



Informers

64th Season
• Issue 5 •
April 2009

Director Jean Weber and Assistant Director Gloria Schille eagerly await the opening of Little Theatre's fourth show of the season, the musical *The Fantasticks*. "After one week of rehearsal, it is like we are entering our third week," Jean said. "Everything is coming together so smoothly...props, set, costumes, characters, choreography, music..." "I agree," Gloria added, "It's a team effort. Everyone is dedicated to learning all the music and choreography. The variety of talent is tremendous. We have new, returning, and more familiar faces on stage."

The Fantasticks

This long-running (43 years) off-Broadway musical has been produced around the world. It tells the story of two fathers, Bellomy (Robert Randall) and Hucklebee (Brian Hatley), who start a mock feud and build a wall between their houses in order to entice their children to fall in love. The deception works. Luisa (Shauna Fletcher), who is a daydreamer with an active imagination, and Matt (Kit Crawford), a naïve romantic, believe they are "in love." The fathers now scheme to end the feud by hiring El Gallo (Stephen Trego), a dashing adventurer, to stage a mock abduction so that

Matt can appear to be a hero and rescue Luisa. El Gallo enlists the aid of two old actors, Henry (Tod Oleson), once a Shakespearean actor, and Mortimer (Gerry Weber), whose specialty is dying. All goes as planned until the parents' deception is discovered and the children quarrel. Matt goes off to see "the world" and Luisa determines to have an affair. However, after expe-

riencing "the world" and becoming disillusioned, both have matured and return to each other, now ready for true love. El Gallo serves as narrator for the play, and, with the help of his mute (Jessica Barkl) and her handyman (Shane Wood), keeps the play moving. Audiences delight in listening to well-known songs from the musical such as "Try to Remember" and "You Are Love".



Produced by Marion Inglis with her assistant, Marilyn Washabaugh, *The Fantasticks* is kept in line behind the scenes by a talented group of people. Stage Manager Angela Ferguson Rohde and Assistant Stage Manager Angelica Dimock make sure all runs smoothly while Set Coordinator Carol Anselmo, Light Designer Brian Hatley, Costumer Patricia Wilson, and Props Mistress Julie Swenson add to the creative element of the show. Linda Howell (Music Director) rounds out this highly productive group.

"We are so lucky to be able to work with all this talent," Jean said. "Linda Henry and Connie McElrath (pianists) are so professional during rehearsals. Haley Benitez (Choreographer) and Brian Sheridan (Fight Choreographer) visually add so much to the show."

Don't miss Little Theatre's exciting production of *The Fantasticks*.



Performances: April 24, 25, May 1, 2, 8, 9, - 15, 16 at 8:00 pm and May 3 at 2 pm.

Box Office Hours:

April 21 through May 16

Tues-Thurs 3-6 p.m. and Fri-Sat 3-8 p.m.

Sunday, May 3 1-2 p.m.

Box Office Phone (509) 529-3683

Reserve your tickets early!

Season Ticket Holders Only by Phone April 20

KALEIDOSCOPE REFLECTIONS

Mary Hanna

Six a.m. The Driftwood Theatre in Edmonds, Washington. Four of us from The Little Theatre stand in the corners of a 10'by10' square painted on the stage. In the center are a tent, an ice chest, and a straw bag holding a pillow with Elvis Presley's face on it. A woman smiling more than seems sane at dawn shouts, "Go!" Quickly George and Gloria set up our props. In the tech booth, Brian presses computer buttons. Light floods the stage.

Backed by producer Jan Torland, director George Smith, tech magician Brian Hatley, and stage manager Gloria Schille, actor Amber Randall and I were rehearsing *Graceland*, a play about avid Presley fans. It was March 7, and, along with community theatre groups across America, we were participating in a bi-annual competition called Kaleidoscope.

Rules are stricter than the Constitution. No production can last more than an hour. Companies get ten minutes to set up scenery and props and ten to dismantle them. All props, cast and crew must fit into that 10x10 square. (No rule for how high you can stack, so you see teetering chairs, atop tables, atop actors.) Not a single word in a play script can be altered. This rule caused our biggest problems. The script says Amber and I bond through sharing Sno-balls. But how do you emote with your mouth full of sticky pink marshmallow on a cookie base covered with coconut? Producer Carol Anselmo's job was even harder, negotiating song usage with the Presley estate.

