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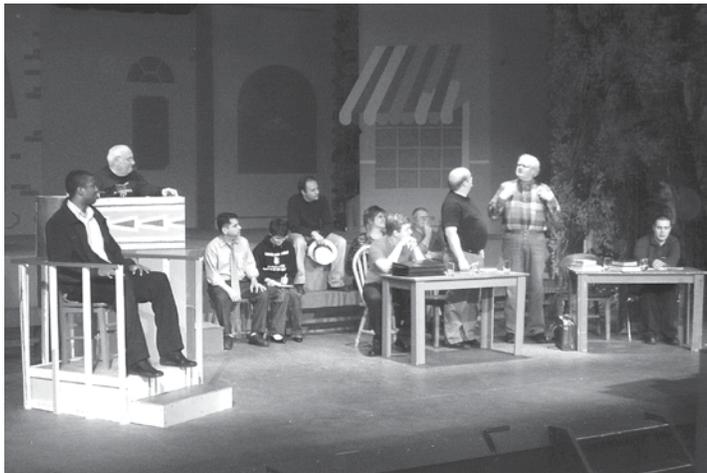


Courtroom Drama *Inherit the Wind* Next Up for Community Players

By Bob McLaughlin

Inherit the Wind, the perennial American classic by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, will be the fourth production of Community Players' 2006-2007 season. The play is a lightly fictionalized depiction of the actual 1925 "Monkey Trial," in which Dayton, Tennessee,

believe. Scopes was nevertheless found guilty, but, adding to the legend of the trial, Bryan died five days after its conclusion.



Mathew Brady (Todd Wineburner) and Henry Drummond (Bob McLaughlin) debate a point of law at a recent rehearsal of *Inherit the Wind*.

Like many cases before and since, the Scopes trial was called the Trial of the Century, which usually means that the issues go well beyond the specifics of the case. Here, it was a focal point for social tensions between the excesses of the Jazz Age and the nihilism of the Lost Generation on the one hand and the desire for stability, order, and absolutes on the other. And this accounts for the continued popularity and relevance of the play. Lawrence and Lee began writing it in 1950 in response to the McCarthyism of the time. In their words, "*Inherit the Wind* is not about the theory of evolution versus the literal interpretation of the Bible. It assaults those who would constrict any human being's right to think, to teach, to learn. Our major theme is 'the dignity of the individual human mind.' "

schoolteacher John Scopes was tried for teaching evolution in his high school science class in violation of state law. The city brought in three-time populist presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan to lead the prosecution, and the ACLU provided the notorious left-wing lawyer Clarence Darrow to defend Scopes. Taking place during an intense heat wave, the eight-day trial turned into a struggle between these two titans and reached its climax when, in what has been called the most extraordinary moment in the history of American jurisprudence, Darrow put Bryan on the stand in order to show that Bryan's fundamentalist reading of the Bible was at odds with what most mainstream Christians

To bring these ideas and issues to life, director **Sally Parry** has assembled a cast of 32, many of them making their first appearances in a Players show (marked with an asterisk in the following list): **Todd Wineburner** as Matthew Harrison Brady (based on Bryan); **Bob McLaughlin** as Henry Drummond (based on Darrow); **Bruce Parrish** as Rev. Jeremiah Brown; **Gary Thompson II** as reporter E. K. Hornbeck (based on

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March - April 2007

Board Meetings

March 13, 6:00 p.m.
April 10, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

Inherit the Wind

Pay-what-you-can: March 8
Shows: March 9-11, 15-18, and
22-24.

Tickets can be ordered online at
www.communityplayers.org.
Click on "Online Ticket Sales."

Big River

Auditions: March 18-20
Pay-what-you-can: May 9
Shows: May 4-6, 10-13, 17-20



Community Players

201 Robinhood Lane
Bloomington, IL 61701
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www.communityplayers.org

Newsletter Committee

Jim Kalmbach
John Lieder
Bob McLaughlin
Roland Spies
Joann Yant

We are always looking for
writers, artists, designers and
story ideas. Send comments and
suggestions to lieder78@yahoo.com

Curtain Calls is published six
times a year for the voting mem-
bers of Community Players.

For information about joining us,
please contact the membership
chair, Roland Spies at roland.spies.gqt9@statefarm.com.

Back issues of *Curtain Calls*
are available on the Commu-
nity Players web site. Click on
"Newsletter Archive."

Big River Auditions

Auditions will be held on Sunday March 18th, Monday March 19th, and Tuesday March 20th at 7:00 pm at Community Players for *Big River*.

Big River is a musical based on Mark Twain's classic novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. First produced on Broadway in 1985, *Big River* won a total of eight Tony awards, including Best Score, Best Direction, and Best Musical. When it returned to Broadway in 2003, it won a Tony for Excellence in the Theater.

