



## SUMMER 2020

### A Message from the President



My previous newsletter message ended with "together we can do so much." After three months of quarantine, our community's COVID-19 numbers leveled off and went down as our attempts to stem the growth of this terrible virus were successful. We are slowly getting back to some semblance of what we consider normal. But this is no time to relax our good habits as science proves the war against this virus is not over and can be reversed in a heartbeat should we become complacent.

Communication during this time has been a challenge for Playcrafters. Prior to the quarantine, we held our board meetings in person. During the the quarantine, we've learned an entirely new medium called ZOOM. In the past, ZOOM simply meant "zooming" back and forth from one place to another. ZOOM is now the new "Go to Meeting." However, depending on one's wifi service, communication can be successful or more like interpreting Morse code with staccato sentences and frozen facial expressions.

Hopefully, we will soon be able to schedule in-person meetings, get our season's productions back on schedule, and even plan a social event involving our entire membership – with the appropriate social distancing – while we look forward to a vaccine that would bring an end to this terrible pandemic.

Thank you to all our heroes: our first responders, our health care workers, our police, our firemen, our grocery personnel – to all who kept our community safe, protected and fed during our quarantine. A special thank you to our South Country Radio partner, [www.bellport.com](http://www.bellport.com), who reported our community's daily COVID-19 numbers, enabling us to understand the reality of our situation and ensuring our continued compliance with the COVID-19 safety guidelines. God Bless you all!

– Amelia Chiamonte

### 2020 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Playcrafters Theatre Company is pleased to announce four scholarship winners for this year.

The **Margaret W. Smith Memorial Scholarship** was awarded to **David Bellante**, who will be attending SUNY Binghamton for computer science, and **Troy J. Sica**, who plans to study music education at Hofstra University.

The **Desmond W. Burke Memorial Scholarship** was awarded to **Lexi Walker**, who will attend Kingsborough Community College majoring in maritime technology, and **Autumn Margaret Walthers**, who will study musical theater at Five Towns College.

Congratulations and best of luck to our talented and deserving winners.

### WHILE WE ARE ON PAUSE

Some of us are discovering new and interesting things to do while we are "on pause" during the quarantine. What have you been doing lately?

**Peter Morrison**, our immediate past BOD, has created a book based on his daily recitation of the Rosary. He relates each of the 20 Mysteries to his own life, and he utilizes his knowledge of theology in his reflections. It was a "labor of love." The title is *Meditations on the Holy Rosary: Walking with Skooter*. There will be a book signing at a Mary Immaculate – details to follow.

**Michele DePalo**, our historian, wrote: Taking almost daily walks was my salvation during isolation. Within walking distance of my house I discovered some lovely areas I never knew existed. This photo, taken on April 1st, is a view of Dunton Lake. I continued to photograph this spot periodically during the spring "awakening", but this remains my favorite shot.



**Jim Hazard**, our Company set designer, had an adventure at the Post Morrow Foundation when a tree fell, pitching a baby owl out of its nest. With the help of a local wildlife rescue he was able to restore the owl into a makeshift nest while mama owl kept a close watch nearby. Good job Jim and friends!



## SAYING GOODBYE

During my time on the board as both president and newsletter editor I have written many obituaries and tried as best I could to capture the essence of the personality of the person whose memory was being honored. This one is personal to me and I am saddened to have to write these words.

During the COV-19 period of quarantine, many of us were disconnected from our regular network of acquaintances, friends and family. Unfortunately, during that time, the passing of **Walter Roe** on April 2, 2020 (a good friend to Playcrafters Theatre Company and a special friend to me) did not reach my ears until just recently.

Walter always had a smile on his face, a sparkle in his eyes and a personality that brightened your day. I met Walter in 1971 when he was directing *Pajama Game* and I played Poopsie. We lost touch for a time, but became reacquainted in 1980 during a dark period in my life. He was a breath of fresh air. He lifted me out of my darkness, gave me hope and guidance and assurance that the sun would shine again – and it did.

Walter performed in Playcrafters productions from the mid-60s, and during the next 15+ years appeared in *Kiss Me Kate* (pictured above, '65), *Fiorello* ('72), *Brigadoon* ('73), *South Pacific* ('74), and *Joseph* ('89). Walter will be remembered by many Playcrafters who spent evenings



gathered around the piano at his restaurant, the Old Inlet Inn, after production rehearsals and performances. With Jim Ahrend's gifted accompaniment, we sang the night away, sounding like Broadway stars (or at least we thought we did at 2:00 in the morning).

Over the years, Walter remained a good friend and generous supporter of Playcrafters as well as being involved with many local civic organizations. We stayed in touch over the years, but as his health started to fail, he pulled back from the limelight. There was a definite void in the community felt from his absence. He will live on in the fond memories of all the lives he touched.

Our sincerest condolences go out to Walter's family and friends with the hope that they know how much he meant to Playcrafters and will be remembered as an integral part of our history.

Walter signed his notes with a little smiley face. So here's to you Walter. ☺ RIP... – *Amelia*

## UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS

### THE FOX ON THE FAIRWAY

The BOD have made the decision to once again move *The Fox on the Fairway*, to the Spring of 2021. Although things are opening up, we have no assurance there won't be a resurgence of COV-19 in community in the early fall. As the health and safety of the staff and everyone who uses our theatre space at the Boys & Girls Club, as well as our actors and audience being at risk, are our major concern, we felt this was the best course of action. Stay safe and see you in the Spring.

More information about exact dates and tickets will be available soon at [www.bellport-playcrafters.com](http://www.bellport-playcrafters.com).

