

Tawas Bay Players Newsletter

January/ February 2012



TBP Singers Deliver Holiday Cheer! by Michal Jacot

Once again, the Tawas Bay Players Singers presented their free Christmas concert. Even organizer Pat Casey admitted she wasn't sure how many years they have been presenting this holiday gift to the community, but judging from the turnout, it's the gift that no one tires of.

TBPS played to a full house on December 14. Now, consider: it was the middle of the week, and not a flake of snow to be seen, replaced instead with gray skies and rain. Not the best circumstances for getting people into the Christmas spirit. And yet by the time our singers were done, the crowd was shaking hands and hugging and wishing each other a merry Christmas. Who needs snow when you've got entertainment like this!

It would probably be very easy to simply do the same concert every year and call it "tradition." So it is to Pat's credit that she changes things up every year. She doesn't settle for the same-old-same-old, and that really came to light this year. New music merged in with the usual favorites to create a fresh new show. The Sinatra version of "White Christmas", with main singers Chris Mundy and Mendy Shmina, was a real crowd pleaser. Barb Hunter's "Christmas in Killarney" showcased how this group excels in non-traditional songs. But those were just a couple songs that came to mind; every song and every singer was enjoyable. The TBPS really shines when the entire ensemble crafts a song. As the spouse of one of the singers, I can verify just how much practice goes into the songs; my kids and I had "Christmas Shopping Blues" memorized long before the concert! These people sound good together on stage and make it look easy because they work at it, and it's a labor of love.

As I told Laurie later, one of the things people seem to like about the TBPS concerts is the casual atmosphere. It seems like these people are gathered in your living room singing, not on stage. At one point in the show, they apparently were so engrossed in the story just told that they forgot they were supposed to sing. The ensuing remarks among themselves ("Shouldn't we sing now?" "Oh, yeah. I forgot. Sorry, folks."— all heard by the audience) weren't seen as sloppy production but as lighthearted and endearing moments. If the conversation had been planned, it would have looked forced, but TBPS always makes it look genuine, because it is. In short, the audience felt like they had been invited to the TBPS Christmas party.

Of course, the Christmas concert wouldn't be the same without two master storytellers, Greg Dahlstrom and T.D. Haskin. Tim's animated delivery and wide range of voices delighted the audience, and reminded me of another very talented man, Dick Van Dyke. And Greg's deep, soothing voice fits his stories like a cozy Christmas sweater. One story, "Harry's Gift", was written by Greg himself, depicting a local event from a few years back, and the touching story drew murmurs of recognition from the audience.

And so this is a shout-out to the talent and dedication of the TBP Singers as well as a thank-you for the holiday gift. You all did great. Merry Christmas!

Christmas at Tawas Village by June Hudgins

The TBP Singers annually have their "Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal" singing for the residents of Tawas Village. They enjoyed our program very much, asking at the end, "Is that all?" We could have sung the rest of the night for them. They treated us as usual to delicious cookies and provided an opportunity to visit with some of the residents. Once again this year TBP members were generous in providing small gifts for the residents. We had gifts for 40 women and 12 men. They were very pleased and we ended up singing some Christmas songs to them when we delivered the gifts. They always join in. Thank you to everyone who donated money or gifts for their bags to help make Christmas so nice for them.

Over the River and Through the Woods by Debra DeBois

This is the story of Nick, an Italian-American guy from New Jersey. His parents retired and moved to Florida. But that doesn't mean his family isn't still in Jersey. In fact he still sees both sets of grandparents every Sunday for dinner. This is the routine until he has to tell them that he's been offered his dream job in Seattle far away from his beloved, but annoying grandparents. And the news does not sit well, at all. Thus begins a series of schemes to keep Nick around. Well, Frank, Aida, Nunzio, and Emma do their level best, and that includes bringing to dinner the lovely—and single—Caitlin O'Hare as bait.

The cast includes Ray Skiver as Nick Cristiano, Alan Dalton and Sandy Schorfhaar as Frank and Aida Gianelli, Nick's Maternal grandparents, Franco Cimmino and Nancy Wigin as Nunzio and Emma Cristiano, Nick's Paternal grandparents and Tina Dalton as Caitlin O'Hare. I'm the director with by Alicia Sgambelluri as my assistant. The producers are Phyllis Spencer and Mary Kiernan.

