

January  
2024



**COMMUNITY  
PLAYERS**  
*of Salisbury*

# Back Stage



## From the desk of the President...

Welcome to 2024 and Happy New Year.

We have had a great start to Community Players 87th year. We did our big musical, Pippin plus three special shows, Paths to Freedom: The Underground Railroad on Maryland's Eastern Shore and Uncle Tom's Cabin, Edgar Allan Poe: His Tales of Horror, and Old-Time Radio Christmas Show. Thank you to everyone who have made these shows a great success.

We are now in full rehearsals for our January show, Rumors at WorWic Community College. Tickets are available on our web site.

Please consider becoming a member of Community Players. If you are not sure if your dues are paid for the current year (September 1, 2023-August 31, 2024) please check the mailing label on this newsletter. If it does not show 2023-24, your dues are not up to date. Please consider becoming a member.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Rumors.

**Tom Robinson**  
President

*Happy New Year*

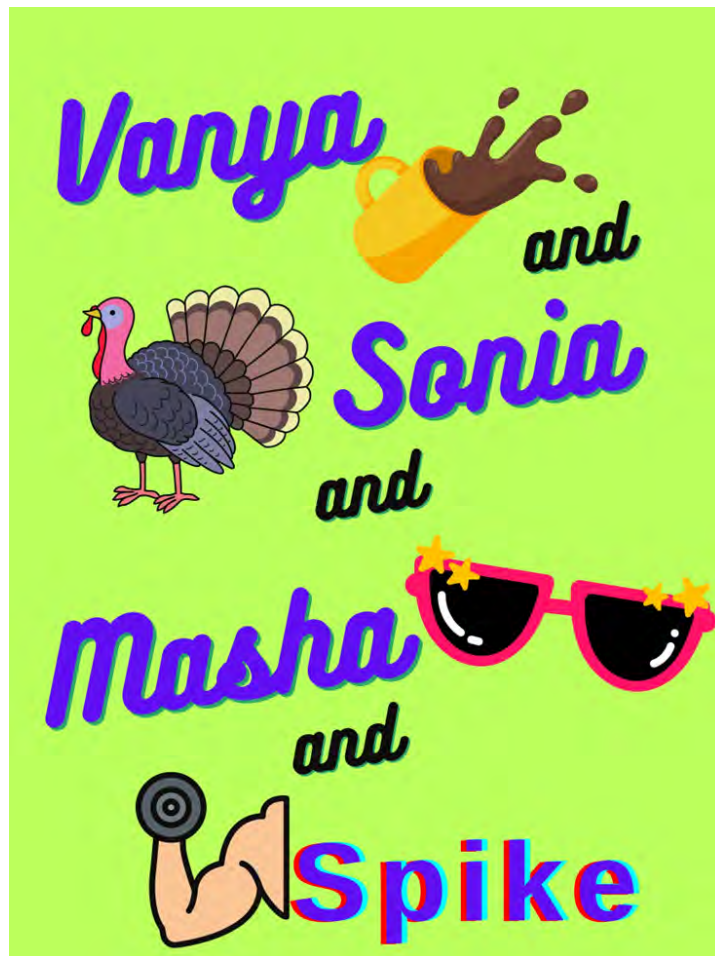
# NEIL SIMON'S **RUMORS**

In case you missed it, Neil Simon's **RUMORS** is the next show and "rumors" are it is very funny. The cast is working very hard and laughing just as hard. But we need help spreading the "rumors".... We need help with Set work and painting, we need a props person, etc. If you can assist please let me know!! [Sherri.hynes@yahoo.com](mailto:Sherri.hynes@yahoo.com) or text me at 443-669-5599



*Rumors* will be presented at Wor-Wic Community College on Friday January 26 at 7:30, Saturday January 27 at 2 and 7:30, Friday February 2 at 7:30 and Saturday February 3 at 2. Check our website ([sbyplayers.org](http://sbyplayers.org)) for ticket sales very soon.





