
Tawas Bay Players
CURTAIN CALLS

September 2019



“TBP: 40 YEARS IN SONGS” A HIT!



Congratulations to the cast and crew of 40 YEARS IN SONGS, a musical celebration of our theater’s history! A wide range of ages (from 14 to 80+) worked to create a spectacular showcase of music for our audiences. Several of the songs were presented by the original cast members, which made them all the more special. Directors Pat Casey, Penny Zacharias and Pam Koepke put together a really fun show, helped along by pit musicians Susan Rook, Brady Jacot, Jim DiLoreto and Gregory Jacot and an assortment of terrific singers (as pictured above). Producer Sue Duncan kept things running smoothly with her tech crew. A fun and festive musical celebration to commemorate our forty years in “The Biz!” To everyone involved: Great Job!

CONGRATULATIONS to our WINNERS!

We gave out some nice prizes during the *40 Years in Song* show. Season ticket winners were Janie Mundy and Ray Chambers, both of East Tawas. The sailboat cruise was won by Tyler Braddock, from ... well, somewhere else. Congrats to all!



“THE SPEAKEASY MURDER”

On August 2 and 3, we presented *The Speakeasy Murder*. Written and directed by Michal Jacot and produced by Sue Duncan, the audience-interactive murder mystery was well-received by our audiences, and we had a lot of fun doing it!



The story took place at Lucky’s, a speakeasy of the Roaring 20’s, filled with an assortment of flappers and mobsters. There was Ross “The Boss” Valentini (Keith del Rio), the mob boss who owns the place; Lucky Gilroy (Bill Archer), the bartender; and Henry Bascomb (Jerry Schmidt), the musician who plays at the speakeasy.

Regular customers included Suzette DeVine (Stacy Perrot), the sweet flapper girl, and Ross’s main squeeze; “Flappy Lips” Flanagan (Ray Skiver), the low-rent mobster who dreams of the big time; Kenny Kreslin (Carter Chrivia), the dashing silent film star; and “Big Bertha” Cannon (Barb Richardson), the holy rolling bane of speakeasies

There was even some — what did we decide they were called? Extras? Set dressing? Non-participating personnel? Eye candy? In any event, we had Jolene Grusecki, Eric Perrot, Alexandra Perrot, Neil Peterson and Emma Brownell (I hope I didn’t miss anyone) hanging out on stage watching the mayhem.

And finally, there was police detective Scott Reasoner (Michal Jacot), a cop who seems to show up in any place (and any time period) just when someone gets killed. (I use this same character in all off my murder mysteries; he’s kind of an inside joke).

And sure enough, the loathsome Henry Bascomb is brutally murdered (beaten over the head with a crowbar ... now that’s a murderer who means business!) So Detective Reasoner rounds up the usual suspects and gets information from eyewitnesses (that would be the audience).

It’s all played for fun, and the tongue-in-cheek attitude that prevailed gave the audience a lot of laughs.

Everyone enjoyed the show, and we even made a few bucks. Thanks to everyone who participated in *The Speakeasy Murder*!



A look back at shows from our past 40 years!
presents

THE SAGA OF SAGEBRUSH SAL

A SUMMER MELODRAMA 1989

By Tara Western

It was the summer of 1989. TBP had been in business for ten years and *The Saga of Sagebrush Sal* was its seventh summer production! Why? We were young and excited about theatre. Every rehearsal was a party. The Saga of Sagebrush Sal was our first melodrama. Not only was it extremely funny and short (25 minutes!), when you add audience participation and over the top acting, you've got a winner! It used a narrator, so few lines had to be learned: the lead had 20 lines! Bill Western was the narrator, June Hudgins produced (of course!), and I directed.

The plot was light: the villain, Jake the Snake and his sidekicks, Larry and Darrell*, seek revenge on Sagebrush Sal. The confrontation takes place in a saloon full of cowboys and Can-can girls. Also, a very short hero wants a very tall gal. That's it!

