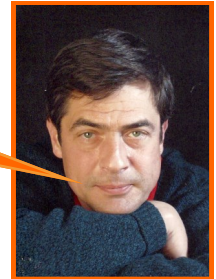




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Prez Says



Happy Fall

Congrats to the cast and crew of *Noises Off!* The show was well-received and folks were roaring with laughter. It was great fun to see. Village Players and all its members can be proud of such a great show; thanks to all who were a part of it. Now let's continue the roll with the upcoming *Sweeney Todd*.

Speaking of which, we will be meeting at 9:00AM October 10th at the Greek Isles restaurant on Hamilton in downtown Birmingham to once again put posters about town. Please come join us and help paint the town with *Sweeney* posters on Saturday October 10th!

As you might have noticed, we are doing the 50/50 raffle again. It is a fun way to get to speak with patrons and build a rapport with them. If anyone is interested in helping me or flying solo during any performances of *Sweeney*, let me know. As my grandma always said, "many hands make for light work," so join in, lighten the load for others and have some fun to boot!

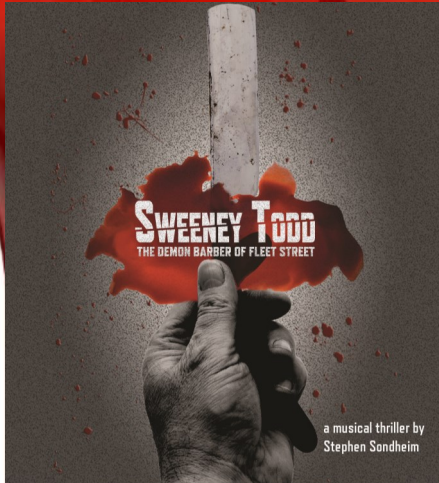
The Play Reading Committee submitted a list of 10 great shows for next season and the Board is now seeking directors for them (see separate article). Please contact me for details at pgillin2@gmail.com or 248-842-5936.

Thanks for all you do for Village Players and Happy Fall!

Paul A. Gillin



Opening October 23



Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd

On October 23rd, the demon barber of Fleet Street makes his way to Chestnut Street slashing the victims in his way.

An indisputable masterpiece by one of greatest living composer/lyricists, Sweeney Todd is a heart-pounding thriller. Set on the seedy side streets of 19th century London, This Tony Award-winning musical tells the tale of an unjustly exiled barber's quest to avenge the wrongs done to him and his family by a lecherous judge. Aided by the romantically inclined, conniving pie shop proprietress Mrs. Lovett, the demon barber of Fleet Street exacts his sweet, razor-sharp revenge.

Regarded as Stephen Sondheim's most beautiful and ingeniously crafted score, this suspenseful musical explores love, loss and revenge with brilliant wit, diabolical humor, and astonishing music.

Get your tickets now, we promise you a bloody good time.

October 23, 24, 30, November 6, 7 - 8:00 PM / October 25, November 1, 8 - 2:00 PM

*Special Halloween Performance Time—8:30pm—Join us for this ghoulish performance. Also join us before the show for Victorian-themed masquerade party complete with a cash bar, yummy treats, costume contests. The October 31 party starts at 7:00. Admission is free. All are welcome.

Richard Knapp and Suzette Ho lead the cast as the vengeful Sweeney Todd and the devious Mrs. Lovett



Audition Notice: *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*

Auditions: Sunday and Monday, October 25 and 26 at 7:30 PM.

Registration starts at 7:00 PM.

At the Birmingham Village Players Playhouse, 34600 Woodward, Birmingham, MI 48009.

Show Dates: January 15, 16, 22, 23, 29 & 30 at 8:00 PM, and January 17, 24 & 31 at 2:00 PM.



