



# COMMUNITY PLAYERS

## CURTAIN CALLS

Vol. 4.5

January, 2009

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## Harvey Appears at Players (or Does He?)

by Bob McLaughlin

A classic can be defined as a story that can be told over and over again and still be fresh. One such story is that of the gentle madman, a man who has left what most of us think of as reality behind for a more pleasant and in many ways more genuine world of his own. His alternate reality can annoy the people around him, but it can also reveal to them truths about themselves and their lives that they have forgotten or ignored. The gentle madman has many names—sometimes he’s called Don Quixote, sometimes Don Juan DeMarco—buy Mary Chase chose to call him Elwood P. Dowd.

Chase’s 1944 comedy *Harvey* focuses on Elwood, an unfailingly good-natured and courteous man, a man who tipsles a bit, and a man whose best friend is a 6 foot, 3 ½ inch tall rabbit, whom only he can see. His sister, Veta Louise Simmons, and her daughter Myrtle Mae grow understandably irritated as Elwood’s (and Harvey’s) appearances continually upset their plans for social respectability and for nabbing Myrtle Mae a husband. So as the play begins, they resolve to commit Elwood to Chumley’s Rest Home, but somehow mistaken identity sows confusion among the doctors and nurses, Elwood’s family and their friends, until it’s not altogether clear who’s crazy and who’s sane and whether there is

or is not an invisible rabbit.



In its original production, Elwood and Veta Louise were played by Frank Fay and Josephine Hull, but, a true classic, *Harvey* has been seen many times since. A film version premiered in 1950, with James Stewart and Hull repeating her stage performance and picking up an Academy Award. The play was revived on Broadway in 1970, with Stewart and Helen Hayes, both of whom reprised their roles in a 1972 TV movie production. Another TV version followed in 1999, with Harry Anderson and Swoosie Kurtz. And, of course, *Harvey* has been seen regularly on smaller stages across the country for over sixty years, including two productions at Players, in 1952 and 1990, and now a new production to kick off 2009.

This time around, Elwood is played by **Bruce Parrish** (who in a 1984 Miller Park production played Wilson and in Players’ 1990 production played Dr. Chumley). Veta Louise is played by **Carol Scott**, and Myrtle Mae

is played by **Hannah Kerns**. Joining them are **Joe Strupek** as Dr. Chumley; **Nick McBurney** as his assistant Dr. Sanderson; **Kristi Zimmerman** as Ruth Kelly, the nurse who may be in love with Dr. Sanderson; **Jeff Ready** as Duane Wilson, a rest home attendant who has no patience with the patients; Players newcomer **Elaine Nussbaum** as Mrs. Chumley; **John Contarino** as Judge Omar Gaffney; **Jeremy**



The cast rehearses a scene from *Harvey*. Pictured left to right, Joe Strupek, John Contarino, Hannah Kerns, Carol Scott, Bruce Parrish, Nick McBurney, and Jeff Ready.

... continued on page 4.

## COMMUNITY PLAYERS Calendar

January - February, 2009

### Board Meetings

Jan. 13 6:00 p.m.  
Feb. 10, 6:00 p.m.  
Community Players Theatre

### Harvey

Preview: Jan. 15  
Shows: Jan. 16-18, 22-25, 29-31.

### Squabbles

Auditions: Jan. 19 & 20  
Preview: Feb. 26  
Shows: Feb. 27 - March 1,  
March 5-8, 12-14

Tickets can be ordered online at  
[www.communityplayers.org](http://www.communityplayers.org).  
Click on "Online Ticket Sales."



### Community Players

201 Robinhood Lane  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
309-663-2121  
[www.communityplayers.org](http://www.communityplayers.org)

### Newsletter Committee

Jim Kalmbach  
Barb Lemmon  
John Lieder  
Bob McLaughlin

We are always looking for  
writers, artists, designers and  
story ideas. Send comments and  
suggestions to [lieder78@yahoo.com](mailto:lieder78@yahoo.com)

*Curtain Calls* is published six  
times a year for the voting mem-  
bers of Community Players.

For information about joining us,  
please contact our membership  
chair, Barb Lemmon at  
[barb.lemmon@comcast.net](mailto:barb.lemmon@comcast.net).

Back issues of *Curtain Calls*  
are available on the Commu-  
nity Players web site. Click on  
"Newsletter Archive."