At the end of each play, the director, performers and crew take front-row seats. Then two drama professionals stand and critique their performance aloud before the entire theater audience. Phew! Washington State judges were veteran theatre professor



Mark Kuntz and B.J. Douglas, a Seattle-based playwright, actor and director.

Kuntz and Douglas loved the *Graceland* script. They lauded George Smith for his thoughtful direction of the play's combination of laughter, sorrow and shock. They praised how well Amber and I reacted to one another, later voting Amber an "Outstanding Achievement in Acting" award. They themselves called their few criticisms "niggling": the opening scene could be clearer; they were never sure where the *Graceland* gate was.



On Sunday, even crawling home through a blizzard, we were exhilarated. We had performed before the most discerning audience possible-- other theatre people. We had learned a lot we can use in future productions. And we had spent time with creative, inspiring community theatre enthusiasts, volunteers who, like us at Little Theatre, do plays out of the sheer love of live theater.

THE LITTLE THEATRE OF WALLA WALLA 2009-2010 SEASON

The Little Theatre Board of Directors would like to announce the productions chosen for the 2009-2010 season.

Lend Me A Tenor - The comedy by Ken Ludwig will be directed by Carol Anselmo and produced by Sonya Gourley and Greg Jones. Audition dates are August 11 and 12, with performances on September 25 and 26 and October 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10.

The Miracle Worker - William Gibson wrote this biographical play based on Helen Keller. It will be directed by Terry and Sherry McConn and produced by Jan Torland. Audition dates are September 29 and 30, with performances on November 20, 21, 27, 28, 29 and December 4 and 5.

Exit The Body - The mystery was written by Fred Carmichael and will be directed by Jean Weber. Audition dates are December 1 and 2, and performances will be February 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27.

Into The Woods - This production with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine will be directed by Becky Hatley assisted by Brian Hatley. Audition dates are February 23 and 24, and performances are scheduled for April 30, May 1, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, and 22.

SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND POTLUCK

The Little Theatre spring membership meeting and potluck will be held Monday, May 4. Everyone is encouraged to be there by 6:00 with serving to start at 6:30. Please bring your own table service and a dish that serves 10-12. Election of Board Members will be followed by the annual award presentations.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

The Little Theatre Board of Directors consists of 12 elected voting positions. In addition, individuals may be appointed by the Board to the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, where they serve in a non-voting capacity. Board members serve two years and may serve two consecutive terms. The following individuals have been nominated by the Board to serve a second term: Angie Alden, Cheryl Sutlick, Brian Hatley, and Carol Anselmo. Nominated to serve their first term are Jon Loney and Dale Grogan. Jon Loney was initially appointed to fill the remainder of Jim Conrad's term following his resignation.

The Board would like to thank Rich Hinz for his four years of dedicated service.

MISSOULA CHILDREN'S THEATRE

In June, the Little Theatre will once again host the Missoula Children's Theatre. *The Jungle Book* has been selected as this year's production. Auditions will be held on Monday, June 22, with 60 roles for children ages 5 through 18. Performances will be Friday, June 26, at 7:00 and Saturday, June 27, at 3:30 and 5:00. The fee is \$45. Parent participation is greatly appreciated. A theatre representative, i.e., volunteer, is needed to be at the theatre in the mornings. Please contact Patty Leeper (525-7232) for additional information.

PARKING SECURITY

On two occasions during this season, theatre patrons have been the victims of car prowls. Both times the cars were locked with purses left in view or inadequately covered. Please take care to lock your vehicles with valuables secured in the trunk. We have requested additional patrols during performances, but the police are not always able to oblige due to other demands on their time.

Because of our limited parking lot space, we would like patrons choosing to use the lot to park as close as possible to their neighbor, still allowing enough space to safely open their doors. If everyone using the lot was a little more conscientious about how they park, we would be able to have the area available to more vehicles.

MUSICAL REVIEW

Plans are currently underway for the 2009 Musical Review. Last summer's Little Theatre musical retrospective narrated by Mary Hanna was enormously successful. Robert Randall and Patty Leeper will once again provide the creative force behind this production. Audition dates are to be announced. Please contact Patty Leeper (525-7232) or Robert Randall (529-9668) for information.

