

**THE  
BACKSTAGE PASS**

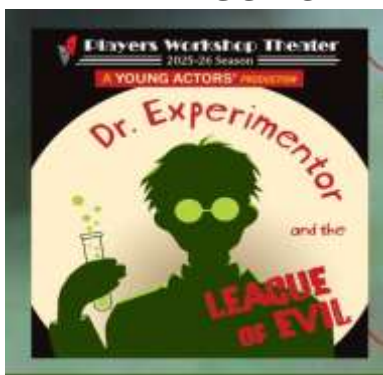
**DRACULA: A COMEDY OF TERRORS  
CLOSES PW'S REGULAR SEASON**



DRACULA HAS LEFT THE BUILDING! He may have left, but the laughter lingers. “My cheeks still hurt from laughing.” “Hilarious! The acting was incredible!” “Definitely my favorite one yet!” “. . . laughing out loud, hysterically funny.”--these were just a few of the comments heard about this play as PW closed its regular season with this hit.

Thanks to a great cast and crew for some terrific entertainment on the PW stage! We will never look at vampires the same way again!

**YAP PRESENTS  
DR. EXPERIMENTOR  
AND THE LEAGUE OF EVIL**



Players Workshop will present the 2026 Young Actor Production *Dr. Experimentor and the League of*

*Evil* by Charlotte Nixon from June 25 through June 28, 2026, at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St., Burlington.

*Dr. Experimentor and the League of Evil* introduces us to Dr. Experimentor, a supervillainous mastermind, who must fight to maintain his membership in the infamous League of Evil; however, membership means defeating superhero Extremo, who happens to be his best friend! To make matters worse, Dr. Experimentor faces relentless pressure from Agnes and Abigail Anarchy, ambitious upstart villains eager for his downfall. Armed with his arsenal of ingenious inventions — minions, Vegetarian Zombies, Pacifist Ninjas, and Robot Soldiers — Dr. Experimentor faces an impossible choice: defeat his superhero or suffer at the hands of the League!

The cast is as follows:

**The Super Friends**

Extremo Will Baker  
Dr. Experimentor Sam Reckling

**The League of Evil**

Mayor Mayhem Abram Hartje  
Abigail Anarchy Avery Irish  
Agnes Anarchy Austyn Deutch

**The Minions**

Minion 1 Quinn Pranger  
Minion 2 Madison Mitchell  
Minion 3 Chloe Williams

**The Zombies**

Zombie 1 Laylianna Burk-Foryth  
Zombie 2 Noah Snyder  
Zombie 3 Regina Critser  
Zombie 4 Ian Franklin  
Catlady Harlee Ayer

**Mutant Ninja Bunnies**

Picasso Gianna Vaughn  
Van Gogh Victoria Anderson  
Warhol Ella Joyce  
Dali Alla Plein

**Robot Soldiers**

Stallone Chloe Carter  
Schwarzenegger DonnaLynne Pappalardo  
Van Damme Seth Hansen  
Diesel Cecellia Jefferson

**Street Toughs**

Devon Isla Heckert  
Daryl Journey Carr

Danny  
**Mad Scientists**

Dr. Depraved  
Dr. Deplorable  
Dr. Dreadful

Nora Brakeville

Allyson Hamilton  
Lily O'Brien  
George Baker

The cast, some of whom have appeared in previous YAP shows and many of whom are new to the PW stage, hail from Burlington, West Burlington, New London, Danville, Mt. Pleasant, Oquawka, IL, and Fort Madison.

Directing the show is Anika Morton, assisted by Matt Poling and Zach Hite-Reckling. Junior assistant directors are Brady Lenaham, Islia Rodeffer, and Sean Hansen. Robbin Poling is the producer.

Other crew members are Alexis Rosler (stage manager), Steve Poling (set design), Krystal Johnson and Sophia May (hair/makeup), Kaitlyn Broeg and Julie Hamilton (props), Nikki Critser, Aurora Critser, and Cori Copeland (costumes), and Dave Beckman (photographer).

Shows will be at 7:00 p.m. on June 25, 26, and 27; the June 28 show will be a 2:00 p.m. matinee.

**Tickets will be available for purchase online (beginning June 11)** and will also be available at the door on the days of the performances. Prices are \$5.00 for students and \$10.00 for adults. The box office opens at 6:00 p.m., except for the Sunday matinee when it opens at 1:00 p.m. All seating is assigned.

*Dr. Experimentor and the League of Evil* is presented with permission of Pioneer Drama Service.

For more information, call the Workshop at 319-753-6623, go to the Workshop's Facebook page, or go to [www.playersworkshoptheater.com](http://www.playersworkshoptheater.com).

