

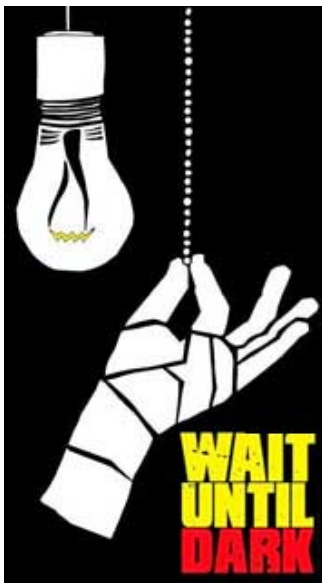
TAWAS BAY PLAYERS CURTAIN CALLS



CURTAIN CALLS is published semi-occasionally for the TAWAS BAY PLAYERS!



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“WAIT UNTIL DARK”

Wait Until Dark is coming to the TBP stage in just a few short weeks!

The edge-of-your-seat drama opens January 24-24-26, and continues the next weekend, January 30-31 and Feb. 1-2.

Written by Frederick Knott, *Wait Until Dark* was first performed on Broadway in 1966 and often revived since then. A film version was released in 1967, and the play was published in the same year.

The suspenseful story revolves around Susy Hendrix, a blind Greenwich Village housewife who becomes the target of con-men searching for heroin hidden in a doll in her apartment.

Wait Until Dark is directed by Ray Skiver.

“Virgil’s Wedding”

Barb Hunter will be directing a combined venture between the high school and the TBP called *Virgil’s Wedding*!

Stand aside Abner Yokum and Daisy Mae; Virgil and Margaret from Lickskillit will steal your heart and have you rolling in the aisle.

Everyone is invited to the social clash of the century as Ms. Delanie, a high-end wedding planner, is hired to direct a simple ceremony for two of Lickskillit's favorite lovebirds: Virgil and Margaret. But it's a wild romp
(continued on next page)



“Virgil’s Wedding”

(continued from pg.1)

before the nuptials are exchanged. The bride doubts the groom's love, the in-laws are decorating the church with Christmas garland, the preacher arrives late with notes for a funeral service, and the groom ends up getting stuck in the best man's lizard trap the night before the wedding. The mayhem begins the moment Margaret thinks she's promised her love to the wrong man (her mama always told her to marry "Mr. Right") when she's introduced to Ms. Delanie's boss, Mr. Wright. Ms. Delanie must also deal with a lost groom and a host of relatives who refuse to cooperate with the fancy city lady.

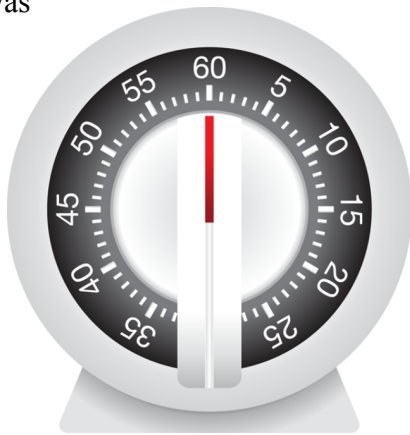
Tryouts for Virgil’s Wedding will be at the school on Jan 15&16. 15th after school at 3:30 and 16th evening at 6:30 pm. Production dates will be in March 12-15th.

KITCHEN TIMER

By Tara Western

This is a time management hack I picked up from Lauren Graham’s book *I’m Talking as Fast as I Can*. When she started writing, she kept feeling stuck. A screenwriter friend told her about “Kitchen Timer” which he adapted from *The Pomodoro Technique* by Francesco Cirillo. I was inspired to share this method by attending Purple Rose playwright, David MacGregor’s playwriting workshop at the CTAM conference at Tree Tops.

This method is for writers, actors, busy people, anyone who has a monkey brain like me. It will help you focus and be



productive every day. If you need to learn lines, write a play for the CTAM playwriting contest (begins January 1, 2020; ends May 15, 2020), design a set, or create costumes, this can help you get it done!

Step 1: Get a timer. It can be on your microwave, a real kitchen timer, Alexa/Siri, or your phone (last resort).

Step 2: Gather materials such as pen, paper, sketch pad, open your work document on computer etc.

Step 3: Turn off all distractions, such as TV, radio, podcasts, phone alerts. Before I bought my cute little timer (FYI, Pomodoro means “tomato” in Italian), a text distracted me. Tell your loved ones that you need quiet time.

Step 4: Set your timer for 25 minutes. That’s what Cirillo suggests and I have found it to be perfect for me. Go!

Step 5: Stop when the timer goes off. Take a five-minute break before you do another Pomodoro, or go about your day.