## AUDITIONS

**Sunday, February 4th at 4:00 p.m.**

**Monday & Tuesday, February 5th & 6th at 7:00 p.m.**

**At Players 5109 Nutters Cross Rd. Salisbury, MD**

**Any Questions? Please ask me!**

**Sharon Benchoff - Director - [fresnelop@gmail.com](mailto:fresnelop@gmail.com) - 410-430-5386**

## Story

Middle-aged siblings Vanya and Sonia share a home in Bucks County, PA, where they bicker and complain about the circumstances of their lives. Suddenly, their movie-star sister, Masha, swoops in with her new boy toy, Spike. Old resentments flare up. Also on the scene are sassy Cassandra, who can predict the future, and a lovely young aspiring actress named Nina, whose prettiness somewhat worries the imperious Masha. Setting is present day.



## Characters

**VANYA:** 50s, lives in the home where his professor parents reared, he and his two sisters. He shares the home with Sonia, his adopted sister. He is resigned to his life; more or less. He is gay but is not defined by that fact. Creative, mild and intelligent, but not fulfilled.

**SONIA:** 50s, lives with her brother Vanya in their childhood home. Sonia's role in life was caretaker of her English professor parents in their declining years. She is restless, discontented, upset, regretful. She feels she has not experienced life.

**MASHA:** 50s, Vanya's and Sonia's sister; a B-list movie actress who gallivants around the world. She can certainly be self-absorbed, but maybe that is a protective mechanism. She is the one who provides monetary support to siblings. She realizes that the film role offers are dwindling as is her youth.

**SPIKE:** 20's - 30, Masha's new companion; an aspiring actor who is very attractive but self-centered. Perhaps a deep thought has never entered his mind. However, we must admire his zest for life and attitude of live every minute. (Must strip down to briefs/jockeys)

**NINA:** 20s, niece of Vanya's and Sonia's neighbors; an energetic and sincere would-be actress who is star struck by Masha. A breath of fresh air that brightens a room.

**CASSANDRA:** Vanya's and Sonia's odd "housekeeper"; a soothsayer who often makes ominous predictions. She takes her responsibilities as a voodoo practitioner/clairvoyant/protector of Vanya and Sonia much more seriously than her household chores. (Great role which can be developed in varied ways)

**Director's Note:** Based on the character descriptions, you may not think this is a comedy, but it really is. Tony award for Best Play 2013! My theory is that the audience will laugh more if they can see themselves, or someone they know, in the characters. These everyday characters (people) are thrown into circumstances, sometimes absurd circumstances, and how they react or what they say brings on the humor. It is far less funny if actors speak dialogue in an exaggerated, almost cartoonish manner. Here is a quote from the playwright Christopher Durang, "keep it simple and make it oddly believable," he said. "Treat it as if they meant what they said. It is both funnier and 'deeper' that way."

Community Players is committed to celebrating an inclusive culture of creativity by welcoming actors, technicians, designers, musicians, and production team members from varied backgrounds with regards to race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, physical & mental ability, and religious & political beliefs.

# THEATRE TEASERS

Trivia by Sharon Benchoff  
"J" is for January

1. Both the protagonist and antagonist in *Les Misérables* are "J" named characters.
2. These two actors with the same first name played Jenna in *Waitress* and Tom Collins in *Rent*.
3. This double "J" played Seymour in the 2021 revival of *Little Shop of Horrors*.
4. *Oklahoma!* features this dangerous threatening character.
5. This choreographer won Tony awards for directing *Gypsy* and *Fiddler on the Roof*.
6. This actor portrayed Atticus Finch in the 2018 Broadway production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
7. He wrote the score for *Funny Girl*.
8. This musical chronicle the lives and career of the Four Seasons.
9. He was George III in *Hamilton* and is currently starring in *Merrily We Roll Along*.
10. *Carousel* and *Show Boat* both have female characters that share the same first name.

