

# Curtain Call

SCHUYLERVILLE COMMUNITY THEATER NEWSLETTER

Fall 2007

## Director Vicki Wolfe returns to SCT to direct *To Gillian* on her 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday



Curtain Call staff met with Vicki to learn more about this touching drama. An interview with Vicki provides the most incredible insight into a theatrical production and leaves one with the desire to be sure to not miss the show.

### Why *Gillian*...?

Any play that has a dead character on stage would appeal to me. Seriously, I read this play many years ago, and decided that I wanted to direct it someday. I knew that the title character died in an accident, leaving a husband and 14 year old daughter. But it was only after re-reading it for this production that I realized she had died on her 35<sup>th</sup> birthday. My mother died in an accident on her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday when I was five. This synchronicity made me feel I was destined to direct this play (but I feel that way about most plays I direct). Beyond that, the grief experience is always a rich theme, and this play handles it with a great deal of authenticity, beautifully portrayed by a near perfect cast. There is much humor, which can surround these events if we allow it. The theme, along with the beach/ocean/lighthouse setting, provides great opportunities for special lighting/sound effects. The venue offers challenges for creativity, and it's going to be fun to see how much we can do.

### Since beginning with SCT?

After directing some of SCT's first shows in the early 80's, and acting with them in *The Devil's Disciple* and *Murder at the Howard Johnson's*, I took time off to earn a living. In '88, I helped get Stillwater Players started and di-

rected several shows for them. In '95, I returned to SCT to direct my favorite show, *Morning's at Seven*. I then went on to direct 3 seasons at Round Lake Auditorium, and SCT's *Oliver* in 2000. After that, I directed an original play, *The Nursery*, at Caffe Lena. Since then, I've written, produced and directed several shows at Unity, a metaphysical church I belong to in Albany. I've always been attracted to spiritual themes, as I believe theatre is the ultimate metaphysical experience.

You seem to love theatre — why so long between shows?

I love a lot of things. In my other life, I paint, remodel, refinish furniture, and am currently rehabbing two buildings my partner and I bought in Troy, in addition to the ongoing rehab of my Saratoga property. I also invested in some video equipment, hoping to get myself interested in that media form, but it hasn't happened yet. In short, the commitment I make to a production usually trumps everything else I'm doing. So, if I'm heavily involved in something that doesn't give me much spare time, I find it hard to fit in a show. I become consumed with it, at the expense of other commitments. This obsession is less than it used to be, as I've given up the pursuit of doing theatre professionally (as in making a living at it). I stress to my cast and crew, though, that professionalism is a state of attitude, and in that regard, I still want a professional show. This cast and crew is obliging.

Does the smaller venue (Black Box Theatre) pose a problem?

No more than a larger one. Just different. I'm so impressed that SCT is still around after so many years, that I'm determined to make it work. The enthusiasm I've received from my cast and crew has been wonderful, and I'm grateful to Anna,

Lorraine, Michele and Donna for stepping into the fray with me. I've worked with these exceptionally competent people in the past, so it's like a homecoming. We had our first meeting over brunch at Lorraine's, and it was one of the best times I've ever had. I came away on such a high that I wondered why I don't direct more often.

The best show I've ever worked on is always the current one I'm doing, and when I looked at the Black Box, I tried to envision the possibilities with no negativity. It worked, and I'm finding the staging much easier, and therefore, less stressful than if I were on the main stage. The primary set challenge is the inability to set it up prior to the show. We do it on opening day, so it has to be extremely portable. Sound effects aren't a problem (and there will be lots of them), but providing the kind of lighting effect I want will be challenging. I anticipate being very hands on during the production, as I don't know how I would impart exactly what to do to anyone else in such a short time. I imagine I'll be making it up as I go on the first night, and then making corrections on the second night. Hey, maybe the opening night audience should come back the second night to see what's changed! One advantage I do have is in the person of Elizabeth Woodbury Kasius, a composer/pianist friend of mine who will be providing background music for the production. She's great at improvisation, so will be able to go with the flow of the production, instead of having to be tightly rehearsed. I wrote a song about my own mother about 25 years ago; I've rewritten the lyrics to fit this play, and Elizabeth will arrange and play the music as Gillian and her daughter, Rachel, sing it at the end of the first act. Will the audience be depressed at the end of this show?

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Not at all! A little reflective, perhaps, but death is as much a part of life as anything else, and we in the western world don't address it nearly enough. We try to avoid it, ignore it — anything to get through it. The necessity of the grieving process isn't always acknowledged. You may come away from *Gillian* feeling that the characters handled it correctly . . . Or not. There's no perfect way. This character driven play treats the subject with reverence and humor, and each time I read it, I find another aspect that either makes me laugh . . . Or makes me cry. That's the sign of a good script.

