

BACKSTAGE PASS

NEXT UP ON THE PW STAGE:



GET IN THE HOLIDAY MOOD

Players Workshop ushers in the holiday season with Ken Levine's holiday comedy *On the Farce Day of Christmas*, which will run at the Workshop Dec. 6-8 and 12-15, 2024.

Under the direction of Catherine Hansen, assisted by Gene Anderson, *On the Farce Day of Christmas* tells of the havoc that ensues when, to keep her religious mother from knowing she's divorced, Wendy pays her ex to pose as her husband and go home for the holidays. Mary Fox will produce, assisted by Anika Morton.

The cast for *On the Farce Day of Christmas* is as follows: PW newcomer Kersten (Kas) Cox plays Wendy; Anna Short plays Wendy's mom—Anna was last seen in PW's *The Outsider*; Wendy's dad is played by Jason Guyton (last heard as the Voice of Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors*); Hayden Roberts portrays Wendy's ex-husband Gary—Hayden recently appeared as "Everybody Else" in *Little Shop of Horrors*; another PW newcomer, Megan Mickael, plays Wendy's best friend Karen, whom Gary makes a play for; rounding out the cast is Jim Brand as Chip, Wendy's current boyfriend who is itching to "pop the question"—Jim also appeared in *Little Shop of Horrors*, playing Mr. Mushnik. All are from Burlington, except for Brand, who is from West Burlington.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m., except for 2:00 p.m. matinees on Dec. 8 and 15.

On the Farce Day of Christmas is presented through arrangements with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by TRW Plays, New York, NY.

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

PW LOSES A LEGEND



The Players Workshop stage lights are a little dimmer now, with the passing of the beloved Bobbie Hillard, who died on Nov. 3, 2024.

Bobbie, who was born Roberta Feikert in 1938, was a PW fixture, appearing in 3 musicals (*Oklahoma*, *Bells are Ringing*, and *South Pacific* and 2 plays (1959-61) while in her early 20's—this was back when the productions were staged in places like Horace Mann and Memorial Auditoriums because the current venue had not yet been built. According to PW Archivist Mary Krohlow, her loss is "particularly notable" as in 1960, Bobbie was "the last of us who performed in the old carriage house," appearing in *The Gazebo*, the last play done there—the current playhouse is built atop the foundation of that carriage house.

She married Don Hillard in 1962 and took a 27-year hiatus, returning to PW in 1989 in *Bedroom Farce*—She brought Don with her, and, together they were a common sight at the theater (although Don was always on the backstage side).

All told, she appeared in 33 plays and musicals, with her last stage appearance in 2017 in *The Addams Family*. Only a handful of actors have had more PW performances over all these years. Bobbie was particularly known for having a "set of pipes;" most of the musicals done by PW had Bobbie in either a major or a minor role, and nobody had a problem hearing her! She also directed 7 productions, and, when she was sitting in

the audience, her infectious laugh would warm up the crowd.

She also served the organization in other ways; Behind the scenes, she was the make-up artist for many plays; she also painted scenery, did hair, supplied costumes, vacuumed, swept, and even cleaned toilets. For a number of years, she handled Active Membership (at a time when it was all done by one person, not a committee). When it was time for a workday, she would call every single active member. For years she was in charge of calling volunteers to usher and work concessions. Her contagious enthusiasm for Players Workshop always brought out numerous volunteers—it was hard to say “no” to Bobbie.

Recalls long-time PW member Carole Rutenbeck, Bobbie would “loan you furniture or wardrobe, take any part from cameo to lead, provide treats for intermission or a cast party, or host the cast party herself . . . Her big warm personality was matched by that big voice and talent that filled the theatre . . . It was a joy to call her a friend.”

Bobbie was on the board, serving as President and Vice- President. She was a director, assistant director, stage manager, producer, and book holder. If it needed done, Bobbie was there!

She was also a tremendous morale booster, and nobody loved a party more than she did!

Don pre-deceased her in 2017, but she is survived by her daughter Melodie Hillard Hoschek, as well as several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Bobbie’s contributions to the Workshop earned her the 2024 Mayors’ Volunteer Award for Cultural Performing Arts, an honor richly deserved. When told of her nomination, she burst into tears and said “But it’s not me! . . . it’s all the others who are so supportive!”

Bobbie Hillard was one of a kind—she represented everything that is good about Players Workshop-- and her talent, commitment, kindness, and laughter will be missed, but the sound of her laughter will always echo in the theater.



REMINDER—NEW HALF-SEASON TICKETS ON SALE

The new half-season tickets will go on sale Dec. 4th and will end Feb. 2. This half season ticket allows admittance to the last two shows of the season (*Hallelujah Girls* and *Murder on the Orient Express*). They can be purchased online or at the box office.

These half season tickets would make a great Christmas gift for someone special. Individually, the 2

shows would be \$30 for adults or \$20 for youth through high school. The special half season tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for students, a savings of \$5! (Please note that *The Farce Day of Christmas* is not included in this special package.)



