

Curtain Call

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The Wimberley Players

For Our Members and Supporters

Number 5, 2006

A Christmas Carol...It's a Dickens of a tale!

Theatre buffs who have enjoyed many performances of Charles Dickens' famous play, "A Christmas Carol," will find the Wimberley Players production a delightful twist on a traditional story. It opens November 24 at the new Wimberley Playhouse.

This adaptation, written by Doris Baizley, is staged in a most unconventional and innovative way, a play within a play. A rag-tag theatre troupe, traveling around to perform the popular yuletide show, suddenly finds that Scrooge and Tiny Tim have abandoned the tour. The prop boy is enlisted to play the part of Tim and the cynical stage manager is persuaded to play old miser Ebenezer Scrooge. The enlisted players quickly become a part of the story and the show, as always, "goes on."

Many visual and sensory effects enliven this production. Out of the troupe's huge trunk come clowns, musicians, and jugglers, tumbling to the music in a theatrical fantasy choreographed by **Pamela Schultz**. Actors, who play multiple character roles, also play the part of various pieces of the minimalist set, such as doorposts, furniture and the flames of a non-existent stove.

The Wimberley Players production is being directed by **Judith Laird**. Assistant Director is **Charlotte Caldwell** (featured in the Playmakers insert in this issue of *Curtain Call*).

Cast members are **Allan Eastwood** as Stage Manger and Scrooge; **Samuel Ellisor** and **Logan Giberson**, alter-

nating performances as Prop Boy and Tiny Tim; **Bill Phillips** as Director, Marley and Christmas Future; **Larry Landaker** as Leading Man and Bob Cratchit; **Denise Bjerke** as Leading Lady and Mrs. Cratchit; **Gary Yowell** as Young Leading Man and Fred; **Gina McClure** as Ingenue, Belle and Mrs. Fred; **Priya Hudson** as Character Woman, Charitable Woman, Mrs. Fezziwig, Mother-in-law and Parrot; **Andy Quitner** as Old Clown, School Master, Mr. Fezziwig and Jake the Fence, **Patrick Savage** as Clown 1, Ali Baba, Christmas Present 1 and Scavenger 1 & 4; **Kay Quitner** as Clown 2, Christmas Present 2 and Scavenger 2; **Nancy Weaver** as Clown 3, Little Caroler, Christmas Present 3 and Scavenger 3; and **Edwin Reck** as Christmas Past.

Live music will grace this production, as **Cina Crisara**, musical director of the Starlight Symphony Orchestra in Wimberley, conducts a small ensemble on stage for each night's performance.

A Christmas Carol will run weekends from November 24 to December 10 at the Playhouse, 450 Old Kyle Road (between the Square and FM 3237). Performances are 8:00 on Fridays and Saturdays and 2:30 on Sundays. The opening night reception, November 24, will begin at 7:00 p.m. with wassail and goodies in the lobby.

Tickets can be reserved by phone starting November 13, by calling 847-0575. They will be available for purchase at the box office at the theatre starting November 20. Box office hours are 1:00-5:00, Monday through Friday. All tickets are \$15. Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

A Christmas Carol may be the second production to appear in the new Wimberley Playhouse, but the cast and production members of Christmas Carol are extremely proud to be the first production to have its own marquee in front of the Playhouse.



Seated from left: Denise Bjerke, Gina McClure, Samuel Ellisor, Judith Laird, Logan Giberson, Allan Eastwood and Bill Phillips

Back row from left: Larry Landaker, Nancy Weaver, Edwin Reck and Priya Hudson

Not pictured are: Andy Quitner, Kay Quitner and Gary Yowell



Your Name on a Theatre Seat ...

It's not too late to make a contribution to the Building Fund and name a theatre seat!

There are already 79 brass plaques on theatre seat arms naming the donor or someone the donor wishes to honor or memorialize. A contribution of \$2500 puts your name on a seat in a matter of days! And each seat so named gives our capital campaign a boost. (Fundraising continues to retire all debt associated with the project.) Mail your check to Wimberley Players, PO Box 992, Wimberley, TX 78676 with your name as you wish it on the plaque (or the name you would like "In Memory of" or "In Honor of") or call 847-7900 for more information.

How Can I Keep From Singing?



