



Twin Lakes Playhouse

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

www.twinlakesplayhouse.org

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Playing Shakespeare is very tiring. You never get to sit down, unless you're a king.

-Josephine Hull



Letter from Your Chairman

By Lloyd Lowery

One of the most difficult tasks I have faced as your chairman has been finding something to write about and to fill this space each month. The theatre operations have continued this year just as in past years. We have presented some good shows, most of them well attended even though at times some of us bemoan the fact that occasionally audience numbers are in the less than 50 bracket. Counter-balancing that, however, is the fact that we have had some sold-out performances. Too many factors come into play to affect attendance- quality of shows, weather, other community activities, and a host of others.

All in all, we are not doing any worse than hundreds of other small community theatres across the country. It behooves us to continue efforts already in place to present quality shows, name recognition shows, and to push the envelope gently. Many members are most active in reaching out to the community to encourage involvement of younger people and those efforts are bearing fruit. Let's continue those efforts. Many members are actively involved in improving the infrastructure. Let's continue those efforts.

Twin Lakes Playhouse productions are a viable alternative to the mundane offerings of commercial entertainment, i.e. TV and the movies. One only has to listen to the comments of audience members after each show to realize the truth in this. So long as we continue to entertain and sometimes enlighten our audiences we will have those audiences.

Director's Notes

By Deb Smith

We have our cast and crew set- finally, after a few hiccups. Our illustrious women of *Steel Magnolias* are: Monna Floyd as Truvy, Karen Robinson as Annelle, Linda Howell as Clairee, Delaney Ross as Shelby, Sharon Miller as M'Lynn, and Cindy Young as Quiser. Our stage manager is Angie Cotter, our sound and lights person is Mike

Baker, technical director is W.W. McElrath, and costume mistress is Traci Hogan. The set was built by Matt Buel with assistance from George Smith and John and Carol Eberhard. Chrissy Carney is my assistant director and Yvonne Gehrke is prompter. Actually, a lot of our furniture is from Yvonne and Larry Gehrke's home so they've contributed greatly.

Rehearsals are underway. This is an exciting adventure for all of us. This play is so well-known- it's a challenge to find a new perspective on such a popular story. However, our ladies are up for that challenge. Each actor has brought a new insight to their character. I think audiences will be pleased with the results of their efforts.

Performance dates are November 6-22. Membership Night is November 5 and our benefit performance is for Relay for Life. We will need car parkers and concessionaires so Shirley Spitzer will be contacting you soon.

Casting Without Stereotypes

Don't Believe the Type!

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.

We all know that fairy tales are loaded with stereotypes, many of which introduce morals we don't necessarily want to teach. For instance, in Disney's *Cinderella*, the ugly stepsisters and the beautiful Cinderella reinforce the ridiculous notion that beauty is goodness; less pretty or plain is bad. Why would we want to teach that to our kids?!

Solution? Break these stereotypes and cast against type. My play, *Cinderella! Cinderella!*, features a plain Cinderella whose feet are so big, they would've broken the traditional tiny glass slipper into shards, and her two petite, gorgeous stepsisters. Presenting a plain Cinderella and beautiful stepsisters clarifies an important dimension to the moral: the play clearly becomes about kindness and goodness winning out, regardless of physical appearance.

Beyond fairy tales, a director can easily alter the subtle messages in a play by avoiding typecasting, another way of breaking stereotypes. In a boy meets girl story, why can't the girl be taller? Overweight? Wear glasses? Not every hero has to be a candidate for a romance novel cover. And yes, villains can be beautiful, fair-haired girls.

Changing the gender of characters can also be seen as a way of casting against type. If you're reading a script for possible production, and it doesn't quite fit the boy/girl ratio you need, look at it again. See if the single king could be a queen, or if the teachers or witches could be boys. If the character has no romantic entanglements, then pirates, butchers, butlers, sheriffs and bullies can all be cast with girls – not with girls playing boys, but with girls simply acting their parts as if they were written for them. Chances are you'll be able to fit your casting needs better while also avoiding reinforcing unintended stereotypes.

But before making any changes, be severely cautioned: It is NEVER safe to assume you have permission to make alterations to a script. Pioneer Drama Service is very flexible about this and easily approves making small changes such as gender switching. But be forewarned that it is against federal copyright law to change the gender of a character without first obtaining permission from the copyright holder unless the script specifically invites you to do so.

So talk to your publisher (Pioneer Drama Service really is the easiest to work with regarding this) and have fun seeing how a gender change impacts a play's message. Why couldn't a Fairy Godmother be played by a male – not a male pretending to be a female, but a Fairy Godfather? I did it this way once, and it gave a whole new look to a very old fairy tale. And it certainly doesn't have to be Marlon Brando's "Godfather," but perhaps a befuddled older man as I did or an earnest young man so eager to please he makes mistakes.

The next time you're casting a play; don't be afraid to think outside the box. Cast against type, break stereotypes and see what wonderful new messages or lessons come to the surface.