FOR



Director Libba Flores has announced open auditions for the winter production of the Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, & Jamie Wooten farce *The Hallelujah Girls*, a southern comedy about a group of women from the town of Eden Falls, Georgia, who vow to change their lives and achieve their dreams after the sudden death of a dear friend. The action takes place in SPA-DEE-DAH!, an abandoned church-turned-day-spa where the group of friends gathers every Friday afternoon. “The story is about loss and renewal, betrayal and forgiveness, missed opportunities, and endless possibilities.”

Auditions will take place on Sun. and Mon., Dec. 15-16, 2024, from 7-9 p.m. at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St. No special preparations or experience is required.

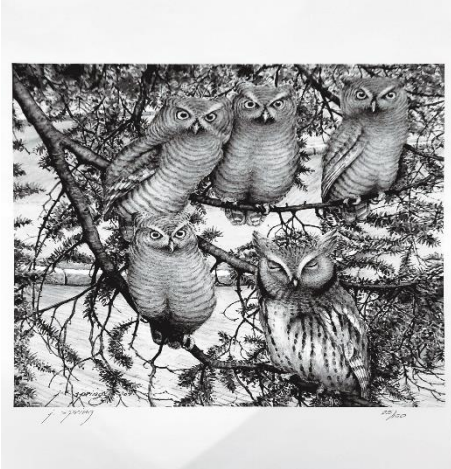
Parts are available for six women and two men—Carlene is no-nonsense woman with a dry wit; Nita is a sweet, simple reader of romance novels; Mavis is brusque and likable (she will have a scene where she wears sexy clothes), Crystal is a daffy, lovable singer of Christmas carols (she will need to be able to play the piano or fake it convincingly); Sugar Lee is a strong leader attracted to Bobby Dwayne, a sexy construction worker and fix-it guy; Bunny is tailored, sophisticated, manipulating, and self-important; and Porter is a nerdy “Mama’s boy” with a horsey laugh and a belly.

Although the cast calls for actors in the 50-60 age range, ages are flexible. Flores says she is “really looking for a cohesive, middle-aged group, rather than a specific age.” She also would definitely consider a man/wife team for the parts of Sugar Lee and Bobby Dwayne, who have to do convincing “romantic” scenes on stage.

The Hallelujah Girls will run Feb. 21-23, 27-28, and March 1-2 at the Workshop. It is presented with permission of Dramatist’s Play Service, NY.

For more specific information on auditions, contact the director Libba Flores, at 319-750-3533 or email godspocket@yahoo.com, go to the Players Workshop Facebook page, or go the PW website www.playersworkshoptheater.com.

PW'S 7th ANNUAL ART RAFFLE



“OWLS IN SPRING”

Players Workshop is once again holding a raffle for a beautiful donated artwork. “Owls in Spring” is a 10.5” x 11.25” limited edition, color print by J. Spring of Burlington. This piece is signed by the artist and numbered 25/150.

“Owls in Spring” may currently be viewed in the Workshop lobby.

Tickets are \$10/each or 3/\$25, and will be sold during intermission of *On the Farce Day of Christmas* and after the show, or you can mail a check for the number of tickets desired, to PW Raffle, P. O. Box 793, Burlington, IA 52601.

Drawing for the winner will take place at the final performance on 12/15/24; you need not be present to win.

Monies earned from previous raffles have been designated to specific Workshop projects, and this is no exception, as proceeds from this raffle will go toward replacing the lobby floor in the Workshop.

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS



Jody Ellison of Carthage is one of the newest members of the Players Workshop Board of Directors, having been elected at last May’s general membership

meeting, so she has served on the board for about 5 months.

She says she was “asked to ‘throw my hat in the ring,’ so to speak,” and, since she believes PW is a “wonderful creative outlet that adds to the esthetics of Burlington,” she agreed. She says she is “just hoping to be helpful and of value.” She is a great believer that “teamwork makes the dream work.”

She loves being on stage—patrons might have seen her wield her comedic chops in plays such as *The Outsider* and last season’s *The Wild Women of Winedale*. For Jody, “being part of a comedic ensemble and creating laughter is food for my soul.” She has even taken online classes with Second City in Chicago!

She currently sits on the Strategic Planning Committee, which is charged with determining future goals for Players Workshop, and developing ways to accomplish them. She hopes Players Workshop continues to grow with future generations.

When she isn’t busy working as a physical therapist assistant (PTA), she like painting, listening to her audio books, and writing, but “NOTHING is better than being on stage!”

Players Workshop happily welcomes Jody to its Board of Directors.

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.)

IT'S TIME FOR THE PLAYERS WORKSHOP ACTIVE MEMBERS



Libba Flores will host PW’s annual Christmas party for its active members on Sat., Nov. 30, at 7:00 p.m., at her home at 1604 River St., Burlington. This is the time for all active volunteers to come together for a bit of fun after a year of dedicated work.

