ 1:30-Deb
- Maintenance committee-\$2600 for concrete parking area, \$1600 for asphalt- Larry
- An alternative would be sidewalks only for handicapped parking-we'll continue discussion on this
- Publicity committee-Banner works well-Denise
- Membership committee-Membership directory in the lobby, let me know about any corrections-Jim
- Scholarship-Jo Ellen Miller Won, going to Ark. Tech, Russelville
- "Wit" had a good run, 283 tickets sold \$2830 income
- "Spitfire Grill" is cast, cast introduced
- Gels done but no storage cabinet-yet!
- Best Choice labels go to Patty Brown
- Producers need closing check list
- Director's workshop will be July 19-20-it is needed to direct here
- 10 minute play next month as entertainment
- Adjourn @ 1935

MEETINGS

MONDAY, JULY 14, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, JULY 21, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

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

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

Playhouse Donation

It's great to know that the playhouse is not forgotten by some of its previous and prominent members. Several items were donated by Mickey and April England, former playhouse members. They are planning to relocate to Orlando, Florida and wanted the playhouse to have the following items: 8 Par 36's light instruments; 2 Optima 4 channel,

programmable dimmer packs; Vteck Microphone VT1080; 4 sandbags; 2 A frame T bar light bars; ¼ " x 50" sound cord; 5 50' DMX power cords; Adapter 5 pin to 3 pin DMX; Strand light pallet 90 Light board; 9 light clamps; Leko 30 degree Lipzoid lamp; and 12" green screen monitor. These items will be a good backup to our current system. Dillion Mincey has already tapped into them to create some lighting effects for *The Spitfire Grill*. April also donated some hand props and costume items for *Dial M for Murder*, Bill McElrath's director's choice for 2009. April had planned to direct that show before leaving the playhouse a few years ago. Many thanks to Mickey and April for their generosity!



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

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR: Well, I'm knee-deep in rehearsals now and loving every minute of it. Directing has become my new passion. All those years ago when I was up on stage, I never had the desire to call the shots. I always wanted the applause, the recognition, and the glory. Now that I'm older, I find being able to envision a story and bring it to life is much more satisfying, challenging, and ten times more rewarding. Not to say that I don't enjoy acting...I do very much. But if I had to make a choice between the two, I would choose directing. There is so much detail, so many choices to make, so much visualization involved- set design (which I find extremely difficult), lighting effects (thanks to a very capable and creative lighting specialist), characters and their relationships to other characters, play analysis, timing, blocking, costumes, makeup...the list goes on and on. Directing isn't for everyone. Directing is an obsession if done right and takes a huge chunk of time out of your life. But if you love it, the time goes quickly and before you know it, rehearsals are over and it's opening night. Then it's the actors' time to shine and you can sit back and enjoy your creation. The process is worth every effort, every sleepless night, every missed social event, and every hour away from your family. Directing a play allows one to step out of one's life and step into another dimension, at least for a little while. And it's great to be able to control some of that dimension.

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 August 2008 Newsletter is August 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.