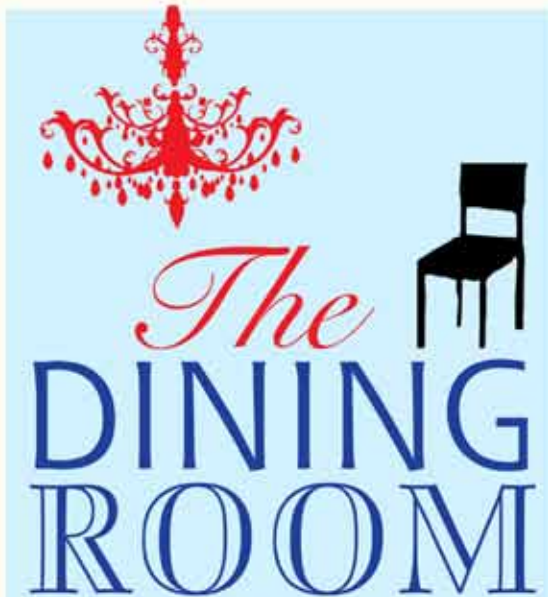


# BRAVO!

SEASON 2011

The Magazine of  
Hershey Area Playhouse

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1  
WINTER 2011



CABARET NIGHT PAGE 4  
THE IMPORTANCE OF  
BEING EARNEST PAGE 4-5  
PADDY'S POT PAGE 8  
WINTER ACTING CLASSES PAGE 13

# From the Chairman Paul Thompson



## Dear Supporters

of Hershey Area Playhouse, a collaborative enterprise providing cultural infrastructure to the community by giving expression to all imaginations in a creative and inviting setting.

Through the dedicated involvement of several committed individuals, the Playhouse finds itself, in 2011, well ensconced in an accessible location, nurtured by a community devoted to the performing arts, surrounded by discerning theatre goers, fiscally sound (please send money the next time you write), and thus poised for another year of creative excellence. As it now embarks on a new season of being there, its doors remain open to all creative views, and ready to provide a forum for enactments of consequence and relevance. And so it will! Such is the state of local theatre, at least in the greater area of this township.

There are some truly auspicious things to report at this transition of seasons. First, the rap for last season is succinct. For a time, we were all in the thrall of that affable rabbit (p. 6) who won us over without

as much as a wink. And then we reinvented ourselves by revisiting that best Christmas scene where the kids keep coming and laughing in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, caringly directed by that perennial Santa, Tony Pingitore, who, somehow, graciously keeps everyone on his good list.

BRAVO's cover highlights the major productions for next season, and what a lineup it is! If you did not get beyond contemplating the cover material, that would be understandable since the Artistic Committee again has put a dazzling season together. A great mix of scripts and directors will provide you with dramatic gravitas throughout the year. To best benefit from that offering, season tickets are a great option, providing not only a cultural habit that enriches you, but the assurance of a great seat in a setting that quickly becomes you.

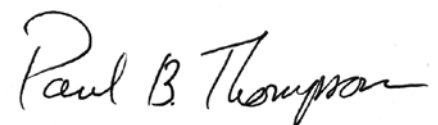
In other venues, the call to this year's Cabaret Night is compelling (page 4). This festive evening of musical entertainment is the major annual fundraiser at which we seek support for many key operational activities from funding the Theatre Academy to keeping our remarkable facility in performing order. The sumptuous food, the prizes, and the auction items at this event are all so grand that the associated costs to you are quite painless. Whether careful deliberation or even reckless spontaneity result in a joyous decision to attend, you must come to the Cabaret. Don't miss it! Don't even be late!

The volunteer spotlight this quarter is on Lisa Greene and how could it not be after her many contributions in managing and now producing? She exemplifies the spirit of how the Playhouse does the many things it does! Our board is bidding farewell to another consummate volunteer, Michele Robertson, who fortunately is not going far away. Her picture with Toys for Tots (p. 10) best illustrates the many things she continues to do that make a difference, and keep us connected to the greater community.

In regard to volunteers, it is obvious that the Playhouse needs many more Lisa's and Michele's, and Tom's, Theresa's, Tim's, Jennifer's, Susan's and Lynne's! Please contact us to express your interest in joining the Playhouse team. We could greatly use your help in the box office, or in communications, as well as many other places.

There are several additional exciting activities to report such as the Evening of Song with Broadway performers in January, and the production of *Paddy's Pot* in March. We hope to see you at these special presentations that fill out our busy schedule of providing year round theatrical opportunities to the community.

Best wishes for a new season!



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**BRAVO!** The Magazine of Hershey Area Playhouse is published quarterly and is a benefit of membership in Hershey Area Playhouse. Special thanks to ChocolateCovers for the design and printing.

# TWELFTH ANNUAL *Cabaret Night*

Mark your calendars for April 2, 2011!

