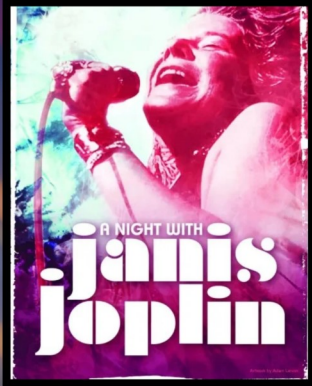


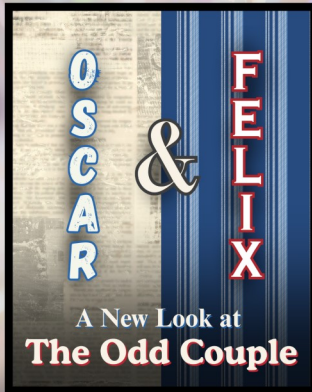
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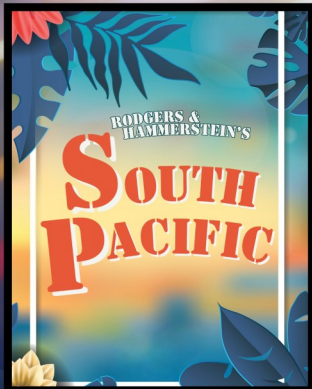
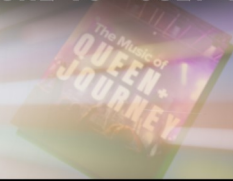
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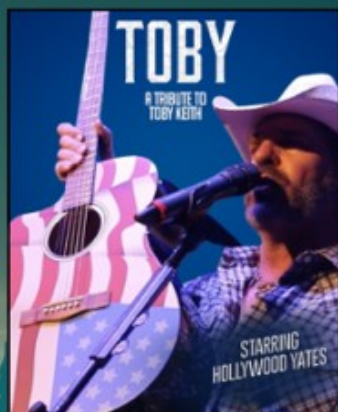
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Mission Statement

The mission of the Totem Pole Playhouse is to provide superior professional theater at affordable prices; to introduce a diverse population to the joys of live theater; and to give young people an opportunity to learn about the arts.

Vision Statement

Sustain and grow the Totem Pole Playhouse's legacy as one of the preeminent summer theaters in the country and to provide cultural and artistic leadership to our community.

Values Statement

Preserving the Totem Pole Playhouse for present and future generations, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Promoting live theater in South Central Pennsylvania by presenting nationally recognized artists, quality entertainment and offering arts education.

Bringing people together through innovative, artistically creative and mutually beneficial collaborations with a wide variety of community organizations.

Maintaining the highest organizational standards for fiscal responsibility, facility maintenance and professional practices.

Enhancing the cultural experience of the community and inspiring individuals to develop a lifelong commitment to the arts.



Greetings from Our Board Chair...

Welcome to the 76th Season of Totem Pole Playhouse

There is a moment in every performance—just before the lights fade and the curtain rises—when the theatre seems to hold its breath. In that quiet instant, anything feels possible. Stories are about to unfold, music is about to fill the room, and for a few hours, strangers will become a community.

For more than seventy-five years, that moment has been part of the magic of Totem Pole Playhouse. Tucked within the beauty of Caledonia, this “theatre in the woods” has been a gathering place where generations have laughed, reflected, and shared in the transformative power of live performance.

This year, that tradition continues with a season that celebrates the spirit of America itself.

As our nation marks its 250th anniversary, the productions on our stage reflect the many voices and stories that have shaped the American experience. From the electrifying sound and rebellious soul of *A Night with Janis Joplin*, to the remarkable true story of kindness and humanity in *Come From Away*, to the timeless comic brilliance of *Oscar & Felix: A New Look at The Odd Couple*, this season captures the humor, resilience, and heart that define us. We travel further through America’s musical landscape with the sweeping romance and unforgettable melodies of *South Pacific*, before closing with the warmth, wit, and unmistakable spirit of one of our nation’s most beloved icons in *Karen Hester as Dolly*, a joyful tribute to Dolly Parton.