The adapted “Kitchen Timer” is not an arbitrary 25 minutes. Busy day? Set the timer for 10 or 15 minutes. Got a deadline? Set it for 40 minutes or longer. The critical part is focused work. Since using this method, my writing time is much more productive.

David MacGregor said that the difference between the people that “want” to write and those that have a play entered in a contest or published is that “they finished”!

(Editor’s Note: Thanks for this tip, Tara! Particularly that last line! Often, the key to writing anything is just getting a block of uninterrupted time. In today’s plugged-in world, that can be difficult, but not impossible. Don’t wait for that uninterrupted block of time ... MAKE it!!)

Fall Theatre Travels

By Michal Jacot

Laurie and I spent several weekends in October enjoying theatre around the state.

We started off on October 13 by heading to Midland Center for the Arts to see *Beautiful: The Carol King Musical*. While it detailed the life of the iconic singer/songwriter, it really was a musical revue thinly disguised as a biography. The plot told of King's personal life and her beginnings and rise in show business, all cleverly told via the songs she wrote and/or performed.

If you grew up in the '70's it would be impossible for you to NOT enjoy this show. The music was a showcase of favorites, one after the other. The lead actress portrayed King to perfection. The ensemble cast recreated the look and sound of songs with amazing accuracy; when two actors strode out onstage as the Righteous Brothers and sang "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'", you'd think you were watching the genuine article!

The following Sunday we traveled to Meadow Brook Theatre to see *Murder on the Orient Express*. Our son Brady is an Agatha Christie fan, so we took him and his girl Melanie to this classic Christie mystery. MBT never fails to put on a good show, and their theater facility is very nice.

One thing that really stood out was their unusual set. The play takes place on two train cars. The cars were actually two connected sets, one car visible onstage at a time; they were shifted back and forth across the stage as needed. It's always fun to see some set-building ingenuity like this!

We finished up our theatre month with *Church Basement Ladies*, presented by a small-town theatre group with big talent. My first thought upon seeing the realistic set was, "Wow! You could almost hear the people walking above this church basement!"

CBL was filled to the brim with humor and heart. Funny lines abounded, and the characters were great (I recognized several of them from my own church!). The music was, of course, well done; with a stage full of talent like that it was hard to go wrong.

So that was a fun month of theatre-going for Laurie and me. If any of you have enjoyed a production somewhere recently (such as Tara and her Adventure of the Purple Rose elsewhere in this newsletter), why not share it with your fellow TBPers here in CURTAIN CALLS?

WANTED: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

By Michal Jacot

I am looking for an Assistant Director for "*I Love Lacy*," the TBP summer show.

The show is written and directed by me. It is a light romantic comedy with a cast of six people. Production dates are July 10-11-12 and July 16-17-18-19.

With a simple set and a fun script, I expect "*I Love Lacy*" to be a pretty easy show to put on. Ideally, I'd like to have an A.D. who hasn't directed at all but would like to learn the ropes and earn their director cred. This would be a good show to "get your feet wet" with. That said, I'll consider anybody who shows an interest. Plus, I try to make my shows a fun experience for everyone.

If you're interested in being my Assistant Director, just let me know!



TARA WESTERN AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE PURPLE ROSE

By Tara Western

Finally saw a show at Jeff Daniels' Purple Rose Theatre—Bucket List? Check! Bonus: the play was by playwright, David MacGregor, whom I met at the CTAM conference at TreeTops. David led two sessions of a playwriting workshop and was also the keynote speaker. I was enthralled by his description of his plays, so I immediately booked tickets for *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Fallen Soufflé* (which runs through December 21st).

David graciously emailed me the script for his first Sherlock Holmes play, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Elusive Ear*, and also *Fallen Soufflé*. I loved them both. Admittedly, I'm a Sherlock Holmes fan in all its iterations, but David's format of adding two historical characters to the formidable group of Holmes, Dr. Watson, Irene Adler (Sherlock's lover), and the late Professor Moriarty's daughter, the brilliant and evil Marie Chartier, makes for a hilarious and rich experience.

The performance at the Purple Rose was stupendous! The set, the décor, the costumes, the props, the lighting, the sound, and of course, the acting — Magic! Long story short, I was smitten, and want to share the wealth, so to speak.

Holmes, Watson, Irene Adler, and Marie Chartier appear in both plays. In *Elusive Ear*, the notorious and as-yet-undiscovered genius Vincent van Gogh arrives at Baker Street, bleeding and asking for help with a most unusual case. And then Oscar Wilde shows up! *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Fallen Soufflé* has Queen Victoria's son, Bertie (the womanizing Prince of Wales), and celebrity chef Auguste Escoffier seeking help from anarchist assassins, blackmail, and scandal. And by the way, these are both stand-alone plays, not a series.