THE STORY

Winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Play. In this comedy, middle-aged siblings Vanya and Sonia live in their family home in Bucks County, PA, where they spent their adulthood taking care of their now-deceased parents. They bicker and complain and by varying degrees seem dissatisfied or resigned to their lives. Neither has a career and expenses are paid for by their successful movie star sister, Masha. Their static environment is disrupted when Masha swoops in bringing a flurry of drama and insecurity, along with her new handsome, much younger and dim-witted lover, Spike. Sonia's resentments and Masha's competitiveness spark arguments while Vanya tries to restore the peace and Masha threatens to sell the house. Spike uses every opportunity to strip down and show off his muscular physique. Also on the scene are the sassy maid and prophetess Cassandra, who can predict the future, and a lovely impressionable aspiring actress named Nina, whose attractiveness causes concern from the imperious Masha. *(Please note: the show contains strong language and adult content.)*

THE CHARACTERS

Vanya – 50's, living in Bucks County, PA with his adopted sister Sonia in the house where he had been caring for his now deceased parents. He has resigned to accepting his life more or less and accepting the status quo, aside from some possible sexual confusion.

Sonia – Vanya's adopted sister, in her early 50's, living with him in their Bucks County, PA home. Discontented, upset and regretful. Not concerned much about her appearance, which can be frumpy, but changes decidedly later when she attends a costume party in an elegant gown.

Masha – Vanya's biological sister. 50's, glamorous and a successful actress who has appeared in motion pictures and on stage, but is on the downward slope of her career. She embraces her larger-than-life "star" persona, and gallivants around the world.

Spike – A would-be actor, mid to late 20's, whose claim to fame is in almost being cast in HBO's Entourage 2. Attractive, sexy, fit, flirtatious and self-absorbed. He is often parading around in his underwear. Masha's new dim "boy-toy" companion.

Cassandra – Cleaning lady, soothsayer and voodoo priestess (name taken from the oracle of Greek mythology), of any age or race. She tends to the house and looks after Vanya and Sonia. Irreverent, she is often in throes of a trance divining the future and casting spells.

Nina – Lovely, sincere aspiring ingénue actress in her early 20's. She is visiting her aunt and uncle next store. Starstruck in meeting Masha, she is optimistic, idealistic and enthusiastic.

Audition cuts may be obtained by sending an email to birminghamvillageplayers@gmail.com with "VSMS" in the subject line and list the character name(s) that you are looking for in the body of the email OR by visiting the playhouse during regular office hours: Tue-Sat from 10 AM to 4 PM.

The production team includes: Director, Steve Sussman; Producer, Diana McClain; Assistant Director, Pam Dundas;

Questions can be addressed to director Steve Sussman at stevesuss248@gmail.com

VP's Fundraising Committee is busy planning all kinds of exciting event for us.

Join us for Karoke Night on November 28 & Sing in the Season on December 20.



Stay tuned for more details about these events as well as and announcement about programs for 2016, including a VP Birthday Bash in February.



Grease is the Word....

The youth theater held auditions for its fall production, Grease, School Edition on Saturday, September 26. We had a great turn out with lots of new faces and are excited with our cast of 32. The youth theater rehearses Monday and Wednesday from 4:30–6:30 and Saturdays from 11–2.

Our show dates are December 10– 14 and tickets should go on sale this week.



Tribute to VP's Lady who Lunched

On Saturday, September 26th, Village Players rang with applause as the family and friends of Maureen Cook gave her one last standing ovation. Maureen passed away quietly on September 10th, surrounded by her three daughters.

Maureen has been a fixture at Village Players ever since joining in 1974 and first appeared in the musical *Plain and Fancy* with all three of her daughters. Her next role would define Maureen in many of our minds – that of Joanne in *Company*. It was during the run of that production that Maureen's mother arranged for Mo to have lunch with her next-door neighbor's daughter, none other than Elaine Stritch. That lunch began a friendship that lasted until Ms. Strich passed away a

year ago.

Maureen's career at Village Players included over 25 different roles on stage, as well as innumerable positions backstage including directing, producing, and working props. She also served many years on the artistic board, including stints as both president and vice president. She graced our stage in such varied roles as the Reverend Mother in *Nunsense*, Sara in *The Sisters Rosensweig*, Miss Tweed in *Something's Afoot*, the Mother in *Barefoot in the Park*, and finally as the grandmother in *Regrets Only*, where she could be seen sporting a fashionable outfit constructed out of garbage bags, accented by tissue box shoes. Maureen was exhilarated when she was finally able retire from her day job so she could "be the actress I was always meant to be."