Answers found on page 6

## PROSPECTIVE DIRECTORS



Have you ever thought that you might like to direct a show? Would you like to have a mentor to help you through the process? We are planning to host a New Directors/One Act Show Cast at Players this summer. Prospective directors will direct a one-act play with the guidance of an experienced director who will act as a mentor. The plan is to choose low budget/no budget plays which can be produced on the same set (with minor cosmetic changes). Audition/rehearsal time and space would have to be shared so scheduling would be a must. If you are interested in directing a one-act or mentoring a new director, please contact Rusty Mumford at [popirusty@comcast.net](mailto:popirusty@comcast.net) or 410-430-0423. This will be a great way to increase our pool of directors for future seasons.



## BACK STAGE SUBMISSIONS

Articles, photos, etc. for publication in Back Stage should be emailed to me (popirusty@comcast.net) by the 15th of each month. Also, if you have ideas for the improvement of our newsletter, please let me know!

*Rusty Mumford*  
Corresponding Secretary

HAPPY  
*New Year*



Players' next meetings will be Jan. 3 (7:00 PM) and Feb. 7 (7:00 PM). Join us to see where you can help with **Rumors** and all of the coming shows!

2024

## ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUESTIONS:



- Answers:
1. Jean Valjean and Inspector Javert
  2. Jessie Mueller and Jesse L. Martin
  3. Jeremy Jordan
  4. Jud Fry
  5. Jerome Robbins
  6. Jeff Daniels
  7. Julie Styne
  8. Jersey Boys
  9. Jonathan Groff
  10. Julie Jordan and Julie Dozier



Thank you for donating to Community Players on #GivingTuesday. Your generous donations allow us to continue our mission of presenting quality theatre to everyone on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. A special thank you to the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, Shore United Bank, and 47 ABC - WMDT for sponsoring this tremendous event.

## **Fundraising**

The Old-Time Radio Christmas show fundraiser was a success. It was performed in Snow Hill and at the Players Playhouse in December, and it raised approximately \$1200. Congratulations to the cast and crew.

Giving Tuesday was held in late November and netted a profit of \$2299.19.

Tentative fundraisers for 2024 are as follows: special production focusing on the Harlem Renaissance in February, a Movie Night in March, a Comedy Night in April, a Kids Show in May, a New Directors' One-Act Play Showcase in July, and a One-Act Play Festival involving local community theaters in August. If you are interested in coordinating or helping with any of these tentative fundraisers, contact Matt Bogdan at 443-235-3272 or [oceancityhappyme@aol.com](mailto:oceancityhappyme@aol.com).

The next fundraising meeting will be held at Players on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 7 p.m., during which the Capital Campaign will be discussed. All are invited to attend.

## **Grants**

Requests for grants were made for Google ads, Farmers and Planters, Too, Verizon, Sony Corporation, Nora Roberts Foundation, the Maryland State Arts Council Grants for Organization (Off-Year), and ArtsHERE, a new grant program launched by the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Community Players of Salisbury**  
**P. O. Box 2431**  
**Salisbury, MD 21802**

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becoming a member  
of Community Players.  
If you are not sure if  
your dues are paid for  
the current year,  
please check the  
mailing label on this  
newsletter.  
If it does not show  
2023-24, your dues  
are not up-to-date.*

**2024**

*Back Stage is funded, in part by a grant from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council (SWAC). Players would like to thank SWAC for their continued support.*

**Next Meetings - Wednesday, Jan. 3 (7:00 PM) and Feb. 7 (7:00 PM).**

**Community Players Officers & Board of Directors**  
**July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024**

*President: Tom Robinson - tomchicken@aol.com  
Vice-President: Matt Bogdan - oceancityhappyme@aol.com  
Recording Secretary: Darrell Mullins - dgmullins@salisbury.edu  
Corresponding Secretary: Rusty Mumford - popirusty@comcast.net  
Treasurer: Charlie Linton - charliecamtransport@yahoo.com  
Immediate Past-President: Kel Nagel - kelnagel@yahoo.com*

**Board Members**

*Kate Adkins, Bobbie Calloway, Robin Finley - Term Expires 2024  
Sharon Benchoff, Cass Dasher, Kyle Hayes - Term Expires 2025  
Lynne Bratten, Ken Johnson, Shelbie Thompson - Term Expires 2026*

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