David is generously sharing his first two Sherlock scripts (the third and final play, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Ghost Machine*, will debut at the Purple Rose in the Fall of 2021). He or I will send you the pdf of the scripts if you email dmacgregor77@gmail.com or tarawestern@hotmail.com.

For the moment, both of these plays can be licensed directly from David. To give you a little more information about him, he has had his work performed from New York to Tasmania, and his published plays can be found at Playscripts and Heuer Publishing. If you want to see more of his work, go to <http://david-macgregor.com> or his page at the New Play Exchange: <https://newplayexchange.org/users/1668/david-macgregor>.

In addition, you might want to visit www.purplerosetheatre.org. For true Holmes' fans, go to the Amateur Mendicant Society of Detroit, "sharing Sherlockian lore and whimsy since 1946" at www.amateurmendicantsociety.org.

"Word Compass"

By Michal Jacot

I spent four fun days this last November at Word Compass, a writer's retreat. It took place in Gaylord at a beautiful log cabin home. With 17 writers in attendance, there were plenty of opportunities to mingle, talk shop, and compare notes. The writers there consisted of novel authors (published and unpublished) of different genres, poets, and songwriters. There were also a couple of workshops and lots of delicious food served up by a couple of incredibly talented chefs. The main order of the four days, though, was writing. There was no television, and nobody missed it a bit. Everyone was encouraged to lounge around in their jammies as long as they wanted, using the peace and quiet to recharge the writing part of our brains.

It turned into a very productive experience for me. I'd had an idea for a full-length play that I'd been toying with for a while now, and this retreat gave me the perfect chance to get it down on paper. By the time the fourth day rolled around, I had completed about 2/3 of the script, all in longhand.

Word Compass was a lot of fun for me, and I'll likely attend it again next year. Meanwhile, I just have to finish up the last part of that script!

Tawas Bay Players Singers Songs & Stories

The TBP Singers helped our community celebrate the Christmas season with their annual *Songs And Stories* free concert. The concert, presented December 17th, gave attendees an hour's worth of classic holiday tunes, interspersed with inspiring stories. Concert goers were even treated to some nice pre-show holiday music, courtesy of Greg and Brady Jacot and Melanie Bruno (pictured). The evening was capped off with an after-show cookies and punch get together in Hudgins Hall.

Congratulations to all of the TBP Singers who brought this wonderful gift to the Tawas area, and a special thank you to Pat Casey for her years of heading up the Tawas Bay Players Singers!



TO NEAR-CAPACITY AUDIENCES

Players Present Murder Mystery

By Jim Dunn

EAST TAWAS — The best murder mystery minds available were brought together to solve an imaginary crime but ended up faced with a real murder in last week's production of the "The Butler Did It", by the Tawas Bay Players.

The opening night performance of the mystery comedy drew a large crowd to the East Tawas Community Building, where the staging of the play was nearly surrounded by the audience, creating the intimate atmosphere of some of the tiny off-broadway theatres in New York.

The basic action of the play focused upon a group of mystery writers attending a week-end house party on an isolated island off the coast of San Francisco. The writers, who all attended the party as their alter-ego fictional characters, were

supposed to solve a staged murder but the plans ran amok when an actual murder was committed.

The audience seemed thoroughly amused by the polished performances delivered by the cast, and the material was a good choice for family entertainment, with young children making up a fair share of the audience.

Presenting standout performances in Thursday's production were June Hudgins as Miss Maple, Ron Warner as Chandler Marlowe, and Cindy Hayes as Haversham.