This season also marks the beginning of a new act for Totem Pole Playhouse. Following our milestone 75th anniversary, we are proud to step forward as a three-season theatre company, expanding our programming beyond the traditional summer season so that even more audiences can experience the joy of live theatre throughout the year.

Of course, the true stars of Totem Pole are not only those on stage. They are also the patrons who fill these seats, the donors who believe in our mission, the volunteers who give their time and talent, and the artists and staff who pour their hearts into every production. Together, you ensure that this remarkable tradition continues.

So tonight, as the lights dim and the music begins, take a moment to enjoy the magic that only live theatre can offer. This exact audience, this exact performance, this exact moment—will never happen again.

And that is what makes it extraordinary.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our dedicated staff, and the talented artists you will see on stage, welcome to the 76th season of Totem Pole Playhouse. We’re so glad you’re here.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wesley R. Fugate". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Wesley R. Fugate, Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Directors
Totem Pole Playhouse

A Greeting from The Artistic Director...



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Playhouse. It is truly a joy to have you here with us for the 2026 season.

We are especially excited about this year's lineup of shows—five remarkable productions in our Broadway Series that each offer something unique for our audiences. From the electrifying music and storytelling of *A Night with Janis Joplin*, to the deeply human and uplifting journey of *Come From Away*—to the laughter and heart found in *Oscar & Felix: A New Look at The Odd Couple*, the sweeping romance and timeless score of *South Pacific*, and the celebration of music and

personality in our season finale featuring Karen Hester as *Dolly*—this season reflects the range, talent, and joy that live theatre can bring to our community.

For the first time in several years, every musical in our Broadway Series features live music onstage, something we are deeply proud to offer. These productions represent not only artistic excellence, but a commitment to giving our audiences the most comprehensive Performing Arts we can.

This season also marks an important moment in the life of our theatre. We have embarked on our Three-Season Comprehensive Campaign, an effort designed to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Playhouse and ensure that this special place can continue serving our community for generations to come. Like many arts organizations across the country, we are navigating rising costs, changing audience habits, and new expectations—while remaining deeply committed to artistic excellence and accessibility.

One of the ways we are building for the future is by expanding what we offer beyond the traditional summer season. Our off-season initiatives - *Music in the Pines*, *Tucked Away Treasures*, and our growing children's programming - are not just new programs; they are essential to our long-term health. These offerings allow us to welcome new audiences, serve students, create opportunities for artists, and keep this space active throughout the year. Quite simply, they represent the future of our success.

The truth is simple: it costs \$81 to put one person in a seat at the theatre. The more tickets we sell, the more that cost comes down. Every full house helps sustain the work onstage, support our artists and staff, and ensure that these new programs (and this historic theatre) can thrive.

So here is our heartfelt request:

If you are able, please consider making a gift.

And if giving financially isn't possible right now, you can still make a tremendous difference, buy another ticket, invite a friend, bring a neighbor, or share the experience with someone new. Your presence and your advocacy are powerful forms of support.

The arts matter now more than ever. They bring people together. They create joy. They spark conversation. They remind us of our shared humanity. And in times of uncertainty, they help us feel connected and hopeful.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for believing in this work. And thank you for helping keep the Playhouse strong.

With gratitude,

Ryan B. Gibbs

Producing Artistic Director

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Patron Information Latecomer/No Show Policy Any unclaimed tickets 15 minutes after the start of showtime will be released for resale. Latecomers will be seated at the House Manager's discretion.

Children and Live Performances Children of all ages are admitted to our children's and theatre camp public performances. For other performances, children under the age of 5 are not admitted to Totem Pole Playhouse. Please carefully consider whether a performance is appropriate for your child before planning to attend. Disruptive patrons, including children, may not be allowed to remain in the theatre.