Directions to Libba's are as follows: Turn east on Glenn, off Main St. Parking is only on the west side of River St. and north side of Acres St., one block down on the right. She will leave the driveway open for 2 cars for the people who have difficulty walking.

Libba will be making her famous chicken noodle soup for all. Bring a snack to share, your own drink, and a gift to exchange. Please label the gift for "male," "female," or "either."

Warning: she does have cats and dogs—they will be contained, but, if you are allergic, you might want to take a pill.

PLEASE—YOU CAN HELP PW SAVE MONEY!

If you are on the mailing list for *The Backstage Pass*, and you plan to move or your address has already changed from what we have on record, PLEASE contact Mary Weinand at mary.weinand@yahoo.com or at 319-750-4651. The post office does not notify us, just because you fill out a change of address card, so PW is charged every time a newsletter is returned as "undeliverable" or has "no forwarding address,"--these costs really add up

Thank you.

**THEATER—SO MUCH MORE
THAN JUST ACTORS**



Players Workshop is always looking for volunteers to help in all phases of our productions.

There are so many opportunities, there isn't room to list them all here, but a few PW is in the most need of are set builders, set designers, hair dressers, makeup artists, stage managers, producers, light and sound designers, light and sound booth techs, props manager, costumer, assistant directors . . . and the list goes on.

They will be more than happy to teach you. Besides, it's a lot of fun!

To learn more, go to the Workshop website, and, from the ABOUT US/MEMBERSHIP dropdown, choose membership form (www.playerworkshoptheater.com), or, with more specific questions, contact Pres. Mary Fox at 319-750-6046 or pw6623@gmail.com.

**SUPPORTING CAST 2024-2025
DONORS WELCOME**



Players Workshop invites you to join the Supporting Cast for 2024-2025 season .

This is a one-time financial donation to Players Workshop, which will run for the theatrical season, and contributes significantly to the financial stability of PW.

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+

Names of all those who have joined since the last newsletter are listed in bold face type. Won't you join them?

Star

Tim & Tonja Binder
BNSF Railway Foundation
(matching Kevin Liles' donation)

Mary Fox
Kevin Liles
Carole Theesfeld

Supporting Actor

Sandra Allgood
David Beckman
Carolyn Dorting
Bonnie Downes
Eva Ann Elmer
Jon Hart
Wayne & Colleen Heibner
Nathan & Stephanie Heubner
Marlene Holsteen
Russ Leuck
Chip & Dana Readinger
Tim Roberts
Fred & Martha Wetzell
Kimberly Wittkamp

Stage Crew

Barb & David Acord
Allan G. Allsup
Cindy & Darrell Bachtell
Connie Bowen
Dan & Kathleen Cahill
Jim & Sandy Carter
Lois A. Close
Carol Copeland
Barbara Drodz (in memory of Jim Drodz)
Mary & Bill Fortin
Becky Foy

Roger & Lori Griswald
Robert Haines
Carole Halicki
Carol Janosik
Denise Johnson
Cynthia M. Leonard (in memory of Mark T. Leonard)

Tammy Lohmann

Mary Marsh
Linda Messer

John & Lisa Pomberg
Milton & Laurie Paule

Carol J. Reed

Rheinschmidt's Flooring America
John & Kathy Schneider
Teresa, Mark, & Pat Shaffer

Sara Sink

Pauline Spees & Jim Raudabaugh
Nancy StClair

Wayne & Nancy Tolander

Peggy & Earl Stott
Kathy Wolfskill

Renee Zaiser – Razzle Travel

Usher

Judy Bartachek
Russell Benischek
Chad & Sally Bird
Lynne Carter

Lois Close (in memory of Sandra Nolte)

Joyce & Paul Dennison
Jaquelyn Edwards

Mary Fickel

Lori Fry

Russ Fry

Susan Geren

Lyle & Janice Gibson
Barbara Hahn

Linda & Harry Hoenig

Katherine M. Hoth

Dean Hurliman

Char M. L. James

Dee & Wayne Johnson

Dorothy Leazer

Pat Mayle

Lucinda Milder

Kendra Robertson

Kathleen Schier

Keith Schultz, Sr.

Bev & Duane Sherbondy

Brett Shollenbarger

Jyll & Paul Sly

Laura Sly

Anita Stapleton

David Teater

Larry & Linda Turley

Christine Williamson

Kay Wilson
Eunice Winters

All those who join will have their names listed in each play program and newsletter, as well as on the PW website, for 2024-25. Thank you in advance for your support.

You may join the Honorary Supporting Cast by filling out the form at the end of this newsletter or the form in your play program.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM
THE BACKSTAGE PASS!**



Happy Thanksgiving



Merry Christmas



Happy Hannukah



Happy Kwanza

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HONORARY SUPPORTING CAST DONATION FORM

Join the **Honorary Supporting Cast** and make a one-time donation for the 2024-2025 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.