Set in the late 1840s along the Mississippi River, *Big River* chronicles the adventures of young Huck Finn as he escapes from his abusive father. After staging his own "death," Huck flees down the river on a raft. Accompanying Huck is Jim, a runaway slave, who Huck promises to help escape to freedom. They have many adventures, encountering mostly scoundrels and a few saints, along their journey.

A cast of at least fourteen men and seven women ranging from ages fifteen on up is required. Those auditioning should be prepared to sing (accompaniment will be provided), dance (some very simple steps), and read from the script. *Big River* opens on May 3rd and closes on May 20th.

Roger Miller wrote the music for this exciting rendition of an American classic. From gospel music, to the blues, along with some beautiful ballads the score is toe-tapping as well as heart-wrenching as it weaves the story of the friendship of two runaways against the backdrop of a pre-Civil War America.



CP Board Member Nominations Needed

Nominations are open for the following Board positions for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Secretary Marketing
Theatre Craft Vice President
Box Office

All are 2-year terms, except the Vice President position, which is a 4-year commitment. The Vice President becomes the President in the second year and then the Past President in the 4th year. The Vice President must also have 2 years prior Board experience.

For more information, or to nominate someone, please contact any member of the Nominating Committee:

Brian Artman -

brian.artman.jehl@statefarm.com

John Lieder - lieder78@yahoo.com

Jason Wiggins - snj10497@hotmail.com

Roland Spies - erro@verizon.net

Nominations will be presented to the board at the March 13 Board Meeting.

New Exterior Lights

Michael Franks has installed two exterior lights to the west side of the building. The lights provide a much safer path for actors and customers who use the Post Office parking lot. Thanks, Michael!"



Board Spotlight – House and Grounds

As the title suggests, the duties of the House and Grounds Chair include just about anything involved in the upkeep and appearance of the theatre property. The By-Laws list six responsibilities for the House and Grounds Chair.

1) Maintenance. Of course. Maintenance includes the functionality and appearance of just about anything in, on, or around the building except that which is the responsibility of other board members (e.g. stage lights, shop, box office, etc). As one can imagine, our venerable 45-year-old building has quite a bit to maintain and it provides **John Lieder**, House and Grounds Chair since August 2005, a constant challenge. There is always the leaky faucet, the finicky toilet handle, the burned out light bulb, the mite-infested crabapple tree, little red ants in the green room, weeds in the sidewalk cracks, etc. etc., that keep him busy in and about the building.

2) Supplies. The H&G Chair is responsible for making sure that there are ample paper towels, facial tissues, toilet paper, hand soap, first aid items, etc. Every month or so, Lieder will take a tour of the building to check out the inventory, but he also relies on producers and the box office staff to keep him posted if they notice supplies getting low. CP veteran **Paul Dillow** helps out by placing orders for paper products through Vonachen Service and Supply Company.

3) Service Contracts. CP has several service contracts, including services for general cleaning and carpet cleaning, heating and air conditioning, termite protection and fire extinguisher inspection. Lieder has made a point of introducing himself and giving contact information to each contractor. He has also had occasion to work with our plumber and roofer, although no on-going service contract exists with those businesses.

4) Fire Inspection. The By-Laws succinctly state that the H&G Chair must “see that the theatre is in such condition that it could pass a fire inspection at any time.” Toward that end Lieder verifies that exits are not blocked, that emergency lights are functional, fire extinguishers are inspected, and he continually keeps an eye out for fire hazards.

5) Reporting. The By-Laws instruct the H&G Chair to “submit a monthly report to the Board of Governors regarding the status of ongoing improvements, needed improvements, condition of the building, and other such items as are necessary to the operation and upkeep of the building and grounds.” Lieder’s reports to the Board include the following sections: 1) *Completed Tasks*, 2)

Job jar, including tasks in progress and pending, 3) *Questions for the Board* and 4) *Other*. The perpetual “job jar” keeps Lieder on track so that items that can be given lower priority do not get forgotten.

6) Sticking to a Budget. The House and Grounds budget is prepared by the Finance Committee and

is approved, along with the rest of the annual budget, at the annual meeting. The Chair is required to discuss equipment expenditures with the Treasurer prior to purchase. Unfortunately, the building has required some rather expensive (budget busting) maintenance efforts in Lieder’s tenure, including plumbing upgrades, boiler repair, and repainting of the house floor.

Lieder notes that Players’ stalwarts **Paul Dillow** and **Bruce Parrish** and his predecessors **Jeremy Stiller** and **Jane Thomley** have been extremely helpful in helping him learn all the procedures, why’s and how’s and history of the building. He has worked with the Membership Chair to get volunteers for various projects, such as painting the house floor and spring-cleaning. He has learned that people are good about pitching in to help – you just need to ask.