Food and Drink No outside food or drink is permitted inside the theatre. We ask patrons to unwrap or remove candy or gum from wrappers before the performance so as not to distract the performers or anyone seated around you.

Smoking No smoking (tobacco or other substances) or vaping is permitted within 25 feet of the box office, bathroom, patio, or any door.

Service Animals Patrons who require the assistance of a service animal must notify the box office before attending a performance. Our wheelchair and companion seats are designated for patrons with service animals. No non-service animals are permitted in the theatre.

Accessibility Totem Pole Playhouse is fully accessible for mobility impaired patrons. Our walkways and aisles provide enough space for the passage of walkers and wheelchairs.

Parking Totem Pole Playhouse has several spaces designated for handicapped parking.

Wheelchairs Totem Pole Playhouse is wheelchair accessible. Please view our seating chart for wheelchair seating locations. Patrons who require assistance are encouraged to arrive early and ask an usher for assistance before a performance.

Assisted Hearing Devices Free assisted listening devices are available at the box office prior to the performance by exchanging a license or credit card. No advance reservations for assisted listening devices are required.

Photos The taking of photographs and use of video recording equipment are not permitted once the show has begun.

Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices Please silence or turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones, beepers, tablets, and watch alarms. We encourage you to share your experience at the Totem Pole Playhouse via social media, but please refrain from doing so or texting during performances; the glow from your device is distracting to the performers and the patrons seated around you.

Lost and Found Lost and Found articles are kept in the Box Office for 30 days. Please contact the Box Office at (717) 352-2164 to inquire about lost items.

Emergency Notice The exit indicated by a red exit sign nearest to the seat you occupy is the shortest route to the outside. In the event of fire or other emergency, please walk to that exit; please do not run. Patrons using wheelchairs should use the house lower left or right entrance.

TOTEM POLE PLAYHOUSE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

RYAN B. GIBBS.....Producing Artistic Director
 FERN-MARIE AAMESManaging Director
 KIA ARMSTRONG.....Production Manager
 RENEE RANKINFront of House Manager
 BONNIE ABENSHONAsst. Box Office Manager
 BOX OFFICE STAFFTammy Argenbright, Abigail Bucher,
Malee Cook, Haley Hager, Annika Rife
 HOUSE MANAGERS.....Lauren Bowen, Zachary Barber, Mariah Fortney
 USHERSHeaven Barnes, Alia Brookens, Laelle Cannon,
 Kash Cooley, John Cooper, Karen Powers-Davis, Jaden Eger (Head Usher),
 Leah Grimes, Elyse Hoch, Kathryn Huber, Derek Jamelli, William Price, Jared
 Reichelderfer (Head Usher), Alex Ross, Hannah Ross, Aden White
 ANGEL SNOWBERGER.....Company Manager
 KAREN POWERS-DAVIS.....Company Management Support
 KRISTI WITMER.....Bus Greeter, Administrative & Company Support
 ANDY SMETZER.....Photographer
 COCO SANSONI.....Branding Graphic Artist
 TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS.....Jason Nedrow, Chris Russo
 SOCIAL MEDIA/MARKETING.....Luke Reed, Kaelin Butts
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TOTEM POLE PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTION TEAM

RYAN B. GIBBS.....Producing Artistic Director
DARREN SERVER.....Resident Musical Director
KIA ARMSTRONG.....Production Manager/Stage Manager
CHRIS RUSSO.....Technical Director
JASON NEDROW.....Technical Consultant
KAY YAUKEY, FERN-MARIE AAMES.....Costume Consultants

