



COMMUNITY PLAYERS

CURTAIN CALLS

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November, 2011

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Patent Leather Shoes Shines at Players

by John Lieder

Based on the book by John R. Powers with music and lyrics by James Quinn and Alaric Jans, *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?* is a delightful homage to Catholic education of the 1950s. But you don't need to have gone to Catholic school or lived through the 50s to get your funny bone tickled and your heart tugged by this one. *Shoes* is told through the eyes of Eddie Ryan (played by **Austin Travis**), a graduate of St. Bastian's Grade School and St. Patrick Bremmer Catholic High School for Boys. A self-confessed "late bloomer," he recalls childhood friendships, first confession, sex education of a sort (as taught by Father O'Reilly and Sister Lee), Senior Prom, and his first love.

One of the fun things about *Shoes* is that the same adult actors play the kids in each scene, from second grade through high school. Portraying the kids, in addition to Travis as Eddie, are **Jennifer Stevens** as Becky Bakowski, **Kelly Slater** as Virginia Lear, **Joel Dwight Shoemaker** as Felix Lindor, **Tom Smith** as Mike Depki, **Mindy LaHood** as Nancy Ralansky, **Reena Artman** as Mary Kenny and **Mark S. Robinson** as Louie Schlang. And as kids are wont to do, they can occasionally get downright nasty, like when they're making fun of the overweight Becky, who, in one of the emotional highlights of the show, is led to ask the musical question: Does God love "Little Fat Girls"? I predict you'll see lots of moms and

maybe even a few dads pulling out the hankies for Stevens' interpretation of this number.

When it comes to teaching the grade schoolers, "It's the Nuns," who are portrayed by **Christie Vellella**, **Nancy Nickerson**,

Samm Bettis and **Melissa Fornoff**. The priest and head of St. Bastian's is chief enforcer Father O'Reilly, played by **Bob McLaughlin** with appropriate levels of sternness and compassion, all mixed with great humor. Father O'Reilly and the nuns are allowed to let their guard down from time-to-time, with hilarious results.

Shoes is directed by **Brian Artman**. **Chad Kirvan** and Players newcomer **Angela Bargmann** are the music directors and **Sherise Kirvan** is choreographer. The set, designed by Director Artman with artwork by **Dave Fuller**, is comprised of four rotating boxes that, when opened, reveal different settings throughout the play. Pretty clever.



Bob McLaughlin as Father O'Reilly leads the kids and nuns in "Patron Saints."

Karen Clark and **Connie Artman** (yep, Brian's mom) are in charge of costumes, including Catholic school uniforms and a fat suit for Jennifer Stevens to wear in Act I. **Mark Wright** is doing lights. **Rich Plotkin** is sound designer. **Carol Plotkin** and **Dorothy**

... continued on page 4.

COMMUNITY PLAYERS
Calendar

Nov. - Dec. 2011

Board Meetings

Nov. 15 6:00 p.m.
Dec. 13, 6:00 p.m.
Community Players Theatre

Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect up?

Preview: Nov. 3
Shows: Nov. 4-6, 10-13, 17-20

Murder at the Howard Johnson's

Shows: Dec. 1-4

Hauptmann

Auditions: Nov. 14 & 15
Preview: Jan. 5
Shows: Jan. 6-8, 12-15, 19-21



Community Players

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Newsletter Committee

Jim Kalmbach
Wendi Fleming
John Lieder
Bob McLaughlin
Sally Parry

We are always looking for writers, artists, designers and story ideas. Send comments and suggestions to kalmbach@ilstu.edu

Curtain Calls is published six times a year for the voting members of Community Players.

For information about joining us, please contact our membership chair, Wendi Fleming at cplayersmember@aol.com.

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

Hauptmann Auditions

From the writer of screen favorites *The Aviator*, *Any Given Sunday*, and *Gladiator*, as well as the dramatic masterpiece *Never the Sinner*, comes *Hauptmann*, the extraordinary tale of the German immigrant sentenced to death and executed for the abduction and murder of the Lindbergh baby. Facing a nation that has already declared his guilt, Bruno Hauptmann, with the help of the six guards watching his cell, tells his side of the The Crime of the Century, recreating the events leading up to his incarceration.



Auditions for this show will be held on November 14 and 15 at 7:00 pm at the theatre. Director **Opal Virtue** is looking to cast five men and two women, all of whom must be over 18.

If you have any questions, contact producer **Sherry Bradshaw** at skbojv@gmail.com.



The Community Players Singers provided the entertainment at the ISU Faculty-Staff Appreciation Lunch on Oct. 13. **Christie Vellella**, **Cris Embree**, **John Lieder**, and **Bob McLaughlin** offered a selection of classic show tunes, **Sally Parry** accompanied, and **Bruce Parrish** served as host.

On Oct. 21, the Singers were invited to a return engagement at Heritage Health.

Murder at the Howard Johnson's Is Players' Fall Lab Show

by Dave Lemmon

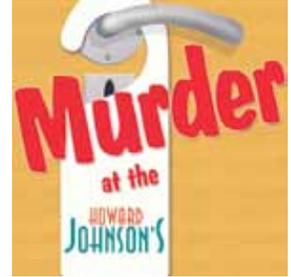
Agatha Christie tells us through Miss Marple that "Murder is so common." The British use the word *common* as a pejorative. It is used to describe a person's or thing's level of culture (or lack thereof). Socio-economic or political standing doesn't necessarily enter into it. When something is labeled common, it is low, base, or even (behind one's hand, of course) trashy. On this side of the pond, a Boston Brahmin might invoke the word *vulgar* to convey the same condemnation.

