

## THE INFAMOUS FIRST ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER SPELLING BEE

Your dedicated hard-working team (The Thespians – get it? – thespian spellers) for the First Annual Children's Center Spelling Bee was made up of Carol Bense, Corky Mork and Diane Ducret-Mork. We dressed as robbers with black pants, our black VP t-shirts, black watch caps and black masks. (Yeah, yeah, yeah – what is the connection between robbers and Thespians, you are probably asking. Well there isn't any. We just wanted to wear our black VP t-shirts and the robber costume went with that. Besides three masks and three black hats are easy to come by at the last minute.)

We were given a list of the most horrendous spelling words you never saw and a couple of weeks to study them, and we did what we could. But, come on, - "skeuomorph" what the heck is that? "Sulpician" ???? At least that one was in the dictionary. (Try running them through spellchecker and you will come up with a big question mark.)

After two weeks, consonants and vowels were raging through our minds with no connection whatsoever to the real world, as we approached the hour of competition. We were confident that we could do well (actually we were just hoping not to embarrass ourselves too much). Kingswood Auditorium was decorated with bees of all kinds and the stage was set for the 27 or so groups who competed this year. Our cheering section was in place and ready to root for us.

We competed in the first round, and we did OK, and our cheering section celebrated each correctly spelled word, until we came up against "gymkhana." Corky had it, but Carol was the spokesman and the group couldn't agree on how to spell it. So we lost. We let down the organiza-

tion and the cheering section, but at least the money went for a good cause. The bee was won by the Garden Club Team. Who knew they could spell so well?

What we learned was never let Carol be the spokesman.

## SCOPE OF BUILDING RENOVATIONS

Budgets are being prepared and the scope of work finalized for the next phase of the theater restoration program. The existing restrooms will be demolished and replaced by much more spacious rooms, with all new fixtures, lighting and finishes. In the auditorium, ductwork will be extended to distribute air more uniformly throughout the space. A new air handling unit will be installed to supply fresh air to the front end of the building at the lobbies and restrooms. Building security will be greatly enhanced by the installation of an automatic fire alarm system that will immediately alert the fire department of any smoke or fire detected in the building. The back stair from the second story will be reconfigured to provide a rated passageway with direct exit to the exterior.

Construction coordination will be by LaRochelle Builders of Alton Bay. Paul LaRochelle has worked diligently with the design team from the Village Players to price out the total scope of work shown in the architect's documents, and then to define a phased approach that will allow us to optimize the expenditure of the available funds. Work should begin in mid-December.

Dick Cary, Architect



December 2003

[www.village-players.com](http://www.village-players.com)

# The Prompter

All The News That Fits, We Print

## FIRST NIGHT – DON'T MISS IT

The Village Players contribution to First Night for 2003 will be "Oh Horrors, It's Murder" (Book by Billy St. John and Music and Lyrics by Bill Francoeur), an audience participation murder mystery – quite a mouthful, eh? This year the performance will be at 7:00pm and there will be only one performance as the show will be presented at Kingswood Auditorium so there will be room for all. Admittance is by First Night button only, so be sure to buy yours early and get there early.

Bob and Helen Rautenberg are directing this musical romp through murder at the museum. The set will be constructed by Jay Sydow, and Willie Mork is in charge of costumes. Corky Mork will take care of the special effects (Boom, Ka-pow).

The cast (in order of appearance) includes some folks new to VP as well as many of your old favorites. Don Rautenberg is the imperious museum director. The lovely "other woman" is played by Kristi MacDonald. The ostentatious major benefactor of the museum is Willie Mork. Diane Sullivan fills the role of perennial ambulance chaser and personal attorney to the museum benefactor. Athena Ellis plays the ever susceptible assistant to the museum director. Bill Fluhr takes the role of the bumbling newsman, while his photographer with big ideas of her own is played by Mariel Fluhr. Michael Wilkes plays the stalwart, if absent-minded, archaeologist. The scorned wife is played by Carol Bense. The two mysterious Egyptians are played by Tony Dingley and Alex Babalis. The head guard is Jerome Holden ably assisted by the other guards, Peter Ayer, Eileen Sloan, and Jay Sydow. Corky Mork plays the local detective sent to investigate the murder with the help of his assistant played by Esther Roakes.

Lots of creepy and funny songs and plenty of laughs make this another First Night show you won't want to miss.