## SEASON REVEAL PARTY HAD GREAT TURNOUT



Players Workshop welcomed more than 90 people to the Workshop, as it held the first-ever season reveal party on April 11!

The event kicked off with a lively “mocktail hour,” where guests enjoyed a variety of show-themed food and beverages inspired by the upcoming season. The unique offerings were a clear hit among patrons, adding a flavorful and festive touch to the experience.

The music of local violinist Claire Tillotson enhanced the experience, as the event highlighted the theater's new community-driven identity and guests were encouraged to embrace the hashtag **#IAMPW (I AM PW)**. Also during this time, many patrons took advantage of the opportunity to purchase their 2026-2027 season tickets at current season prices and receive a PW “swag bag.”

The highlight of the evening was the Season Reveal Video, where audiences responded with enthusiastic applause as each production was unveiled. The video featured interviews with each show's director, and each offered insights into a vision for that particular production. (The season line-up for 2026-2027 is listed below.) **Attendees were also informed that, beginning with the 2026-2027 season, all evening shows will begin at 7:00 p.m.** This is a change from what it has been for the past several years.

The afternoon concluded with a lively Q & A session, where audience members were given the chance to connect directly with the directors, and PW used the opportunity to promote the upcoming *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* and the YAP summer production of *Dr. Experimentor and the League of Evil*.

PW sends a big “thank you” to all who attended, renewed their season tickets, and/or worked on making this afternoon a resounding success.

## WELCOME PW'S 2026-2027 SEASON!

### **ANGEL STREET**

by Patrick Hamilton  
Suspense Thriller  
3W/2M

Oct. 2-4, 8-11, 2026

Lee Franklin, Director

Presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.



Also known as *Gaslight* (you might have seen the 1940's *film noir* starring Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman), the story is set in 19<sup>th</sup>-century London; it deals with the attempt of a husband to slowly and subtly drive his wife insane, in order to conceal his own

criminal activities. The term “gaslighting” originates from this play, which explores themes of psychological abuse, deceit, and a woman’s struggle to reclaim her reality.

### **LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY**

by Topher Payne  
Holiday Farce  
4W/4M

Dec. 4-6, 10-13, 2026  
Gene Anderson, Director  
Produced through special arrangement with  
Best Idea Wins Inc.



Eight actors play 22 characters in this lightning-paced holiday farce! It’s Christmas, and a young couple are awaiting the arrival of their first child. They have asked that their families keep their distance until they bring the baby home, but, of course, no one keeps their distance, in a hilarious Christmas story that celebrates families of all kinds.

### **HOW I BECAME A PIRATE**

Book, Music, and Lyrics  
by Janet Yates Vogt and Mark Friedman  
(Based upon the book *How I Became a Pirate* by  
Melinda Long, illustrated by David Shannon)  
Fantasy Musical

3M/5 of either gender  
Feb. 19-21, 25-28, 2027  
Nikki Critser, Director  
Presented through special arrangement with  
Theatrical Rights Worldwide



A delightful, swashbuckling musical adventure the entire family will love! Sail off on a fantastic musical excursion when a band of comical pirates lands at North

Beach, looking for an expert digger to join their crew as they search for the perfect spot to bury their treasure. Kids of all ages will love this one!

### **SILENT SKY**

by Lauren Gunderson  
Historical Drama  
4W/1M

April 23-25, 29-May2, 2027  
Adam Fauser, Director

Presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on  
behalf of Dramatists Play Service



This play tells the true story of 19<sup>th</sup> century astronomer Henrietta Leavitt, as it explores a woman’s place in society during a time of immense scientific discoveries when women’s discoveries were usually discounted in favor of giving credit to their male counterparts. In this poignant tale of a woman’s dedication to the stars, the “ahead of her time” Leavitt ultimately makes a scientific discovery that has a profound and lasting impact on the field of astronomy.

### **OUT-OF-SEASON**

#### **YOUNG ACTOR PRODUCTION**

### **THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN LOCKS**

by Brian D. Taylor  
Fairy Tale Adventure  
5M/10W + 12 roles either gender  
June 24-27, 2027

Anika Morton, Director  
Produced by special arrangement with  
Pioneer Drama Service



Kids will love this world of fairy tale espionage and intrigue, where top-level spies take on the kingdom’s worst criminal masterminds, when agents of the Fairy Tale Bureau of Intelligence take on the biggest mission

of their lives--battling dwarves and witches, porridge and magic beans, giants and double-agents, as they race to stay one step ahead and save the kingdom from Public Enemy # 1!