Most of the cast and crew have moved or passed on. The inimitable Jane Ruster played Sal, Can Can girls still around are June Hudgins, Sue Dowell, and Mary McGahey. Ray Skiver played the very short hero, Heartbleed Haymeadow in love with the big and/or tall Hazeltine, played by Sharon (Miller) Bailey (sorry, Sharon! You were pretty tall, but not big!). **

We had a table, a bar, three chairs, three bar stools, a door frame... a lot of stuff to haul around! These props should give you a good idea how wacky the show was: a stuffed skunk on a string, bubblegum for the cowboys, a stick horse, a mosquito gun, rubber knives, and a wedding veil. Sound man, John Thomas, added sound effects for horses, musical motifs for the main characters, mood music, etc.--- a true creative effort!

An article in that TBP's newsletter said: "See Sal pick her teeth with her gun! See Warren 's dying scene attempt to equal the "ham" quotient of Michal's classic! See Heartbleed Haymeadow ride a stick horse! See Larry and his brother Darrell (low budget play—only one Darrell!!)



Rich Gibson and Ray Skiver in "Saga of Sagebrush Sal"

Where did we perform? Northeast Michigan was rockin' that summer. Almost every small town had a festival and we performed everywhere: AuGres' Harbor Days (parade*** and show!), Tawas' Marinerfest, Iosco County Fair, Tawas City Art show, Tawas Point State Park, and the Sand Lake Festival. We also appeared in Tawas' Fourth of July

parade. We mailed a flyer asking for a minimum \$50 donation; we netted \$416.26!

The villain, Jake the Snake, was played by Rich Gibson who wrote for the Iosco News-Herald at the time. Loving theatre he gave both TBP and Shoreline Players superb coverage; I found THREE articles about our little show and a picture. Just to give you an idea how good Rich was, this was in the first article: “The show contains saddlebags full of broad satire, exaggerated pantomime, and farcical action.”

We were young (sort of), free (kind of) and we loved to have fun (still do)!!

*from the then popular, Bob Newhart Show— “This is my brother, Darrell, and this is my other brother, Darrell”.

**If you’ve been around awhile, you know this wasn’t their last show as a couple!

***We won a prize for “Most Original”!

ADDENDUM:

If you Google *The Saga of Sagebrush Sal*, you will find a 50 minute “full-length” (their words, not mine!) show with a cast of 17! You can read the first three pages and a great description of a melodrama Books.google.com. The show is from I.E. Clark Productions.

(Editor’s Note: Many thanks to Tara for the terrific article and photo! Her memories of Sagebrush Sal kicks off a [hopefully] regular column that will look back on some vintage shows from our past 40 years.

I’d love to hear *your* reminisces; do you have a show from way back when that you want to share with everyone? Send it to me for an upcoming TBP RETRO column!)

**Congratulations to our two new
Board members,
Laurie Jacot and Jolene Grusecki!**



**Mr. Newsletter Editor,
how can I, a humble member
of the Tawas Bay Players,
contribute to
CURTAIN CALLS?**

Glad you asked! You can:

... **Write an article about TBP.** Don’t worry if you misspell words or “aren’t a good writer” ... I’ll edit it. You can write whatever you want about TBP.

... **Write an article about some other theater.** Saw a show recently that you want to tell us about? Here’s the place to do it!

... **Contribute photos from current or past productions or TBP events.** You’ll get your photos back; just make sure to identify who is in the picture and what’s going on.

... **Get a question answered.** Want to know something about TBP? Ask TBPers. The newsletter is a great forum for any questions on how we do stuff.

... **Tell us about a personal event.** Celebrate an anniversary? Know a former member who got into theater elsewhere? Got that embarrassing tattoo removed from your backside? Let’s hear about it! Hey, if you don’t tell us, we’ll have to make up our own gossip about you, and you know that won’t end well for you.

... **Contribute memorabilia from old shows.** Not just photos; programs, newspaper articles, whatever you’ve got. Again, you’ll get them back.

... **Write a regular column.** Want your voice to be heard? Want your ideas to be known? Want to just say hi? This is the place for you.

Send your contributions, stories, ideas and whatnot to Michal Jacot. Electronic format is best, but I still accept old-fashioned handwritten articles. Send it to me at mljacot@sbcglobal.net, catch me at the theater, or drop it off at my house.

“EYES ON” LEARNING! TAKE IN A PLAY OR TWO THIS FALL!