### BELLPORT DAY

As with so many other things, the pandemic has had a huge impact on the Bellport Chamber of Commerce, of which Playcrafters is a member. Due to the safety restrictions, the Chamber scaled back plans for this summer, including the cancelling of Bellport Day. Playcrafters plays an important part in the Bellport Day festivities by providing actors to perform as "The Bell Brothers" on the trolley tour/shuttle ride around the village. Playcrafters also writes the script for the brothers, who share the history of Bellport village with the many riders who use the free shuttle service.

### PLAYCRAFTERS' RADIO SHOW

Our actors have been working hard throughout these very trying times. We have been rehearsing via Zoom and in smaller groups honing in on our characters. We plan on recording our three radio comedies as soon as we can do so safely.

Everyone involved with the radio show project is totally committed to bringing our audience the very best. We will continue on doing our part for as long as it takes. We believe that once these shows are completed, our South Country Radio listeners will agree they were well worth the wait!



## PLAYCRAFTERS' 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

To commemorate our 60th year and in absence of our having the opportunity to hold our physical in-person celebration until 2021, in the next couple of newsletters we will be including anecdotes from members involved in productions that hit their funny bones. Hope these "back stories" bring a smile to your face. What memory would you like to share?

Board Member and Director **James Carey**:



During *All My Sons* (2017), we used a real gun with LOUD 8mm blanks for the finale. During one performance, the blank failed and as a result, a backup SFX (nowhere near as loud) was used. After the show, while

people were lingering around too long in the theater, **Vince Rasulo**, the actor responsible for firing the gun, walked on stage and fired it without warning before announcing, "And that's what you should have heard earlier." Hilarity ensued...



**Michele DePalo**:

The one anecdote from a past Playcrafters show that stands out most in my mind was during a performance of *Hello Dolly!* back in 1981. During the scene at the

Hat Shoppe where Cornelius and Barnaby try to hide from Horace Vandergelder, **Chuck Collins** (Cornelius) ran into the free-standing closet, as he always did. But one particular night he was a little zealous and it toppled over backwards, falling

*(continued next page)*



PLAYCRAFTERS' 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION (cont'd)

with a crash, with him in it. Those of us onstage didn't know what to do. We had no idea if he was hurt. Bill Love (Vandergelder) and Millie D'Agostino (Mrs. Molloy) were stopped in their tracks. Then I (Minnie Fay) glanced over at Pat Corn (Dolly), who started to do a little jig. Michael Boccia (Barnaby) was hiding under the table thinking "Oh my God, he's dead!" A few moments went by and Chuck, in his inimitable style, opened the door and popped up from the box unscathed and continued his performance as if this was all part of the script. The audience went crazy.



Brian Hannon and I wanted to do H.M.S. Pinafore in 1987; the Board, not so much. We conducted an all out campaign, they finally agreed, and we launched the ship. We found an audience.

BOD and Past President Jane Love:



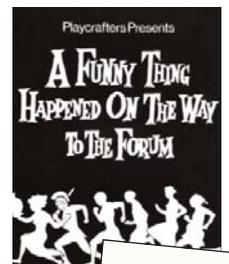
I have been involved with Playcrafters close to 50 years—first as a play reviewer, and then in 1973 in the chorus of Brigdoon (where I was given a pattern, some material, some lace and told when my

costume had to be finished. Those dresses were seen often over the years). From then on I was on stage, back stage, on the board, directing, audience, selling cookies, and enjoying every minute—cherished friendships, hundreds of laughs, and such good memories.

I directed Carousel in 1977. Those were the days at the high school where there were as many backstage as on stage. There had been a hurricane, we lost many trees. The Bellport Garden Club was trying to replant and held a fund drive. The cast of Carousel took a collection and donated a tree. Somewhere in Bellport is the Carousel Tree. It was a real nice Clam Bake.

We followed with The Mikado (1992) and The Pirates of Penzance (2002). We had to turn people away at the last performance—even after adding many chairs. That was the time that Brian and I did the "Dance of Joy" down the Middle School hall.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1985) was a wonderful show. I was Dementia and for my curtain call I merrily danced across the stage pinching – well, you know what. I played Mrs. Potiphar in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (1989). It was another dream roll—wheeled on stage and my directions were to do whatever I wanted once I got there! I remember Mame (1976); I had the pleasure of playing Gooch.



And so it goes... memories of great shows, great friends, good times and more to come.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE! If you have any anecdotes of a past Playcrafters show, please send them to Amelia at amcloop@aol.com and we will be sure to include them in the next few newsletters.

PLAYCRAFTERS MEMBERSHIP – MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Just one of the consequences of this pandemic is its effect on the theater community. Broadway's lights will stay dim into 2021 and local community theaters try to figure out their best courses of action. The lack of live theater is a reminder of its importance. Though Playcrafters was forced to cancel its theater offerings in 2020, we're anticipating a wonderful 2021. And we can't do it without our members. Check out our membership page on our website – www.bellport-playcrafters.com/membership. If your name isn't there please consider joining us by completing a membership application. Thank you, friends.

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION – We are a 501(c)3 entity. All membership dues are tax deductible.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

- PATRON \$100 & up
- ANGEL \$75 to \$99
- SPONSOR \$50 to \$74
- MEMBER\* \$25 to \$49

- Check one:
- Notify me by email (highly recommended)
  - Notify me by US mail only

\* The former Single, Couple, Family, and Household member levels have been combined

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Playcrafters and mail to: P.O. Box 452, Bellport, NY 11713