



COMMUNITY PLAYERS *of Salisbury*

December
2025

Back Stage



Hello Everyone

Well the temperatures are dipping lower reminding us that winter is on its way. Luckily performers and tech crews have been working hard to bring warmth to our hearts. November's production of **Annie** was spectacular, reminding us that even during tense times, there is reason to hope. Our December special production of **A Gift To Remember** continues the warmth with a story of strangers who ultimately realize that challenges and frustrations are temporary, especially when we allow ourselves to see beyond our own expectations and learn that community can be created out of chaos.

On the topic of winter we are getting ready for our next mainstage production, **Misery**, based on the Stephen King novel. The story is set in a snowy mountainous region. In the midst of a blizzard, a famous writer is rescued from a car crash and is rescued, (or maybe not) by a nurse, a number one fan of the author. Don't miss this chilly tale. Head to our website to get tickets.

Speaking of our ongoing work, you may have noticed in the lobby there was information about our Capital Campaign. Our goal is to raise the monies needed to transform our space on Nutters Cross Road into a state-of-the-art performance venue. We hope you will help us get there and you can start by supporting us through a new initiative, "Shore Gives 365". This is a new initiative coordinated by the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore. More information is available in the "Donate" button on our website.

Thank you all for continually supporting our efforts. I wish you all a joyous and relaxing holiday season

Kind Regards,

Darrell Mullins

President

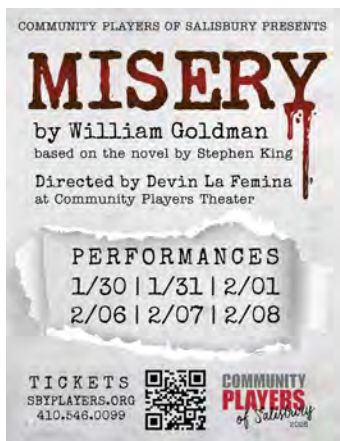


Players' next meetings will be **December 3 (6:00 PM) and January 7 (6:00 PM)**. Please note the changes so that we don't conflict with **Misery** rehearsals. Join us as we continue to work on our season.

BACK STAGE SUBMISSIONS

Articles, photos, etc. for publication in Back Stage should be emailed to me (popirusty@comcast.net) by the 15th of each month. Also, if you have ideas for the improvement of our newsletter, please let me know!

Rusty Mumford
Corresponding Secretary



Director Devin La Femina would like to thank all of the talented people who auditioned for **Misery**. She is very pleased to announce the cast of our next show and her directorial debut.

Annie Wilkes - AJ Payne
Paul Sheldon - Chuck Rafferty
Buster - Heather Oland



THE THREE AMIGAS

Debby Nagel

Last month's newsletter had a story about the three "Annies." This month's story is about "the three Amigas". More specifically the three women who took on the job of costuming the 39 cast members in Community Players stunning, fall production, Annie.

A last-minute change in the production staff brought producer, Kim Cuesta, to the forefront ... accepting the role of costume designer. Kim's career as a physician and Chief of the Pathology Department at Tidal Health often finds her peering through a microscope and managing a great number of people as well as medical specimens. Fortunately, she brought her organizational skills and the same degree of focus and dedication to this new job.

Kim's first task was to scour the wardrobe collection, pulling clothes that defined the Depression years, particularly 1933, when President Roosevelt introduced the New Deal. The costume plot slowly emerged, moving from the orphanage, to Hooverville, to Daddy Warbuck's palatial mansion, to the streets of NYC, to the radio studio and on to the White House before arriving back at the mansion for the Christmas party. This meant that outside of the orphans, each character had at least three, if not four costume changes, for a grand total of over 100+ costumes!

Early in rehearsals, Kim's husband Pete (Daddy Warbucks), asked if she had seen Jasper on stage that evening. She responded, "Who is Jasper and what costume does he wear? I don't have him in my binder." They both laughed when Jasper was identified as Sandy and everyone agreed that Sandy looked just fine in the fur coat he came in.