By Tara Western

Viewing other community theatres’ productions can inspire and instruct. You can also have a lot of fun! Here are some of the shows near Tawas taking place this fall. We are hoping to have a coordinator for Players and friends who would like to carpool to a show. You will be in charge of your own ticket however! Would this work? You email a coordinator (let’s just call him or her, **The Big Giant Head**, okay?) with the details of your interest(s). The **BGH** will compile the information and then, email all the respondents. Of course, you can make your own arrangements, or post that you have one seat in your car and so on. Better yet, you can contact the people on the list and make your own group. The Big Giant Head would be a clearinghouse, and informational site, not a matchmaking series.

TITLE OF SHOW	THEATRE	DATES	TIMES	MILEAGE	WEBSITE
The Importance of Being Ernest	Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City	Sept. 13-15, 19-22, 26-28	7:30 2:00 on Sundays	2 HOURS 25 MINUTES	www.oldtownplayhouse.com
Play On	Bay City Players	October 4-6, 10-13	7:30 3:00 Sunday	1 Hour 19 minutes	www.baycityplayers.com
CTAM fall conference at TreeTops in Gaylord		October 11-13		1 hour 46 minutes	Ctam.online
Deer Camp the Musical	Alpena Civic Theatre	Oct. 17-20, 24-27	7:30 2:00 Sunday	1 HOUR 20 MINUTES	www.alpenacivictheater.com
Once Upon a Mattress	Northland Players in Cheboygan	Oct. 24-27	7:30 2:00 Sunday	2 HOUR 23 MINUTES	www.nlplayers.org
Death by Design	Rogers City Players	Oct. 25-27, Nov. 1-3	7:30 2:00 Sunday	1 hour 42 minutes	www.rrctheatre.org

Editor’s Note: Great idea, Tara! Watching theater performed by other groups is a great way to see how they do things. It’s always much more fun when you travel with a group of like-minded friends. And other community theater groups ALWAYS give backstage tours if you ask; they love to show off their home, and we can get some TERRIFIC ideas from them! Here’s hoping we find a Big Giant Head to help with this project.

Church Basement Ladies

By Dennis Szatkowski

Our fall production of *Church Basement Ladies* is a fun filled, musical comedy directed by Dennis Szatkowski and produced by Vickie Szatkowski and Judy Quarters. The story could be about any group of women who cook and organize the food for any church, event or function in any small town. You've seen them; you know them; they are the ones that are busy in the basement or back kitchen planning, directing and preparing the food, each with their own special character or personality.

In the case of *Church Basement Ladies*, the setting is the basement of the East Cornucopia Lutheran Church of the Prairie, a small rural church in the small town of Cornucopia in Northern Minnesota.

Church Basement Ladies is a musical comedy, book by Jim Stowell and Jessica Zuehlke, and music and lyrics by Drew Jansen. The story is about the ladies that work in the church basement cooking meals for church functions. The musical is inspired by the humorous book *Growing Up Lutheran*, by Janet Letnes Martin and Suzann Nelson. Published in 1997, *Growing Up Lutheran* is a humorous "scrapbook of memories" of what it was like to grow up Lutheran in the Midwest in the 1950s. In addition to their best seller, Janet and Suzann have written numerous other works, and have performed together as "Those Lutheran Ladies" around the country. Their lives and writings have inspired six additional *Church Basement Ladies* musicals.

A celebration of the church basement kitchen and the women who work there, *Church Basement Ladies* is a musical comedy featuring four distinct characters and their relationships as they organize the food and solve the problems of a rural Minnesota church about to undergo changes in 1965. From the elderly matriarch of the kitchen to the young bride-

to-be learning the proper order of things, we see them handle a record breaking Christmas dinner, the funeral of a dear friend, a Hawaiian Easter fundraiser, and a steaming hot July wedding. They stave off potential disasters, share and debate recipes, instruct the young, and keep the Pastor on course while thoroughly enjoying, (and tolerating) each other as the true "steel magnolias" of the church. Funny and down to earth, audiences will recognize these ladies as they witness the church year unfold from below the house of God.

The cast of this show is:

Mrs. Lars Snustad (Vivian) - Pat Casey
Mrs. Gilmer Gilmerson (Mavis) - Barb Hunter
Mrs. Elroy Engleson (Karin) - Penny Zacharias
Signe Engleson (Karin's Daughter) - Patricia King
Pastor E. L. Gunderson - Chris Mundy

Church Basement Ladies hits our stage October 18, 19, 20 and October 24, 25, 26, 27. Backstage crew volunteers are always appreciated!



"Stella!"

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