If you can't make it to Dress Rehearsal, please come and see this show. It will make you laugh, remember your grandparents and bring a tear to your eye. You may even be envious of the cast. It has been a long time since a cast ate so well on stage. They eat all the time during the whole show. Plus dinner. HA! HA! But that's what you to expect when you travel "over the river and through the woods to Grandma's house". Performances will be January 20, 21, 22, 26,27, 28 & 29. **Editor's note:** We saw a fantastic dress rehearsal. It is a great play and the cast was wonderful. See it if you get a chance!

Auditions for The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Auditions for the spring musical, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* will be held on Monday, February 13th and Wednesday, February 15th at 6:30 p.m. at the TBP Playhouse. We are not having auditions on Tuesday 14th so you can spend Valentine's Day with your loved ones. The script calls for the actors to double in other parts, specifically the parents of the contestants. I may choose to cast others in those roles and use more actors. Performance dates are May 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

Here are descriptions of the roles. **Chip Tolentino:** The reigning spelling champ of Putnam County, athletic and social, he expects things to come easy to him. But he has been going through some weird changes and things are slipping out of control. He is a tenor. **Logainne Schwartzandgrubennier:** Younger than the other Bee contestants, she has a big desire to win to make her two fathers proud, she 'lisps' and is uncomfortable in her body. She has some 'tics', a strong presence, keen sense of justice and is aware of everything in the room. This part is for a soprano. **Leaf Coneybear:** Never expected to compete here today. Home schooled with many siblings the Bee is a great adventure to him. He wears homemade clothes and he may have severe attention deficit. Leaf doesn't expect to win or even spell one word correctly but finds everything amusing. His mother makes him wear his protective helmet to the Bee. This actor must sing well. **William Barfee:** Health problems have caused William to be loud and combative, the kid who becomes a bully to avoid being picked upon. Parents are divorced and his father remarried a much younger woman. He doesn't expect kindness from anyone except his mother. He has ill timed allergies and spells with his foot. This actor must sing well. **Marcy Park:** The overachiever, her family expects excellence. She knows she can win. Her talents include piano, dance, martial arts, and baton twirling. She always wears a parochial uniform. **Olive Ostrovsky:** She is a word lover, very shy at first then blossoms. She spends a lot of time alone during the first half of the Bee. She often stares out into the audience to see if her father is there. She sings beautifully. **Rona Lisa Perritti:** Putnam's hostess, she is a local realtor and the winner of the 3rd annual Bee. Her interest in the Bee is great and she knows she has to step up her game to make this Bee a success. This actress needs a great soprano voice. **Vice Principal Panch:** Frustrated with his life, the drive of the young spellers is alien to him. He wants to do well at this Bee to impress Rona Lisa. He sings only in group songs, he has no solos. **Mitch Mahoney:** With a bouncer's physique and demeanor he appears to be an odd choice to be the "comfort counselor" but it is part of his community service assignment. He wonders why they put the students through all this and wants to make the kids all feel better about losing. This actor needs a great voice.

TBP Scholarship

The TBP Board has set up a scholarship program to attend CTAM educational programs. Please be aware CTAM also has funds available. Please check their web-site. If you have questions please call Vickie Szatkowski at 362-6419. Return the completed form to Pat Casey, 720 E. State Street East Tawas, MI 48730.

Awards: Up to 50% of registration fees for theatre educational opportunities per active member.

Eligibility: Active member of TBP for at least one year and currently in good standing.

Requirements: Members must fill out an application in order to apply for the award. The scholarship award must be applied toward the registration for such activities as CTAM conferences, theatre workshops, etc. The member will be responsible to pay the registration fees up front and be reimbursed by the treasurer, upon presentation of a paid receipt. There must be funds in the educational account in order to issue the awards.

