

# Wizard of Oz Next at Community Players

By John Lieder

When I was a kid growing up in the 1960's, my family and I always enjoyed the annual CBS broadcast presentation of *The Wizard of Oz*. One year our TV was on the fritz. My brother and I were so disappointed about missing "Oz" that my parents arranged for us to watch it at our neighbors – on their brand new color TV set! This summer's Theatre for Young People production of *The Wizard of Oz* is similarly a bona fide family event. Not only is the story superb family entertainment, but this production finds many in the cast sharing the stage with siblings and/or parents. (In an ultimate example of family togetherness, the **Strong** family is represented not only by parents **Chrissie** and **Todd** and sons **Alex** and **Sean**, but also by their dog, **Jasper**, who appears as Toto!)



Matt Drat and the cast of *The Wizard of Oz* in rehearsal. Photo by John Lieder

The show serves as the summer fund-raiser, so attempts have been made to cut costs wherever possible. Toward that goal, Scenic Designer, **Gary Schwartz**, and Master Builder, **Bruce Parrish**, have left much of the Chicago set in place. However, the hues of blue from Chicago have been replaced with a glorious array of pastel colors. At the time of this writing, Bruce was hard at work drawing 6-foot illustrations of the main characters from the original storybook on the back and side flats.

In a further attempt to cut costs, Players is foregoing the expense of music rental for the orchestra. The "pit" consists of Music Director **Melody Palm** at the piano and **Weikang Sun** at electronic keyboard. There will also be some percussion.

**Eddy Arteman** has the Herculean task of costuming the cast of 48. She has been able to recycle many of the costumes used in the Miller Park production. I'm told they do indeed have ruby slippers, although I suspect they aren't genuine ruby.

According to Director **Marcia Weiss**, the stage version follows the movie "pretty closely". There are obviously some constraints involved in staging a live production and the audience is given the opportunity to exercise their imaginations. For example, the flying monkeys ... well, I'm not going to spoil that for you, other than to say that there were no actual flying monkeys that came to auditions so a creative solution is being provided.

Ably tackling the role of Dorothy Gale is **Justine Harris**, who last appeared as Zaneeta Shinn (Eee-gawds!) in *The Music Man*. **Elizabeth Anhalt**, **Matt Drat** and **Nick McBurney** return to the Players' stage as the Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion and Tin Man.

Other supporting characters are **Chrissie Strong** as the Wicked Witch

of the West, **Mike Franks** as the Wizard, **Ingrid Myszka** as Auntie Em, **Jessica Hunt**, a Players newcomer, as Glinda the Good Witch and **Todd Strong** as Uncle Henry. Yours truly was able to sit in on the June 23<sup>rd</sup> rehearsal (exactly two weeks before Preview) and found the leads well on their way to polishing their characters. The munchkins come in all shapes and sizes and are adorable, even before costumes. It is truly a delight to see them fill the stage and "come alive" as Dorothy enters Oz.

Marcia tells me she is – naturally – challenged by the size of the cast, but states, "This has been really, really fun to direct. I have always loved all things 'Oz', so this has been a fabulous opportunity. The kids are all great, as are the principles (and Toto too!)" Preview (pay-what-you-can) night is July 7. Other performances are July 8–10, 14–17 and 21–24. As usual, Thursday night performances are at 7:30; Friday and Saturday performances are at 8:00; and Sunday matinees begin at 2:30. The standard musical ticket prices apply – \$15 adults, \$13 for seniors and students and \$6 for children 15 and under.

# A Season to Die For

*At Community Players, we invite you to join us in celebrating our 83rd season with A Season to Die For. Whether you enjoy a light-hearted comedy or a dark musical thriller, an American classic from the past or a Tony award winning drama, we have something for everyone in our 2005-2006 season.*



## **Cheaper by the Dozen**

From the book by Frank & Ernestine Gilbreth  
Dramatized by Christopher Sergel

Performances: Sept. 9-11, 15-18, 22-24, 2005    Preview: Sept. 8 (Auditions: July 25-27, 2005)

The Gilbreth residence is brimming with children, and Father has designed a system so that the family business is conducted with the utmost precision and efficiency. Not all is bliss as the family faces social change and the natural tendency for children to grow up. A perfect comedy for the entire family.