## **PLAYERS WORKSHOP ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MAY 20**

Players Workshop will hold its Annual General Membership Meeting on Wed., May 20, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Workshop.

There will be election of new members to the Board of Directors, election of the President, reports about the past season and the upcoming season, and reports about the financial status of the organization.

Nominations committee chairman Bill Ell reports that 7 people have announced their candidacies for election to the Board of Directors. In keeping with PW tradition, Ell submitted the following questions to each candidate:

- Why do you want to serve on the PW Board of directors?
- What strengths and skills will you bring to the PW Board of Directors?
- How have you been involved in the PW to this point?

Below is the list of candidates (in alphabetical order) and their replies to the questions. Some replies have been edited due to space constraints.

**Nicki Critser**—"I enjoy serving on the board, because I have a passion for our theater. I feel like I bring a good perspective to the group. I try my best to be focused on the future of the theater in all aspects.

"I am very dedicated. I tend to put my all into every endeavor. I do my best to hear from everyone and take all the information in before making a decision. I take my responsibilities seriously.

"I am currently involved in play selection, youth committee, costumes, lobby committee, and the board. I have been volunteering with PW since 2019 with my children, both behind the scenes as well as being on stage."

**Lee Franklin**—No Response

**Brittany Gerst**—"I like to volunteer on the board because I love this theater and the volunteers and people

who come to see the shows. PW is very active in our community, and I would like to continue bringing live theater to everyone.

"I am a good listener and keep my mind open when presented new ideas or perspectives of others.

"I have been a volunteer since 2017 and am currently the Treasurer. I have helped as a stage manager, stage hand, light booth tech, usher, board member, actor, and a lot more. I am currently the chair of the Finance committee, and member of the Youth committee and Member & Community Engagement committees."

**Jason Guyton**—"My dedication to the performing arts and my belief in the transformative power of community theater have motivated me to pursue this opportunity. I have a deep appreciation for the culture and sense of belonging that the Players Workshop fosters in Burlington, a vital aspect of our community that enriches our lives and enhances our artistic landscape.

"[Through obtaining my music degree at WIU and currently holding a supervisory position in my professional life] I understand that successful productions are born from a collective effort, and I am eager to bring this perspective to the Board of Directors. I am committed to supporting the Players Workshop's mission and ensuring that Burlington continues to thrive as a hub for artistic expression.

"I've had the privilege to be part of several productions, including *Comedy of Tenors*, *On the Farce Day of Christmas*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*, where I took on the unique challenge of portraying 'Audrey 2' while also directing the pit orchestra and fellow actors, showcasing my versatility in both acting and music. I look forward to the opportunity to work both behind the scenes and on stage, contributing to the vibrant arts community we cherish."

**Krystal Johnson**—"I feel very passionate about the art of live theater! I have loved PW since the first time I set foot inside the door. I want to ensure the future of PW is strong so generations to come can enjoy this little gem.

"My previous experience: Grimes Elementary PTO (Secretary, President), Code Red- Period Poverty (Co-Founder, Vice President, current secretary), Optimist International Club (board member, scholarship chair), Take Away Hunger (board member), Zion UCC (VP of consistory). My strengths are organization, education, communication, and creativity. I pay attention to details. . . .I love a good challenge. . .

"I have done hair, make-up, and backstage costume changes for *Hallelujah Girls*, *Bedtime Stories...*, *Something Rotten*, and *Dracula*, I am on the youth committee, and this summer I have taken on IVRS

day (insert shameless plug here for volunteers July 9th). I'm still a new kid on the block . . . ,but I rarely say 'no.'"

**Anika Morton**—"I'm currently finishing a 2-year term on the PW Board of Directors. I joined the board because I like being involved with the community and encouraging the youth to pursue the arts. I hope to continue working with the next generation of "theater kids" and to continue growing our programs. I have enjoyed helping keep PW's various activities going while propelling us to a sustainable future to pass on to the next generation.

"As the youngest board member my biggest strength is in getting more young people involved and learning new skills in the different areas of the theater.

"I have been on stage as an actor in a couple of shows; *Mamma Mia* and *Sister Act*. I've been behind the scenes in others: running lights/sound, hair and makeup, stage manager and crew, as well as assistant directing and currently serving as the director of this year's youth production of *Dr. Experimentor and the League of Evil*. I also serve on the Fundraising committee, the Youth committee and the Costume Committee.

**Njeri Patric**—"I'm 35 years old and I'm the Chief Domestic Engineer, Director of Operations and Chief Executive Officer of The Patric Family. I'm married to Elijah and we have three daughters, Naomi, Hadassah and Lydia. I would like to serve on the Board of Directors to help keep this valuable piece of Burlington's history alive, to have a creative outlet for all those who wish to join for generations to come!