Prepare yourself to meet three of the most common people with whom it would be your misfortune to share a stuck elevator. Arlene, Mitchell, and Paul present a study in selfishness—as common a trait as there is wouldn't you say? But whereas this subject could be grist for a dark, introspective, and morbidly tedious work of drama, luckily for you, it is also opportunity for farce. And this cast has grabbed the opportunity with both hands and sunk their teeth into it too.

Murder's afoot at the Howard Johnson's Motor Inn, but who's the murderer? Who's the victim? What's the motive? What are the dynamics of the love triangle? All these things shift and change alarmingly as the relationships among Arlene, Mitchell, and Paul transform.

Playwrights Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick set their play at a Howard Johnson's, circa 1979. Those of us of a certain age can explain to the younger folks just how iconic Howard Johnson's was from the late 50s through the

70s. By 1979 the franchise had passed its zenith. Many of the motels and even downtown high rise hotels were becoming a bit run down and in some cases, dare I say, trashy.



Ron Clark's credits include scripts for stage, TV, and the movies. He did sketch comedy for variety shows such as *The Smothers Brothers*, sitcom scripts for *That Girl* and *Hot L Baltimore*, and collaborated with Mel Brooks on *High Anxiety* and *Silent Movie*. Sam Bobrick, besides collaborating with Ron on other stage plays, has also written sketch comedy and sitcom scripts, notably *Andy Griffith*, *Get Smart*, and *Bewitched*. So our playwrights have given us a script that is very funny.

Director **Dave Lemmon** has cast **Bridgette Richard** as Arlene Miller, **Paul Vellella** as Mitchell Lovell, and **Jeff Ready** as Paul Miller. Producer and Prop Master **Dorothy Mundy** is calling on the talents of Costume Designer **Laura McBurney**, Master Builder **Bruce Parrish**, Lighting Designer **Tony Meizelis**, Sound Designer **Rich Plotkin**, and Stage Manager **Judy Stroh**.

Murder at the Howard Johnson's runs one weekend only, December 1-4, at Community Players Theater, with evening performances at 7:30 and the Sunday matinee at 2:30.



Mystery Photo Contest!

Identify the show from Players' past represented in this photo.

Bonus points for identifying the year.
Double bonus points for identifying the performers.

Send answers to rmclaugh@ilstu.edu.
Winners will be praised in the next issue!



... *Patent Leather* preview continued from page 1.

Mundy are in charge of properties. **Joe Strupek** is stage manager and **Jean Lieder** is house manager. **Judy Stroh** is playing swingman, sliding between properties and stage crew. **Brian Feldkamp** is rehearsal pianist.

The Pay-What-You-Can Preview Performance is Thursday, November 3rd. Regular performances are November 4-6, 10-13 and 17-20. And as usual, all evening performances are 7:30 with Sunday matinees beginning at 2:30. Not really intended for very young audiences, *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?* contains just a very few impolite words, pretty tame by today's standards, and Father O'Reilly's song "Private Parts," sung to the eighth grade boys, is, well, what you think it would be about, but done in good taste.

Remarkably, at eight words, "*Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?*" is not even the longest-titled show this season. That distinction goes to the lab show, *You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running*. What two shows, at ten words each, tie for the longest-titled shows produced at Community Players?

Players Awarded IAC Grant

Community Players has been awarded a \$3500 grant from the Illinois Arts Council. The money will support our general season, with special attention to our initiatives in audience outreach, outreach to young people, and artistic development. State budget cuts have greatly reduced support for the arts, so this award is not only welcome monetary support but an endorsement of our work and our contribution to the community. Kudos to the Grants Committee: **Cathy Sutliff**, **Joel Shoemaker**, and **Bob McLaughlin**.

Fried chicken, rubber chickens, and Guyanan chickens have all graced the Players stage. For the 1979 production



of *My Three Angels*, two brightly colored Guyanan chickens were borrowed from the Miller Park Zoo. Named Stella and Stanley, they bit actors but squawked on cue. **Gary Schwartz's** car was never the same after transporting them from their pens in the basement at Players back to their home at the zoo. These trips occurred in sub-zero January. Gary has not transported animals since.

35 for 35, A "Fun" Raiser

How do you celebrate an anniversary? Wear a funny hat? Go out to dinner? What if it was a volunteer anniversary? How do you celebrate that?

Well, **Bruce Parrish** and his family came up with an idea to celebrate his 35th volunteer year at Community Players. It's a "**Fun**" raiser called the **\$35 for 35 Campaign**. The purpose is to get approximately 1000 people to donate \$35 each to reach a grand total of \$35,000.



Why is this man smiling? Participate in our 35 for 35 fund raiser and find out.

Why \$35,000? Well, because the theater's building is in some desperate need of repair and they're unusual ones not anticipated by our regular funding resources. We need to replace the drains to the north of the building before the entire basement turns into an indoor swimming pool. On the south side of the building the loading dock allows rain in (you should see it dodge the wall sconces!) and the costumes are getting wet. Did we mention two of the building furnaces and two blowers died leaving the shop and costume areas without heat? Plus we need some drills, a new chop saw and some other lesser items of equipment.

We're reaching out to our audience members, former and current cast or staff members because you understand our needs the most. Please help us reach our goal. Every amount helps whether it's \$10 or \$35. Could you throw a little money in the kitty to help us continue another year? All donations are completely tax deductible as Community Players is a 501(c) 3 organization.

To donate, do one of the following, drop off a check at the Box Office, mail a check to Community Players, P.O. Box 1706, Bloomington, Ill. 61702-1706 or go to our website at communityplayers.org and make your contribution online.

Bruce and his family want to thank all of you for helping us reach this goal. This organization has been so important them and they really appreciate your help.