

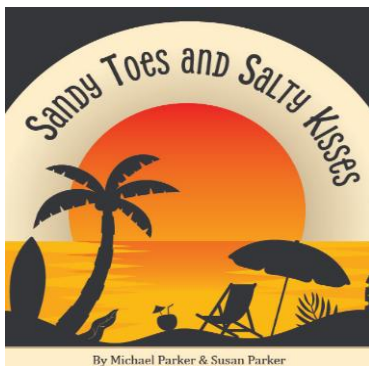
BACKSTAGE PASS

PW'S HOLIDAY OFFERING A HIT!



The Workshop's holiday presentation of *Miracle on South Division Street* provided laughter, tears, and applause, as everyone gave 100% on the stage, despite inclement weather (two performances had to be entirely cancelled as Mother Nature didn't seem to realize there was a show going on!). Many thanks and "Bravos" to all for their stellar work! This type of dedication is the heart of our community theater. And . . . Please accept the Players Workshop apology for the inconvenience caused by the cancellations, but we were concerned for patron and participants being out during bad road conditions. Thank you for your understanding.

NEXT UP --



PW COMEDY OPENING IN FEBRUARY

Chase away the winter blues with Players Workshop's hilarious upcoming comedy *Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses* by Michael Parker and Susan Parker.

Described by one critic as ". . . fast-paced action, inventive physical comedy and crackling dialogue, *Sandy Toes & Salty Kisses* is an audience hit from start to finish . . .", the show opens at the Workshop at 1431 Grove St., Burlington, on Feb. 20, 2026, and runs for 2 weekends.

The story is set at The Lovers' Landing Beach Hotel, which is on a barrier island on the Gulf of Mexico.

The hotel is a popular wedding destination, which has acquired a certain mystique and which Audrina Brown has just inherited from her late father. That's when she discovers that her Uncle Bubba, the hotel manager, is running a variety of "extra-curricular activities," which, without exception, appear to be illegal, on the property! They run the gamut from cash-prize bingo to a rum distillery to off-track betting. You name it, Bubba is doing it! Into this situation come a New England blue blood and her daughter, who are checking things out for the daughter's wedding, and, well, everything quickly gets out of hand.

Appearing in the play are Anna Short of Burlington, as Audrina Brown, and Kevin Gobble of Wever as Wilberforce Brown, aka Uncle Bubba. Joni Ellison of Carthage plays Candy, the ditzy hotel receptionist; Jane Gobble of Wever is the "aristocratic" Beatrice Rutherford-Smythe; Fawn Orduno of Burlington plays her daughter Traci Rutherford-Smythe, who just wants to get married without all the hoopla; Todd Haeffner of Montrose is Douglas Dupont, a guest who is a victim of mistaken identity; and Ivan Orduno of Burlington is Peter Mudd, Traci's fiancée who keeps getting caught up in situations not of his own making.

PW veteran Libba Flores is directing, assisted by Joni Brainerd. Carol Hinkle is the producer.

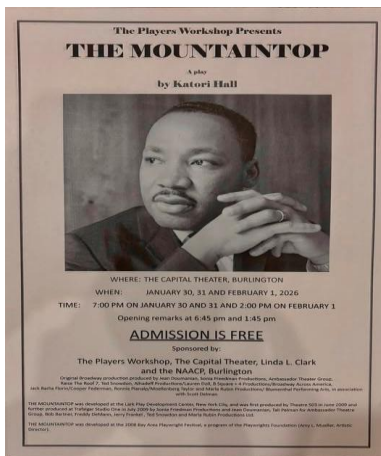
Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses will run Feb. 20-22 and Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2026. All shows are at 7:30 p.m., except for Feb. 22 and March 1, which are 2:00 p.m. matinees.

Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

For more information, call the Workshop at 319-753-6623, go to the Workshop's Facebook page, or go to www.playersworkshoptheater.com.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter,
contact Mary Weinand
(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, to have the newsletter
converted to electronic format.)

**PLAYERS WORKSHOP
&
CAPITOL THEATER
PROUDLY PRESENT
THE MOUNTAINTOP**



Players Workshop is pleased to partner with Capitol Theater of Burlington to commemorate Black History Month by presenting a FREE, live production of Katori Hall's modern American classic *The Mountaintop*.

Set entirely in Room 306 of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN, *The Mountaintop* is a "gripping reimagination" of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, last night on earth.

In 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., was in Memphis, to speak out on the behalf of the Memphis sanitation workers who had gone on strike after the deaths of two workers who had been crushed by a malfunctioning truck. The poor work conditions and pay the sanitation workers suffered angered the black community and encouraged them to speak out on behalf of other issues concerning civil rights.

On April 3, 1968, the night before his assassination, King gave his speech, *I've Been to the Mountaintop*, where he declared, "We've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through."

After delivering the speech, an exhausted Dr. King returns to his room at the Lorraine Motel while a storm rages outside. When a mysterious stranger arrives with some surprising news, King is forced to confront his destiny and his legacy to his people.

Appearing in the production are Victor Walker and Njeri Patric. Kent Lewis of Players Workshop, assisted by Jim Beres, is directing the play, which is also being sponsored by the local chapter of NAACP.

American playwright Katori Hall is from Memphis, TN. In March 2010, after the British production of *The Mountaintop*, Hall became the first black woman in history to win the Olivier Award for Best New Play. The original Broadway production starred Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Bassett.

The Mountaintop will be presented at the Capitol Theater, 211 North 3rd St., Burlington, on Jan. 30 and 31, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. and on Feb. 1, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

For more information, contact director Lewis at 319-759-1414 or the Capitol Theater at 319-237-1099. Information will also be available on the Facebook pages of both Players Workshop and Capitol Theater and at www.playersworkshoptheater.com.