2026 SEASON PRODUCTION STAFF

SAM SIMS.....Head of Lighting and Video
KATE WECKER.....Sound Designer/Audio 1
TYLER RICHARDSON.....Assistant Production Manager/Swing Crew
LORELEI CONTE.....Head Stitcher
ALASTAIR BLACKWOOD.....Wardrobe Supervisor
NICHOLAS RYAN.....Assistant Electrician
LILIANA HEURING-McBRIDE.....Assistant Audio
TAYLOR PIEKARZ.....Stitcher
KAMILA AVILA.....Wardrobe Assistant/Hair
DYLAN SABATANO.....Scenic Carpenter
KIERA GAVITT.....Crew Chief, Special Events Stage Manager
KEYS NEWELL.....Stage Management Production Assistant
KEEFER STILES.....Technician
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Nathaniel F. Spang (top right)

David F. Spang (bottom right)

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RYAN B. GIBBS (*Producing Artistic Director*)
 Ryan is a Director, Producer, and Stage Manager with a 25-year theatrical career. His career has involved everything from school plays to Broadway shows and almost every step in between. Broadway and National Tour credits include *Rent, Wicked, Elf, Avenue Q, Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, The Drowsy Chaperone, School of Rock, Chicago: The Musical, and Mary Poppins*, as well as Production Supervising the

Austrian and Japanese companies of *Mary Poppins*. He has worked directly “in the room” with creatives and producers such as The Disney Theatrical Group, Jason Moore, Casey Nicholaw, John Tiffany, Cameron Mackintosh, and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Locally, he has worked for the Fulton Theatre, The Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre, Franklin and Marshall College, Sight & Sound Theatres, and many others. Ryan served as the Artistic Director of the Allenberry Playhouse for three seasons and was a founding member of the Lancaster-based theatre company The Reverie Acting Company. For four years, he was a Producer for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, where he produced work for Broadway legends such as Jerry Mitchell, Chita Rivera, and Bernadette Peters. A graduate of Kennard-Dale High School (Go Rams!) and Marywood University (Go Pacers!), Ryan runs a nostalgia retail experience called *Retrosplat!* and a theatre coaching and consulting company called *Gibbsology*. He is a professor of professional practice at the Academy of Live Events and Technology on the Rock Lititz campus and lives in Lancaster with his wife (Amy), his sons (Anderson and Benjamin), and his cat (Gumbo) and is so thankful for everyone reading this program!

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Meet Our Production Team...

KIA ARMSTRONG (*Production Manager/ASM*) is thrilled to be in her second year as Production Manager here at the historic Totem Pole Playhouse. She just adores the playhouse's charm, staff, and creative energy. Last season, *The Marvelous Wonderettes* became a particular favorite, cementing her joy in this new chapter. With 30 years of diverse theatre experience, Kia has worn nearly every hat backstage and beyond: acting, choreography, lighting, assistant stage management, assistant directing, and automation. In recent years, she's truly found her home in Stage & Production Management—where her love of storytelling, precision, and beautifully controlled chaos all come together. Grateful doesn't even begin to cover it—Thanks to Ryan, whose belief in me and constant support make these challenges feel possible, there's no one else I'd rather run a theatre alongside! And an extra special thank you to my far-flung gaggle of misfits for the love, laughter, and steady encouragement that fuel me—especially my amazing kids, who remind me why I do this beautiful, bonkers work!

KAMILA AVILA (*Wardrobe Assistant/Wigs*) is over the moon to join Totem Pole Playhouse as the Hair and Wardrobe Assistant this summer! Last summer she worked as a Costume Intern at The Naples Players in Naples, Florida, with credits on shows such as *Beetlejuice Jr.* and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, and recently graduated in May 2026 with a degree in Fashion Design in her home state of Maryland. Kamila's endless passion for the magic of theater (and for having loose safety pins in her pockets) inspires her work and she is beyond delighted to work with a team as undoubtedly dedicated as Totem Pole Playhouse.

ALASTAIR SILAS BLACKWOOD (*Wardrobe Supervisor, Camp Costume Designer*) is proud to be joining Totem Pole for the 2026 Summer season. He recently graduated from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts with a degree in Costume Design and Technology. He specializes in costume crafts, dye work and fiber arts. He also enjoys working on short films, having multiple design credits. In his spare time he enjoys playing DND with friends and listening to podcasts.