Sounds like you've got this show figured out. Never.

*On To Gillian on her 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

Gillian is dead. Very, very, very dead. But her continued presence (or memory, you decide) in the experience of her husband, David (Christopher Welch), and therefore, the experience of her daughter, Rachel (Elizabeth Ruland), is causing concern for those around them. David's conversations with Gillian (Donna Hillebrandt) on the beach are the only way he can cope with her absence. Yet, the "real" world, as well as Gillian herself, is urging him back. His oldest friend, Paul (Frank Pickus), does it with humor; Gillian's sister, Esther (Kimberly Dauphinais), does it with authority; Rachel's best friend, Cindy (Emily Bryan), does it with a teenage crush; Rachel does it with innocence; and Kevin (Barbara Miner) is caught in the middle.

The time is the present; the place is a beach on Nantucket Island with a lighthouse in the distance. Sea gulls are swooping, stars are exploding into existence, fog horns are blowing; and the waves are singing . . . "life goes on."

And tomorrow is an anniversary.

**For tickets, call 695-5480  
– Don't miss it!!!**

**W**elcome to the 27<sup>th</sup> Season of the Schuylerville Community Theater. The Board is pleased to announce two new board members, Michele Peters and Lorraine Thompson, who join the team for the 2007-08 season and bring a long history of SCT membership and participation between the two. And a round of applause to the out-going members, Patrick Doyle, Bev McKim, Jim Chaffin and Richard Salls. Your time and energies given to SCT is greatly appreciated. The remaining membership remains intact and provides experience and dedication to continue to provide quality theater to the surrounding communities.

In this ever-changing world of theater, the board members are confident in overcoming the challenges facing community theater with the use of tremendous skill and creativity. During the last 25 years, there has been an increase in theater groups in the region to a total of over 30 in number at this time. High Schools have also increased the opportunities for theater experiences for students. The fact that the audiences are supporting these groups is exciting. However, the available resources for cast, crew, viable venues and volunteers are limited. This has caused many of the local theater groups to rethink their goals and to find new ways to present live theater.

SCT is no different. The SCT Board is offering two wonderful productions this season with a twist in presentation. We look to our faithful SCT audience and supporters to help make this a success.

We begin the season with veteran director, Vicki Wolfe, bringing a touching drama, *To Gillian on Her 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, to the "SCT Black Box Theater" in the Schuylerville High School on Oct. 26, 27 & 28.



This cast of seven is guaranteed to warm your hearts and test your emotions as you watch and listen to Gillian's loved ones help her widowed husband, David, move on to accept the fact that she is no longer with him.

For the spring season, SCT will be venturing forward with a different approach and we are staging a rousing musical, *Damn Yankees* on the 8th, 9th, and 10<sup>th</sup> of February (not exactly springtime)!! We're offering *Damn Yankees* in February as the antidote to that "cabin fever" that we all feel just about then! Debbi Terrio will be directing *Damn Yankees*, and is inviting all to join in the fun either on or off the stage. Auditions are posted in the newsletter; mark the dates on your calendar and pass them on to your relatives and friends.

There will be no changes to our very successful Children's Theater Workshop. Donna Hillebrandt, Executive Producer promises another exciting summer for youth ages 5 and up. Enrollment fills up quickly; members have privileges for early registration so if you have not renewed your membership yet, now is the time to do it. And, new members are always welcome.

The director/play selection committee has already begun their search for next season. Be sure to let us know if you have any favorites you would like to see on the SCT Stage. Please come and be a part of our fun. We always need back stage help, musicians, directors, choreographers and actors. Just give a quick email to the website or contact one of us on the Board (don't be shy!) if you're interested. Thanks for your continued interest in SCT and looking forward to seeing you in October.

*Joann Searles*  
President SCT



## ATTENTION SCT MEMBERS

The Schuylerville Community Theater Scholarship Committee once again has been invited to participate in the Barnes and Noble Gift Wrapping Program this holiday season.

This is a unique opportunity for the SCT Scholarship fund to once more benefit through the generosity of the folks at Barnes and Noble. Last year we earned enough monies to cover one of our three memorial scholarships. All we have to do is supply the "man-woman" power to make this a success. SCT members and former SCT scholarship recipients (including friends and family) are asked to give a few hours during the busiest season of the year, to wrap purchases made at the Saratoga Barnes and Noble Bookstore on Rte 50. Barnes and Noble provides the wrapping supplies, and we provide the wrappers! Throughout the time that we are there, they announce that gifts may be wrapped for a suggested donation, to be placed in a jar/basket at the wrapping counter. It is also an excellent opportunity to advertise our upcoming events, answer questions about our organization and encourage membership in SCT.

