

www.cvft.org

# Encore

Volume 13, Issue 2 June, 2007



*Providing opportunities for families to participate together in producing affordable, high-quality theatrical performances for the citizens of the Chaska valley region.*

## The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: The Broadway Musical



**Show Dates**  
 July 12 - 14, 19 - 21  
 7:00  
 July 14, 15, 21, 22  
 2:00

**Special Dinner Theater Performance**  
 July 19

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Tom Sawyer.....	1
Camelot.....	2
Money!.....	2
Theater Happenings.....	2
Meet Your CVFT Board .....	3
The Beast is Coming!.....	4
Tom Sawyer ticket order form .....	5

This coming July Chaska Valley Family Theater intends to turn their community center stage into a 19<sup>th</sup> century river town made famous by one of its own sons, Mark Twain. The fictional town of St. Petersburg, modeled after the very real town of Hannibal, Missouri, is home to a cast of some of America's more enduring characters – Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, Becky Thatcher, Aunt Polly and Injun Joe.

This musical version, penned by Ken Ludwig and Don Schliz, opened at the Minskoff Theatre in May of 2001. According to many it closed too soon. Set to a rollicking bluegrass score this energetic depiction of the Tom's adventures went mostly un-noticed as the country dealt with larger issues. Still, as reviewer John Kenrick wrote:

*"This show deserved a far better fate! Whatever its shortcomings, Tom Sawyer had charm, melody, and a genuine professional polish. These are not qualities to be taken for granted on Broadway, especially at a time when artless travesties like Saturday Night Fever and Footloose were able to run for more than a year apiece"*

As it turns out, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: The Broadway Musical" is enjoying plenty of success, especially in cities and towns far removed from Broadway where an old fashioned, small town yarn can be readily identified with.

White washing wooden fences and skinny-dippin' in ponds may have given way to video games and organized hockey but a vibrant musical version of Mark Twain's depiction of glorious childhood in an earlier America is about to be re-visited still again, and very appropriately in another small river town.

C. E. Title, Director  
 CVFT



## Chaska Valley Family Theatre presents: "Camelot" April 2007

I must start by saying that I never really thought CVFT would do "Camelot". It was never seriously under consideration. Although some of us on the Board of Directors mentioned it occasionally, it seemed an old relic of the past and perhaps as exciting as others. Not many children in it either. However, I have always been very fond of it, and when talking to some of my cohorts in the organization, I found that there were actually many others who have a love for this show. (I could name them - and I will - Randy Herget, Robert Braudt, Amy Huang, Ann O'Neill, Tom Kocka, Dianne Prieditis, my father). These are some people whose opinions matter a great deal to me. I felt if I had the support of people like this, CVFT could do a wonderful job of producing this honored musical. So when I offered to direct, I was taken up on it. (I must say, my family greeted this news with groans of support, having been through things like this before. Sally always refers to a cast as my "other family.")

That's how "Camelot" came to be. I never knew it would be. And while I wanted it to be, I was ill at ease in my crown until the first night of auditions and my eyes beheld all of you. Then suddenly, for the first time, I knew I wanted "Camelot" to be one of the most splendid productions CVFT would ever do.

I could go on forever about the pleasure of having such an amazing turnout at auditions - especially in the Men Department. (And I do believe I heard a collective gasp when Anna walked in late that second evening.) With many new faces and many loyal performers from past productions, Dianne and I had our work cut out for us in choosing the cast.

As reflected in comments from our audiences, I am sure we made the best choices. Exploring the personalities of Arthur, Guenevere, Lancelot, Mordred, Pellinore, and Merlyn with the people chosen to play them was the most rewarding part of my job. Bringing them to life with your own personal touches was beautiful to watch.

The cast was truly an amazingly talented bunch - Kings, queens, knights, ladies, wizards, toads, mushrooms, nymphs, witches, and the dog, all were thoroughly impressive. Throw in an orchestra that was better than any in my recollection, magnificent sets, lighting and costumes, lots of swords and other cool stuff, beautiful dancing, and there you have it. An all-around glorious production!

My warmest thanks to the cast, crew, production volunteers and especially the ever-present musical force in my life, Dianne. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did and please keep in touch!