## ART FOR ART'S SAKE AUCTION

A partnership of The Village Players and The Governor Wentworth Arts Council presented an art auction on November 8 at our theater to raise money for our building renovation fund. It was a beautifully presented evening of fun and good will with the artwork creatively and professionally displayed by Jeanette D'Onofrio and her committee members, Barbara Gray, Terri Harriman and Joel Cookman. Auctioneer, Denise Batchelder, kept things moving. Wine and hors d'oeuvres were served by Village Players members led by Diane Ducret-Mork and Carol Bense. Hunter's and DeVylders generously provided fruit and cheese trays.

The crowd was small but the bidders were happy to go home with

## AUDITIONS FOR OUR SPRING PRODUCTION 'THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE'

You will want to be a part of our upcoming extravaganza, "The Pirates of Penzance", another blow-out production of a Gilbert and Sullivan staple in the tradition of "H.M.S. Pinafore" which we performed in the spring of 1999. Auditions will be held on Tuesday, January 6, 2004 at 7pm and again on Sunday, January 11, 2004 at 2pm at the former gymnasium at Brewster Academy – now called the Kaywin Fitness Center. Please come to one or the other if you would like to audition or if you would like to participate in the production work. If you really can't come to either session, but would like to audition, please contact Michael Wilkes ([mwilkes@metrocast.net](mailto:mwilkes@metrocast.net) Tel: 569-4814) or Andy Campbell ([andy\\_campbell@brewsteracademy.org](mailto:andy_campbell@brewsteracademy.org) Tel: 569-1600 X282) and arrange for another time.

Once again, The Village Players is collaborating with Clearlakes Chorale and Brewster Academy to produce a super presentation of this popular Gilbert and Sullivan work. We are planning to hire a full orchestra, and the voices of the chorale will swell the chorus numbers, but we also need lots of people on stage. Anyone is welcome to audition.

To reach the Kaywin Fitness Center From the center of Wolfeboro follow Main Street south and turn right at Brewster Academy's "Student Parking and Deliveries" entrance (It's a left turn if you're coming from the Alton side). That driveway takes you alongside a long parking lot. At the end of the lot you will be at an old brick building (the Kaywin Fitness Center. Park in the lot and come inside the building on the lowest level on the right or left side. Both doors open onto either end of a long corridor and the auditions will be in the main room off this corridor.

treasures from well-known local artists. A group of our members chipped in to purchase as a gift to The Village Players, a whimsical painting of our theater by Wolfeboro artist Fleur Palau. Look for it on display in the theater next time you come.

Thanks to the generosity of the artists who donated their work and to Jeanette and her hard-working committee members, \$2,800 was added to The Village Players building renovation fund. Art helping The Arts! Great idea!

Our gratitude to everyone who helped to make it possible.



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## VILLAGE PLAYERS ANNUAL MEETING

The Village Players annual meeting was Sunday, November 23 at the theater. About 40 members gathered to enjoy great food, lively conversation, an update on VP happenings, and to vote for new officers and at-large board members.

Willie Mork made a special award presentation to Carol Bense who has been a vital cog in the VP wheel since her first production in 1977. Carol was nominated by members of the organization and Wolfeboro community for a New Hampshire Council of the Arts Award for Arts Leadership. Because Carol was not the state-wide recipient of the prize (try figuring that one out!) Willie created a trophy in her honor. See Willie’s write up about Carol’s fantastic commitment to VP in this issue of The Prompter.

To great fanfare, Wayne Gehman unveiled a painting of the building which was successfully bid upon by a consortium of VP members at last month’s art auction (see article in this issue). The work, by Fleur Palau, was generously framed by Willie Mork and will be featured at the theater.

Other highlights from the meeting:

Building renovations are ready to begin and should be completed in early Spring (see article in this issue).

In order to maintain and update the facilities, the Board would like more community groups to be utilizing the theater. An advisory board might be created to help in this area.

The fundraising committee is looking for additional input. Contact Carol Bense for information.

Outgoing treasurer Diane Ducret Mork reported \$177,000 in assets with the 2002-2003 season of shows bringing in \$13,450.

The Village Players will once again join with Clearlakes Choral and Brewster Academy for a spring production. “Pirates of Penzance” will feature a producer from each of the 3 organizations plus 1 student producer. Lots of on- and off-stage help will be needed from each group to make this a successful production.

First Night will feature “Oh, Horrors! It’s Murder” directed by Helen and Bob Rautenberg. The one performance only melodrama will be at the Kingswood auditorium on New Year’s Eve at 7PM.