"I don't bring a lot of strength and skill to the table, being in a bit of a crazy season of life, but I am a willing listener and love encouraging the creative energy everyone else brings along! I will be PW's biggest cheerleader!

"I moved to Burlington in 2021, and have been involved at Players Workshop since 2022 in various capacities: performing, choreographing and helping out backstage."

In addition to the 7 candidates listed above, nominations will also be accepted from the floor on the night of the meeting.

Voting for the President of Players Workshop will also take place at the meeting. Currently the only stated candidate is incumbent Mary Fox, who also submitted her answers to the same questions posed to the board candidates. Below are her responses.

**Mary Fox**—"I retired a number of years ago from a career in manufacturing quality management. This career path taught me to be customer focused. No matter

what you're offering, you always want the customer to return. I bring that mindset with me to PW. I would like to continue as President because Players Workshop Theater means a great deal to me. I value the people, the creativity, and the sense of community we share. I'm committed to supporting our volunteers, encouraging new ideas, and helping the theater grow while honoring its traditions.

"I bring strong organizational skills and clear communication, along with a deep commitment to the success and sustainability of PW. I value collaboration, enjoy working with other volunteers, and strive to help keep projects organized and moving forward. I'm dedicated to supporting the theater's mission and helping ensure PW continues to thrive for years to come.

"I've been involved with PW since appearing in *Sex Please, We're Sixty* in 2014. Since then, I've had the opportunity to serve in many roles, including director, stage manager, producer, board member, board president, Facebook page creator, and box office manager. I've also pitched in at nearly every clean-up day and garage sale, and even helped clean the theater during those challenging COVID days. PW means a great deal to me, and I try to contribute wherever I'm needed."

Nominations for President will also be accepted from the floor on the night of the meeting.

All dues-paying members of Players Workshop are eligible to vote in the elections, but you must be present to do so.

All members are encouraged to attend, to help determine the future of Players Workshop.

If anybody has questions regarding Players Workshop's annual general membership meeting, please contact [mfox6046@gmail.com](mailto:mfox6046@gmail.com) or telephone/text 319-750-6046.

## PLAYERS WORKSHOP LOSES HERB PRICE



Players Workshop mourns the passing of longtime PW member Herb Price, 78, on April 8, 2026, following a years-long battle with cancer.

Originally dragged to the Workshop by his theater wife Sally, Herb became an asset for many decades as he threw himself into full participation.

He produced 9 plays, helped build sets, ushered—whatever needed to be done, Herb was there—doing everything from cleaning gutters to organizing scripts.

He was also an actor—appearing in 2 PW productions and in various skits in the Burlington area, some as part of PW outreach and others for community organizations.

Herb served on various PW committees, but his crowning achievement was to start the digitization process for play photographs and programs, leading the PW Board to officially establish the Archives Committee (as it is now known) in 2010. Herb was an original member of the committee and remained an integral member of it until his recent passing.

Herb's other pastimes included an interest in cemeteries, toy trains and Studebaker automobiles. For many years he was chairman of the Des Moines County Pioneer Cemetery Commission. Later in life he enjoyed traveling with his wife.

Players Workshop extends its deepest condolence to his beloved wife Sally, his children, and grandchildren. We will miss him.

**Please don't forget—if you are moving, please let PW know of your address changes so that we may make the appropriate changes to the newsletter mailing list. The post office charges us for all returned mail. Contact Mary Weinand ([mary.weinand@yahoo.com](mailto:mary.weinand@yahoo.com) or 319-750-4651) with any changes. THANK YOU.**

## **DON'T FORGET SMUGMUG**



SmugMug is an online platform (website) for photographers to store, share, and sell their photos.

This includes longtime PW photographer DAVID BECKMAN, and he has many PW production pictures available. David is also donating any proceeds from the sale of his pictures to PW.

If you would like to view or purchase photos of any of our recent plays, scan the QR code below and go to [www.davidbeckman.smugmug.com](http://www.davidbeckman.smugmug.com). If you would like photos from an earlier performance, send your request to [pw6623@gmail.com](mailto:pw6623@gmail.com), and we will see if we have photos from that show.



Please remember that these photos are copyrighted and not to be shared. Proceeds help Players Workshop.

**If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, contact Mary Weinand ([mary.weinand@yahoo.com](mailto:mary.weinand@yahoo.com) or 319-750-4651) to have your name removed from the mailing list. (Prefer an email version? Contact [pw6623@gmail.com](mailto:pw6623@gmail.com), to have the newsletter converted to electronic format.)**

## **PW SUPPORTING CAST 2025-2026**



Players Workshop invites you to join the Supporting Cast for 2025-2026 season.