Plans are well underway for Hershey Area Playhouse's 12th Annual Cabaret Night, set for April 2, 2011 at the beautiful Hershey Country Club. This is the Playhouse's major fundraiser and it only comes around once a year, so you don't want to miss it!

Headlining this year's event is consummate performer and director Stuart Landon (director of Hershey Area Playhouse's *Love Letters*). Landon is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma A. Max Weitzenhoffer Department of Musical Theatre and has directed or performed locally at Theatre Harrisburg (upcoming *Crazy for You*), Open Stage of Harrisburg (*Little Shop of Horrors*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, [title of show]), Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg (*Violet Oakley Unveiled*), Fishing Creek Playhouse (*The Music Man*), Allenberry Playhouse (*Stand By Your Man*, *The Full Monty*, *Oklahoma!*), and, of course, Hershey Area Playhouse (*Love Letters*). He moved to Central PA from NYC in 2006 after he became a company member at Allenberry Playhouse.

Landon will be joined by other professional and Hershey Area Playhouse performers, who will present popular and classical show-stopping Broadway hits. In addition to the outstanding entertainment, guests

will enjoy a three course meal and the opportunity to bid on some extraordinary items – with ALL proceeds benefiting the operating budget of the Playhouse.



And keep in mind, for the first time ever, if you purchase a season ticket to all five Playhouse shows, you can buy a ticket to Cabaret Night for only \$80 – that's \$20 off the regular price. For \$150, you can have a season ticket PLUS a seat at our major fundraiser.

Invitations will be mailed in early 2011. In the interim, visit our website at [HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com](http://HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com) to purchase your season tickets. If you are interested in attending Cabaret Night, making a donation or have any general questions, please email [CabaretNight@HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com](mailto:CabaretNight@HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com).

*We need your support, so we hope to see you on April 2!*

## *The Importance of Being Earnest*

by Joan Kraft, Director

It is both a thrill and a challenge to have *The Importance of Being Earnest* as my inaugural directing project here at the wonderful Hershey Area Playhouse. A thrill because this classic drawing room comedy, with its abundance of wit and paradoxical wisdom, is great fun and working on it has been a joyous adventure filled with discovery and excitement. A challenge because it has been performed so frequently, in both the best and the worst of productions, that most audience members are very familiar with it and therefore looking for something unique and satisfying in the Playhouse's production of this delightful comedy of manners.

Many productions have added a bit of unexpected flavor by casting the role of Lady Bracknell with a male actor. Most notably the famous movie and theatre actor, Geoffrey Rush; TV star Larry Linville; opera singer, Justin Birdsong; and Stratford Canada favorites William Hutt, George Maguire and Brian Bedford. In fact this summer I attended a gender-bending production at the Scena Theatre in DC where all female roles were performed by men and all male roles were performed by women. It brought a completely different twist to many of the endlessly quotable lines.

# The Importance of Being Earnest Continued

But regardless of how it is cast, we love following the shenanigans of our two foppish, idol, ne'er-do-well bachelors with their secret lives and their love affairs with two stylish young ladies who are oddly enamored with the name Earnest. Add the endearing bloom of late-life love between a governess and her heartthrob reverend along with the crowning touch created by the formidable and domineering society know-it-all and you have an evening of entertainment and laughs.

It's all good fun, of course, with each of the characters behaving badly at all the right times. Oscar Wilde was right to insist that his *Importance of Being Earnest* be performed "with the speed of a pistol shot."

We want to present to you our offering of all that is most certainly NOT earnest.

**NEXT SHOW**  
**The Importance of Being Earnest**  
by Oscar Wilde

February 10-13 & 17-20, 2011

**Tickets:**  
**\$17 for adults**  
**\$14 for children 12 and under**

# A Family Affair by Sandy Stoner

Is it possible that our love of the theater could be in our genes? It looks that way to me from what I have observed the last several months as a member of the cast of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.

I feel that this production truly has been "a family affair." I thought that it would be interesting to look into just how many involved in our production were, in real life, related to each other. Of course, please keep in mind that everyone felt like "family" when the final rehearsals were happening.