## Squabbles Auditions

*Squabbles*, by Marshall Karp, is a delightfully funny play set in the household of Jerry and Alice Sloan; a successful, married couple living in Stamford, Connecticut, with Alice's curmudgeonly comical father, Abe Dreyfus, who lives life by the credo "an argument a day keeps the doctor away." On the very evening that Jerry and Alice receive news that they are pregnant with their first child, Jerry receives a phone call from his mother, Mildred, informing them that her house has just burned to the ground. Much to Abe's dismay, Alice and Jerry offer to take Mildred into their home. The relationship between Abe and Mildred gets off to a rocky start and begins to take its toll on Jerry and Alice from the moment Mildred arrives. It soon becomes clear that one of the two squabbling in-laws is going to have to go before the new baby arrives!

Auditions for *Squabbles* will be held on Monday, January 19th and Tuesday, January 20th, 2009 at 7:00 pm at Community Players Theatre. There are roles for four adult men and three adult women:

Abe Dreyfus: Alice's father; a widower and retired cab driver (suggested age, 72).  
Mildred Sloan: Jerry's single mother; a retired piano teacher (suggested age, 65).  
Jerry Sloan: Alice's husband; an advertising jingle writer (suggested age, 35).  
Alice Sloan: Jerry's husband; a lawyer and soon-to-be first time mother (suggested age, 35).  
Hector Lopez: Jerry and Alice's Puerto Rican handyman/gardener (suggested age, 40).  
Sol Wasserman: Abe's card playing buddy; a retired pharmacist (suggested age, 70).  
Mrs. Fisher: A governess/nanny hired to take care of the new baby (suggested age, 40-50).

Auditioners will be asked to fill out an audition form and read from the script. Attendance on both audition nights is welcomed, but not mandatory. Director Brian Artman is looking for energetic, naturally funny actors and actresses who can play well off of each other in accordance with the relationships depicted in the script.

Performances for *Squabbles* are scheduled for February 27 - March 1, 5-8, 12-14, 2009, with a preview performance on February 26, 2009.

If you are unable to attend either of the scheduled nights of auditions and need to arrange for a private audition, or if you would like more information about the show, please contact Brian Artman at [brian.artman.jehl@statefarm.com](mailto:brian.artman.jehl@statefarm.com).

### Board of Governors Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for new members of Community Players' Board of Governors. New Governors will be elected in the General Membership meeting in May 2009 for the areas of **Theatre Craft**, **Box Office** and **Playreading**. Due to an oversight in last years elections, playreading will be for a one year term. Board officers **Secretary** and **Vice President** will also be elected. The Vice President will become President the following two year.

To learn more about the duties and responsibilities of each position please refer to the Community Players By-laws posted on the website at [www.communityplayers.org/theatre.html](http://www.communityplayers.org/theatre.html). All nominations must be submitted by January 30, 2009.

If you are interested in joining the Board of Governors or have a nomination, please contact Deb Smith at [community.players@verizon.net](mailto:community.players@verizon.net).

# Squabbles

### Promoting Community Players

Many thanks to **Jean Lieder** for all her efforts in getting the word out about Community Players. She attends several events a years - setting up the CP display board and handing out our brochures. She never tires of telling people about our wonderful shows and how they can get involved. She truly enjoys talking with people who stop by the booth.

If you are interested in joining in on the fun with Jean at some of these events, please contact **Elizebeth Aronson** or **Cathy Sutliff**.

While not all of us are "people persons" like Jean, there are many things you can do help get the word out. Jean carries a bundle of brochures in her car just in case she sees an opportunity. The next time you are at the theatre grab a few for your glove compartment. Or you can hang up posters from the shows. And don't forget to mention the current show at work. It's amazing what a little word of mouth can do in getting people through our doors.

# Community Players Announces New Season

Community Players announces its exciting 87<sup>th</sup> season, full of shows that have never been done by our theater. The season includes Neil Simon's autobiographical comedy-dram *Lost in Yonkers*; the energetic and tuneful musical *The Pajama Game*; the eccentric southern comedy *Dearly Departed*; Woody Allen's hilarious *Play It Again, Sam*, and the blockbuster musical, *The Producers*. In addition, the fall lab show will be David Mamet's academic drama *Oleanna* and this year, there will be a spring review, *Side by Side by Sondheim* featuring the music and lyrics of Broadway's most creative contemporary composer.