## **Sweeney Todd -The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**

Book by Hugh Wheeler

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Performances: Nov. 4-6, 10-13, 17-20, 2005    Preview: Nov. 3 (Auditions: Sept. 12-14, 2005)

In Victorian England, a vengeful Sweeney Todd has just been released from jail for a crime he did not commit. With his dazzlingly demented accomplice, Mrs. Lovett, the "demon barber of Fleet Street" cooks up a hilariously macabre revenge scheme in this crafty, comedic, and captivating musical.



## **Deadwood Dick or A Game of Gold**

By Tom Taggart

Performances: Jan. 13-15, 19-22, 26-28, 2006    Preview: Jan. 12 (Auditions: Nov. 14-15, 2005)

Sisters Lily and Rose Blossom are on their way to Deadwood Gulch to search for their long-lost father when their stage is hijacked by Deadwood Dick, the meanest villain of the Black Hills. Rose is kidnapped, while the blind Lily travels on to meet up with good guys Wild Bill Hickok, Ned Harris, Calamity Jane, and the villain of all villains, Blackman Redburn. Long lost daughters, stolen gold mines, kidnapped heroines and hairbreadth escapes abound in this blood and thunder melodrama of the Old West.

## **The Desperate Hours**

By Joseph Hayes

Performances: Mar. 10-12, 16-19, 23-25, 2006    Preview: Mar. 9 (Auditions: Jan. 23-24, 2006)

The Hilliards are a typical family living on the outskirts of Indianapolis, when one day their pleasant home becomes a jungle full of cunning and violence. Suspense runs high in this drama of three escaped convicts who take over the home of a respected family and hold them hostage until they can work out their plan to seek revenge on a small town Deputy Sheriff.



## **Oklahoma!**

Music by Richard Rodgers, Book & Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II.

Based on the play "Green Grow The Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs

Performances: May 5-7, 11-14, 18-21, 2006    Preview: May 4 (Auditions: Mar. 13-15, 2006)

Set in a Western Indian territory just after the turn of the century, the rivalry between the farmers and cowboys provides the colorful background against which Curly, a handsome cowboy, and Laurey, a winsome farm girl, play out their love story. The road to true love never runs smooth, and the journey is as bumpy as a surrey ride down a country road.

# An Evening to Die For

## Murder Mystery Fundraiser Dinner

Community Players Theatre celebrates its 83rd season with "An Evening to Die For." The evening will begin with a silent auction followed by a delicious dinner prepared by the renowned Radisson Chef and topped off with our exciting cabaret entertainment. Be prepared for an evening full of gripping suspense, colorful suspects and a few unexpected surprises.

A beautiful diamond necklace donated by Jack Lewis Fine Jewelry will be raffled off to the lucky person who solves the mystery.

Join us on August 12, 2005 at the Radisson Hotel for this fun and witty "Who Done It". Tickets are \$40 and will go on sale starting in July.

For more information, visit us on the web: <http://www.communityplayers.org/special.html>



## Auditions Set for *Cheaper by the Dozen*

Director Matt Drat has announced that auditions for *Cheaper by the Dozen* will be Monday, July 25 through Wednesday, July 27 as follows:

- Monday**, Children ages 12 and younger only
- Tuesday**, Adults and children ages 13 and older
- Wednesday**, Callbacks for all ages

All audition sessions begin at 7:00 PM. However, auditioners are asked to arrive 10 - 20 minutes early in order to complete the audition form.

*Cheaper by the Dozen* is a light-hearted comedy following the antics of the Gilbreth family as the father applies industrial efficiency techniques to the household.



### Did you know?

The 1996 Production of *The Wizard of Oz* included 140 children in the cast and crew. Since the children were not needed onstage after the first act, they stayed in the basement of St. John's Lutheran Church to wait for the curtain call.

## COMMUNITY PLAYERS Calendar

### **The Wizard of Oz**

preview July 7

performances July 8-10, 14-17, 21-24, 2005

### **Sugar Creek Arts Festival**

Saturday July 9 & Sunday July 10

Downtown Normal

Look for Players Table by Babbitt's Books

Costumed cast members from Oz will be circulating on Saturday.

### **Barnes & Noble Community Players Day**

Saturday July 9th

Performance from *The Wizard of Oz* in the Children's section at 3 p.m.

Use the voucher included with this newsletter to have 15% of your purchase price go to Community Players! Tell all your friends!

### **Board Meeting**

Tuesday July 12, 6 p.m.