After finding appropriate costumes, many alterations had to be made ... sleeves and hems shortened or lengthened, necklines and waistlines adjusted, buttons moved and adjustments galore. That is when Debby Nagel volunteered her help. Having been the costumer for Kiss Me Kate, she was familiar with large casts and multiple scene changes. Besides being a stickler for details, she also likes to think of the actors as part of a "stage" painting. Coordinating outfits and using color to enhance the "picture."

The next order of business was to outfit the fourteen orphans. Luckily, Sally Ridgway had stitched delightful apron/dresses for an earlier production. Of course, fourteen orphan costumes in the exact sizes of the new cast would have felt like winning the lottery. But by chance, Irina Perkowski, Annie's real mother, came to the rescue and volunteered to reshape and make some new pieces to fit each girl. Kim and Debby quickly found Irina to be a true gem.

Irina says that she has been sewing forever, as her family in her native Lithuania boasts a lengthy line of skilled seamstresses. So, she set about outfitting the orphans, personalizing each, and adding many features like pockets to hide the treats for Sandy. She was particularly adept at embellishing Annie's costumes, adding fur to her pink coat and making a belt with a bow tie to "spruce up" a plain blue dress. Irina (an RN) and Kim agree that their jobs are often focused on specific duties. So both appreciated that this experience really allowed them to delve into their creative spirits. Irina said, "Watching the orphans on stage, knowing that each of these dresses passed through my hands - whether altered, refashioned, or made from scratch- was incredibly meaningful and special."

So, three women, leaning on their individual skills and ingenuity, teamed up to create the vast costume plot envisioned by Kim and director, Sherri Trader Hynes.

Kim, Debby and Irina, the Three Amigas, are so proud of the finished product. As Kim says, "It became a huge labor of love, as beautiful and talented people came together to create art through wardrobe."

Of course, costuming is only one of the elements of stage production. Set design, lighting, sound, stage management, makeup/wig design all contribute to supporting the story. Community Players is blessed to have wonderfully capable individuals who contribute to the whole.

But our "three Amigas" story highlights the fact that there is always room for more volunteers. No matter how insignificant you might feel concerning your talent or abilities, there is always room for another team player. Come join us and experience the joy of making magic!

*What are you doing New Years...
New Years Eve?*

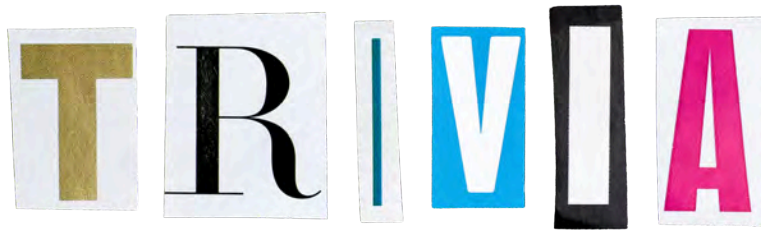
Spend New Years Eve with us at
Players' Family Game Night!

8 PM til ?

BYOB, a snack to share, and
your favorite game
(Cards, Board games, any indoor game)

*Sharon Benchoff has volunteered to host
Trivia
for part of the evening!*

**Reservations by December 15th please!
410-546-0099 or popirusty@comcast.net
contact information, number of people
and snack to share**



THEATRE TEASERS
Trivia by Sharon Benchoff
December – Simple as A B C
(Titles are in order A through J)

1. An ambitious young fan maneuvers to take the place of Margo Channing, a highly regarded but aging Broadway star.
2. *"A tale as old as time"* sings Mrs. Potts.
3. This musical tells the true story of airline passengers stranded in Gander, Newfoundland on 09/11/2001.
4. Middle-aged baseball fan, Joe sells his soul to Mr. Applegate to become a young baseball star.
5. The true story of Joseph Merrick, a beautiful soul trapped in a terribly deformed body in Victorian London.
6. This play by August Wilson explores themes of family dynamics, racial inequality, and unfulfilled dreams.
7. Momma Rose is the ultimate stage mother in this musical.
8. The American tribal rock musical celebrates the sixties counterculture in all its barefoot, bell-bottomed glory.
9. High school teacher, Bertram Cates, is put on trial for teaching evolution.
10. The musical based on the 1886 novella by Robert Louis Stevenson that examines the good and evil in man.