This one-time financial donation runs for the theatrical season, contributing significantly to the financial stability of PW.

All those who join will have their names listed in each play program and newsletter, as well as on the PW website, for 2025-26.

You may join the Honorary Supporting Cast for 2025-2026 by completing the form at the end of this newsletter or the form in your play program.

Donations may be made in one of the following categories:

**Usher \$25-\$99      Stage Crew \$100-\$249**  
**Supporting Actor \$250-\$499      Star \$500-\$999**  
**Director \$1000-\$2499      Producer \$2500+**  
The following have already joined for 2025-2026.

**Director**

Barb Bonnett (in memory of George Bonnett)  
Rollen Giffin  
George & Clara Klein

**Star**

Tonja & Tim Binder  
Mary Fox  
Lillian Rubin

**Supporting Actor**

Carolyn Dorting  
Bonnie Downes  
Barbara Drozd (in memory of Jim Drozd)  
Dr. Amy Groeltz -- The Smile Shoppe  
Jon & Peggy Hart  
Judy Johnson

River Ridge Dental – Dr. Nathan Heubner  
Brian & Sara Sink

Duane & Bev Sherbondy  
Kathy & Kevin Wolfskill

**Stage Crew**

Cindy & Darrell Bachtell  
Connie Bowen  
Don & Kathy Butler  
Dan & Kathy Cahill  
Lois Close  
Carol Copeland  
Robert Haines

**Hazell Agencies, Burlington, IA**

Kay Hanna & Tim Hutchins  
(in memory of Susan Diehl & Bobbie Hillard)  
Dean & Karen Hurliman  
Carol Janosik

Renita Jarrett & Dave Dorethy

**Mike & Karen Johnstone**

Cynthia Leonard  
Donna & Jan Logan  
Dean & Pam Marshall  
Keith McNeil (in memory of Maxine)

Lori Moore  
Ralph Parish  
Prugh Funeral Service  
Jim Raudabaugh  
Chip & Dana Readinger

Carol Reed  
Marlis Robberts  
Tim Roberts  
Kathy & John Schneider  
Matt & Mary Shivers  
Peggy Stott  
Nancy St. Clair

Olive Sullivan (in memory of Mary Krohlow & Rod Reeves)

Henry Villareal  
Kay Wilson  
Merry Wiseman (in memory of Rod Reeves)  
Tammy Kimmel-Wunderlich

**Usher**

Judith Bartachek  
Jill Baumert  
Sally Bird  
Jackquelyn Edwards (in memory of Dave Edwards)  
KC & Beth Fleming

Barbara Hahn  
Zachary Hall  
Scott Hartje  
Karen Hassel  
Melinda & Dave Hentzel  
Linda Hoenic

Marlene Holsteen  
Katherine Hoth  
Maureen Hutchcroft

Jessica Irish  
Ladonna Kitsch  
Faith Krause  
Shylah Lonahan  
Pat Mayle

Linda Messer  
Kenneth Morris  
Linda Peitz

Pamela Pinkston

John & Lisa Pomberg

Connie Quee (in memory of Rod Reeves)

Jeff Rucker

Jane Sanford

Kathleen Schier

Dorothy Schulte

Anita Stapleton

**Lora Turner**

Kathryn Waterhouse

Martha Wolf

Calley Yaeger

**PLAYERS WORKSHOP** sends sincere thanks to the following who made general donations since the last newsletter: **Brad Cathcart, Jeanine M. Kemp Joe Sattler, and John Wetteland.** Thank you so much for supporting local community theater.

Editor: Bonnie Downes (catlady60450@msn.com)

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Mary Weinand

President: Mary Fox

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***HONORARY SUPPORTING CAST DONATION FORM***

Join the **Honorary Supporting Cast** and make a one-time donation for the 2025-2026 season.

Six Donor Levels Available:

Usher \$25-\$99      Stage Crew \$100-\$249      Supporting Actor \$250-\$499      Star \$500-\$999  
Director \$1000-\$2499      Producer \$2500 +

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Donation Amount \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer my gift remain anonymous. \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make a donation but do not wish to be listed in the Honorary Supporting Cast. \_\_\_\_\_

**Send completed form to Players Workshop, PO Box 793, Burlington, IA 52601**

You may also contribute by clicking on the DONATE button at the top of the PW website  
([playersworkshoptheater.com](http://playersworkshoptheater.com)) or using the link on the PW Facebook page.

Players Workshop is a 501(c)3 organization.