*In a cast of 41, you will notice that there is a very large number of relatives that have spent a great deal of time together. Here are my observations.*

Baby Angel (Arcadia Banis)  
Sound Engineer (Tim Banis)  
**Father & Daughter**

Church Lady (Karen Benjamin)  
Elmer Hopkins (Samuel Moll)  
**Mother & Son**

Shepherd (Cameron Brown)  
Baby Angel (MacKenzie Brown)  
**Brother & Sister**

Charlie Bradley (Cameron Bush)  
Mr. Bradley (Jim Bush)  
**Father & Son on and off stage**

Sunday School Kid (Ashton Byrd)  
Baby Angel (Dylan Byrd)  
**Sisters**

Reverend Hopkins (Tom Curry)  
Accompanist Recording (Nick Curry)  
**Father & Son**

Sunday School Kid (Renee Ciardullo)  
Ollie Herdman (Andrew Ciardullo)  
**Sister & Brother**

Sunday School Kid (Emily Lewis)  
Mrs. Bradley (Melissa Lewis)  
**Mother & Daughter**

Hobie (Nathan Stoner)  
Church Lady (Sandy Stoner)  
**Grammie & Grandson**

David (Peter Stoner)  
Church Lady (Sandy Stoner)  
**Grammie & Grandson**

Nathan and Peter Stoner  
**Brothers**

Sunday School Kid (Moxie Thompson)  
Board Chairman (Paul Thompson)  
**Father & Daughter**

Church Lady (Anjie Vago)  
Assistant Stage Manager (Laura Vago)  
**Mother & Daughter**

*Many volunteers behind the scenes are also "related."*

Tony & Leah Pingitore  
**Husband & Wife**

Michele & Mackenzie Robertson  
**Mother & Daughter**

Paul & Beth Michel  
**Brother & Sister**

Theresa & Pete Ridge  
**Husband & Wife**

Aimee & Austin Potteiger  
**Mother & Son**

Also, many family members without roles in the cast and crew participated by volunteering in the green room, box office, cast party, and ushering. As a cast and crew, we have made memories that will last our lifetime and we are indebted to all those that make our Hershey Area Playhouse a wonderful opportunity in this community. It's, without question, "a family affair."

# A Great Thanks to All

## by Harvey the Pooka



**Back Row L to R:** Eric Friedman, Jeannine Snyder, Lamar Kukuk, Harry Menear, Tracey Ford, Rob Kopko  
**Front Row L to R:** Nancy Parson, JoEllen Myers, Kathy Luft, Don Bowman  
**Center:** Greg Merkel

**Some would say that I live a charmed life.** I get to travel all over the world doing something I love and meeting new and interesting people. But the truth of the matter is that at times it can be exhausting. For years I have wanted to settle down, put my feet up, and just enjoy the feeling of being stationary for a bit. Unfortunately, such things aren't in my future. I made promises all those years ago and a pooka is nothing if his word can't be trusted.

I think this constant hustle and bustle involved in city after city, stage after stage, show after show, may be why I am waxing a bit nostalgic this evening as I write this special letter to a group of people who made me feel welcome in a way that just doesn't happen for me anymore. Maybe it's the whiskey in my egg nog, but the holidays have made me sentimental.

Hershey is a very special town. I suppose it would have to be, founded as it was on something as sweet as chocolate. But, I daresay that even in a place so full of history and wonderment, the small corner that is Hershey Area Playhouse shines out as a beacon. It will always have a special place in my heart.

But the Playhouse is not the building, beautiful as it is, it is the people who fill it. The incredible individuals who give so much of themselves to bring a small, but shining, serving of joy and entertainment to their friends and neighbors. Rarely has the "community" been so evident as at a community theater.

Our director, Marcie Warner, poured so much of herself into our production. No detail was too small to

be beneath her notice and no one's opinion was beyond consideration. She truly turned the show into a marvel to behold, shaping the raw talent of her cast and crew into a spectacle of humor and humanity.

And what a cast to work with! Rarely have I had the opportunity to work with such a fine group of people. Whether it was Greg's constant attention to the chemistry between us on stage, the hilarity of watching Nancy and Tracey working with Don and Rob to craft such wonderful humor, or seeing Harry, Lamar, Jeanine, and Scott becoming the madcap hospital staff – it was a true pleasure to work with them all. Their dedication, and more importantly their heart and true love of the artistry of theater, shined through in everything they did. By the end we were more than a cast, more than friends, we were family.

And, of course, the show couldn't go on without the hard work of the people behind the scenes. The wonderful sets that Carlton designed for us added yet another layer of believability to our production. It was easy to become one with our setting with such an incredible set to act on. The costuming that Drenda did was spot on, capturing a small piece of old-fashioned America and setting it on stage. And the technical and stage crews were of uncommon caliber in their roles, doing their work so well you often forgot they were there, which is a tribute to them.

I usually move on from one production to the next, barely giving thought to those I leave behind. And, I have spent so many years on the road that the concept of "home" seems like a ghostly apparition to me at times. But Hershey will always be different. I will always consider the town that chocolate built to be a place I can call home, and the people I met while I was there to be family. And I must thank you all for that whether you were cast, crew, or audience. It was a warm feeling to be sure.

So, to everyone in the Hershey area: keep your eyes open. You never know when you might spot me leaning against a Hershey Kiss streetlight on Chocolate Avenue, waxing philosophical about your little slice of heaven there in Central Pennsylvania.

Maybe I can buy you a drink.