Paula Atkins  
Director

## Money, Money, Money, Money, Money...Mon...ey!

All the world revolves around money. In CVFT's world, although money is important, it is not the driving force of what we do.

...We serve the community with quality opportunities.  
...We offer theatrical opportunities to everyone in the community regardless of economic status.  
...We encourage and cultivate all members of the community to participate in our CVFT productions.  
...It is the mission of CVFT to give all community members the opportunity to participate in any CVFT production.

We have produced quality productions for over 11 years and have had the involvement directly and indirectly by over 70,000 people since 1996!

To continue to have these great opportunities and to continue to make all these productions, WE NEED YOUR HELP! It takes money to make sure that all of our productions continue to grow and to fund new opportunities for all the members of our community.

Contact Tom Stauber at [www.cvft.org](http://www.cvft.org) for more involvement opportunities!

## Theater Happenings Around Town

### Cross Community Players

Grease

June 15-24, 2007

<http://www.crossplayers.org/>

### Minneapolis Musical Theater

Kiss of the Spider Woman

June 1 - 24

<http://www.aboutmmt.org/>

### Minnetonka Community Theater

Damn Yankees (with Bill Coldwell as Coach Van Buren)

July 12-21

<http://www.minnetonkatheatre.com/>

### Prior Lake Players

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers

<http://www.priorlakeplayers.org/>

### Eden Prairie Players

South Pacific

June 15 - 21

<http://www.edenprairieplayers.org>

# Meet Your Chaska Valley Family Theatre Board of Directors!

## Paula Atkins, President

There are few things that people do not know about me. One of them is that I am really a very shy person and I have to force myself to speak in front of a group. I actually get physically sick before holding auditions. Presiding over Board meetings as president is a challenge for me as well. Shyness, coupled with a strong urge to manage things may be a conundrum, but as Pellinore might say, there you have it. Through CVFT I have learned to believe in myself, trust my instincts, use kindness and diplomacy to solve problems, and most of all it allows me to hang out with kindred spirits. CVFT has provided me with the opportunity to share my love for theater. I have been a fixture at CVFT for the twelve years of its existence. I have seen many children grow up with us and move on to success in performance and in life. I have seen many good and lasting friendships formed. These things have taken on so much importance in my life.

Here is my life, in a nutshell:

Lived my whole life in Chanhassen. Attended St. Hubert School, Guardian Angels and Chaska High Schools. Married Jack (an Edina native – opposites do attract!) and raised four beautiful children in above-mentioned town. Was exposed to creative people (especially my relatives) at an early age which fostered a love for theater. Drifted through many jobs (have decided at this point I want to be a nurse when I grow up, and recently started college with that end in mind.) Was coerced by some dear friends into being on the first Board of Directors for CVFT in 1994. Currently work for Caribou Coffee (a GREAT job!) and have served on the Chanhassen Parks & Recreation Commission for the last 5 years. Hosted 5 exchange students from Europe over the last 10 years. Have a beautiful grandson. Have a daughter getting married in October. (my next and most important production!) Recently celebrated 50 years of living and got my first tattoo in honor of the occasion.

Now you know most everything about me, and I want to tell you I thoroughly enjoy getting to know every one of you, our volunteers, actors, supporters, members, and new friends. Call me any time!

## Tom Stauber, Director

Hi Everyone – I have been with CVFT for 6 years now, my first experience was with my daughter Anna in Wizard of Oz. Robert Braudt was the director and we had such a great experience that we began doing many of the shows as a family. In fact Best Christmas Pageant, directed by Paula Atkins was the first that all 6 of us had a part in the production and the Chanhassen Villager referred to us as the Von Stauber family after the famous Von Trapp family of the Sound of Music. I became a member of the Board of Directors 4 years ago. We have all been blessed to have found CVFT where so many of our fondest memories are and some of our closest friends have come from. Thanks to all for so much hard work and so much fun!