TAWAS BAY PLAYERS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Last Name

First Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone Number

Number of years as member of TBP

Purpose of request for scholarship (CTAM, class, etc)

Date of proposed meeting

Amount of request

Do not write below this line

Date of Board Approval

Amount of Board Approval

2011 – 2012 Season

Over the River and Through the Woods (Comedy) by Joe DiPietro

January 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29

Snow Angel & A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Fifth Period (Teen Production)

March 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Adult Musical) Music & Lyrics by William Finn

May 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20

Let's Play Crossroads (Comedy) by Michal Jacot

July 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22 – Summer Show is not included in our Season Tickets

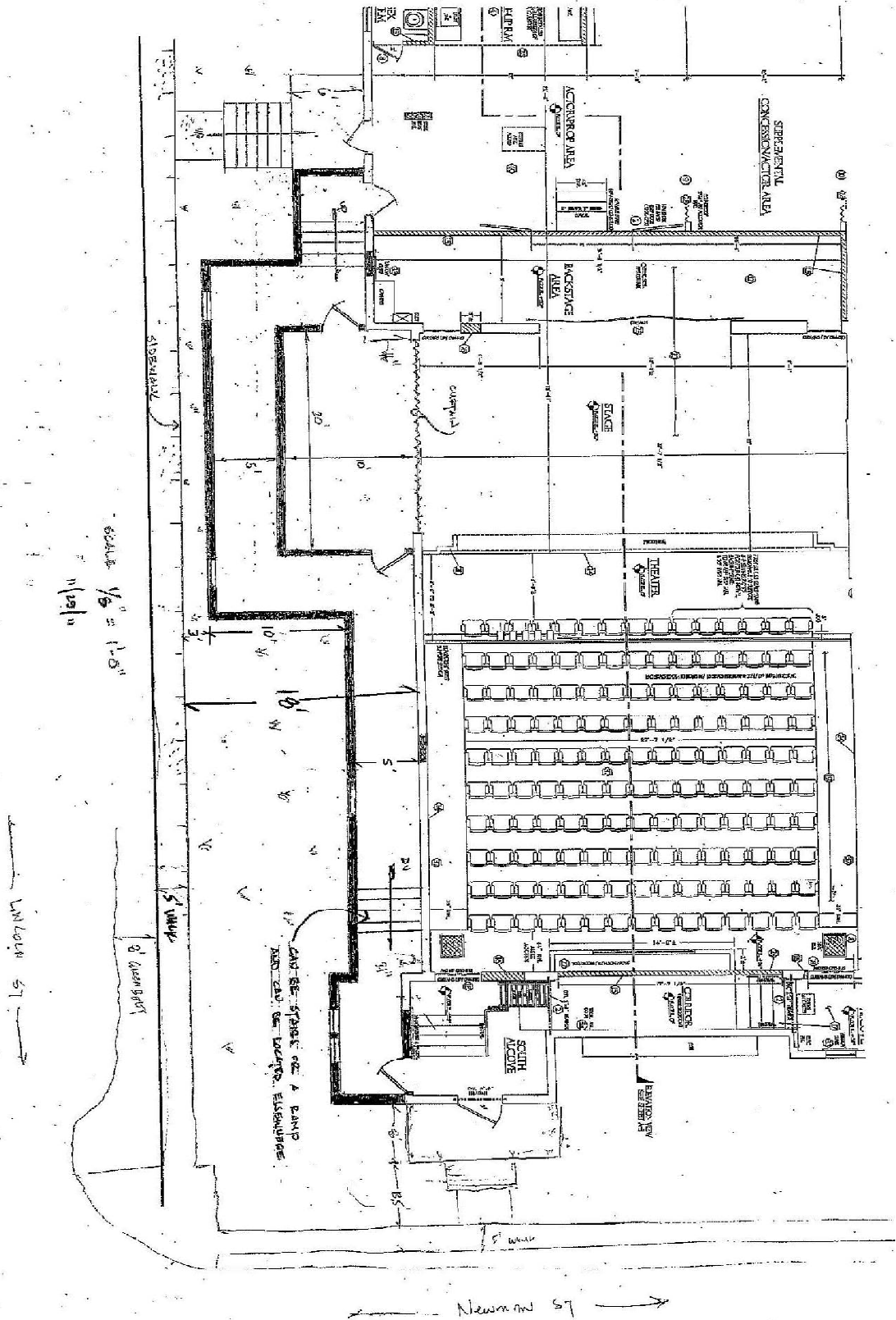
Theater Changes and Proposed Changes by Keith Frank