Many of us have wonderful memories of Mo. "I met Maureen Cook more than 20 years ago," said Jay Kaplan, "and the first thing that caught my attention about her was her voice—it reminded me of a cello, deep, but elegant. Over the past 15 years I was very fortunate to have been able to direct her in two plays and two musicals. Aside from being the consummate performer, hardworking and always prepared, I found Maureen a delightful person to work with and to get to know. Although we didn't see one another often between shows, I could always count her for a kind email or phone message, sometimes with her inquiry, 'know of any shows with good parts for an old broad?' I will miss that voice. And I will miss her."

Coleen Gentry remembered Maureen: "I met Maureen in an acting class with Sally Savoie and Pam Johnson. We ended up meeting Wendy Wagner, the assistant, and Maureen called us the Fab Five. We would go to auditions together, were the ladies who lunched and usually had a glass of wine. Upon occasion we were fortunate enough to be cast in shows together. She was our Matriarch!"

Maureen's dedication to the theater was unwavering. According to Michael Gravame, "The day she had her stroke, I had five messages from her and, when I finally got a hold of her, I knew she didn't sound quite like herself. She told me she had a stroke and was in the hospital, but wanted me to get a hold of Steve Roberts and make sure the letters for the preview audiences went out. That is what I call dedication to the arts!"

All of us at Village Players will miss our brash, warm, tell-it-like-it-is broad with a heart of gold. Here's to our lady who lunched!

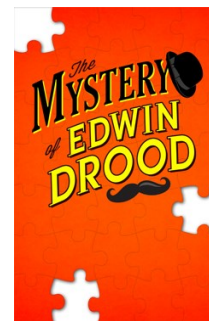
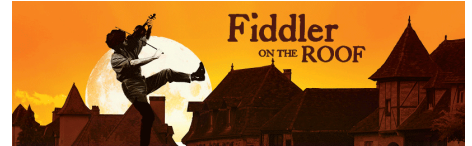


Seeking Directors for 2016-2017 Season!

The Play Reading Committee has submitted a list of 10 exciting possible shows for next season and the Board of Directors is seeking members who are interested in directing any one of these terrific shows next season.

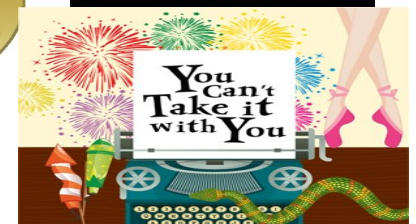
Musicals:

- Anything Goes – Cole Porter
- Cabaret – Kander and Ebb
- Fiddler on the Roof – Bock and Harnick
- Mame – Jerry Herman
- The Mystery of Edwin Drood – Charles Dickens and Rupert Holmes



Non-Musicals:

- Amadeus – Peter Shaffer
- Doubt: A Parable – John Patrick Shanley
- The Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays – Ken Ludwig
- Plaza Suite – Neil Simon
- You Can't Take It With You – Kaufman and Hart



Potential directors will make presentations to the Board of Directors on Saturday, October 24, 2015, starting at 9:00AM at the playhouse. Please contact Paul A. Gillin at 248-842-5936 or pgillin2@comcast.net for a submission form, additional information, and to reserve your presentation time.

Thank you to the Play Reading Committee for these excellent suggestions. The Board looks forward hearing your vision for any one of these shows.

Roof Repairs at the Playhouse

By Gary E. Mach, for the Board of Trustees

The Playhouse has six separate roofs, each of a different type and each at a different height. Earlier this year, the Board of Trustees commissioned a study to better understand the status of these vital building components. Unfortunately, what we learned is that we are nearing the end of the normal life expectancy for all of our roofs, and over the next five to seven years, they will all need to be replaced. We determined that the best way to tackle these major renovations was to take on the roof most in need of replacement, the high flat roof over the stage house, as Phase I. This roof was in pretty tough shape and had been given just a year or two of remaining life. It may well be the cause of the occasional leaks we have seen in recent years during story nights and spring time melts.