LORELEI CONTE (*Head Stitcher*)

KIERA GAVITT (*Deck Manager, Event Stage Manager*) Returning for their third year with Totem Pole, Kiera is thrilled to spend another summer in beautiful Pennsylvania with the wonderful folks at the theatre. Kiera is endlessly grateful to their family and friends who have supported them in their career and make it possible for them to work away from home!

LILIANA HEURING-McBRIDE (*Audio Assistant*) is an aspiring audio engineer and designer from Vandenberg Village, California. She has a passion for the collaborative experience of theatre and blending artistic intent with technical knowledge. She graduated from PCPA's 2-year technical program in 2024, with her favorite credits from that time being A1 on *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Cabaret*, as well as Sound Designer for PCPA's outreach show *Dulce*. Outside of theater, Liliana follows wherever her interests lead, currently learning web programming, network design, and designing home-built computers.

JASON NEDROW (*Technical Advisor/Technical Director*), in his third season working with this Totem Pole Team, is

the Technical Director for the Dickinson College Department of Theatre and Dance in Carlisle, PA. Jason has also worked as a Technical Director and Stage Carpenter at Messiah University, Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre, and Allenberry Playhouse. He also instructs courses in scenery construction with a focus on recycling and sustainable construction at Dickinson College. Jason lives in Boiling Springs and has two amazing daughters.

KEYS NEWELL (*Production Assistant*) is so excited to be joining Totem Pole Playhouse for the 2026 summer season! Select theatrical credits include: *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (2025), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2025), and *A Christmas Carol* (2024) with The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, *Every Book is a Yearbook* (2026) presented as a part of Keen Teens Festival of New Work, *Lady From the Sea* (2025) with Hudson Classical Theater Company, and several staged readings in the NYC area. They graduated from Drew University with a degree in Theater Arts and a concentration in Directing and Stage Management.

TAYLOR PIEKARZ, she/her (*Stitcher*) is a rising sophomore at Marymount Manhattan College, in the BFA Theatre Design and Technology major, with a concentration in Costume Design. Recent credits include *Brightstar* and *Rent* at Marymount Manhattan College (NY, NY), *The Addams Family* at Theatre League of Clifton (Wayne, NJ), *Matilda* at The Charles Seller Foundation (Bloomfield, NJ), *Legally Blonde* at Waldwick High School (Waldwick, NJ), *Godspell* at The Charles Seller Foundation (Bloomfield, NJ), and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Waldwick High School (Waldwick, NJ).

TY RICHARDSON, he/him (*Assistant Production Manager*) is a rising senior at the William and Mary, studying Theatre and Public Policy. Outside of stage and production management, he is President of William and Mary's chapter of Alpha Psi Omega and Secretary of William and Mary's Theatre Student Association. Ty has worked in various forms of production management since high school and has had the privilege of continuing to grow in both collegiate and professional settings. Favorite past works of his include *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* (William and Mary), *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (William and Mary), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Endstation Theatre Company). Ty would like to thank Kia and Ryan for the opportunity to join that Totem Pole Playhouse this summer, as well as Matt, Chuck, and David for their constant support and mentorship.

NICHOLAS RYAN (*Assistant Electrician*) is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist and is glad to return to Totem Pole. They spent most of the past year at Florida Studio Theatre as the Sound Intern where they designed *Grandma Gatewood Took a Walk*, *Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground*, *Deck the Halls*, *Snow White*, and *The Write Stuff*. Nicholas graduated from Gettysburg College last year where they designed lights and sound for shows

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Meet Our Production Team...

NICHOLAS RYAN, *cont.* including *Broken Mirrors*, *Eurydice*, and *The Ver*zon Play*. The past two summers they've worked as the Education and Cabaret Lighting Design Apprentice at Theatre Aspen and the A2 at Totem Pole Playhouse respectively. Find more of their work here: <https://illuminatedsoundscapes.com/>.

