

Tawas Bay Players Newsletter

May/June 2015



This is an especially brief newsletter but I am including every article I received and am trying to include information about everything I know. I apologize if I have left things out but my role as editor is not to research and write the stories, merely to format what I get from others. I am happy to accept articles at any time; I have a file on my computer to store them in. Thank you to those members who routinely send me information.

Auditions for *The Queen of Bingo*

Where can two sisters on the other side of fifty, who want to add a little zest, fun and excitement to their lives, find it? Bingo! Auditions for this summer's production, *The Queen of Bingo* will be held Tuesday and Wednesday, May 26th and 27th at 6:30 at the Playhouse. The cast requires 2 women and 2 men (one man is the voice of the bingo caller from off stage). Productions dates will be July 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18 and 19. The set is minimal and doesn't change so we won't require a large backstage crew. For more information or to volunteer, call director Deb DeBois at 362-6800.

On any Bingo night at St. Joseph's, you can find Father Mac, Lonnie and Cindy Conklin, Marge Meranski, Coach Anderson, and the many off beat, colorful regulars we meet through the eyes of Sis and Babe. They dish the dirt, giggle like school girls and share old memories. Sis and Babe are sisters and best friends who have been coming to play Bingo together for years because they love it. Sis is a good loser who just loves to play. Babe is a player who has always got to win. Sis is naturally fit and trim. Babe is naturally overweight and always fighting the battle of the bulge. Sis is content in her widowhood. Babe is still looking for love. They complement each other in ways only sisters can and they drive each other crazy in that same sisterly fashion. On this particular night, Babe and Sis share something new as each confesses a secret and finds a special kind of redemption.

The Red Velvet Cake War

The spring production was well received at dress rehearsal and it is obvious that the cast worked very hard to get the timing of some of the more chaotic scenes just perfect. Congratulations to cast members, Diane Ray, Carol Kushion, Deb DeBois, Buck Weaver, Barb Hunter, Tara Western, Pam Katona, Rodger McElveen, Craig Sayer, Yanett Langley and Kathy Weaver you all did a great job. Welcome Rodger, Yanett and Kathy in their first appearance on our stage. It's obvious that Rodger has a lot of previous experience but this is Kathy and Yanett's first time on any stage. We hope you all will continue with TBP. Thank you director Sharon Langley, assistant Rodger McElveen and Producer June Hudgins for bringing us a lot of laughs. The show continues this weekend, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. Catch it if you get the chance.

Editor's note: Deb DeBois told me that the authors of the play left a message on the theater answering machine offering their congratulations and best wishes.

***Don't Hug Me* A Review from an Unbiased (Well, Okay, Maybe a Little Biased) Audience Member by Michal Jacot**

Laurie and I braved the bitterly cold temps to see TBP's winter offering *Don't Hug Me* on its opening night. Now, I have to have full disclosure here ... I'm not a big fan of what I call "Escanaba humor." Entire plays about funny-talking people going ice-fishing just don't do it for me. So, to be honest, I wasn't expecting much from the show. Maybe a few chuckles here and there and a chance to get out of the house for the night.

So I was pleasantly surprised to find myself laughing all the way throughout the evening, tapping my foot to some catchy music, and really caring about some of the characters. *Don't Hug Me* was a delightful show, and a talented cast and crew made it work for me. My first impression on walking into the theater was the great set. "The Bunyan" was created perfectly, with enough detail to draw you into the locale.

The cast nailed their characters perfectly and sang each song with crowd-pleasing enthusiasm. I love the little touches such as the orchestra pit huddled around the fire before the show (I laughed when a little kid in the audience saw Dave Dunham through the window and said, "Look, there's a hobo out there!"). I liked Diane Meyer showing up in the kitchen for a little impromptu percussion. And the best part, the mysterious guy sitting silently at the bar all the way through Act 2. I kept wondering, who *is* this guy? Is he going to *do* anything? And when the show was done and the cast got their standing ovation -- like those movies that show an extra scene after the credits for those willing to sit through them -- the guy reveals himself, realizes he's alone, and grabs the opportunity by doing some karaoke (until the wife tracks him down and takes him home). Nice job to Keith and Sue on their uncredited appearances! Bottom line, *Don't Hug Me* was just a ton of fun. Kudos to everyone involved!

"Maui" Wowie! by Michal Jacot

TBP recently dove into a new kind of entertainment for us, a murder mystery evening. This idea has been talked about for years, and in the past some attempts have been made to pull one off. But it took the persistence of Sue Duncan to get it all together and create an evening of fun. Sue found a script online called "Murder on Maui". Working together with the Knights of Columbus, she coordinated an evening of dinner, drinks, and murder. I acted as the director, gathering a cast for this extravaganza. A murder mystery evening is unlike a regular stage show in that the cast doesn't really learn lines. They are given information on their character and what part they play in the unfortunate events that follow. Then they pretty much ad-lib through the rest of the night. So I had to make sure I got people who could think on their toes.