JOHN "DALE" LONG July 9, 1939 – March 14, 2009

Former Little Theatre member, director and actor Dale Long passed away in New Orleans on March 14, 2009. Dale was active in the Little Theatre during the 1960s and 1970s. He directed the first production of *The Miracle Worker* during the 1969-1970 season, as well as several other productions at The Little Theatre and Harper Joy. According to Joan Stevens, he was very active in promoting the theatre to all ages, including providing workshops for young people.

Carol Ann
Flohr

Artist/Weaver

Gallery
Artist

The fiber arts of Carol Ann Flohr will be featured in the Mildred Stewart Room during the current production, *The Fantasticks*. A professional weaver for over 30 years, she has exhibited in museums, galleries and contemporary craft shows.

INFORMER REQUEST

The Informer is currently mailed to almost everyone on our list. Very few individuals have requested to receive their copies by email. In the interest of helping the Theatre to save on printing and mailing costs, we would like to encourage recipients to provide an email address for the publication. The address can be given to the Box Office when making reservations. I assure you that the address will not be released to any other agency or business and will only be used for the purpose of Little Theatre mailings. Thank you.

Carol Anselmo
President of The Little Theatre
Board of Directors



GUESS WHO'S
COMING TO TOWN?

PHIL & JOLENE SMITH



Please join us for an
Open House
Potluck- Hors d'oeuvres Party
May 3rd, 4:00 pm
at Jan Torland's Home
124 E. Langdon
529-1698



JO ANNE RASMUSSEN

February 24, 1928 – February 18, 2009

The theatre was her life and love, and Jo Anne Rasmussen instilled that love in countless people, not only her students. Phyllis Bonds, a fellow actress and friend, called Jo Anne a wonderful recruiter who could see potential in almost everyone of any age. Jodi Lindquist, also a fellow actress, friend and director, said Jo Anne's encouragement helped her son, like so many others, to recognize his self-worth and develop a love of theatre.

Jodi and Joan Stevens first met Jo Anne in 1976 when they all worked on *Trails West*, directed by Rod Alexander. Jodi was a costumer who made Jo Anne look "very fat." Joan and Jo Anne had scenes together as pioneer women and then as Indian squaws. They had to run into the wooded area behind the amphitheatre, change costumes, dash back on stage, and then change costumes again. When they had time, they would sit and get acquainted. Joan remembered Jo Anne's wonderful sense of humor and her quick mastery of their Native American dialogue.



In 1977, Jodi, Phyllis, and Jo Anne were part of the *Spoon River Anthology* production that won state and regional awards at the one-act competitions. Later, Jodi directed Jo Anne in *Gingerbread Lady* and *Hay Fever*. "She was easy to direct, a natural actress and a great trouper!" Phyllis, who acted with her in *Dames At Sea*, remembers her as a "real ham."

Many folks know Jo Anne from her years teaching speech and directing summer musicals and children's theatre at Walla Walla Community College, but when she first came here with her husband Richard, she worked as a radio broadcaster. She also taught speech at St. Paul's School for Girls and St. Patrick's Catholic School. St. Paul's had a gymnasium that she and Bea Mortenson used as a theatre---the dramarena.

Bea first saw Jo Anne in the Whitman College production of *Mother Courage* and then met her again when they were teaching at the old WWCC campus. They became friends and produced and acted in many plays. They also collaborated and acted in dinner theatre shows. One of Bea's favorites was their production of *Fallen Angel*. She also reminisced about a time when they were short of funds and wrote their own script of *Scrooge* so they wouldn't have to pay royalties. They rented the Little Theatre for that production which proved "quite successful."

She first appeared on the LT stage in 1953, but over the years, Jo Anne made her presence felt not only as a director and actor, but also as a Board member.

All these are wonderful memories, but many of us who worked with her also remember a key phrase. If a rehearsal or scene did not go so well, she'd say, "That show just died, so do it again." And we did until we got it right.



Joan Stevens summed up Jo Anne and her legacy. "She was a creative, talented, dedicated woman who took her work seriously and demanded perfection."

Jo Anne, we miss you.



