

## AUDITIONS SET FOR FALL SHOW, *KISS ME KATE*

There'll be shrews, blues and Much Ado next fall when the Village Players present *Kiss Me Kate*, the story of modern-day actors performing Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* while embroiled in their own marital discord and mayhem. Auditions for *Kiss Me Kate* are set for Sunday, Aug. 24 and Monday, August 25 beginning at 7:30 pm at the Village Players Theater. Performance dates are November 14, 15, 16, 21, 22 and 23. Director Carol Light's goal is to have the show cast by Labor Day weekend, and to have the first rehearsal shortly thereafter. The tentative rehearsal schedule will include Sunday nights and one other week night to start, adding a third rehearsal night as performance time gets closer. There are no roles for children in this production, only for older teens and adults. There are four principal roles---Lilli Vanessi [Kate], Fred Graham [Petruccio], Lois Lane [Bianca] and Bill Calhoun [Lucentio]. There are also a number of meaty smaller roles, including several secondary characters who have solos of their own. The ensemble chorus also sings in a several big numbers, and also play roles in the production of the *Shrew*. Lilli and Fred used to be married, and their divorce is rockier than their marriage was. Needless to say, it makes for some wicked improvisation when they take to the stage in the roles of Kate and Petruccio. Lois is a hopeless flirt, which compli-

cates things for Fred, but she still loves Bill, an inveterate con man and gambler. A couple of hit men with a penchant for culture are sent to collect gambling debts from the wrong person, and end up on stage. Things couldn't get more confused----or can they? The director intends to keep the cast streamlined, smaller and easier to work with. Everyone will be asked to sing alone at audition; one of the show's numbers will be taught to everyone at the audition. There may also be a simple dance routine taught, which will be done at auditions in groups. The show will be produced by Michael Wilkes. Michael is looking for a number of people to fill out the many production roles, including stage manager & crew, lights, sound, props, set, makeup/costumes, etc. Anyone interested can contact Michael at 569-4814 for further information.

### Web Site

Our trained Web Monkey has been hard at work adding and improving to the Village Players' website at [www.village-players.com](http://www.village-players.com). The text and readability of the website has been improved, and thanks to some contributions by Carol Bense, Michael Wilfert, and Matt Johnson there are now 10 shows with photos and / or news articles to see in the photos section. The website is updated on a semi-regular basis, so there is lots to see. If you would like to contribute to the Village Players website, please let Matt Johnson know at [magestar@worldpath.net](mailto:magestar@worldpath.net).



June 2003

# The Prompter

All The News That Fits, We Print

## DON'T MISS *THE FOREIGNER*

Your summer dose of chuckles and laughs is on the way (C'mon - you know we all need it after the winter we've had). Our summer show will be the laugh-filled and exciting, *The Foreigner*, by Larry Shue. The title makes you think of a serious drama, maybe even a spy thriller, but this show is nothing of the sort. The spectacle of a couple of Brits dropped into a rural setting in the Deep South, where one of them doesn't seem to speak the language at all, creates opportunities for plenty of misconceptions and hilarity.

Performances will be at our theater on Glendon Street on July 18,19,25 and 26 at 8PM with a Sunday matinee on July 27 at 2pm. Tickets will be \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. They will be available at Black's Paper and Gifts on Main Street in Wolfeboro about 2 weeks before the show.

Nadine San Antonio is directing, with Jay Sydow as her assistant. This is their first collaboration, so you can expect some exciting results. .

Once again, we have been lucky enough to find some new people who want to participate. We want to welcome Jenna MacPhee who is taking on the role of Catherine, the young woman who befriends the foreigner; and Vicki Dilling, in the role of Betty, the crusty and outspoken owner of the inn where everyone is staying. This will be the first show with Village Players for both of them, and we're very glad they auditioned.

Other roles in the show will be filled by Brooks Campbell as Froggy, one of the Brits; Bob Rautenberg as Owen, a local bully; Michael Wilfert as David, the preacher; Wayne Gehman as Charlie, the foreigner; and Zach Shea as Ellard, Catherine's younger brother.

Lots of other members are working on the show under the leadership of Producer, Diane Ducret. The set will be designed and built by Michael Wilkes, with help from Richard Croteau, Russ Ellis, John Gillette, and Jay Sydow. Russ is also the Stage Manager, and Matt Johnson and Jeff Gilligan are on his crew. Set decoration will be under the management of Kathy Whitehead, with help from another newcomer to our group, Jo-El Cookman . Carol Pralle and Betty Sherwood are working on costumes. Carol Bense and Phoebe VanScoy are searching for props (anybody got an hourglass?). Helen White will be doing make-up with Louise Horton assisting. Lights, sound, and special effects (yes - there are special effects - no - I won't tell you what they are) will be managed by Corky

Mork and Tim Brown. Jeannette D'Onofrio will do the programs and posters for us and Jerome Holden will create the sign we need out front. House Manager is Willie Mork.