## Robert Braudt, Director

Nearly ten years ago, Robert debuted on the CVFT stage as Mr. Bumble in Oliver! At his side was his 5 year old "orphan" son, Cody. From that experience grew a love for CVFT's commitment to opening the theatre experience to the entire family. Robert has expanded his involvement beyond the stage as the Lighting Designer for many of CVFT's productions, and Artistic Director for "Wizard of Oz," "Jesus Christ Superstar," and next spring's "Beauty and the Beast." Robert joined the Board of Directors in 2007 and looks forward to being a part of an organization that brings so much value back to the community that it serves

## Jane McCloskey, Vice President

I have lived and taught elementary school in Chaska for (gasp!) over 20 years. My introduction to Chaska Valley Family Theatre came 6 years ago when Robert Braudt asked me if I would like to help costume The Wizard of Oz. Not knowing what in the world I was getting myself in to, I said yes, and I haven't looked back since. CVFT has become an important part of my family, and my children, Katie and Megan have been involved right along side me every step of the way. From being on stage together, to costuming as a mother-daughter team, the McCloskey girls continue to work and play together with our extended CVFT family – and hope to for many years to come!

## Amy Huang, Secretary

Our family moved to Chanhassen, Minnesota in 1989 from Buffalo, New York. The weather isn't much different here than Buffalo, so our adjustment was quite smooth. My first introduction to CVFT was when our daughter came home from school in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and said her teacher (Dianne Strandberg) thought she should audition for a show at the CCC. That night both our daughter and son auditioned for CVFT's "The King and I". Since that moment in 1999, our family has enjoyed being involved either on stage or back stage with the "family" of CVFT. From my own first-hand experiences as well as from watching other families involved with our productions, I've seen how rewarding it is when people work together to bring something of value to the community and in the process, create lasting memories that are shared together.

## Larry Schroeder, Treasurer

Larry Schroeder is in the last year as the treasurer for CVFT. He has been an occasional actor on stage in the many productions of CVFT over the last several years and hopes to find time to direct or act in the future. He and his wife reside in Chaska and take time to travel and visit with their children between the many patients seen in a busy Bloomington dental practice.

## Kelly Jeremiason, Director

An elementary music teacher in Orono living in Chaska. Hobbies include woodworking, automobilia, and useless information. I may not be an actor, but I can act like one. I owe CVFT more than anyone can imagine. Without CVFT, I would not have met my wife Jennifer and we would not have our son Riley. From Bye Bye Birdie and Oklahoma to Babes in Toyland, Jesus Christ Superstar, Love Rides the Rail, and CVFT shows of the future, CVFT is near and dear to my family's heart.

## Charlie Title, Director

Moved to the Twin Cities in the early 1970's from Missouri. Worked as a song and scriptwriter for various production companies, producing multi-media shows and business theater for companies like, Target, Toro, Smucker's, Dr. Pepper, Kirby Company and many others. Has songs on various children's albums and wrote sketches and songs for Dudley Riggs productions. Grandpa to two grandsons and a third on the way. Married to the talented and beautiful Alice who is currently playing keyboards for CVFT's production of "Camelot".

## Tammy Riesgraf, Director

Tammy is in her 2nd year as a CVFT board member. She joined CVFT in 1997 as a nun and ballroom dancer in "The Sound of Music". She has not only been on stage in several productions, but has also enjoyed being a member of the stage crew and in the lighting booth as the stage manager. CVFT just closed their production of "Camelot" where Tammy tried her hand at publicity. This job is harder than it looks. Being on the board has been a real privilege for Tammy, she has learned a great deal about the inner workings of the theater and what it takes to get a show off the page and onto the stage.

Tammy lives in Chaska with her husband Tom and four children; Andy (20), Tyler (16), Brittney (16) and Michael (16). Yes, they are triplets!! Tammy and Tom have been married for 27 years. Tammy is the Attendance Secretary at Chaska Middle School East. Tom works for Bachman's in Farmington as the Operation's Manager and Buyer. Andy is a junior at the University of Minnesota, Mankato majoring in Law Enforcement, with a minor in Drug Studies. The triplets are sophomores at Chaska High School. You may have encountered all three of them at Cooper's New Market bagging your groceries.

Tammy's love of theater actually began in Junior High when she saw Tom Kocka and Patty (Kocka) Schlader perform in "West Side Story". Never having the nerve to tryout herself it actually took her sister-in-law Connie Jo's power of persuasion to get her to audition for "The Sound of Music". The rest as they say is "History". Her favorite play that she performed in was "Annie" because she actually had a few lines. Her favorite play to work behind the scenes was "State Fair" where she got the opportunity to work with Reid Harmson, Drew Hasty and Barb Kocka. It was a lot of work, but well worth the effort. Tammy looks forward to helping Charlie Title and company with this summer's production of "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer". In the near future she will be performing in the play "Garage Sale" that she co-wrote with eight of her dear friends. Without the love and support of her family Tammy could never have gotten so involved with CVFT. Over the years she has made wonderful new friendships and has made long lasting memories. She hopes to continue for as long as CVFT will have her.