That is what **Lee Coleé** is asking when you talk to her about the upcoming holiday season. And that is the title of her newest concert series for the New Year's weekend. Lee will give two concerts at the Wimberley Players' new theatre on December 30 and 31, both starting at 8:00 p.m. On the 31st, a New Year's Eve buffet will be served.

This will be Lee's first appearance as a solo artist with live accompaniment from nationally renowned pianist **Suzanne Daniels**. Lee says this concert is one she is especially looking forward to as she will be sharing some great new songs, some musical memories and her deep love for singing great music in an intimate and beautiful setting. And as always, a surprise or two can be expected.

Lee and her husband, **Ray Atnip**, have made Wimberley their home for the past six years. Besides directing numerous productions for the Players, (most recently *1776*), and the annual summer music theatre boot camp for kids, Lee has presented six annual holiday concerts for Wimberley. Deciding in 2001 to offer a New Year's alternative celebration to local residents, she held her first two concert series at the Prow'd House. Outgrowing this venue, Lee then moved to The Greenhouse Theatre on New Year's weekends with a brand new and exciting program for holiday audiences and Wimberley Players' patrons.

If you are already a fan of Lee Coleé, or have yet to discover what she brings to the stage by herself, "up close and personal," you won't want to be anywhere else but at the new theatre to bring in the new year!

Tickets for December 30th are \$20 each (concert only). New Year's Eve tickets for December 31st are \$40 each (concert and buffet). Reservations can be made by phone, 847-0575, beginning December 11.

A Starlight Christmas

Join us as The Starlight Symphony Orchestra celebrates *A Starlight Christmas* with performances on Saturday evening, December 16 and Sunday afternoon, December 17.

Once again, our artistic director and conductor, **Cina Crisara**, has come up with an entertaining program that will brighten the holiday season. The orchestra will feature terrific renditions of everyone's favorites. Selections include *Winter Wonderland*, *The Skaters Waltz*, Mannheim Steamroller's version of *Stille Nacht (Silent Night)* and many more of your favorites. A guest conductor from the audience will be selected via a raffle to lead the Starlight Orchestra in *Sleighride* (a new tradition started last year, searching for local talent).

The Old Blanco Courthouse will be the site of our 7:30 p.m. concert on Saturday, December 16. On Sunday, December 17, The Starlight Symphony will perform a 4:00 p.m. concert in the Lone Star Theatre at the Wimberley High School.

We invite you to bring family and friends and share the joy of beautiful holiday music.

Skip Jorgensen

SSO Liaison to Wimberley Players

Welcome to our new website...wimberleyplayers.org

It's a beauty. New graphics, new layout, easy to navigate...all the latest information about the Wimberley Players with the click of your mouse.

The Players have **Jane Dunham** to thank for designing the site and granting the Players use of her server. She has also agreed to serve as webmaster, updating information on a regular basis. Thank you, Jane! (Jane serves on the Board as Show Publicity Chair and editor of *Curtain Call*).

We also thank Ed Wood for creating and maintaining our first website, an invaluable contribution that moved us onto the internet.

Check out the *Wish List* on our website, www.wimberleyplayers.org, for items needed for the theatre and for the next show.

Al Sander, President

Preview Party a Smash Hit

Founders Club members and other major donors enjoyed a first look at the new Playhouse on Sept. 7. **Kay Allison** chaired the Preview Party team, including **Nora Moeller**, **Ceale Kirkham** and **Julie Ray**. As guests enjoyed a lavish spread prepared by **Terri Bisett**, theatrical team and Board members explained the theatre's features in key areas. **Bravo, Kay!**



Thanks for grant support

Once again, the Lions have honored the Wimberley Players with a generous gift. For 2007, the award of \$2500 will be presented at The Lions Club meeting on November 7. We appreciate the Wimberley Lions!

The superb lighting design for *1776* was the work of consultant **Chris McKnight** - whose services were made possible by a \$1000 matching grant from **Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA)**. The challenge of managing installation and testing of a completely new lighting system in the Wimberley Playhouse and the need to train volunteers to run the new lighting control board made professional help valuable.

1776... Even better than we imagined

The success of our grand opening production *1776* was phenomenal! Every show for four weekends was sold out, and no one left the theater disappointed.