Answers found on page 6

PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

It's that time of the year! The Production Committee, under the leadership of Chair, Kyle Hayes, has begun the lengthy process of reading and evaluating submitted shows to be considered for our 2026-27 season. The committee is composed of a diverse group of Players' members who will read all submitted shows and make recommendations to the Board



Giving Tuesday and Shore Gives More 365

This holiday season, The Community Foundation is hosting on-line Giving Tuesday (December 2nd) where nonprofit organizations can raise funds during this time of giving.

Community Players will be participating again this year with a new twist! You no longer have only one day to make your much appreciated donation.

The Community Foundation is introducing **Shore Gives 365**.



You may now donate to Community Players all year round.

Our website, **sbyplayers.org** has a link to shoregives365. Just click on the donation button where, in a couple of steps, you will be able to donate whatever you are able to give. All donations are tax deductible and are genuinely appreciated.

Our four major productions are not all we do for the Shore. Players also lend set pieces, furniture, costumes, and props to schools in Wicomico and Worcester Counties as well as other organizations for their productions. To provide live theatre to more, we take several productions "on the road" across the Lower Shore. Players also have Theatre Camp for students in the summer and provide scholarships to our high school graduates.

Community Players is committed to celebrating an inclusive culture of creativity by welcoming actors, technicians, designers, musicians, and production team members from varied backgrounds with regards to race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, physical & mental ability, and religious & political beliefs.

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUESTIONS:



1. All About Eve
2. Beauty and the Beast
3. Come From Away
4. Damn Yankees
5. The Elephant Man
6. Fences
7. Gypsy
8. Hair
9. Inherit the Wind
10. Jekyll and Hyde

Answers:

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Various fundraisers were held recently. In October, ***Edgar Allan Poe: Master of the Macabre*** raised \$800. In November, ***World War II: Heroes of the Eastern Shore*** raised \$200. The 50/50 raffle at ***Annie*** raised \$1200. Thanks to all who helped with these fundraisers.

Our next fundraiser is ***A Gift to Remember***, a heartwarming play in which strangers become friends. It will be held at Community Players' Theater on the following dates and times: Thursday, December 11, at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, December 12, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, December 13, at 2 p.m and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, December 14, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and students, \$15 for children, and \$65 for families. Tickets are available at sbyplayers.org.

The fundraising committee met in November and discussed fundraisers for 2026. They will include a Craft and Fair in March, a Musical Revue in August, and the presentation of ***The Great Gatsby*** in September. If you have ideas for fundraisers, contact Matt Bogdan at 443-235-3272.

2025 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Congratulations to Kel Nagel, this year's recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. Kel has been a valued member of Community Players for over twenty-five years. During that time, he has acted in scores of productions and has portrayed roles from the President of the United States in ***The Mouse That Roared*** to a gangster in ***Wait Until Dark***. Kel has directed as well, bringing us Agatha Christie mysteries and classic musicals like ***Kiss Me Kate***. He has served as president of the board and is currently heading up our new theatre project. Thanks for all you do, Kel!



Community Players of Salisbury
P. O. Box 2431
Salisbury, MD 21802

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*Please consider
becoming a member
of Community Players.
If you are not sure if
your dues are paid for
the current year,
please check the
mailing label on this
newsletter.
If it does not show
2025-26, your dues
are not up-to-date.*



Back Stage is funded, in part by a grant from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council (SWAC). Players would like to thank SWAC for their continued support.

Next Meetings - Wednesday, December 3 (6:00 PM) and January 7 (6:00 PM).

Community Players Officers & Board of Directors
July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

*President: Darrell Mullins
Vice-President: Kyle Hayes
Recording Secretary: Melissa Dasher
Corresponding Secretary: Rusty Mumford
Treasurer: Charlie Linton
Immediate Past-President: Matt Bogdan*

Board Members

*Lynne Bratten, Ken Johnson, Shelbie Thompson - Term Expires 2026
David Allen, Kim Cuesta, Charlie Szentesi-Thomas - Term Expires 2027
Pete Cuesta, Betsy Metzger, Tom Robinson - Term Expires 2028*

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