Community Players Theater

Please come to voice your opinion and offer your vote on the Constitution changes that have been submitted to you through email. We need your support and involvement!

Contact Joann at [hstry95@yahoo.com](mailto:hstry95@yahoo.com) for more information.

### **An Evening to Die For**

August 12

Dinner Theatre Fundraiser

Radisson Hotel

<http://www.communityplayers.org/special.html>

### **Community Players**

210 Robinhood Lane

Bloomington, IL 61701

309-663-2121

[www.communityplayers.org](http://www.communityplayers.org)

### **Newsletter Committee**

Jim Kalmbach

John Lieder

Joann Yant

Send comments and suggestions to [lieder78@yahoo.com](mailto:lieder78@yahoo.com) We are looking for writers, artists, designers and story ideas. The **deadline** for the next issue is August 27, 2005.

# 2005-2006 Community Players Theatre Board of Governors

Did you ever wonder who picks our shows, who pays the theater's power bills, and who puts the order in for more light bulbs? Community Players Theatre has a Board of Governors who, along with committees and non-board chairs, collectively manage the functions of the theater. Below are brief descriptions of each office. Come to a Bylaws review session for more details on these positions!

**President:** Alan Wilson

The President presides at all meetings of the Membership and Board of Governors and ensures that the Constitution, Bylaws, and all standing rules as set forth by the Board of Governors are followed.

**Vice-President:** Deb Smith

In addition to assuming the duties of the President in his absence, the Vice-President is the Chair of the Constitution and Bylaw Committee and the Fundraising Committee.

**Secretary:** Ellen Thomas

The Secretary manages the records of the Membership and the Board of Governors meetings and tends to all general correspondence of the officers and Chairs of the committees of the organization. She also maintains the theatre's master calendar and tracking logs.

**Treasurer:** Jason Wiggins

The Treasurer manages the funds of the organization, and submits the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. He is also responsible for tax returns and related business, and is the chair of the Finance Committee.

**Box Office:** Tom Smith

The Box Office chair is responsible for single admission and season ticket sales. He also schedules and supervises Box Office staff.

**Membership and Volunteer:** Joann Yant

The Membership and Volunteer chair is the custodian of General and Voting membership programs. She also manages and advocates the volunteer program, and serves as chair of the Volunteer Committee.

**Marketing:** Cathy Sutliff

The Marketing chair coordinates all advertisements publicizing the organization, its productions, special events, and program. She also arranges for advertising in the programs, and acts as liaison to other area organizations.

**Theatre Tech:** Brian Artman

The Theatre Tech chair coordinates and reports on the activities of the Set Construction/Scene Shop coordinator, the Lighting & Special Effects Coordinator, and the Sound & Sound Effects coordinator.

**Set Construction/Scene-Shop Coordinator**

(non-voting position): Bruce Parrish

The Set Construction/Scene-Shop Coordinator determines the guidelines for set design and construction and is in charge of the Scene Shop.

**The Lighting & Special Effects Coordinator**

(non-voting position): Dan Virtue

The Lighting & Special Effects Coordinator supplies lighting equipment necessary for rehearsal and production of each show.

**The Sound and Sound Effects Coordinator**

(non-voting position): Rich Plotkin

The Sound & Sound Effects Coordinator supplies sound equipment and sound effects necessary for rehearsal and production of each show.

**The Theatre Craft:** Eddy Arteman

The Theatre Craft chair coordinates and reports on the activities of the Wardrobe Coordinator and the Hand Properties Coordinator.

**Wardrobe Coordinator**

(non-voting position): Eddy Arteman

The Wardrobe Coordinator is in charge of the Costume Shop and makes available costumes from the costume shop for all productions and rentals. The Wardrobe Coordinator also evaluates the inventory of the permanent wardrobe collection and is responsible for the return of all borrowed and rented costumes.

**Hand Properties Coordinator**

(non-voting position): Carol Plotkin

The Hand Properties Coordinator is in charge of the Prop Shop and maintains an evaluated inventory of the permanent hand props.

**Play Reading:** Stuart Cartwright

The Play Reading chair, with the Play Reading Committee, reviews potential productions and presents a suggested season to the Board of Governors for its approval. He also distributes production guidelines to the season's directors and producers.

**House and Grounds:** Jeremy Stiller

The House and Grounds chair monitors and reports on the status of building and grounds conditions and improvements.