DYLAN SABATANO (*Scenic Carpenter*) With a strong interest in the craftsmanship behind storytelling, Dylan focuses on the construction and realization of the physical environments that bring productions to life on stage. His work combines practical building skills with an eye for visual detail, helping translate design concepts into fully realized sets for audiences to experience. Working with Totem Pole Playhouse marks Dylan's first professional step toward pursuing a deeper career in film and theater. He is particularly interested in production design and set construction, and views scenic carpentry as a hands-on foundation for understanding how worlds are built for both stage and screen. Dylan is excited to continue developing his skills and contributing to collaborative storytelling through design and build.

SAM SIMS, they/them (*Associate Lighting Designer, Head Electrician, Video Designer and Operator*) is delighted to return to Totem Pole Playhouse. After completing their first summer season with the Playhouse—where they served as Head Electrician, Associate Lighting Designer, and designed the lighting for the Neil Diamond Tribute—Sam is thrilled to step into this new role. Originally from Utah, they have spent nearly a decade working in theatrical lighting across community, regional, and

professional theatres in both Utah and Pennsylvania. Most recently, they worked at The Fulton Theatre, honing their craft in a fast-paced, high-caliber environment. Sam is passionate about the art of stage lighting, and they love bringing designs to life while balancing the technical and creative aspects of theatrical electrical work. They're excited to continue collaborating with the talented Totem Pole team.

ANGEL SNOWBERGER (*Company Manager*) is looking forward to her second season as Company Manager at Totem Pole Playhouse. Angel was the Youth Supervisor for two previous Totem Pole productions, *Annie* and *A Christmas Carol*. She previously served on the Board of Directors and as Volunteer Coordinator for Chambersburg Community Theatre. For the past 13 years she has been homeschooling her two daughters while incorporating a love of live theater into their home. Recent onstage credits include *Tell* (originating the role of "Dare" in a local production) and *Fun Home* (Helen Bechdel).

KATE WECKER, she/her (*Sound Designer/AI*) Kate is thrilled to be returning to Totem Pole Playhouse. Some of her favorite past sound designs include *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* (Totem Pole Playhouse), *Animal Farm* (A Noise Within - Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award), and *Passage* (Millikin University). She was the Resident Sound Designer at Laguna Playhouse and Pioneer Theatre Company. Her designs have been heard at theaters across the country from Cape May Stage in New Jersey to Pepperdine University in California. She is a proud member of the Philadelphia chapter of Sound Girls.