Village Players tee-shirts are now on sale for \$12. Contact Jay Sydow for purchasing information.

All members are invited to the board meetings, the first Monday of every month (call a board member to make sure of the date).

At the conclusion of the meeting, elections were held for officers and at-large board members. The new board is:

President - Jay Sydow                      Vice President - Corky Mork  
Treasurer - Matt Johnson              Secretary - Diane Sullivan  
At-large members - Jeannette D’Onofrio, Russ Ellis, John Gillette, and Willie Mork.

Carol Bense will stay on the board in the “past president” position. Deepest thanks to all who put their hats in the ring and to past board members for their time and energy. And, congratulations and

many thanks in advance to this year’s board!

## THE EXCLUSIVE PRESIDENTIAL INTERVIEW

The new president of The Village Players, Jay Sydow, has been an integral part of the organization for years. In this edition of The Prompter, an exclusive interview revealing what makes him tick. (Disclaimer: The bad jokes and unusual views expressed are those of Mr. Sydow alone and do not reflect the opinions of The Prompter, its affiliates, or the Village Players organization).

*TP:* Where did you grow up?

*Jay Sydow:* I plan to grow up here in NH when the time is right... Actually, I was born in Framingham Ma. A long time ago. My parents bought a cottage in Alton in 1966 and I spent every weekend in Alton until 1978 when I graduated from high school. The day after graduation I moved to Alton Bay and have lived here ever since.

*TP:* You don’t dress like a man who is independently wealthy and you look too young to be retired.... how does Jay Sydow make a living?

*JS:* He ekes out a living as a marine mechanic but makes his fun money with his boat detailing business as well as his landscape design work. (P.S. He thinks he dresses like a million bucks.)

*TP:* Tell us about your hockey obsession: when did it begin? is it just UNH or are there other teams that you follow? where has it taken you? Have you sought professional help to overcome it?

*JS:* Well, doctor, that is my Dad’s fault. He had season tickets to the Bruins so I got to go a lot of games. The UNH stuff happened about fifteen years ago. I used to run the adult volleyball league (the world’s second best sport) in Alton. One Saturday night the gym wasn’t available so some of us decided to go to a hockey game at UNH. The rest is history. I used to travel to all of the away games in New England but something has taken me away from that. Nothing will help me overcome my obsession.

*TP:* It’s Friday night, 5 o’clock. You have a full tank of gas and no obligations until Monday. You’ve just passed go and collected two hundred dollars. How do you spend your weekend?

*JS:* Two hundred bucks? Let me think. Well if it’s winter I will be following the hockey team. If you would give me a little extra money I may head off to LL Bean for a little midnight shopping. LL Bean at 2 o’clock in the morning (if you have money) is the next best thing to UNH hockey.

*TP:* Were you involved with theater as a kid?

*JS:* I played “Flower the Skunk” in my first grade production of “Bambi”.

*TP:* Did you have any early influences that led to you pursue a life of theater?

*JS:* My Dad’s assistant had season tickets to the theaters in Boston and occasionally we would all go to a show. I got to see Yule Brynner in “The King and I”. That was cool. In high school I had a crush on a girl that was the lead in all our musicals so that may be what did it.

*TP:* Tell us about your work with the Pittsfield Players and the Lakes Region Summer Theater.

*JS:* I first got involved with the Pittsfield Players when Michael Wilkes asked me to go down and paint and decorate the set for “Noises Off”. I had met a couple of the people through Village Players productions prior to that but I really got to know them working for Michael. I just recently

painted the sets for their production of “State Fair” (Long nights, lots of complaining.... So I guess that means I enjoyed it!) I have made a few good friends down there and plan to work with Meggin Dail this spring on Pittsfield’s production of “Twelve Angry Men”. (Allow me to take opportunity to mention that we will need men for the show. Please feel free to contact me for details.)

The Lakes Region Summer Theater is the reason I am with the Village Players. It is time to be serious for a second. My best friend died of leukemia after being sick for only nine days. It changed my outlook on life. One night I took off by myself. As I was driving through Meredith I saw that “Oklahoma” was playing at the high school so I stopped in to see the show. At intermission I asked if they needed any help. Needless to say the answer was “yes”. I worked there for rest of the summer. After the season was over I was having withdrawals. That is when I hooked up with the Village Players.

*TP:* How and when did you first become involved with the Village Players?