Did you know we are selling gift certificates to our performances? If you are interested in purchasing some as gifts for your friends, please contact Shirley Spitzer to make the arrangements.

Marjorie Rock - In Memory



We lost another dear friend and member last month. Marjorie Rock was known for her passion, her zany characters, and her courage at Twin Lakes Playhouse.

When first coming to the playhouse, Marge didn't know what to expect. She was pleasantly surprised when she attended a production of *Grace and Glorie* in 2001. So much so, she decided then and there she wanted to get involved. Her first audition was for *Trouble in Tumbleweed*, when she created one of her many unforgettable characters. She asked about doing a musical at TLP but was told we didn't do musicals. "Why not?" asked Marge.

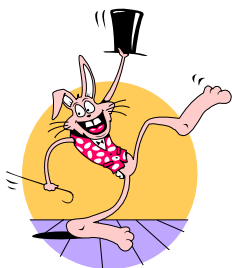
She opened the doors and directed our first musical, *Quilters*, in 2003. She went on to direct *Godspell* in 2006. She also brought the controversial play, *Wit*, to our stage and directed another production of *Grace and Glorie*. She also wrote and directed *The Reluctant Santa* and starred in *Wash Your Troubles Away*. Marge helped with fundraisers, bringing groups together for events such as *The Battle of the Bands* and the *35th Anniversary Show*. Not only was she actress, writer, performer, and director, she also created and wrote the Twin Lakes Playhouse PLAYBILL.

With her unique style and sense of humor, her constant drive and ability to motivate and teach others, and her courage to participate even though her health was failing, Marge made a huge difference in the success of the playhouse and created friendships that will last a lifetime. At Marge's memorial in Mountain Home, she received not one but two standing ovations that were sure to make her smile. We will miss the tall redhead (although on her last visit, she showed up with blonde hair- so Marge!) with the zany personality and bigger-than-life persona. She was a gem!

Her family has designated that memorials to her memory be sent to Twin Lakes Playhouse, P.O. Box 482, Mountain Home, AR 72654. Another memorial will be held in Franklin, Wisconsin, where her husband, Don, is residing. If anyone would like to contact him, his address is: Don Howard, 7031 W. Rawson Avenue, Franklin, Wisconsin 53132.

Setting the Stage

By John Eberhard



CONTROVERSIAL

One of the problems we wrestle with on a regular basis is what is too controversial to appear on our stage.

Language is the easiest and most frequent topic therein.

Please note: it is both ILLEGAL and UNETHICAL to change a script.....at all.

Can/should we allow the "F" bomb? It appears in a lot of scripts. What about the racially charged "N" word? Quality shows such as "To Kill A Mockingbird" and "Huck Finn" have this word. Should we draw up a list of the unacceptable words for our stage? Is it fair to turn down one show for language while accepting another show with the same language? Can we take the Lord's name

in vain? Are certain body parts or sexual acts unmentionable, either in scientific or slang terminology?

On the one hand, theatre is supposed to stimulate.....and "stimulate" does not always equate to "comfort". Some consider any criteria based on morality to be censorship. A huge portion of new and even great classic plays have "language" that could be considered offensive. Would loosening up on language bring younger, hipper additions to our audience? Who gets to choose exactly what words are "offensive"? And, of course, no matter what language you designate as forbidden, we all know you cannot please all of the people all of the time.

The other side of the coin is that it is the COMMUNITY'S theatre; not just ours to do with as we please: the morals and the mores of the community should be taken

into account. This is NOT professional theatre. Undeniably, there is language---particularly in this heavily religious area---that will offend and alienate some of our audience, possibly leading to a decrease in attendance. There is no denying that some language is inappropriate for children. We all know what you can and do hear on television and in movies; this is neither.

The second topic is subject matter. Sex--How suggestive and /or blatant can you be? Drugs---in either a positive or a casual light? Rock 'n Roll--Teehee. Homosexuality---serious relationships, characters, marriage, or even as comedy? Incest? Abuse? Religion---is anything other than traditional Christianity acceptable in a positive light or Christianity in a negative light? Politics---particularly positive liberal themes in this heavily conservative demographic, or ideology other than capitalism as a positive force? Graphic violence--- such as in "Equus"? Race---and

racists? Evolution as an accepted scientific reality? Abortion? Sexually Transmitted Diseases?

Just a few quality but questionable shows that come to mind are "The Vagina Monologues", "Rent" (AIDS, death, sex, homosexuality), "The Laramie Project", "Hair", "Jesus Christ Superstar", "Assassins", "Spring Awakenings", "A Clockwork Orange", "Reefer Madness: The Musical", "Agnes of God", "The Pillowman", "Lysistrata", "Salome".....the list is practically endless.

Questions that come to mind: Exactly where do you draw the line? Do you draw the line at all? Can you advertise as "Strong Language" or "Adult Themes" or "Graphic Scenes" and just run with it? I don't have any answers, but believe the questions are something we should discuss.

