

Community Players of Salisbury  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
April 3, 2024

Board Members Present: Tom Robinson, Presiding, Kate Adkins, Matt Bogdan, Sharon Benchoff, Bobbie Calloway, Cass Dasher, Robin Finley, Kyle Hayes, Charlie Linton, Darrell Mullins, Rusty Mumford, Kel Nagel.

Other Attendees: Brenda Allen, David Allen, Tony Broadbent, Kim Cuesta, Pete Cuesta, Melissa Dasher, Debby Nagel, Betsy Metzger, Ann Northam, Joshua Smith,

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the March 6 meeting were approved as distributed.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was approved as distributed.

President's Report: Tom Robinson thanked everyone involved with current production efforts as well as Matt Bogdan for his coordination of grants and fundraising.

Committee Reports:

Concessions: Brenda Allen reported as follows:

1. Popcorn and Cupcakes were offered during the Movie Night fundraiser.
2. Preparing concessions for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*.

Facilities Management: Nothing to Report

Fundraising: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. Movie Night was held on March 16. Although attendance was low, the audience and the crew had a great time. Thanks to David Allen, Brenda Allen, Tony Broadbent, Matt Bogdan, and Bonnie Nay for their time and effort in the fundraiser.
2. Thanks go to Matt Bogdan, Bonnie Nay, David Allen, Becky Mumford, Rusty Mumford, Robin Finley and Robin's grandson Max for helping to man the gate at Bordeleau Vineyards and Winery in Eden as part of the Chili Cook-off and Spring Festival on March 30. Also, we thank Bordeleau Vineyards and Winery for allowing Players to be the beneficiary of their gate, which totaled **\$710**.
3. Volunteers are needed to help with the April fundraiser, which is a 50/50 raffle at the Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike performances on April 12-13 and April 19-20.
4. The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of the Arts, to held April 26-28, is also an April fundraiser. It is coordinated by Matt Bogdan and sponsored by Ernie Matthews, in memory of his wife Elizabeth.
5. We are seeking more sponsors and program advertisers.
6. The May fundraiser will be Movie Night on May 18 with the showing of Buster Keaton's "The General." It is a silent movie that Orson Welles called "the greatest comedy ever made, the greatest Civil War film ever made, and perhaps the greatest film ever made."
7. Sharon Benchoff has agreed to run Trivia Nights throughout the summer. Dates to be determined.
8. The June fundraiser will be the Guest Bartender fundraiser on June 6 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Brew River. The group with the highest sales will receive a \$2000 grand prize. Shelbie Thompson is the coordinator. Devin Bradley La Femina will provide entertainment, and we hope to promote *Kiss Me, Kate* during this fundraiser, perhaps with some songs from the show being sung at Brew River.

9. Another June fundraiser will be the 50/50 raffle at *Kiss Me, Kate* performances.
10. The July fundraiser will not be the New Directors' One-Act Play Showcase, coordinated by Rusty Mumford. Instead, Rusty is planning a Musical Review for late July.
11. The August fundraiser will be Movie Night on August 10 with the showing of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." It is a 1939 American romantic drama starring Charles Laughton and Maureen O'Hara.
12. The September fundraiser will be an Eastern Shore Heritage Festival to be held Sept. 13-15. Matt Bogdan is the coordinator. More details to follow.
13. The October fundraiser will be the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Poe show. Performances will be at Possum Point Players on Friday, October 18, from 7-9 p.m., at Snow Hill Firehouse on Saturday, October 19, from 7- 9 p.m., and Poplar Hill Mansion on Saturday, October 26, from 7 to 9 p.m. Other venues and dates to follow.
14. The November fundraiser will be Giving Tuesday, coordinated by Sharon Benchhoff.
15. The December fundraiser will be the radio play *It's a Wonderful Life*.
16. Letters have been sent to potential sponsors of fundraising events.

Rusty Mumford explained that the planned "Directors Workshop" did not generate sufficient interest. That is why it was cancelled and replaced by a Musical Revue that he will direct.

Concerns about the Musical Revue were raised given that as it is a production it was not proposed and submitted to the Board for approval. Rusty Mumford, who proposed the idea, commented that if it needed to be approved by the Board, the same standard should be applied to all planned fundraising events. After continued discussion, Matt Bogdan pointed out that the report stated that Rusty was "planning" a revue rather than "doing" a revue. Rusty added that the theme of the planned revue is "Show Stoppers" for a late July performance.

Matt Bodgan commented that the proposed Eastern Shore Festival is also in "planning" rather than a definite event. Further discussion focused on how to clearly differentiate between "planning" vs "doing."