The cast consisted of Alan Dalton as slimy hotel owner Harold Logan, Ray Skiver as Harold's partying partner Rebel (we never could figure out how to pronounce his Hawaiian last name), Michael Denny as detective Thomas Magnus, Tim Haskin as lounge singer Donnie Wo, Diane Teddy as turbo witch Stella Capwell, Harold's ex-wife, Tara Western as spacy psychic Abigail, Tina Dalton as Harold's main squeeze and former wrestler Bambi Bianca, Katie Hill as spoiled society twit Ruth Astoria, and Deb DeBois as our Narrator, who kept things moving along nicely. With a cast like that, I knew they would be able to think on their feet and be outgoing.

After a terrific Hawaiian style dinner courtesy of the K of C, the actors mingled with our guests. Before long, we saw the grand entrance of Stella Capwell, who riled a few people up before she stormed off stage ... only to storm back on moments later, stabbed and bleeding to death. From there, it was up to the audience to play detective and figure out who took out Stella. As these things always go, nobody really cares if they guess right or wrong, they're just there to have fun, and we had plenty of fun. The full house enjoyed the show, and we got some really nice comments about it. And the Knights of Columbus were pleased with it and want us to do another one, so we'll probably try it again next year!

Sue was foresighted enough to put surveys on the tables for people to fill out, and we got some nice input from these. The comments were overwhelmingly positive; people are always looking for something different, and this seemed to fit the bill. We got a lot of good constructive criticism, too. Our biggest goof, it seems, was that we didn't use microphones. In a place the size of the K of C hall, some people simply didn't hear what was going on. We'll know better next time. I heard from several people after the fact that they didn't attend because they hadn't seen it advertised anywhere. I had to explain to them that this was because the show's tickets were sold out about two to three weeks ahead of time. Given that information, we saw no point in paying for advertising. Sue and I are penny-pinchers when it comes to any production, and she made sure there were very few expenses for "Murder on Maui". The bottom line wasn't in yet, but TBP definitely made a profit on this show. In addition, we created a nice bond with the Knights of Columbus for future events like this.

As always, the people behind the scenes put the actors on stage, and I want to give special thanks to those who helped. Beth Borowski, Pat Casey (most tips), Donna Thomas (2nd highest in tips). Thanks to Sharon Langley who helped sell tickets at the K of C fish fries and Monday hamburger nights! We were also supported by a number of area businesses who chipped in prizes for our guests. E'clipse Salon, Twin City Salon, Huron Sport and Fitness, Healing Hands Massage, O'Connors, Bay Shore Car Wash, Alcona Canoe and Rental (185 buck donation!) If you visit any of these businesses, let them know you appreciate their support of our group.

Overall, I think everyone involved had a fun time, so we'll most likely be doing it again (maybe in the winter months to while away those cabin fever blahs?). If you think you might be interested in working on one sometime, tell Sue or me and we'll probably find a place for you. Sue said if she did it again ("if", she says. Ha ha. Don't you mean "when", Sue?) she would recruit more backstage help, so there's got to be something you can do to help. Thanks to everyone who participated in "Murder on Maui"; you all did a great job!



The Women of Lockerbie at AACT Fest by Deb DeBois

I am so very proud of the cast and crew; unfortunately we were not able to move on in the competition. We all want to thank everyone for the tremendous show of support for TBP's first ever entry in AACT Fest. Not only did we raise enough funds to travel but many TBP members attended the festival to cheer us on. We especially appreciate Seymour Carpet and Furniture for the loan of their truck to transport the set pieces to Owosso. We got to see some amazing shows and it was a great learning experience.



AACT FEST 2015 by Tara Western

I was asked by Sue Duncan to write about the AACT Fests, State and Regional that I attended in Owosso and Midland respectively. Having been to two before (one state, one National), I love the format, I love the adjudication, and I love seeing so many shows in two-three days. BUT, I said, to myself, "Self, what would the average Tawas Bay Player want to know"

So here are some thoughts that may or may not be relevant. "The Woman of Lockerbie" was TBP's first entry in an AAC fest. We represented well, and were a contender; as good as or better than Midland's entry. (Midland is a perpetual winner). The buzz about our fantastic cast and crew at the afterglow was awesome. We were instant celebrities, even those of us who had nothing to do with it.