MEETINGS

MONDAY, October 12, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, October 19, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

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



Soliloquy

By Deb Smith

Since I'm currently directing the next play, *Steel Magnolias*, I'm faced with the memory of how difficult it is to find crew members to help with the show. I have to say some people we contacted were more than willing to help out and those are the people we are

working with- bless you, you know who you are. But, there were many others who were not so available.

I understand some people have just finished with a play and now need a rest (been there, done that). I also

understand people who have out-of-town guests arriving or who are leaving for vacation (don't get to be there, unfortunately). But, it's so frustrating for a director to have to "beg" people to help with a production. It would be so nice if people would just volunteer without being asked (again, some of my crew did and I am most grateful for them).

For instance, I had 22 women audition for this show. Many of them said they would be interested in working backstage, painting, or gathering props if they weren't cast. However, when called upon to do so, most of those women were too busy to help. I was disappointed

with the response. Then I started worrying about my next production and what would happen if I had to again "beg" for help. This next production is huge- it's a cast of 20. I have no doubt I can cast the show but will I be able to have the backup I need to put it on?

We should volunteer at our comfort level. We each have lives and obligations- this is understandable. But, members of the playhouse, I encourage you to put yourself in the shoes of the director and perhaps say "yes, I will" when asked next time. After all, we are in this together, right?

WE STILL COLLECT BEST CHOICE LABELS

Please return them to Patty Kotlicky.

Twin Lakes Playhouse Members Meeting September 21, 2009

Called to order @ 7:00 Lloyd Lowery

Welcome to members and guests.

Lloyd Lowery reports that TLP has a major roof leak. J&J Roofing has been contracted and presented a proposal and bid for roof repair. A motion to accept the bid and proceed with the roof repairs was made by Mike Baker, seconded by W.W. McElrath. Also requested was a bid for the whole roof repair. The most critical area of the roof will be addressed immediately (as weather permits) and the bid for the entire roof will be reviewed when received.

Minutes of previous members meeting approved as published.

Treasurer's report was approved as published.

Bill Simpson reports 84 members.

Deb Smith reports that the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette will be publishing an article on children's theatre and acting workshops across the state of Arkansas. The deadline for the article is September 23, 2009. In lieu of this information, Deb asked the Board and membership to allow her to proceed with the first slot of 2010 season and perform *Treasure Island*. Deb also asked for the cost of admittance to be \$5.00 for students in an effort to attract a younger crowd. W.W. McElrath made a motion to accept with Cindy Young second.

Deb Smith- play reading committee- 4 plays and 3 directors have submitted for the 2010 season.

Deb Smith- reports that a gentleman named Jack B. from Chicago has contacted TLP re: a free improvisation workshop tentatively set for October 10, 2009. Bill Simpson made a motion with W.W. McElrath seconding to accept Jack's offer to provide a free improv workshop as scheduled. Deb will send out an email to members re: time and confirmation.

Deb Smith- announced auditions for *Steel Magnolias*- the last production of 2009. Friday, 9/25 and Saturday, 9/26.

Patronage- no report

Publicity- no report

Scholarship- no report

Nominating- no report

W.W. McElrath- announced a light and sound workshop set for Saturday, October 3, 2009, 1:00 p.m. at TLP. All interested parties should attend.

W.W.W McElrath- reports *Dial M for Murder*, reports attendance was excellent.

Lloyd Lowery- reports that the buttress wall installation has been scheduled. Will work around the next play schedule.

Janet Lacefield- reports of new flooring for the lobby/concession area. Yvonne Gehrke made a motion, seconded by Mike Baker, to install ceramic tile, same pattern, for the lobby and concessions area. The membership will be allowed to pick the pattern.

Lloyd Lowery- stated that 2 new speakers for the auditorium have been donated and possibly 2 more will be donated.

W.W. McElrath will handle installation. The membership stated that any cost associated with the installation up to \$1,000 is approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes taken by Denise Jones



That's Entertainment!

Yes, it looks like Elvis is back in the building!

At least, he was for TLP members at the September Meeting. Elvis, a.k.a. Stacy Tiffin, gyrated his way through numerous hits, passing out leis to the ladies. What fun.

Thanks Stacy.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR: There's not much to say that I haven't already said. I'm happy to be a part of this organization even though sometimes it's frustrating. I will continue to do my best in every way- through the newsletter, through the Education/Outreach Program, through directing and acting in shows, and even helping with parking and such. I call upon you to contribute what you can- we all have gifts to be shared and memories to be made. I look at this journey as an opportunity of a lifetime.

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 November 2009 Newsletter is November 1st*******

Board of Directors 2009: Lloyd Lowery, Chairman; Bill Simpson, Vice-Chairman; Mike Baker/Denise Jones, Recording Secretaries; Cindy Young, Treasurer; Yvonne Gehrke; Janet Lacefield; and John Eberhard.

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