With great affection,

# The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

by Lewis E. Silverman



## Kids are the stars in holiday standard.

A sure sign that the holidays are upon us occurs when Starbucks brings out its seasonal hot drinks such as gingerbread and peppermint lattes while local theater companies roll out such standard classics as *"A Christmas Carol."* Fortunately for us, Hershey Area Playhouse has brought back its own sweet and frothy concoction of *"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever."*

This show features tons of kids in various roles, Christmas carols and a generally fun, fast-paced atmosphere in what has become a holiday tradition in our area. Under the direction of Tony Pingitore, this production is delightfully uplifting and is certain to chase away any Scrooges who might be lingering about.

The plot is simple. Each year, the local church puts on a Christmas pageant featuring well-scrubbed and mostly well-behaved local children. This year, however, a monkey wrench gets thrown at them when six delinquent children, the Herdman kids, show up at auditions and manage, simply through their mere presence, to get cast in the lead pageant roles.

The Herdmans are famous around their community – they steal the lunches from other children, they lie, curse, hit other kids, set fire to things and, oh yes, smoke

cigars. In other words, the Herdmans are the meanest, nastiest group of six unruly siblings in town. They'll ruin the Christmas pageant for sure...or will they?

*"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever"* is timeless in the manner in which it touches on the human condition. The recent headlines about cyber-bullying in America makes the Herdmans' actions seem all the more real to a modern audience.

However, the secret virtue of the show, for parents who might be concerned about the fact that its protagonists are a roving band of juvenile delinquents, is that the Herdmans end up being the most intellectually and spiritually connected to the "true meaning" of the pageant.



Melissa Lewis, as Grace Bradley, is delightful to watch. She gives us a perfect blend of charm, witticism and appropriate frustration when the enormity of the task at hand sinks in.

One of the most impressive performances of the night goes to the littlest Herdman of all, Gladys (Lexie Corcoran). In her tattered clothing, Gladys was cast as the Angel of the Lord. Instead of muttering her simple one-liner "Unto you a child is born," she "shazams" her way onto the stage and into our hearts.

Madison Youch as Beth Bradley and Amber Emerson as Imogene Herdman stand out in their strong supporting roles. Youch, as the eldest child of the Bradley family, doubles as the show's narrator – keeping us abreast in a pleasant tone as the plot unfolds. Emerson tugs at our heartstrings with her character transformation by show's end.

But perhaps the most heartwarming – the star atop the tree, if you will – was when the entire cast appeared onstage for the final few numbers. Children will love this show – it's short enough and active enough – to hold the attention of even the youngest theatergoers.

## And it really does feel like Christmas.

*This article reprinted with permission of The Patriot-News and Lewis E. Silverman.*

# What's so special about *Paddy's Pot*?

by Cory Wilkerson

As many of you may know, Hershey Area Playhouse is emerging as one of our area's most well respected community theatres with its carefully planned season of five main stage plays designed to be sure to meet everyone's taste. What some of you may not know is that the Playhouse is also committed to new and emerging works and to works that meet a community need. Their special event series has hosted such plays as *Songs for a New World*, *Secrets of a Soccer Mom*, *The Vagina Monologues* and *Moon Over Montmartre* to name but a few.

The special events at Hershey Area Playhouse have come to be known as a source for refreshingly original works, sensitive probing pieces and dynamic vibrant contemporary works. Which is precisely why I am so thrilled to be directing an offering for the Playhouse's special series in March with the area debut of the comedy *Paddy's Pot* by Thomas W. Stephens, performing March 17th, 18th, 19th at 8:00 PM, with a final matinee performance on Sunday March 20th at 2:00 PM.

So what's so special about *Paddy's Pot*? Certainly the play itself is special. It's a charmer written by a Lynchburg, VA area playwright. The play is a sweet comedy about three generations of strong Irish women living together who are asked to watch the family's newest addition- an infant who will be the first child not to be raised as a Roman Catholic. As the oldest "grand" plots to secretly baptize the infant, the audience is drawn into

the story and asked to consider what truly makes a family bind together. What is it that makes a family special to one another?

The cast members are pretty special as well. All three are veteran actresses with well respected careers in theatre in the Central Pennsylvania area and beyond.

Terri Mastrobuono plays the oldest of the "grands"- M'DEAR, aged 106. Terri is an Equity actress, director, writer, and arts educator. She co-founded Lancaster's CoMotion Theater, dedicated to generating original actor-created pieces. Terri has been featured at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, Washington Storyteller's Theatre, Touchstone Theatre, Open Stage of Harrisburg, and Gamut Theatre. She is a roster artist with the PA Council on the Arts, and is an adjunct professor of theatre at Elizabethtown College.