## Joan Joyce, Director

My first experience with CVFT was being a part of 'Jesus Christ Super Star'. My daughter talked me into trying out with her so that we could increase her chances of getting on the cast. Much to my surprise, our names appeared on the cast list (in spite of the fact that I can't really sing or act). I unexpectedly found myself and my daughter involved with a great group of people (adults and children of all ages) who were fun, energetic, very inclusive of everybody and talented beyond belief. I knew I had to find a way to become more involved.

My only prior acting experience was when I performed "Peter and the Wolf" out of my garage when I was in fourth grade. I remember being a bit irritated that our audience kept whispering to each other throughout the performance. They had paid a few cents to come see it after receiving a flyer in their mail box and a promise of complimentary lemonade and cookies during intermission. There were perhaps five friends in the cast. I played the wolf and some other character. I can't imagine how it happened but our small group ended up having the entire day off of school so that we could show the school our play. I think we performed it three times due to the lack of space in the gymnasium. I can still remember the boom box and some of the props we used! Yikes! I'm glad there were no pictures taken.

My fun experience with CVFT was so enticing to the rest of my family that we all tried out for "Fiddler on the Roof" and made it! Our experience has brought us continued enjoyment and many laughable memories with the theatre. I know I did not miss my calling (I am still better suited to be an Interior Designer) but I am very glad not to have missed the opportunity to know and be a part of such a great group of people

## Dianne Strandberg, Director

After a long break from Community Theater, Dianne joined the cast of CVFT's production of "The Music Man." The year was 1996. From that time she has been actively involved with the Chaska Valley Family Theatre as an actor, publicity chairperson and board member. Her newest theater challenge will be producing this summer's "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, the Broadway Musical."

Through her 33 years working as a teacher in the Chaska School District, Dianne has enjoyed seeing many of her students both past and present blossom on the stage of CVFT. Besides working with CVFT, now retired, Strandberg spends time working with the Carver County Historical Society. Her winters are spent in sunny Florida with husband, Harry.

## Randy Ross, Director

Randy Ross is vice president of human resources for Best Buy, a global retailer of technology and entertainment products and services. He oversees the human resources function for the company's 4,000-plus corporate staff.

Ross' exceptional understanding of people and their strengths is instrumental as the company strives to unlock the many talents of its people. Under his leadership the company has redefined its approach to rewarding employees by recognizing the unique needs and motivators of the diverse employee base. He also was vital in implementing the company's agreement with Accenture to develop simplified HR tools and systems for employees.

Ross joined Best Buy in 2000 after an eight-year career with Target Corporation where he worked in training, organizational development and human resources. In addition, he has worked in human resources at Dow Chemical Company and Rockwell Collins International. He also has held several positions at the University of St. Thomas (Minnesota), including coordinator of consultation and outreach, staff psychologist, adjunct faculty member in the graduate program in human resource development, and instructor for the university's management center.

Ross is a licensed psychologist in the state of Minnesota. He has served as a consultant for the news department at KARE 11 (NBC) in Minneapolis and has appeared on various news programs to discuss career and stress-related topics. He has published numerous articles and a book on occupational stress and burnout.

A native of Sioux City, Iowa, Ross attended the University of Iowa where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1984 and received his PhD in 1989. He serves on the Board of Directors at the Minnesota Children's Museum, the advisory board for the Division of Executive Professional Development at the University of St. Thomas, Board of Directors of the Human Resources Outsourcing Association and the School Board at St. John the Baptist Catholic School.

### ***The Beast is Coming***

***That's right! In the Spring of 2008 CVFT will be featuring Walt Disney's Beauty and the Beast. Directed by our own Robert Braudt ( Director of Wizard of Oz, 2002 & Jesus Christ Superstar, 2005). Auditions will be held October 15-16 with call backs on October 18<sup>th</sup> at the Chaska Community Center.***