Watching lots of theater in one weekend is intense and tiring in its way, but unbelievably inspirational. We saw eight shows in Owosso, and ten in Midland. At the end of this article is a list of plays that, in my humble opinion, would be suitable for TBP.

Adjudications can teach you about creating a play whether it's directing, acting, set designing, lighting, sound, props or costumes. Each element has its role in the success of the show. Making deliberate choices, adding details that enhance raises the play to the next level to a "WOW". Listening to approximately four hours of adjudications, you start to understand how the choices made, work or don't work to create that WOW!

Set dressing isn't just decorating, costuming isn't just clothing the characters, and lighting isn't just illuminating the stage. Set dressing helps tell the story. Costuming helps the characters tell their story. Light and sound set a mood and help the audience understand the story.

Plays I Think Would Be Suitable For Us:

The Sugar Bean Sisters by Nathan Sanders

Talley's Folly by Lanford Wilson

Revival at Possum Kingdom Community Church by Linda LaRocque*

Freud's Last Session by Mark St. Germain (who also wrote *Camping with Henry and Tom*)

The 39 Steps by John Buchan and Patrick Barlow

Dear Me by David Durham

*Linda is a Michigan playwright, a longtime friend of Vincent Weiler's and I got to meet her. She is a great lady. Another benefit of attending AACTfests is meeting great people!

2014-2015 TBP Board Contact Information

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Just Wanted To Let You All Know by Michal Jacot

Around mid-February, I went through my appointment calendar, looking ahead to see what kind of adventures I had in store for March. I came across a note that I had scribbled to myself in the March 16, 2015 space: "*First appearance on TBP stage 35 years ago today.*"

This amused me. Somewhere along the line I found out that *The Butler Did It*, the first show I was in, opened on March 16th (I probably came across a poster or old program in one of my huge collection of scrapbooks), and the obsessive-compulsive in me figured out that it had been 35 years ago. And that fact tickled me so much that I took the trouble to write it in my calendar. I don't remember doing it; I probably wrote it in there when I bought the calendar last fall. But why would I go the trouble of writing that in my calendar?

Then I got thinking about that first show, and smiled at the memories. Playing the debonair, tuxedo'd man-about-town (the first time I'd seen a tuxedo, much less wore one) – and having to get my scraggly hair cut to play the part ... discovering what "community theater" was (I had no idea before getting cast) ... a running joke with Ray Skiver about him being a "ruffle fluffer" that we still refer to today ... a card I got from Deb DeBois on opening night that said "I believe in you, Michal! I *do!*" (and at that time in my life, I needed someone to believe in me) ... and the friends I made.

And I realized that many of those friends from way back when are still in my life. Deb and Ray. Keith. Vincent. Annie. June Luv. I ran into Ray's sister Liz last week and we chatted like old friends, and the only connection we had was that we were in a play together decades ago.

At the risk of getting sappy here, that's what community theatre is all about, Charlie Brown. Friendships, sharing our lives. Over the years I've shared my life with the people in this group, had fun with them, bonded with them, taken road trips with them and made memories with them far beyond the many memories we've made on stage. I met Laurie through our group, and now we have two kids that will change the world. We have all shared laughs and tears and adventures and stories that can fill an evening with the reminiscing. I can pick any of my TBP friends at random and be blessed with so many individual memories.

You people, connected with the Tawas Bay Players, whether I have known you for one month or 35 years, have played a huge role in my life and I am grateful for all of you. Thank you for sharing your lives with me.

And now I know why I wrote that note in my calendar.

Editor's note: Michal learned in February that his newest play has been published! Congratulations Michal.



Happy Birthday



May

- 2 Diane King
- 2 Patricia King
- 5 Diane Brewer
- 7 Gregory Jacot
- 7 Charles Shuart Jr.
- 7 Joyce Hill
- 9 Diane Teddy
- 13 Pam Frank
- 17 Suzan Witt
- 17 Warren Brewer
- 18 Paula Dery
- 24 Mike Merluzzi
- 26 Tom LeClair
- 28 Ron Lockett
- 30 Andre DeWilde
- 30 Alan Kushion

June

- 4 Michal Jacot
- 15 Lynn Phillips
- 21 Laurie Jacot
- 22 Pat Ruster
- 26 Kay Robson
- 30 Mary Ann Michalski

July

- 2 Al Bixby
- 2 Alan Dalton
- 5 Buck Weaver
- 9 Feliwelyn Shuart
- 13 Larry Van Wagoner
- 15 Deb DeBois
- 18 Mary Henry
- 18 Betty DeWilde
- 21 Gatlyn Dunham
- 22 Janie Mundy
- 27 Dee Bixby



Red Velvet Cake War