JON RUBIN

February 24, 1957 – February 6, 2009

Jon Rubin, a great friend of The Little Theatre, passed away on February 6, 2009. Those who knew Jon can easily recall countless wonderful moments of his time with many of his theatre compatriots. Jon's contributions include a wide variety of positions such as board member and patron, but his generosity mainly focused on set building. Beginning over twenty years ago, he worked with Phil Smith on his first show, *A Delicate Balance*. Thus was born a long career of set building. Some of his creations include *The Foreigner*, *Foxfire*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Ladies of the Camellias*, *Arcadia*, *Artichoke*, *Lion in Winter*, *Deathtrap*, *The Matchmaker*, and his most recent, *On Golden Pond*.

Throughout these twenty years, Team Teal (Jon, Walt Keyes, and Ron Fastrup) thrived on challenges. Jon always said that he had no interest in building ordinary sets. They were boring. Each set had to have "that special something," whether it was the squeak in the cellar door, the drawbridge with the appropriate chain sound, a real fire in the fireplace, running rainwater, log siding, a cave, and many other touches that make a set come alive. The quality and reality of Jon's sets were amazing.

One director who worked with Jon on numerous sets is Carol Anselmo. "I think for Jon the theatre was a place he could be creative and innovative, as well as being a really big tease. All of us just had a lot of fun in our make-believe world away from the real world and its stresses," said Carol. "Just watching Jon and his Team Teal gang figure out how to make something work was like watching Spanky and his gang."

Little Theatre treasurer Jan Torland recalled how important Mother's pink and white frosted circus animal cookies were to Jon and Team Teal. They would not work without those frosted delicacies. "During *On Golden Pond* it was my job as Producer to make sure the supply did not run out. Unfortunately, Mother's Cookies went out of business and I could only find Franz Animal Cookies. Franz had to pass the test before the guys would work. They passed and the men started building the set."



Just two months ago, Little Theatre audiences were dazzled by the beauty and meticulous detail of the *On Golden Pond* set. Jon and his team wanted to create a summer cabin that anyone would want to visit. They succeeded far beyond our imagination. Co-director Cheryl Sutlick related two special memories of her time with Jon on this set. "One night during rehearsal Robert and I made a note to talk to Jon that weekend concerning how the window would open so that Ethel could use it to communicate with other actors. When I talked to Jon about what was needed, he just kept telling me how he couldn't do it. It was impossible. All I had to do was look into Jon's eyes and see that twinkle. He intended on doing whatever we wanted, he just loved to tease me," said Cheryl. "Every performance night I sat in the house and couldn't wait for it to rain. When it happened, I knew Jon was there each time. It was his creation."

Jon leaves behind his beautiful wife, Susan, two wonderful daughters, Jennifer and Stephanie, a son-in-law, Tony Garza, and grandchildren Allison and Charlie Garza. All of his friends at The Little Theatre will miss him terribly. His creativity, wry sense of humor, and friendship have left an indelible mark on The Little Theatre.



The
L I T T L E

T H E A T R E

O F W A L L A W A L L A

PO Box 39 • Walla Walla, Washington 99362

Return Service
Requested

*The
Fantasticks*

Performances are:
April 24, 25, May 1, 2, 8, 9,
15, 16 at 8:00 pm
and May 3 at 2 pm.

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
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Permit #197

**RAFFLE
THANK YOU!**

The Little Theatre would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who participated in the raffle held during *On Golden Pond*. Congratulations to **Nancy Austin**, winner of the *On Golden Pond* painting.

Thank you, also, to Matt McKern for his gracious donation of the original oil painting he created for the *On Golden Pond* publicity. The framing was provided through the generosity of Fenton-Stahl Gallery.

THANK YOU

Frank and Barbara McKinney
-Table saw

Dr. Helen Kilzer
-Costumes

EMAIL ADDRESS

If you need to send a comment, make suggestions, change your address, or sign up for your newsletter online – *we now have an email address:*

littletheatreofwallawalla@live.com

OPENING NIGHT GALA

During the 2008-2009 season, the Little Theatre will once again host opening night galas. Beginning at 7:00, light refreshments will be served. The preshow audience is encouraged to view the gallery exhibit, meet the artist and socialize in anticipation of the opening night performance of *The Fantasticks*.

*The Little Theatre of Walla Walla
Informer*

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(509) 529-3683

<http://www.ltww.org>

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