Peg (85) and Ida (63) will be played by Lisa Lutton Weitzman and Linde Stern. Lisa Lutton Weitzman is a local actress and teacher at the Capital Area School for the Arts where she is the theater director. Lisa has acted in many venues in south-central PA including the PA Renaissance Faire and Theater Harrisburg. One of her favorite roles was Emily Dickinson in the one-woman show *The Belle of Amherst* at Open Stage of Harrisburg.

Linde Stern is another well know actress from the Central Pennsylvania area whose work has been admired by many. Linde is frequently seen performing at the Gamut Theatre.,

Fulton Opera House and Theatre of the Seventh Sister in Lancaster.

Finally this production itself is special in that it breaks new ground in sharing the stories of older adults. The grands in the story range from 63 (she's the baby) to 106 – and all are vitally strong women with interesting stories to tell.

This delicate piece explores the connections between generations and the subtle (and not so subtle) things that make us human. As we learn about these three women of a certain age, we are sure to come away learning about ourselves.

Come and spend St. Patrick's Day at Hershey Area Playhouse celebrating Irish women, strong women, mothers, grandmothers and life!

**Playhouse available  
FOR RENT!**

Hershey Area Playhouse at  
Country Meadows is available  
for community groups and  
corporations to rent.

Please contact:  
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**operations@HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com**



## A True Fire Cadet Grace Wagler of Hershey



A fireman's uniform makes for a great costume, but in this case the person wearing it was the real thing. When theatre goers saw two firefighters cross the stage to check out cigar smoke coming from the characters' restroom, they may have thought they were seeing two actors in firefighters costumes. But one of the fully uniformed rescuers was a true fire cadet, 15 year old Grace Wagler of Hershey. She has been a volunteer firefighter for two years and this is also her second year performing as a firefighter in a production of *TBCPE*.

## Community Connection Ronald McDonald House

This past fall, the Ronald McDonald House completed construction on its expansion to provide housing for families who come to the Hershey Medical Center's Children's Hospital. It now has the capacity to house over 30 families, doubling their previous occupancy. This extension was made possible by several families and organizations donating to the cause, including Hershey Area Playhouse. In the Fall of 2008, the Playhouse presented an encore performance of Jennifer Feldser's original play, *The Other Woman*. Half of the proceeds from this play went to the "Building Hope and Healing Hearts" campaign as well as the daily operations of the House. As part of the campaign, contributors received an engraved brick,



set at the new entrance of the House. You can see how one community organization can help pave the way for another!

*Jennifer Feldser*

### NEWS TEASER for JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2011

Keep an eye on the Playhouse's website and your INBOX for information on upcoming special events in early January and February!

## Jane Brockman & Tim Shew

On Saturday, January 15th, Hershey Area Playhouse will be hosting an *Evening of Song* with Broadway performers Jane Brockman and Tim Shew- a husband and wife team with ties to both Hershey and Broadway!

Jane graduated from Hershey High School and went to college at Penn State. While at Hershey, Jane was involved in all the musicals and had the lead in *Oklahoma!* when she was a senior. She also competed in the county, regional, state and All Eastern State choruses.

As an actress, her credits include Broadway's *A Christmas Carol*, Lincoln Center's live broadcast of *Camelot*, Off Broadway's *The Kid*, and National Tours of *The Sound of Music*, and *The Light in the Piazza*. She has performed concerts at Carnegie Hall and the Royal Albert Hall in England. Most recently she worked with Benny Andersen and Bjorn Ulveus (ABBA) on their new musical *Kristina* and on the recording of that show.

Tim's resume is equally impressive and diverse. He has performed Jean Val Jean

in *Les Miz* on the Great White Way, with supporting roles in the recent revival of *Bye Bye Birdie*, as well as *Wonderful Town* and *Guys and Dolls*. Most recently he has been working with Frank Wildhorn (composer of *Jekyll and Hyde*) on his new musical *Bonnie and Clyde*.

Both Tim and Jane have been seen in many commercials, on *Law and Order*, and in the movie *The Producers*, as well as other film and TV. In 2009, Jane and Tim were seen at the GRETNA playhouse's production of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Not one to forget her roots, Jane has returned many times to sing at Cabaret Night - the benefit performance for the Playhouse (in fact the first few they ever had!!) and continues to keep strong ties in the Hershey area supporting the Playhouse and doing workshops for them whenever she can.

There is no better way to stave off the winter blues or celebrate 2011! Join Jane, Tim, and the Playhouse on Saturday January 15th for a fun-filled evening of music. The event includes a reception with

light fare and beverages. Tickets are \$40.00, but if you are a 2010 or 2011 contributing member, your tickets are just \$25.00 each! As a special bonus and incentive, if you decide to buy a whole row of seats for \$1,000, you and your guests each receive a Macy's gift basket filled with all sorts of goodies!