The Playreading Committee is looking for directors, producers, and other staff people for the upcoming season. Please go to [communityplayers.org](http://communityplayers.org) for a letter of application and a form to apply. All applications need to be sent to Sally Parry at [separry@ilstu.edu](mailto:separry@ilstu.edu) or 1509 E. Grove St., Bloomington, IL 61701 by February 6, 2009. Please include a brief resume of your theatrical experience, and if applying to direct, your vision for the show. We are constantly in need of designers and crew members so please consider these positions as well. Please note that we now have a harassment policy in effect and that anyone involved with the production must sign a waiver in order to participate.

**Les Misérables** School Edition (Musical)  
Auditions: May 11-13, 2009  
Preview: July 9;  
Performances: July 10-12, 16-19, 23-26, 2009 (11 performances)

Our Theatre for Young People program continues with the adapted version of one of Broadway's longest running and most popular musicals of all time. The winner of 8 Tony Awards in 1987, *Les Mis* features audience favorites "I Dreamed a Dream," "Bring Him Home," "Do You Hear the People Sing?," "Master of the House," "On My Own," and "Castle on a Cloud."

**Lost in Yonkers** (Dramatic Comedy)  
by Neil Simon  
Auditions: July 27 & 28, 2009  
Preview: September 10; Performances: September 11-13, 17-20, 24-26, 2009 (10 performances)

Winner of the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Award for Best Play, this modern classic by Neil Simon (*The Odd Couple*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *Barefoot in the Park*) centers on brothers Jay and Arty, who are left in the care of their domineering Grandma Kurnitz and warm-hearted Aunt Bella while their father goes on the road as a traveling salesman.

**The Pajama Game** (Musical) Book by George Abbott & Richard Bissell; Music & Lyrics by Richard Adler & Jerry Ross  
Auditions: September 13-15, 2009  
Preview: October 29; Performances: October 30-November 1, 5-8, 12-15, 2009 (11 performances)

Winner of the 1955 Tony Award for Best Musical and the 2006 Tony Award for

Best Revival, this classic musical deals with labor troubles in a pajama factory, where worker demands for a seven and a half cent raise are going unanswered. In the middle of this ordeal, love blossoms between the complaint committee head and the new factory superintendent. "Hey There," "Hernando's Hideaway," "Steam Heat," and "I'm Not at All in Love" highlight this Broadway masterpiece.

**Oleanna** (Drama) by David Mamet  
Auditions: October 12 & 13, 2009  
Performances: November 19-21, 2009 (3 performances)

This two person play involves the power struggle between a university professor and one of his female students who accuses him of sexual harassment and, by doing so, ruins his career.

**Dearly Departed** (Comedy)  
by David Bottrell  
Auditions: November 9 & 10, 2009  
Preview: January 7; Performances: January 8-10, 14-17, 21-23, 2010 (10 performances)

In the Baptist backwoods of the Bible belt, the beleaguered Turpin family proves that living and dying in the South are seldom tidy and always hilarious. Despite their best efforts to pull themselves together for their father's funeral, the Turpins' other problems keep overshadowing the solemn occasion. An eccentric cast of characters and enjoyable storyline ensure that this comedy will become an audience favorite.

**Play it Again Sam** (Comedy)  
by Woody Allen  
Auditions: January 18 & 19, 2010  
Preview: March 4; Performances: March 5-7, 11-14, 18-20, 2010 (10 performances)

Allen Felix has been dumped by his wife and his ego is crushed. His hero is the tough guy played by Humphrey Bogart in many of his movies. The apparition of Bogart begins showing up to give him advice, and with this encouragement and that of his two married friends, he actually tries dating again... with less than satisfactory results.

**Side by Side by Sondheim** Auditions: January 11 & 12, 2010  
Performances: March 25-27, 2010 (3 performances)

A musical revue featuring the early works of one of Broadway's most recognized and prolific composers; Stephen Sondheim (*Company*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Into the Woods*, *Follies*). Includes the classics "Comedy Tonight," "Send in the Clowns," and "Broadway Baby."

**The Producers** (Comedy-Musical) Book by Mel Brooks & Thomas Meehan, Music & Lyrics by Mel Brooks  
Auditions: March 14-16, 2010  
Preview: May 6; Performances: May 7-9, 13-16, 20-23, 2010 (11 performances)

This comedy-musical focuses on two theatrical producers who scheme to get rich by overselling interests in a Broadway flop. The winner of a record-breaking 12 Tony Awards in 2001, the hysterical, high-energy show contains memorable numbers like, "If You've Got it, Flaunt it," and "Springtime for Hitler."