New Combination Lock – You may notice that a new combination lock has been installed on the kitchen door. There have been too many instances over the past several years with keys being given out and not returned. This has led to doors being left open, followed by calls from 911 at all hours of the night and early morning. In the past, the Board has had all of the locks to the building re-keyed with the hope that only the production set would be given out and returned after each show. However, that set was rarely returned to the President as was the policy. It got passed from one producer to another and no one was able to keep track of who had the set. Eventually, it became clear that there more keys were out there than just the production set. The solution was the combination lock. With the new lock, the combination can be reset after each show. The director of each show will be given the new combination to pass on to their production staff. At the end of the show, the lock will be changed for the next show. All of the locks on the doors have been re-keyed and deadbolts installed on the Newman and Lincoln Street doors. Keith and Pat are the only ones that have keys to those locks. Everyone else will access the building through the kitchen door. We hope this eliminates the problems we have experienced in the past.

Handrails – The next time you are in the theater proper, check out the handrails going up each side of the aisle. These handrails were donated by Deann Walters from Tawas Hardware. She was at the theater to see her granddaughter in our teen show last May and found it difficult to maneuver up the aisle. She contacted us and indicated her desire to donate the handrails if we would install them. Keith worked with Russo Engineering to get the necessary specifications and the handrails and brackets were ordered. Mary Ann Michalski saw to it that the rails were stained and varnished before our installation crew of Pat Casey, Pam Dibert, Al Bixby and Jim Wendling installed them. Deann has also set up a \$200.00 credit on behalf of the Tawas Bay Players at Tawas Hardware. We can use that credit to purchase any theater related items that we may need. So, if you are in Tawas Hardware and see Deann, be sure to thank her for all she has done for TBP. Also a big thank you to the above crew that saw to it that the handrails were stained, varnished and installed.

Orchestra Pit – On September 27, 2011 representatives of the Board met with Russo Engineering to discuss the possibility of building an orchestra pit. George Robson also attended the meeting. Two options were discussed. The first was for a traditional pit to be built in the basement. This would require the construction of a sound proof room with emergency access to the outside. It would also require the possible relocation of some seats in the front row. The second option was for an addition to be added to accommodate a 10' x 20' orchestra area on the Lincoln Street side of the existing stage. Because of the cost involved, \$30,000 for a basement pit as opposed to \$20,000 for the addition, it was decided to go with the addition concept. Another benefit to the addition concept is that for all non-musical productions, the space could be used as wing space. The board met again with Russo Engineering on November 7 to fine tune the requirements and space needed. It was at this meeting that we discussed the possibility of adding an outside hallway the full length of the building to allow actors access to the back of the house without having to go outside into the weather. Jim Russo put together a preliminary site drawing showing the "pit" area as well as the hallway (see below). Keith presented the plan to the East Tawas Park Board (our landlord for the theater) where approval was given to proceed with the plan provided that it conformed to current City of East Tawas building codes. One problem that we may face is that in order to include the 5' hallway on the outside of the building, the new outside wall that will be created is only 3' from the current sidewalk. This may not conform to existing code. At this time, Keith is pursuing the plan with the City. We will keep you updated as things progress.

Proposed Orchestra Pit and Outside Hallway Plan



TBP Links by Tara Western

Some of us who have been involved with TBP for a while (read decades) thought it would be fun to learn how everyone became involved with our group. We want to know about you, whether this is your first involvement with TBP or if you can't remember a time that you weren't a member. If you are willing to share your story with us please send an email telling us the story and specifically who got you involved. It's a take on the "six degrees of separation" idea. Tara has a questionnaire that can be filled out if you want more direction. You can email Tara at tarawestern@hotmail.com or Pam at p.frank@charter.net. There is no deadline to this project – send your information any time.