*We hope to see you there!*



## Kid's Choir

by Jen Feldser



On Wednesday December 22nd, Handel's Messiah Rocks rocked out the Hershey Theatre! It had a full orchestra, Broadway caliber singers backed by a chorus of local talent. Wherever this show travels, it incorporates a children's and young adult choir made up of members from that community to infuse a new, energetic backup. Many of these participants have appeared in or have been featured in past Playhouse shows.

Angeline Lonardi was little orphan Molly in *Annie*; we said Bye Bye to Brandon Bitner's Conrad Birdie, and both Leila McCrumb and Paul Luckenbaugh were in this summer's *Hello, Dolly!*. One of the musical directors for this group was Dan Fisher, who was co-musical director for last year's *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*.

Among the children's choir, you can find Acting campers, royal children from *The King and I*, and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. A portion of the tickets that were bought by family and friends of these mini- idols goes toward the Playhouse.

The young adult and children rehearsed for a combined total of over 20 hours to learn their songs and even some choreography. The younger children participated in three songs, while the older choir was involved in about seven. Both choirs rehearsed separately and did not get together until the day of the performance. Not like you could tell. **Rock on!**

## Toys for Tots

Michele Robertson

Michele Robertson is leaving the board this year but will continue to make creative contributions to the playhouse as producer. She is pictured below with one of her many unique initiatives this year, the Toys for Tots program.



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Gene & Jan Cary  
Nelson & Ethel Damschroder  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles DeHart III  
Mrs. Elaine Dye  
Mr. Roy Frysinger  
June Gibbs  
John N. & Margaret B. Goldman

### SUSTAINERS (CONTINUED)

John & Susan Grab  
Maxine Haynes  
Ted & Jane Janeczek  
Nancy & Jay Krevsky  
John Mallonee  
John Messmer  
Dr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Miller  
Lou & Ashie Santangelo  
Carmine & Tamara Sarracino  
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Shapiro  
Shirley & Don Stratton  
Mr. & Mrs. John Wolgemuth  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Zimmerman

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Mr. & Mrs. Walter Robertson  
Andrew & Beverly Sekol  
Melvin Shenk

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Lisa Greene



Tell us a little about yourself... (town you live, family, pets, place you work, etc.)

I live in Hershey with two little kittens named Amelia and Simon and I work for the Commonwealth. I grew up on Long Island, New York and then moved while in my teens to St. Petersburg, Florida where I graduated from high school. Shortly thereafter my family moved to Hummelstown and I fell in love with central Pennsylvania. The only thing missing is proximity to the beach! A few years after graduating from Penn State I moved to Baltimore where I lived for 13 years. It was there that I developed friendships with a group of people in the film, video and television industry and found their discussions about the creative and production processes and the projects they worked on so very intriguing. It was a completely different world for me. The extent of my involvement was minimal though - I free-lanced on a couple commercials being filmed in Baltimore, providing craft services. I found the whole process fascinating - albeit working with a slightly diva-like director for whom I had

to pick all the brown M&Ms out of the candy dishes because he didn't like them! But I digress...

What made you decide to volunteer for Hershey Area Playhouse?

I decided to explore getting involved with Hershey Area Playhouse after a friend forwarded an email soliciting volunteers. When I saw that many of the positions required no previous theater experience - like ushering, box office, props crew, and back stage crew for example - I decided to give it a try.

When did you start working with Hershey Area Playhouse?

I began working with Hershey Area Playhouse in the fall of 2009 with *Wait Until Dark*.

What positions have you volunteered for so far?

I've ushered, worked concessions, been on the props crew, and have been house manager for the last four productions in a row. I'm taking a bigger step in terms

of involvement by recently agreeing to produce the first play of the 2011 season, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, an Oscar Wilde comedy. I see producing as an avenue for me to put my experience in event planning and project management to use. I'm really excited about this opportunity and appreciate the vote of confidence!

What positions would you like to volunteer for in the future?

I'd like to get on the rotation and produce again.

What do you like most about volunteering at Hershey Area Playhouse?

What I like most about volunteering at Hershey Area Playhouse are the people! I love interacting with the cast, crew, and audience. I also just love the magic that envelopes the theater with each performance! The talent and creativity is just awe-inspiring!

What could you tell our readers about you that they might be surprised to learn?

I serve as Survivorship Chairperson on the Hummelstown-Hershey Area Relay For Life planning committee. If you don't know, Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature fundraising event. It marks the end of a year of team fundraising and is a 24-hour celebration honoring cancer survivors and caregivers; a time to remember those who have lost their battle; and a place to learn how we can all fight back against this terrible disease that touches so many. As a survivor of stage 3 ovarian cancer, I felt I had to get involved in helping to find a cure. After all, research saved my life. I'll reach the monumental (in my mind anyway) five year cancer-free mark in March so will be more than ready to celebrate at Relay in June! The Hummelstown-Hershey Area Relay For Life will be held on June 10 & 11 at Lower Dauphin High School and is free and open to the public. For more information or to register as a survivor or caregiver, please go to [www.relayforlife.org/pahha](http://www.relayforlife.org/pahha). I would love you all to come and celebrate with us!