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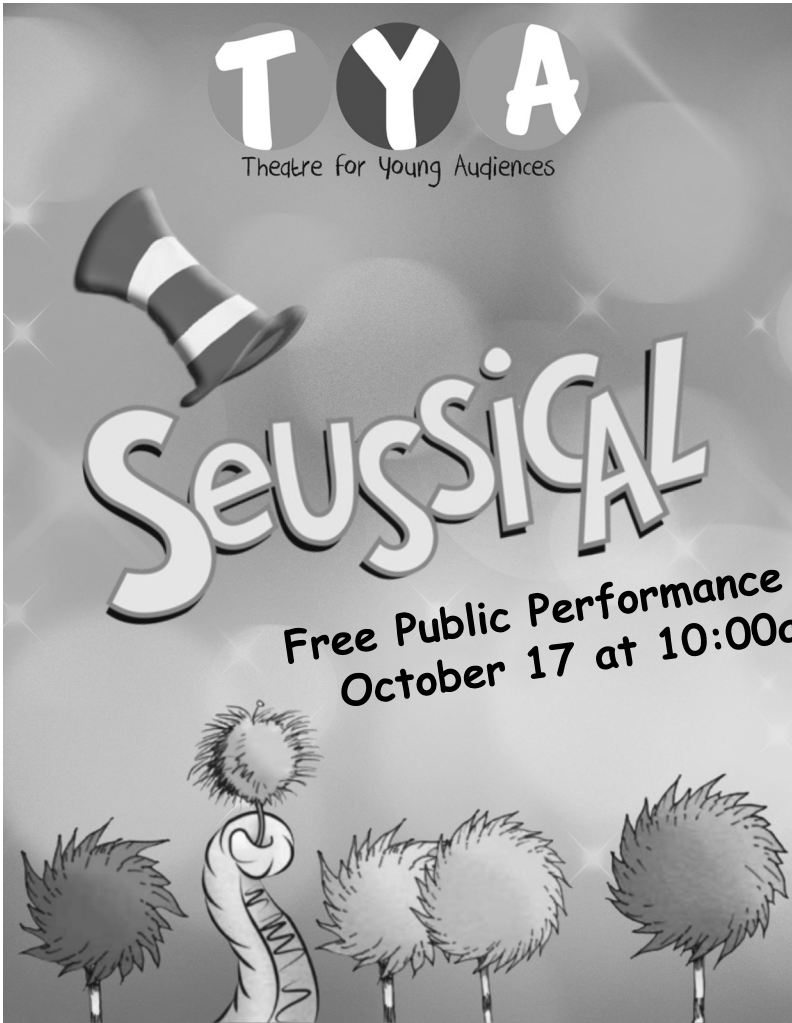
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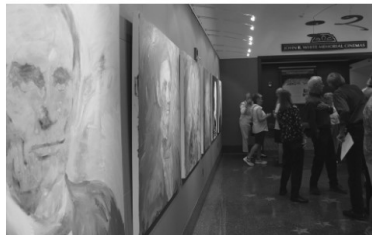
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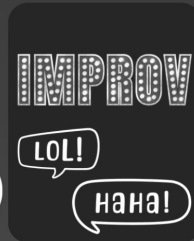
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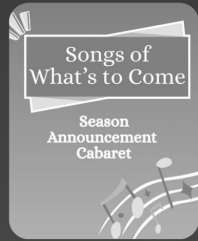
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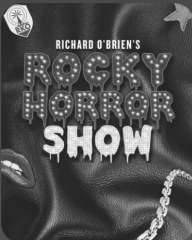
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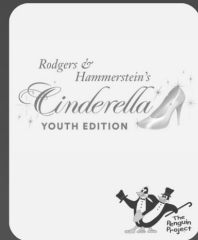
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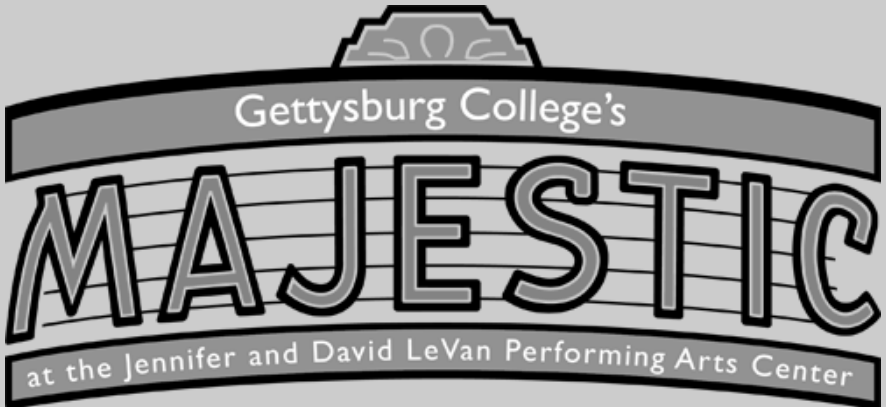
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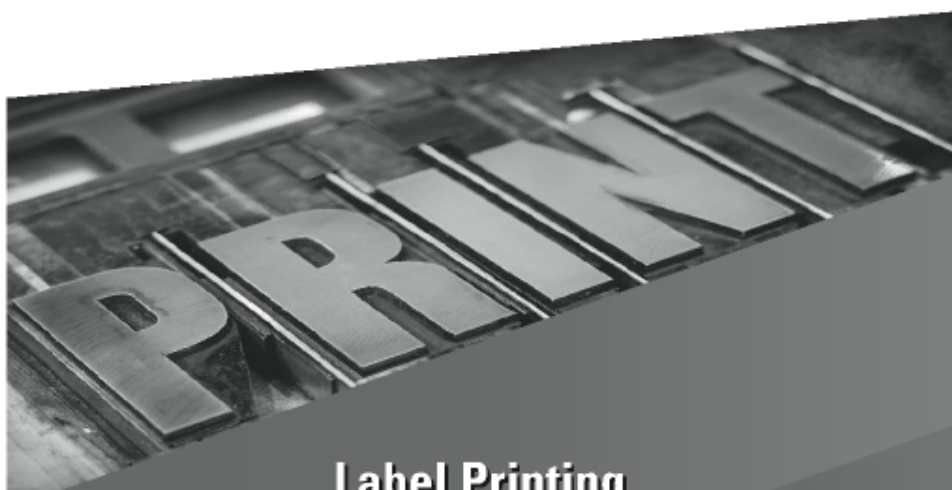
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Acknowledging the Loss and Celebrating the Life of Tiane Cheryl “TC” Benson