Two adults are needed for each shift; however, students may also participate with their parent. While it is realized the hectic nature of the time of the season, understand that it will also be the most profitable for SCT. Shifts are four hours each, but can easily be divided if necessary.

Wrapping dates and times are:

Friday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> From 10 am to 2:00 pm & 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Sunday, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> From 10 am to 2:00 pm, 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm & 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Monday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> From 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Please e-mail or call me as soon as possible to let me know if you might be available to participate in this worthwhile fundraising event. I can let you know at that time which time slots still need to be filled. Your support of our Scholarship Fund, including the memorial scholarships is greatly appreciated.

*Michele Peters, SCT Scholarship Committee*  
50 Duncan Lane Gansevoort, NY 12831  
695-5332 MPeters@LocalNet.com

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

We are happy to announce the release of Sara Joki's first solo CD, Ya'ale.

Recipient of the Budding Twig Award in 1996, Sara Joki blossomed as an actress and vocal performer over her 13 year involvement in SCT. Her first part at the age of 6 was in the chorus of *Ghost Towns Never Die* and her last was as a High School graduate as Ti Moune in the wonderful production of *Once on this Island*. Sara and other members of the cast and crew won numerous TANYS awards for excellence. After SCT, Sara earned a degree in classical voice from SUNY New Paltz.

In the summer of 2005, Sara moved to Israel and now lives in Jerusalem. As a new citizen of Israel, her Hebrew name is Shaina Ettel. Once in Israel she found her way into the Raise Your Spirits Company. Shaina Ettel was offered the lead role of Ruth in their original musical production *Ruth and Naomi in the Fields of Bethlehem*. There were 22 performances and over 10,000 women saw the performances.

Ya'ale, the title of Shaina Ettel's CD means "to rise and go upward." With the first note many of you will immediately recognize her voice. The quality of Shaina Ettel's classically trained voice grabs your attention and this music appeals to all audiences. For more information about the CD call us at 584-5548 or check out her website: [ShainaEttel.com](http://ShainaEttel.com)  
Sue and Bob Joki

## ATTENTION SLUGGERS! GET OUT OF THE DUGOUT AND HIT A HOME RUN WITH SCT

### 9 Roles To Be Cast:

### AS WE AUDITION FOR DAMN YANKEES

Mr. Applegate — The Devil in disguise as a slick salesman (baritone)

Joe Hardy — The 22-year-old, home run hitting alter ego of Joe Boyd (baritone)

Lola — The Devil's seductress assistant (alto) Dancing ability a plus!

Meg Boyd — Joe's loyal, traditional wife (alto)

Gloria Thorpe — A probing reporter (mezzo-soprano)

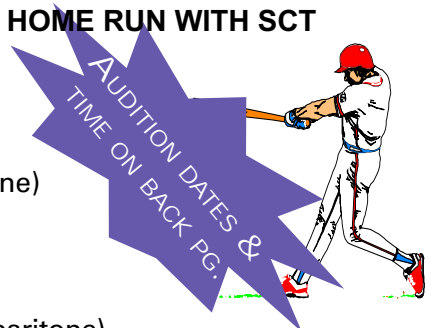
Van Buren — Manager of the Washington Senators, great heart, but no luck. (baritone)

Joe Boyd — Middle-aged, overweight married man in love with baseball, especially the Senators [the "older" Joe Hardy] (tenor)

Doris — A friend of Meg's (alto) Sister — A friend of Meg's

**AUDITIONS** - Each person will be asked to prepare 16 bars of a song from the show or a Broadway song that showcases your vocal talents. Readings will be from the script.

The Ensemble - Assorted group of singer-actors (both men and women) who can also move well.





**Curtain Call** is a newsletter of the Schuylerville Community Theater, P.O. Box 143, Schuylerville, NY, 12871. SCT is a non-profit community volunteer musical and theater arts organization. SCT is governed by an elected Board of Directors.

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**SCT**

**Board of Directors 2007/2008**

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Joann Searles, Debbi Terrio,  
Lorraine Thompson, Deana Tracy,  
Chris Tucker, Anna Welfley

Attorney - William Thomas, Esq.

**TO GILLIAN ON HER 37<sup>TH</sup>  
BIRTHDAY**

October 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> at  
8:00 PM &  
October 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM in  
the Black Box Theater  
Schuylerville High School  
For tickets, call 695-5480  
- Don't miss it!!!

**DAMN YANKEES**

Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Open Auditions: Mon., Nov 26<sup>th</sup>  
Call Backs: Tues., Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>  
Read Through: Wed., Nov 28<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 Registration  
7:00 Auditions  
Location: Schuylerville High  
School, Schuylerville  
Call SCT at 695-5480 for  
further information.

**Check the Web: SCTTHEATER.org**



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