# hershey area playhouse theatre academy offers winter classes

## Fun again this winter – with performances for all ages!

Chestnuts roasting, sleigh bells ringing and imaginations soaring- all at Hershey Area Playhouse as we spice up the winter months with a full range of acting classes for youth and young people. Our line up has something for everyone including classes for grades kindergarten through twelfth. This winter session the groups will be focusing on performance with play scripts and age appropriate roles. These popular classes are repeatable skill buildings that use a variety of theatre games and a different thematic focus each semester to keep the curriculum fun and exciting.

## Why take acting classes?

Our students tell us that acting classes help them form friendships; many cite their experiences with Hershey Area Playhouse as having created a sense of family. Not only that but our students are thriving in the arts in their schools - active in roles in semi professional theatre and broadening their horizons by working backstage or appearing in roles in our main stage productions.

More importantly however, statistics tell us that participating in the dramatic arts actually has a measurable affect on student performance in school. MENC: The National Association for Music Education, The American Alliance for Theatre and Education and the website for Americans for the Arts all cite research that shows a correlation between the arts and things like reading comprehension, school attendance and social skills. Most notably, The College Entrance Examination Board has reported that students involved in dramatic performance score an average of 65.5 points higher on the verbal component of the SAT and 35.5 points higher in the Math component.

So not only is acting fun- but as suspected, it better prepares you for life and career and creates young leaders! What's not to love?

It's never been easier to register for classes. The new streamlined classes are designed to fit busy schedules and more closely match the way kids like to learn. Again this winter we offer classes that are longer in duration but run for a shorter time period- giving the same number of hours of instruction in an easier to access format. Simply choose the appropriate class level below and cut out and send in the registration form, and let the learning, laughing and leading begin!

## Our Line-up:

***Creative Kids - 9:00-10:30 Saturdays***

***Grades K-3 \$90.00 early bird \$100.00 after 12-31***

This class teaches acting through creative dramatics and storytelling, exposing the children to their own creative and artistic possibilities – building communication, confidence and self-expression in a non-threatening atmosphere. Sessions culminate in an open house performance. New stories, games and fun each time make this skill builder repeatable. Nine hours of instruction a semester.

***Winter Session: Saturdays 1/15/11 – 2/19/11***

***Acting it Up - 10:30 – Noon Saturdays***

***Grades 4-6 \$90.00 early bird \$100.00 after 12-31***

This fast paced mixture of theatre games and improvisational acting gives students the confidence to create realistic characters and stretches imaginations. Students will learn games to expand expressiveness and develop the actor's tools in order to perform a role. Sessions culminate in an open house performance. Since the class aims to build a sense of community and a theatre troupe, students are encouraged to take both Fall and Winter sessions. New stories, games scripts each time make this class repeatable. Nine hours of instruction a semester.

***Winter Session: Saturdays 1/15/11 – 2/19/11***

***Theatre Arts Studio I Noon – 2:00 PM Saturdays***

***Grades 7-12 \$120.00 early bird \$130.00 after 12-31***

Students spend the semester developing a complex character inspired by their favorite plays, stories or even the world around them. Theatre games combine with formal exercises and training from several acting school of thoughts as we look at all kinds of plays and players. Each session puts a focus on a different genre, style or special acting skill, making these classes repeatable. Sessions culminate in an open house performance. Twelve hours of instruction a semester.

***Winter Session: Saturdays 1/15/11 – 2/19/11***

***NEW! Be the Star You Are! – Musical Theatre Workshop  
SPRING – Noon – 5PM***

***Grades 4-12 \$200.00 early bird \$225.00 after 3-1***

Four consecutive Saturdays culminating in an evening Musical Theatre Showcase performance. Students grouped by age, choose their own role, then receive instruction from veteran dance, voice and acting instructors to bring that role to life. Please come to the first class with a song you would love to learn and some ideas for your favorite role. Twenty hours of instruction a semester.

***Spring Session: Saturdays 3/19/11 – 4/9/11***

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 4 days prior to the first class** - if space is available.  
Should a class cancel – the decision will be made on Wednesday or Saturday before the first class.  
**Don't delay. Space is limited.**

**REGISTRATION FORM - clip and mail**

To register - mail the form below to:

**Hershey Area Playhouse**  
**PO Box 703 - Hershey, PA 17033**

TUITION FOR THE ENTIRE SESSION IS DUE AND PAYABLE AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.  
PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO **HERSHEY AREA PLAYHOUSE**.  
INCLUDE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH STUDENT.