The State of the Building. Built back in 1962, the building is showing its age. The downstairs restrooms and south wall leak whenever there is more than moderate rainfall. The south exterior wall could really use a coat or two of paint. The carpeting in the lobby and house was donated several years ago and is getting thin. The south house doors and lobby doors are not energy efficient and there is insufficient insulation on the north side of the building. There is not nearly enough space for storage. The list continues, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.



John Lieder, House and Grounds Chair.

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An Evening to Die For a Big Success

On Friday, February 16th Community Players held *An Evening To Die For*, a murder mystery dinner theatre. This fundraising event provided an opportunity for an original script written by Community Players own **Dan Horn** to be produced. The show titled "Death and Chocolates" started out as your typical melodramatic mystery full of over-the-top characters and a plot involving blackmail, deceit, and sordid affairs. But as the action unfolds, we discover that the prop gun used in the play had real bullets instead of blanks loaded, killing the director of the play. As luck would have it, there happened to be a mystery writer in the audience who sorted through the look at the behind-the-scenes treachery of a community theatre group.

A sold out Valentine's crowd received long stem red roses, enjoyed a candlelit dinner, and were serenaded by the Community Players' **Kathy Taylor** and **Patricia Stiller** before the show. The event raised over \$4,000 that will be used to further Players' building renovation plans.



The cast of *An Evening to Die for* **Jim Splittstoesser**, **Melissa James Shrader**, **Neal MacDonald**, **Justin Palm**, and **Rebekah Strauss**.



... *Inherit the Wind* continued from page 1.

H. L. Mencken); **Michael Gardner*** as Bertram Cates (based on Scopes); **Kellie Cundiff*** as Rachel Brown; **John Contarino** as Judge Merle Kennedy; **Justin Palm** as District Attorney Tom Davenport; **Laurie Combs** as Mrs. Sarah Brady; **Herb Reichelt*** as Court Clerk Charles Meeker; **Elizabeth Aronson** as Miss Mary Ann Goodfellow; **Alexis Wood** as Mrs. Eunice Krebs; **Jeff Ready** as William Bannister; **Zoe Mundy** as Melinda Loomis; **Chris Braun*** as Howard Blair McLain; **Joy Ralston** as Mrs. Lucille Loomis; **Hannah Kerns*** as Mrs. Harriet McLain; **Stephen Patterson*** as Elijah; **Jim Kalmbach** as Mayor Bud Beauchamp; **Diane Smith*** as Mrs. Beatrice Beauchamp; **Emma Blythe** as Rebecca Beauchamp; **Eli Mundy** as Timmy Beauchamp; **Kenneth Hill*** as Jesse Dunlap; **Kameron Cox** as George Sillers; **Katie Appel** as Sarah Krebs; **Genevieve Pilon** as Court Reporter Phyllis Mae Fernsbee; **Gary Thompson, I*** as the Monkey Seller and Dr. Amos D. Keller; **Ted Ichniowski** as Dr. Allen Page; **John Brittingham** as Walter Aaronson; **Alan Wilson** as Harry Y. Esterbrook; **Dorothy Mundy** as the Hot Dog Seller; **Judy Stroh** as the Eskimo Pie Seller.

The dedicated staff is made up of **Alan Wilson**, Producer; **Cathy Sutliff**, Assistant Director; **Bruce Parrish**, Set Design and Builder; **Judy Stroh**, Properties and Stage Manager; **Dorothy Mundy**, Properties and Stage Manager; **Cris Embree**, Costumes; **Gary Ploense**, Sound; **Mark Wright**, Lights; **Jean Lieder**, House Manager; **Melody Palm**, Music Consultant.

Inherit the Wind begins with a pay-what-you-can preview performance on Thursday, March 8 and then plays March 9-11, 15-18, and 22-24.



... *House and Grounds* continued from page 3.

Looking to the Future. Lieder is thrilled that the board is currently finalizing a building plan that will solve many of these problems and will provide a remodeled lobby and additional rehearsal space. Lieder has been called on to give his perspective to the architects and is pleased with what he has seen of the plans so far. (Look for more information regarding building plans in future issues.) Of course, the upgrade will require more of the House and Grounds Chair's time, but that will be a few years coming. In the meantime, Lieder will keep at it. He states there is a good deal of satisfaction in giving back to a building that has been the location of so many of his fondest memories.

Editor's Note: This article resumes our series spotlighting positions on the Board of Governors. For previous articles, see Volume 1, Issue 2 and Volume 2, Issue 1 at http://www.communityplayers.org/involve_news.html