. . . *Harvey* preview continued from page 1.

**Stiller** as taxi driver E. J. Lofgren; **Ann White** as Mrs. Ethel Chauvenet, an old friend of Elwood's if not of Harvey's; and **Judy Stroh** as Miss Johnson, domestic servant.

Making his directing debut (he's already done everything else around the theater) is **John Lieder**. John and first-time producer **Brett Cottone** have assembled a first-rate crew: Set Designer **Dave Fuller** and Builders Bruce Parrish and **John Brittingham**; Sound Designer **Gary Ploense**; Lighting Designer **Tony Meizelis**; Prop Mistress **Dorothy Mundy**; Costume Designer **Kathy Parrish**; Stage Manager **Judy Stroh**; and House Manager **Jean Lieder**.

*Harvey* opens with a Pay-What-You-Can Preview Performance on Thursday, January 15. Regular performances continue January 16-18, 22-25, and 29-31. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday performances begin at 7:30. Sunday performances begin at 2:30.

### A New Look at Community Players

When you come to see *Harvey* you might be surprised by a new look! The entire lobby and box office received a new coat of paint! And we have new carpeting in the house, lobby, box office and green room! The carpeting was donated by State Farm Insurance Co. in the fall, and was installed in early January.

Many thanks to Jason Wiggins who secured the donation for us. And additional thanks to the box office crew and others who helped prepare the space for Carpet Weavers to come in to remove the old carpet and install the new carpet tiles in time for *Harvey*! And striking while the iron was hot and the rooms were empty, an industrious crew came in to paint the box office and the lobby. We hope you like the fresh new look.

Also, a big thank you to members of our painting crew **Kameron Cox, Joan, Ted** and **Becky Ichniowsky, Jean Lieder, Dorothy Mundy, Marcia Weiss, Jeremy Stiller, Jason Wiggins**, and **John Contarino**,

### Guys and Dolls Food Drive

If you attended a performance of *Guys and Dolls* you may have noticed a table crammed with paper bags. The cast and crew collected food stuffs for the Salvation Army food pantry. In all we donated 415 items to the pantry and \$37. Much thanks to **Elizabeth Aronson** who organized the food drive.

### State Farm Good Neighbor Grants

State Farm Employees and Retirees Don't forget about the great benefit State Farm offers you in the form of the State Farm Good Neighbor Grant Program. Whether you designate Community Players or another non-profit organization, this money is instrumental in so many organizations being able to move their purpose forward.

As with all non-profit organizations, the economic downturn has seriously hurt our bottom line. Community Players has seen a decrease in Season Ticket sales, single admissions, and financial contributions. Add on to that the budget issues facing the State of Illinois which resulted in cuts to the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) budget. As a result of these cuts, Community Players did not receive any grant funding from the IAC to support our programming.

The deadline for submitting a 2008 Good Neighbor Grant Application is March 31, 2009. If you volunteered 40+ hours at Community Players in 2008, you just need to complete the form and return it to Jason Wiggins (Treasurer). The forms or the ability to complete your designation online can be found at [www.easymatch.com/statefarm](http://www.easymatch.com/statefarm).

### Woman in Black a Frightening Success

*The Woman in Black*, Community's Players lab show, was a striking success, selling out for two of its three performances. Staged in an innovative way, with the audience on stage as well as the actors, the play drew viewers into a frightening world where the miasmic woman in black caused unhappiness to those who saw her—although not everyone did!

The two actors, **Brian Arteman** and **Kevin Wickart**, did yeoman work, memorizing an enormous number of lines and running through them during their lunch hours at State Farm to make sure that they would be ready for the performances. Special mention should be made of **Dan Virtue** who created the very creepy sound and lighting effects that were a big part of the show.

The production staff included **Dorothy Mundy**, Producer and Props; **Sally Parry**, Director; **Cathy Sutliff**, Set Designer and Dramaturge; **Cris Embree**, Costumes; **Judy Stroh**, Stage Manager; and **Jean Lieder**, House Manager; with assistance from **Kristi Zimmerman, Gary Ploense, Herb Reichelt**, and **Bob McLaughlin**.

Stage Coach Players of DeKalb, Illinois is accepting submissions for its first original **playwriting contest**. For more information, visit [www.stagecoachers.com](http://www.stagecoachers.com) or email Tim Ball at [scpworkshops@aol.com](mailto:scpworkshops@aol.com). Scripts must be postmarked by March 14, 2009.