That's all of us so far, but if you want to help, we can certainly use you. Just call the producer, Diane Ducret at 569-5726 or send her email at [ddmork@yahoo.com](mailto:ddmork@yahoo.com). Tell her what you want to help with and she'll put you to work. Whatever you do, don't miss this really terrific show.

## CELEBRATION OF DONORS WITH PERMANENT PLAQUE

On Sunday, May 4, we hosted a celebration at the theater to thank all those who donated money, time and skills to the Project 2001 campaign. We raised nearly \$350,000 for this campaign, and it was time to show our appreciation.

Approximately 90 donors and members attended the celebration, which was capped by the unveiling of the permanent plaque in the lobby of the theatre. The internally lit, custom-built plaque listing the names of all the donors to the Project 2001 campaign was carefully crafted by Richard Croteau, Jerome Holden and Corky Mork.

The donors were thanked in speeches by Richard Croteau, Past President; Dean Richardson, Chairperson of the campaign; and Carol Bense, President. Richard spoke of the numerous problems with the original building and the work done to restore it. Dean focused on the many volunteer workers who gave so much of their time to the effort. Carol reviewed the money spent on the building and thanked all those who had contributed.

The permanent plaque was then unveiled for all the guests to admire during an interlude of socializing with wine and hors d'oeuvres in the reception room. Nadine San Antonio catered the affair, with delicious snacks as only she can prepare them.

The guests were again seated in the auditorium for a presentation of "The Old Cookie Shop, or Nellie Was A Baker 'Cause She Kneaded the Dough." This one-act melodrama was performed by the current members of the board for the entertainment of the guests. Corky Mork, Vice President, starred as Nellie O'Grady; Carol Bense, President, took the role of Mrs. O'Grady; Diane Sullivan, Secretary, played the villain, Mortimer Whiplash; Matt Johnson, Member at Large, was a customer, Mr. White; Diane Ducret, Treasurer, was also a



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customer, Mrs. Darby; Richard Croteau, Past President, played H. Harry Goodwell; and John Gillette, Member at Large, was Doctor Gilbert. The production was directed by Jay Sydow, Member at Large, with assistance from Jeannette D'Onofrio, Member at Large, and accompanied on the piano by Wayne Gehman, member of the group.

To those of you who could not come to the celebration, we say a great big thanks for all the time and/or money and/or energy which you have donated to The Village Players. Without you all, there would be no Village Players.

## WRAP UP FOR THE DRUNKARD

Another one down and on to the next. We presented 5 performances of "The Drunkard" on April 11,12,18,19 and 20. You may have noticed, if you came to the show, that it was not at Carpenter School, but at our own theater. We were unable to get a contractor to commit to doing the work in the building until this coming November, so we did not have to go to Carpenter with the show.

Approximately 658 people saw the show, and we took in a total of \$6891. Once all the bills are in and we receive the script deposit back from Music Theater International, it looks as though we may realize about \$5000 from this production. This income will enable us to put in new doors in the cellar to tighten the building up (to reduce heating costs) and improve access to the flats, platforms, etc. which are stored in the cellar.

Many thanks to everyone who was in the show, who worked backstage, who worked on the production crew and who helped to clean up the theater. The efforts of each of you helped to make this a successful production.

## MEMORIES OF JANE O'MEARA

By Willie Mork and The Village Players

The Village Players first met Jane when she came to audition for *Steel Magnolias* early in 1995. There was no doubt about it; Jane was perfect for the role of Clairee. She was vivacious, professional, always staying in character, and best of all she taught us all about the importance of projection. The audience never missed a word of her speeches. We were so happy to have such an inspiring actress in our midst.

"I was only 15 when I played Shelby in *Steel Magnolias*, my first show with VP. I think it was Jane's first show, too. I had a hard time not cracking up every time she delivered the line "All gay men have track lighting. And all gay men are named Mark, Rick, or Steve." What an odd thing to remember. During *I Remember Mama* one night backstage Steve Cady and I were singing a punk rock song by some band we were into at the time, and we taught her the chorus and she actually humored us kids by singing it, in harmony, with us.



These are the things that remind me how funny she was." Jenna Van Valen

Jane went on to many other roles in our shows. She was the gossipy Augusta in *The Night is My Enemy*, Melissa in *Love Letters*, Old Sally in *Oliver*, Mrs. Higgins in *My Fair Land*, and dotty old Martha in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. She also took many smaller chorus roles in our other musicals. Jane always gave it her all whether the role was large or small. She was always prepared, professional and fun to be around.

"My personal memory of Jane involves the support and encouragement she gave me during our production of *I Remember Mama*, It was an important role and I was so scared and unsure of myself especially with the use of an accent. She continued to encourage me throughout the whole play. I really appreciated her help and the support she has always given to the Village Players. It was my pleasure to have known and worked with her." Diane Sullivan

As we got to know her better, we discovered her passion for the theater included not only acting, but also lending creative touches to the behind-the-scenes work, touches that are so important to making a play especially appealing to the audience.