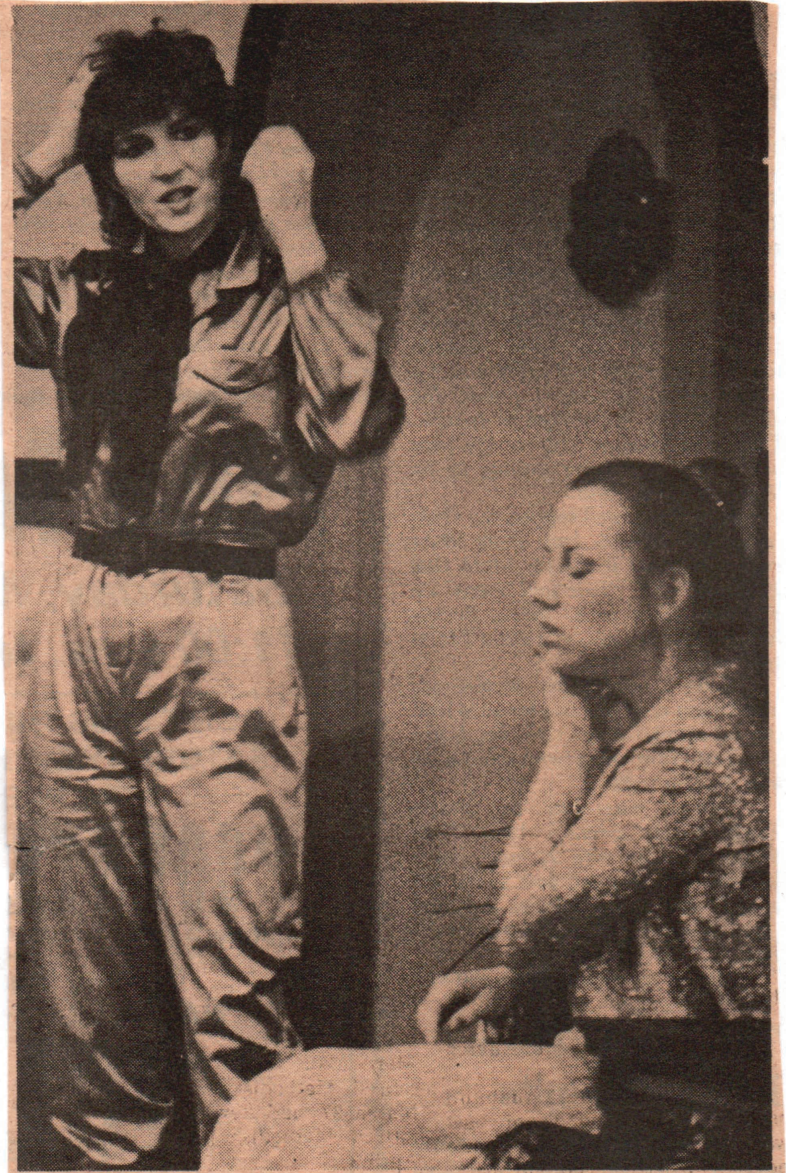
Hudgins seemed to slip naturally into the part of a crafty hostess, flowing easily with the dialogue and injecting the character's action with mannerisms and affectations which gave Miss Maple a personality which stood out even among the diverse and colorful personalities of the other characters.

Similarly, Warner played Marlowe to the hilt, wringing as many chuckles as he could from the audience by supplementing his lines with facial expressions and voice inflections.

Making her local debut in the play, Cindy Hayes had the opportunity to assume two characterizations with one role, and performed both the separate personalities and the transition with a spirited enthusiasm, and should be a valuable asset to the players in future productions.

Presenting an interesting interpretation of the Charlie Chan-inspired characterization of Louie Fan was Keith Frank, while Marge Meiswick slipped comfortably into the role of the streetwise, sexy Charity Hayes.

Also giving convincing perfor-



FIGHTING MAD — Charity, played by Marge Meiswick, shakes her fist at Laura, portrayed by Elizabeth Verlac, to warn her to be careful with her comments. The warning fell on deaf ears, however, and soon the two women were slugging it out over a case of mistaken identity. —

mances were Elizabeth Verlac, in her acting debut as Laura; Mike Jacot, also a first-timer with the players as Rick; Don Mooney as Father White; Debra DeBois as Rita; Rick Swanson as Peter Flimsey.

Casting for the play was excellent; each player seemed to fit the style of his character, and the creative costume work of Terry Aune and Annette French completed the characterization imagery.

Accolades are also due for the producer and director, Anne Dunham and Vincent Weiler, respectively, for transforming a simple, but thorough, set into an interesting and amusing evening of entertainment. Assisting in the directing and producing capacities were Beth Bleiman and Sandy Palmer.

The players next theatrical endeavor is "Pool's Paradise", an English farce which will be staged in early May. Tryout dates are March 5, 6, and 7 at the Tawas Area high school.

To celebrate our 40th year in The Biz, take a look at this news article from our very first season. See any familiar faces... ?



AHHH, SO! — Keith Frank played a credible Charlie Chan type character in the Players' murder mystery, adding a little humor to lighten some of the play's more serious moments. — NEWS-PRESS PHOTO



GUMSHOE — Ron Warner delivered a standout performance as the old school streetwise detective Chandler Marlowe. His comic antics and immersion totally into his character provided the audience with several guffaws during the evening. — NEWS-PRESS PHOTO



CHANGE OF SCENERY — Cindy Hayes, in her debut performance with the Players, breathed life into the dual role which she assumed in the murder mystery. Her ability to change characters in a matter of seconds and still maintain the two separate identities demonstrated her potential talent for the theatre. — NEWS-PRESS PHOTO



IMPERSONATING A PRIEST — Miss Maple, played by June Hudgins, listens to an explanation by Father White that he is not really the person who is supposed to be impersonating a character. Don Mooney assumed the role of the priest in the Tawas Bay Players' production of "The Butler Did It" at the Community Building last week. — NEWS-PRESS PHOTO