*JS:* This ties in with my LRST story. When the season ended in Meredith my sister’s Mother-in-law had me call Willie. I had no idea who this guy, “Willie,” was so I said “why not?” I called this guy, Willie, and she told me: “We are all set for now but I will call you if we need you in the future.” OK fine, with me. I could wait. Hockey season was starting soon anyway. Fifteen minutes later my phone rang. “Jay, can you be at the theater tonight for a production meeting?” I had no idea the future would come so soon! I walked into the theater and knew absolutely no one. At this meeting I was told that I would be painting and decorating the sets with some chick named Kathy. OK I can do that. “Oh yeah, you will also be doing the billboards and the artwork for the programs.” OK... That was the last time I had control of my life. The show was “A Christmas Carol”.

*TP:* How many shows have you been involved with?

*JS:* Christmas Carol was Fall 1999. Since that time I have been involved with all shows except “Rogue of the Railway.” That’s 18 shows in all with the following on and off stage roles: decorate, billboard, artwork, stage crew, chief marker sniffer, arm actor, stage manager, set design, full body acting, shrimp eater/champagne drinker (Happy New Year!), assistant director, director, assistant to the director.

*TP:* You are designing and constructing the set for the stage version of Star Wars: The Musical. You have a \$57 budget and an unlimited supply of duct tape and styrofoam egg cartons. You have 17 hours till dress rehearsal. What do you do?

*JS:* First I call my friends at Sam Adams and have them back up the truck to the stage door. Next I get on the phone to Russ Ellis (that means I will need to get cheap beer for him) and then I call Kathy Whitehead (I don’t need to bribe her with booze-yet). There are others I would call but it is late and we have to get this thing built. Every second counts so I can’t be on the phone all night!

*TP:* Rumor has it that you’ve been a huge advocate and thoughtful contributor to the renovation plans. How do you think the facelift will change the way we “do theater” at VP?

*JS:* Huge is not the word. I am very excited about the direction the board has planned for the theater. I think we should all be excited. The obvious changes will be to the interior of the building itself but the board has even bigger plans for the theater.

*TP:* You’re the new president of the Village Players. Where do you see VP in the coming years?

*JS:* I am so glad you asked me that. I would love to see more of the community involved with the theater. The board has plans for other groups to come in and use our space in hopes of bringing new faces to the theater. I would love to see a relationship develop between the schools and the

theater. We had the opportunity to perform Hounds for Nancy Harwoods class and it was great for the kids but I think an even bigger thrill for the actors. That was a blast. I would love to see more workshops at the theater. I have lots of ideas but I am only one person. I think what everyone has to realize is that this theater does not run itself. What we really need is for every one of our members to get involved. The shows are great fun but there is a lot of work behind the scenes that need our attention. We need everyone’s help.

*TP:* Anything else you want to add??

*JS:* HEY, LET’S PUT ON A SHOW!!”

## “HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES” – A RETROSPECTIVE

Think of all the reasons why we would do our dress rehearsal on a Thursday afternoon. An actor or member of the crew with a conflict off Broadway? Not likely. A conflict in Sandwich? Possible, but alas, not so. No, the reason was to enable about 45 students from the Middle School to come into our theater during their school day and see a live, full length play right here in Wolfeboro!

Thanks to the enthusiasm of Middle School teacher Nancy Harwood, who organized the event and saw to it that her charges were well prepared, we were blessed with a very knowledgeable, attentive, and critical audience. The afternoon turned out to be even more extraordinary when, after the show, all the students remained in the theater to ask questions of the director, cast, and crew, and to give us their impressions of our efforts. Their preparation for the event was evident right off the bat when one student fired off the first inquiry: “So... did you read the original story? We did.”

With that introduction we learned that the students were particularly curious about our staging of the play. Many expected to be taken out onto the moor; some hoped to see the hound itself. Overall they seemed fascinated that we chose to perform the play entirely inside Baskerville Hall and with characters older than they had imagined them. (I think we then explained that on both accounts, we had little choice.)

When the show’s course ran ten days later, we learned that the students all had written us letters thanking us for the experience, and we read each letter aloud at our party. One letter suggested - tongue in cheek - that we could have had a cute little dog chasing the actors around the stage. Another writer said he had never been to a live play before, and that after seeing “Hound of the Baskervilles” he was hoping for the chance to do it again. What a treat! That’s what it’s all about!!

Many thanks to Nancy Harwood and to all the Middle School students and staff who helped make our production very special. And thanks to each of our audiences, without whom we would be just strutting and fretting night after night.

The statistics:	Total Attendance	568
	Income :	\$4887