Sharon Benchhoff commented that "planning" suggests that more details will be provided in the future so that the Board can vote on it.

Cass Dasher commented that if a fundraising event involves auditions, it is a production and should be vetted in the same way other mainstage and "special" productions are.

Bobbie Calloway expressed concern that having so many fundraising events might lead to stressing resources for our regularly planned season.

Grants: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. I attended the check presentation at Coastal Association of Realtors (CAR). We received a grant of \$500 that is to be applied to the Children's Theater workshop to be held this summer at Players. Charlie Linton, Players' treasurer, said that we have received the \$500 from CAR.
2. I submitted an application for a 2024 CTFA Aurand Harris Theatre grant of \$3000. The grant is designed to benefit the field of theatre for children & youth, to provide growth opportunities for theatre artists developing work for the young, to support the mission and values of CTFA, and honor the intentions of Aurand Harris, who is one of this nation's most published and performed playwrights for children and youth.
3. I submitted an application for a \$10,000 grant from the GEICO Philanthropic Foundation to support five fundraisers we are having in 2024.

4. I submitted an application for a \$10,000 grant from State Farm Insurance to support Eastern Shore Heritage Festival in September 2024.

5. I continued to work on the Operating Grant for SWAC, which is due June 7, as well as the final report for our current SWAC grant, which is due June 30. I will be attending the SWAC luncheon in June. **We need to submit a 1-2 minute video by May 1. Help from the board on how to go about making this video would be appreciated.**

6. In regards to the grant application I wrote for the Beach to Bay Heritage Area to secure funds for the building renovation, the local grant review committee met and did not have any revisions to the grant I submitted. Lisa Challenger, the executive director, said that the main thing they realized after I was encouraged to and submitted the application is that Players is not within the boundaries of the heritage area. She said that somehow everyone missed this. She said that she is going to double check to confirm and that this doesn't have to be a deal breaker. They just need to rectify if they can make the case that this is a heritage tourism asset. The state grants review panel will be reviewing these over the first two weeks in June. I requested \$96,753 for renovations to our building.

7. I am still waiting to hear from the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore regarding the grant request of \$10,000 for renovations to our building. I was told that the notification of acceptance will take place in April.

8. I am also still waiting to hear from the Maryland State Arts Council regarding the grant request of \$222,864 for renovations to our building. I was told that the notification of acceptance will take place in April.

9. In order to apply for a grant from the Franklin P. and Arthur W. Perdue Foundation, we need a Perdue associate to endorse the grant request. **Is there anyone on the board or a member of Players associated with Perdue?**

10. I have been invited to speak to Wicomico Women Who Care, an organization that Lynne Bratten made me aware of, on May 16 at 5:30 p.m. at SoBo's Wine Bistro. I will be making a pitch for Players, discussing our need for funds to help renovate our building. After the pitch, each individual in attendance decides on whether or not to donate \$100 to the organization.

Historical: Nothing to Report

Hospitality: Rusty Mumford reported that we are getting closer to having more hospitality events as we continue to return items to their original storage locations now that flood repairs have been made.

House: Betsy Metzger asked for membership applications to give to new ushers.

Membership: Melissa Dasher reported as follows:

1. We currently have 200 members for the 2023-2024 season.
2. This includes:
  - a. 185 voting memberships
  - b. 102 Patrons
  - c. 43 Family
  - d. 40 Individual
3. And 15 non-voting (students under age 18) memberships.

Nominating: Sharon Benchoff reported as follows:

1. Nominations will be announced at the May meeting.
2. There are three open Board positions.

Patrons: Kel Nagel reported that Patrons have been urged to request their tickets for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*.

Performance Space: Kel Nagel provided a proposal from the Becker/Morgan group. That proposal is attached. Based on that proposal, Kel Nagel/Cass Dasher moved to spend up to \$7,500 to have Becker/Morgan provide initial documents up to schematics but not drawings. Motion passed.

Production: Matt Bogdan distributed a ballot to select shows for the 2024/2025 season.

Program/Program Ads: Tom Robinson reported that the program for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* is in its final stages. Two new ads were received.

Publicity: Debby Nagel reported as follows:

1. Billboards for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* are up.
2. 47 yard signs have been posted.
3. We have an article in the *Salisbury Independent*.
4. Sharon Benchoff and Steve Culver will be featured in an interview on *Delmarva Life* tomorrow.
5. Our previous contact for a banner is no longer available.