Before the project began, we were advised that there was the possibility of significant hidden damage to the decking under this roof due to the use of a particular kind of insulation board common when the building was first constructed. Although we tested positive for the substance in question, the GOOD NEWS is that when the roof was peeled back, no damage or rusting was present. The crew was able to replace the roof in just three days, and we are good for the next 30 years or so.

Paying for This: The Board of Trustees determined that the best method to pay for the entire six-phase roof repair would be through a business loan. We borrowed \$25,000 for Phase I and plan to pay it back at a rate of \$1,000 per month. As we near the payoff of this initial loan, we will launch the next phase of the roof repair.

How Members Can Help: As you should be aware, ticket sales account for only around 40% of our entire annual budget. Just to get through a normal year, we need to raise an additional 60% of our budget. Added expenses like this are simply not in the yearly budget. We need the help of our members to keep the building safe and dry. At year end, we ask for donations. All those funds go into our capital reserves, and can be used for the building needs. Please give generously.

We also ask our members to include Village Players in their estate plans through "planned giving". You can designate Players as the beneficiary of life insurance, make gifts of stocks or bonds, leave a specific bequest, or even list us as the "remainder man" in your will. Significant gifts of this type are recorded for eternity on our Legacy Giving wall.

We have recently launched a Fund Raising Committee which will soon be announcing the first of a quarterly series of events designed to give us an added income stream. Please support these programs. Make it a point to be part of every event we undertake. Bring new and old friends to the theater for shows and fund-raising programs. As a member, this is your club, and your building. Help us take care of the "old girl" in the fashion she deserves.

Auditions Elsewhere

To the best of our knowledge, information below is accurate as of publication date. ALWAYS check websites listed below for the latest details.

Grosse Pointe Theatre, Grosse Pointe MI

Chess

Audition dates: October 24-25 Dance, 1PM; Music, 2PM

Performances: January 17-30, 2016

<http://www.gpt.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Chess-Audition-Web.pdf>



Barefoot Productions

Christmas Belles (a holiday comedy)

AUDITION DATES: October 19, 20 - 7-9 PM

Performances: Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12 at 8:00 P.M. and Dec. 6, 13 at 2:00 P.M.

<http://www.justgobarefoot.com/auditions.html>



Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

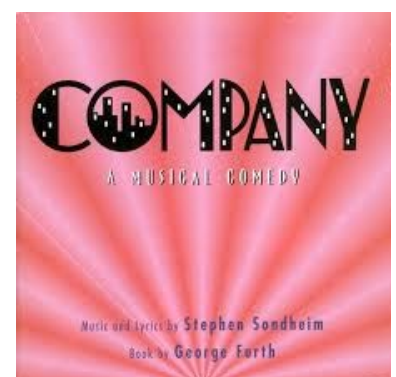
COMPANY

October 17 and October 18, 2-5 p.m.

A2CT Rehearsal Studio, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor, MI, 48104.

Callbacks will be Monday, October 19, from 7-10 p.m.

<http://www.a2ct.org/audition>





34660 Woodward Ave.
Birmingham, MI 48009



Upcoming Events

Prompter deadline October 21, 2015!!!

View the VP online calendar at www.calendar.yahoo.com/vp_calendar

October 13, 630PM

Board of Directors Meeting — Green Room

October 19, 7PM

Playwrights@Work (P@W) — Green Room

October 23, 8PM

Opening Night *Sweeney Todd*

October 31, 7PM

Sweeny Todd Pre-Show “Masquerade” Reception

October 31, 830PM

Sweeny Todd Performance Late Start Time

This edition of The Prompter was created and compiled by your newsletter team Randy Gilchrist, Michael A. Gravame & Tania L. Velinsky.



Please send all newsworthy articles, pictures and items to anyone in the new team.

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