The Mountaintop is presented through special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service.

Don't miss this one-of-a-kind production—and it's FREE!

PW KIDS DO LIVING WINDOWS!



Players Workshop was once again represented during downtown Burlington's 2026 Living Windows Event, as The Players Workshop Young Actors had a great time doing a Peanuts Christmas skit, built around the dance scene in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, in the window at PVT Accounting.

PW's participation was coordinated by PW's Anna Short, assisted by Nikki Critser. According to

Short, the idea was to do “something fast so that, if people even just briefly walked by, they would know what it was.” Response was positive from those who saw the students, with comments ranging from “love this,” “so cute,” and “fun to watch.”

The students involved were Clark Short, Regina Critser, Lauren Johnon, Noah Snyder, George Baker, William Baker, Jackson Chezum, Parker Fritz, Syllas Jones, Rori Jones, Evelyn Quattromini, Allyson Hamilton, Avery Irish, and Collin Underwood.

Thanks to all the kids and adults for their positive representation of Players Workshop and a special thanks to PVT Accounting for, once again, allowing PW to use their window.



DRACULA: A COMEDY OF TERRORS

Players Workshop will hold open auditions for its spring show—*Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* by Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen—on Sunday and Monday, March 1-2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., at the Workshop at 1431 Grove Street.

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors is loosely (very loosely) based on the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. “Ever wondered what would happen if you took Bram Stoker’s legendary vampire tale and put it into a blender with Mel Brooks, Monty Python, and *The 39 Steps*? That’s just what happens in this lightning-fast, laugh-out-loud gender-bending romp. When her sister Mina falls ill with a mysterious disease of the blood, Lucy Westfeldt and her fiancé, Jonathan Harker, enlist the help of famed female vampire hunter Doctor Jean Van Helsing. Their hunt for the dangerous and sexy Count Dracula abounds in this bloodcurdlingly hilarious send-up to the literary classic.”

The directors are looking for 5-6 actors of any gender, but they **must** be aged 18 and older. Some actors will play more than one role, and there may also be gender-bending of some roles. For example, even though a role may be written as a female, a male actor could play it and vice versa.

Kara Ewinger is the director; she will be assisted by Adam Fauser. For more information, and for

anyone wishing to obtain an audition packet with additional descriptions of the characters and a copy of the sides that will be used at auditions, please contact Kara at 319-759-0667 or at karaewinger@yahoo.com.

The show is slated for production on Apr. 24-26 and Apr. 30-May 3, 2026.

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals, NY.



IT’S NOT TOO EARLY to start thinking about the annual Players Workshop Garage Sale. During these long winter months, when you might feel the urge to clean out a closet, an attic, a basement, a desk, or a garage, please consider what items you might find which you could donate to PW’s big summer fundraiser. For more information or suggestions, please contact PW’s own garage sale maven Libba Flores, at 319-750-3533.



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 above and go to www.davidbeckman.smugmug.com. If you would like photos from an earlier performance, send your request to 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.

WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW?

In case you were curious, below is the list of

PW's Officers and Board of Directors:

Officers

President: Mary Fox
Vice-President: Kent Lewis
Treasurer: Brittany Gerst
Secretary: Michelle Huppenbauer

Board of Directors

(in alphabetical order)

Gene Anderson
Joni Brainerd
Christine Claeys
Nikki Critser
Jody Ellison
Cody Flietner
Libba Flores
Amy Ford
Lee Franklin
Jayne Gobble
Carol Hinkle
Anika Morton
Njeri Patric
Anna Short

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)
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

Brian & Sara Sink

Duane & Bev Sherbondy

Kathy & Kevin Wolfskill

Stage Crew

Cindy & Darrell Bachtell

Connie Bowen

Dan & Kathy Cahill

Lois Close

Carol Copeland

Robert Haines

Dean & Karen Hurliman

Carol Janosik

Renita Jarrett & Dave Dorethy

Mike & Karen Johnston

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

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.

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 Hoenig
 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
 Calley Yaeger

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE!



COMING SOON:
ANNOUNCEMENT OF
PLAYERS WORKSHOP'S
2026-2027 SEASON!

IS THIS COMMITTEE FOR YOU?



One of the things that keeps Players Workshop functioning is the work of volunteer committees. From time to time, *The Backstage Pass* will feature these, so you may determine if you might like to become involved. First up—

THE MARKETING COMMITTEE

The Marketing Committee coordinates all marketing material/media (newspaper, radio, social media, website, flyers, etc.). Their job is to build awareness for the theater throughout the community.

This is done by promoting the season as well as each individual show by writing press releases, social media posts, newsletters, and updates to the website. They are tasked with maintaining a consistent look and tone through logos, color, and messaging. In addition, promoting the work of other committees such as membership, donor campaigns, and special events is an important part of this committee's work.

In short, the marketing committee tells the theater's story, makes sure people know what's happening, and helps turn community interest into attendance and support.

Currently, Jayne Gobble is the chair of the committee. Other members (in alphabetical order) are Bonnie Downes, Kara Ewinger, Cody Flietner, and Mary Wienand. Pres. Mary Fox is an ex-officio member.

The marketing committee is currently looking for volunteers with experience in writing newsletters and press releases, as well as someone with web designing experience. If you're interested in helping, please contact Jayne Gobble at jaynemjg@yahoo.com.



from *The Backstage Pass*

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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) or using the link on the PW Facebook page.

Players Workshop is a 501(c)3 organization.