Scholarship: Lynne Bratten asked for input on how/when to announce scholarship winners. She provided the following options:

1. presentation at the senior awards program at the recipients' school
2. presentation at a Community Players event
3. presentation at the All County musical during the year both recipients were participating
4. presentation at the Community Players building with a photo op for publication in the newsletter

After discussion the consensus was to do all of the above. In addition, Melissa Dasher suggested that we get feedback from the parents of winners.

Season Tickets/Box Office: The following was reported:

1. Darrell Mullins reported that as of April 1, 230 tickets for "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" have been sold.
2. Rusty Mumford reported that we are caught up on season ticket holders.

Social Media: Kate Adkins reported as follows:

1. Continuing to post on Facebook and Instagram.
2. Posts about Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Cast and Crew are going out.
3. Kiss me, Kate auditions are posted. And events created for FB.
4. Special production updates are posted.
5. Working on creating an Advertisers special series as suggested at the last meeting.

## Old Business

*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* Update: Sharon Benchoff reported as follows:

1. Thanks to Kate Adkins for the social media coverage that focused on both cast and crew.
2. Please take posters to distribute.
3. Rehearsals are going very well.
4. Currently running full acts.
5. Cast is off book.
6. Please help with the following:
  - a. Loading set on truck, Friday at 5:00 pm
  - b. Unloading set into Wor-Wic, Saturday at 10:00 am

*Harlem Renaissance* Update: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. The show has been cast and is diverse.
2. Rehearsals are going well.

Front Sign:

Matt Bogdan reported that there was an error on the sign, listing our website with the suffix of .com rather than .org. Matt Bogdan/Rusty moved that we have the sign replaced. Motion passed. Tom Robinson stated that he would get it corrected.

Bordeleau Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser: Matt Bogdan reported that we made \$710.00

Children's Summer Theatre Camp: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. The job application and job description for the position of camp counselor are now available at the Players' website. Deadline to submit the application is April 15.
2. The registration form to participate in the summer camp is also available at the Players' website.
3. Deadline is June 15.
4. The next meeting is April 17 at 7 pm
5. Six students are registered.

Darrell Mullins asked for clarification on Alexa Nastasi's participation since she was part of last year's successful camp. Matt Bogdan reported that she is involved in the planning of the camp.

## New Business

Scholarship Applications Board Vote: Kel Nagel/Rusty Mumford moved to approve awarding the scholarships to the two applicants forwarded by Scholarship Committee Chair, Lynne Bratten. Motion passed.

Shows For the 2024-2025 Season Vote: The Board voted to accept the recommendation of the Production Committee. As a reminder, that recommendation was as follows:

1. November            *Guys and Dolls*, directed by Sherri Trader Hynes
2. February            *A Few Good Men*, directed by Pete Cuesta
3. April                 *I Hate Hamlet*, directed by Darrell Mullins
4. June                  *The Importance of Being Earnest*, directed by Cass Dasher

## Other New Business

Production Logos: Rusty Mumford asked directors for next season to work with him on designing logos to be used in advertising so that we can be sure to avoid copyright infringement.

Altering Set Pieces: Debby Nagel expressed the following concerns regarding how set pieces are altered:

1. Oak chairs that match one of our oak tables was damaged during the run of *Pippin*.
2. The storm trunk that she had planned to use for *Kiss Me Kate* was damaged.
3. She was quite distressed that items were being mistreated.
4. She commented that costumes were also being mistreated.

Discussion focused on the following issues:

1. Should directors/set decorators be allowed to alter set pieces?
2. Should they be required to return items to the condition they were in before being used?
3. Should they be required to request permission to use/alter set pieces?

Continued discussion resulted in the following:

1. We understand the concern and see it as motivated by a desire to maintain our inventory.
2. Requiring permission was deemed impractical as it would assume that the approving individual would have to always be available to grant permission.
3. The consensus was that directors/set decorators should not be required to seek permission to use set pieces that we own.

Ocean Pines Players:

Betsy Metzger commented that Ocean Pines Players appears to be dissolving. Should we consider placing yard signs for our productions in an attempt to appeal to the Ocean Pines population.

Sharon Benchoff commented that yard signs in Ocean Pines is a violation of their HOA policies.

Death of playwright Christopher Durang:

Ann Northam commented that Christopher Durang, author of our current production *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, had died. Should we make some sort of statement to that effect? Sharon Benchoff, production director, replied that she was planning to do so.

Rusty Mumford/Charlie Linton moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

The next meeting will be on May 1 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrell Mullins  
Recording Secretary  
Community Players of Salisbury