Tara Western, aka Tara Metzler Link: Debbie DeBois

Tara and Debbie performed together in an AuGres Jaycees' production of *Barefoot in the Park* in the spring of 1979. Tara played Corie, and Debbie played her mom. Debbie had been cast in the *The Butler Did It* and when she heard about try-outs for *Pools Paradise* she called Tara, remembering that Tara could do a Cockney accent. In *Pools Paradise*, Debbie was cast as the man-hungry Miss Skillon, and Tara was cast as Ida, the Cockney maid. Note: Debbie called Vic's Mackinaw Bar in AuGres to tell Tara she got the part - this was before cell phones!

Bill Western, aka "The Deacon" Link: Sandy Palmer

Bill's high school friend, Steve, is married to Marci Ferguson, who in 1980 worked in a salon with Sandy Palmer. Sandy had worked on the first two TBP plays and was assistant producer on *Pools Paradise*. When they were looking for men who could act, Marci suggested Bill. Sandy came into Bill's Weldon Real Estate office, and asked him to try out for the small part of the Bishop of Lax. At Bill's regular watering hold, the Lakeside, Bill told the gang that he had been asked to try out. Although he had no intention of trying out, their derisive laughter pissed him off enough, and Louie Alverson bet him that he couldn't get a part. Although he had many drinks, Bill tried out, and got the lead part of Lionel Toop, the vicar. Note: When Director Vincent Weiler called him to ask him if he could learn the lines, Bill said, "No".



Happy Birthday



December

5 Carol Kushion
10 Pat Casey
17 Judy Quarters
17 Pam Katona
17 Carl Hubner
18 Ken Spencer
19 Leroy Wenzel
24 David Ryan, Jr.
26 Alicia Sgambelluri
29 Kathy Weaver
30 Vickie Szatkowski

January

3 Keith Frank
4 Jake Huitema
7 Gabby Morris
9 Diane Ray
13 Liz Shmina
15 Penny Zacharias
16 Rebecca Buchanan
18 Zachary Dalton
19 Penny LeClair
22 Evelyn Shellenbarger
29 Sue Duncan

February

6 Mike Robson
7 Dennis Szatkowski
8 Vincent Weiler
11 Kay Nordin
12 Dorothy Smith
17 Tim Haskin
22 Tina Dalton
26 Mason Brewer
27 LeighAnne Skiver

The Actors, Unfortunately, Enunciated by Michal Jacot

While getting a bad review for a performance isn't pleasant, keep in mind that it could be worse. Here are some scathing reviews put forth by acid-tongued critics:

Walter Kerr on Hook and Ladder: "It is the sort of play that gives failure a bad name."

Robert Benchley on Perfectly Scandalous: "It is one of those plays in which all the actors, unfortunately, enunciated very clearly."

George S. Kaufman reviewing a comedy: "There was scattered laughter in the rear of the theater, leading to the belief that somebody was telling jokes back there."

Kenneth Tynan on a musical: "It contains a number of those tunes one goes into the theatre bumming."

Dorothy Parker on Marion Davies: "She has two expressions, joy and indigestion."

Reviewing a show in which both the plot and the two starring performers seemed to him soapy and weak, Alexander Woollcott wrote two lines: "In the first act she becomes a lady. In the second act he becomes a lady." And writing about another ill-fated Broadway opening, Woollcott suggested that the leading man "should have been gently and firmly shot at sunrise."

A critic commenting on Siobhan McKenna's voice in the Sons of Oedipus, in 1977: "Miss McKenna's normal stage voice is exactly halfway between a goose-girl and a whole company of keening mourners."

Another critic wrote, "Last night Mr. Creston Clarke played King Lear at the Tabor Grand. All through the five acts of the Shakespearean tragedy he played the king as though under the premonition that someone was about to play the Ace."

Brooks Atkinson on a British actress with the first name of April, giving a guest performance in America: "Oh, to be in England, now that April's here."

Wolcott Gibbs: "Miss Mendelssohn, as the demented governess, gave a notable display of continental acting technique, which seems to have quite a bit in common with professional wrestling."

Escanaba In Love Photos