TC was the one of the best productions produced by the Genus family who founded and directed Totem Pole Playhouse, and younger sister to Terry, who made his debut at the family theatre in its very first years.



Tiane Cheryl Benson (October 7, 1952 – January 28, 2026) Tiane “TC” Benson – a trailblazing Washington fundraiser for 45 years - passed away on January 28th after a short illness. Over her career TC brought in more than \$700 million for a wide range of DC charities that educate and enlighten. The cause of death was a fast-growing glioblastoma brain tumor which surgery and radiation were powerless to stop. She was a child of the theater, “the princess of Totem Pole” the 75 year old summer theater founded by her father and mother near Gettysburg, PA and also a dog lover – lately Westies. When in 2018 a production of The Wiz at Ford’s Theater needed a Toto, her Charlie was the star, and she was the stage mother coaxing him to make his run across the stage. It was the closest she came to acting, except that, as a fund-raiser, she was

constantly “on stage” presenting, presiding, managing. Her given name “Tiane” (from a French perfume) was unusual and usually not pronounced as it should (“Tee – on”) so early in her career she switched professionally to a gender neutral “TC.” She had a commanding presence - nearly six feet tall with a strong voice, a sharp mind, a no-nonsense manner with her staff, and a polished grace with funders. Her intelligence and deep knowledge of the often arcane process for grants helped every organization she served. She was known for being creative and “out front” in partnerships and corporate sponsors. She often observed that “If you’re not the lead dog, the view never changes.” Graduating with a Social Work degree from Syracuse University, she started at the American Heart Association and then moved into development as Director of Foundation Relations at Georgetown, Associate Director for Development at the Smithsonian National Natural History Museum, and Director for Save America’s Treasurers working with Hillary Clinton. Other stints were at the Washington National Cathedral, Americans for the Arts, National Park Foundation, The Studio Theater, House of Ruth and, for the last 10 years, St. Colletta of Greater Washington. Tiane Cheryl Benson was born October 7, 1952 in Spring Valley, New York to Genus C. Benson (professionally Karl Genus), an award-winning television and theater director and producer, and Muriel Valentine (Clerk) Benson, actress, singer, model, chorus director. Tiane grew up along the streams and glens of Woodcliff Lake in northern New Jersey. In 2010, her ability to handle Kafkaesque bureaucracies was essential in successfully adopting a daughter, Irina, from a Russian orphanage and then useful in getting the most out of the school system for a Russian speaking child with almost no formal education. Survivors include her daughter, a granddaughter, her “big brother” Terry (older but 3 inches shorter), her niece, Kara, nephew, Ross, two grand nieces, two grand nephews, dozens of colleagues and friends including from grammar school, and Charlie and Gallie, her two Westies now in a good, new home.




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