**Sign me up for the following session:**

**WINTER SESSIONS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Creative kids (K-3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Acting it Up (4-6)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Theatre Arts Studio I (7-12)

**SPRING SESSIONS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Be the Star You Are! (4-12)

**Name of student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of parent or guardian** (if under 18)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions?** Contact **Cory Wilkerson** at [cory@dramainside.net](mailto:cory@dramainside.net) or **717-269-9026**

**HERSHEY AREA PLAYHOUSE**

PO Box 703, Hershey, PA 17033

717-533-8525 • [HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com](http://HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com)

## Kid's Corner

### Sarah Bixler



I think you'll agree that Sarah isn't much of a kid who should be put in a corner. We wanted to profile her because of the work she has done with kids. If you are one of the 'campers' who took acting classes this past summer or fall, you probably will recognize Sarah. She has been the Acting Class intern, aiding with the elementary and middle school groups, while taking the high school classes herself. In fact, she has been taking acting classes at the Playhouse for about eight years- half of her life!

Sarah has been homeschooled since first grade by her Mom, whom she credits as also helping her with her lines and costumes. The rest of her family includes her Dad, two siblings, her dog Cheech, and several cats. Her love of animals, if not obvious already, extends even further. She is happiest when riding horses. Her dream job is to become an equine veterinarian, really anything to do with helping or training horses.

Sarah's other interests include videography, photography, and model horse collecting.

#### 1. How did you get interested in theatre?

I always loved entertaining my family and friends and I wanted to share my talents with other people through the theater.

#### 2. What other 'skills' do you have and that you have maybe taken classes on to help you?

Over the summer Cory Wilkerson (*who's an amazing teacher!*) held a Shakespeare/Stage combat camp.

I loved working with a sword and learning how to NOT hit someone!

#### 3. What shows have you participated in?

*Honoring the Gifts*, and *Classy* with Hershey Area Playhouse Academy Players. I also worked backstage for *Wait Until Dark* and *Hello Dolly!*

#### 4. What's your favorite thing about doing theatre?

In theatre you can be anyone or anything you want. You get to see things from a different point of view, and sometimes you might find similarities to yourself in characters that you would least expect.

#### 5. What do you find the hardest/most challenging thing about theatre?

It's challenging for me to create believable, unique, and relatable characters. It's not enough to just act like someone, you have to have an inner monologue running all the time of what the character is thinking, feeling or wanting.

#### 6. What has been your favorite role/character so far?

In the Shakespeare/ Stage combat camp I was asked to play Mercutio in a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. I wasn't really sure about the role at first because I'm used to doing comedy. I wasn't sure I could play a serious role well. However, I found similarities between Mercutio and myself and really got into portraying the character. I also got to try out some of my new skills with a sword.

#### 7. What other areas of theatre are you interested in trying or doing?

In one of my drama classes, Cory introduced us to Commedia dell'arte which is an Italian form of popular comedy developed during the 16th and 17th centuries. I'd like to do more because I found the physical antics of the Zanni challenging to learn and highly entertaining to perform.

#### 8. Do you have a dream role or show you would like to do, what is it?

I'd like to be any character in a performance of *Sweeney Todd*, which is my favorite musical. The dark themes are a nice change from the light and happy themes of other musicals.

#### 9. If you were going to encourage other kids to do theatre, what would you say?

Theater is a fantastic learning experience for everyone, and you'll meet people who treat you like family no matter how different you are.



P.O. Box 703  
Hershey, PA 17033

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## Calendar

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>An Evening of Song</b> .....                           | January 15, 2011       |
| <b>The Importance of Being Earnest</b> Performances ..... | February 10 - 13, 2011 |
|   | February 17 - 20, 2011 |
| <b>The Dining Room</b> Auditions .....                    | February 20 - 21, 2011 |
| <b>Paddy's Pot</b> Performances .....                     | March 17 - 20, 2011    |
| <b>Cabaret Night</b> .....                                | April 2, 2011          |
| <b>The Dining Room</b> Performances .....                 | April 28 - May 1, 2011 |
| <b>Seussical the Musical</b> Auditions .....              | May 1 - 2, 2011        |
|   | May 5 - 8, 2011        |
| <b>Seussical the Musical</b> Performances .....           | July 21 - 24, 2011     |
|   | July 28 - 31, 2011     |
| <b>Proof</b> Auditions .....                              | August 21 - 22, 2011   |
| <b>The Guys</b> Performances .....                        | September 8 - 10, 2011 |
| <b>Proof</b> Performances .....                           | October 20 - 23, 2011  |
| <b>The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</b> Auditions .....    | October 27 - 30, 2011  |
| <b>The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</b> Performances ..... | December 1 - 4, 2011   |
|   | December 8 - 11, 2011  |

Visit [HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com](http://HersheyAreaPlayhouse.com) for the most up-to-date calendar listings.