"I feel blessed that I could work with Jane in *Love Letters*. It was a distinct pleasure to join with someone who could be deeply professional about what we were trying to create while still having fun doing it. Her insights and understanding of

human behavior and idiosyncrasies made for quick analyses and applications. It was a delightful trip and I very much regret not getting to know her better. She'll be truly missed by us all." Dan Charlton

Whenever Jane took on the responsibility for a job backstage, we knew it would be done superbly and beyond all expectations. Her big barn seemed to hold an unlimited supply of unusual props that added so much to the atmosphere of a play. Jane was wonderfully creative. If she didn't have something we needed, she would make it. We'll never forget the rock cornish game hens she made of stuffed cloth and popsicle sticks for the dinner scene in *The Nerd*, or the gray flannel rats for the Hooverville scene in *Annie*, or the shiny fish that filled a street peddler's basket in *My Fair Lady*. All these clever creations are stored in our props room and remind us of Jane and her abilities whenever we see them.

" I was so impressed by Jane's professionalism, and then I found out that the reason I was impressed was that she had been a professional. She brought to us all the skills she had learned both on the stage and back stage, but she never lorded it over us amateurs and always respected our work. I was a fellow actor with her in *Steel Magnolias* and in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and it was always a great pleasure to work with her, because you could count on her to do a great job, to help you when you needed it, and to have fun backstage as well. But her work backstage as propmaster was just as impressive. She had her rules and she made sure we all followed them. And as a result we always knew where our props were when we needed them. Her discipline was a model for all of us to follow." Carol Bense

Jane was an enthusiastic and loved member of the Village Players monthly play-reading group organized by Dick Cary. Her strong and expressive voice made her a mainstay for the group.

" I was a nervous first-time director when I held auditions for "Steel Magnolias" in the spring of 1994. That was the first time I met Jane O'Meara. My first impression was, here's this lovely woman with a broad smile and that genteel manner, but there was a twinkle in her eye that suggested a talent for mischief. There was no question after she took her turn at improvising a scene that she had to be in my show as Claree. I had no idea then that she had studied acting and had many years' experience behind her. I'm glad I didn't know that at the time, actually---it would have been intimidating for a fledgling director. For that show, as for every show she took part in after that, she was the consummate professional. She was always prepared for her scenes, consistent in her performance, patient with others much less experienced than she, and a pretty darn good improviser when scenes went awry, as they often do. If she wasn't on stage in a role, Jane was almost always ready to tackle a backstage job, most often finding and handling the props. In fact, she handled the props---and the actors who used them---with an iron hand. She watched with hawk-like attention to make sure things got put back where they should be, that we had just the right props for the show, and actors could count on the fact that she'd

have their props ready and in place for them, no matter how much chaos or distraction backstage.

Most of us knew Jane through the theater, so our memories of her will always be awash in the limelight. I will remember her as a tenacious stickler for detail, as a graceful stage presence who could still appreciate a prank, for her steely calm when the lights went down, and as a much-loved and loyal Village Player, and I will miss her." Carol Light

We'll remember her performances, we'll remember her props, we'll remember her discipline, but most of all we will remember her friendship and encouragement and the fun we shared with her. How we miss you, Jane.

(The major portion of this article comes from words spoken by Willie Mork at the service for Jane)

## NATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL IS CLOSE BY THIS YEAR

This year the National Festival of Community Theater will be held at the Warner Theater in Torrington, CT. Not only will the winning shows from around the country be competing for the national title, but also many great workshops will be offered over the four-day period from June 25 through June 28. If you can afford the time and the money, it's a fabulous learning experience.

The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, June 25 7:00am Rehearsals , 8:00am AACT Committee Meetings, 5:00pm All Festival Welcome Party, 7:00pm Festival Opening Ceremonies and Fellows Presentation, Performance Block A, 11:00pm After Party

Thursday, June 26 7:00am Rehearsals, 7:30am Exhibits Open, 8:00am Workshops, 11:30am AACT State Contacts Meeting, 1:15pm Performance Block B, 7:15pm Performance Block C, 11:00pm- After Party

Friday, June 27 7:00am Rehearsals, 7:30am Exhibits Open, 8:00am Workshops, 11:00am AACT Annual Membership Meeting, 1:15pm Performance Block D, 8:00pm AACT Endowment Roast, Optional Excursions

Saturday, June 28 7:30am Exhibits Open, 8:00am Workshops, 9:30am AACT New Board Meeting, 1:15pm Performance Block E, 7:00pm Awards Gala and Dinner Dance

Many workshops are offered each day including topics relevant to administration, performance and crafts. The cost of the entire festival is \$200. Price for each day individually is \$60.

You can find out more on their website at [www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org)