Under **Lee Colee's** direction, the huge cast of talented and dedicated Players positively shone with each spirited performance. The brilliant period apparel provided by **Bert Flanagan's** Costumed Occasions was complemented by the professional styling of hair and wigs and weaves and falls and widows peaks provided nightly by **Cher Kelly** and **Patrick Preston**. The music (**Linda Sriro**) was terrific and the voices were magnificent individually and in ensemble. The set design (**David Bisett**) was powerfully subtle; the lighting design (**Chris McKnight**) was complex yet unified.



Patrick Preston helps style Ben Franklin's (Carl Galante) hair



Cher Kelly puts the finishing touches on Calvin White's wig

The set design (**David Bisett**) was powerfully subtle; the lighting design (**Chris McKnight**) was complex yet unified.

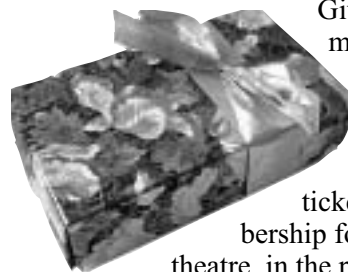
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And the Players were finally able to perform on a bona fide stage--one with space. Even more crucial than the increased floor area is the expanded fly space. Actors and audiences are finally freed from the confines of the eight-foot ceiling, and technical genius **Adam Witko** knows precisely how to conjure the magic known as *theatre*.

Wimberley Players 2006 Board of Directors

- Al Sander**, President
- Dell Hood**, Executive Secretary
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- Judith Laird**, Vice-President, Marketing/Public Relations
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- Lucy Dysart**, Hospitality
- Jana White**, Playhouse Operations
- Nora Moeller**, Development, Public Relations
- Jane Dunham**, Show Publicity
- David Bisett**, At Large
- Tevis Grinstead**, At Large
- Barbara Alexander**, Fundraising
- David Joiner**, Administrative Manager
- Adam Witko**, Technical Consultant

Wimberley Players Memberships Great gifts for any occasion



Give a 2007 Wimberley Players membership to your loved ones.

Remember, when you give a membership, your friends and family will have an opportunity to purchase season tickets for the next season. Membership forms will be available in the theatre, in the production playbill, or by contacting the theatre, 847-1592.

Membership Update

Lucille T. (Ceale) Kirkham, Membership Director



Fife and drum players, **Lisa Gross and Dan Stephens**, representing the Hill Country Band on opening night

Members: Season Ticket Alert!

The Wimberley Players have never offered **season tickets**, but that's about to change! After tossing the idea around for years, discussing and then dissecting some more, hashing, and re-hashing, the decision is YES. An **opportunity to buy season tickets** will be offered as a new benefit of membership. Yes, Yes, Yes! **Season tickets** are almost here!

And just why is this topic on the membership page? Because **only members** of the Wimberley Players will be eligible to purchase season tickets. Members who join or renew for 2007 will receive **season ticket sign-up** materials in early May for the 2007-2008 Season.

Your **membership dues** are critical to keeping our lights on (and all other operating expenses) so every membership is vital to the health of our operating budget. Your dues are tax-deductible, as always, Now we want to reward our members with an **opportunity to see five shows for the price of four** if they buy a **season ticket!**

That's a **20% savings** AND a better deal than coupons of past years. Season ticket holders enjoy the same seat for all shows, and receive their tickets for all five shows before the season begins.

Details are being worked out by a committee of the Board ...so, when are we going to know absolutely EVERYTHING about **season tickets**? At our **New & Improved Annual Membership Meeting on Sunday, January 7, 2007 from 5 – 7 PM at the new Playhouse**. We'll start with wine and yummy nibbles in the lobby (and on the deck, weather permitting) then move into the theatre for a **SHORT** business meeting and a fun video presentation (you may see yourself in it!) **PLUS** the fat skinny on **season tickets**. Be There!

By-law changes for The Wimberley Players will be available online on the Wimberley Players web site (www.wimberleyplayers.org) before the Annual Membership Meeting. An e-mail announcement will inform members that they are ready for viewing.



Longtime member, the very talented **Dan Williams**



The OTHER Cary..... good lookin' **Cary Michaels** preparing for 1776



Looking very much the part for 1776, **Joe Maverick and wife Connie**



Sally Willcox with her adorable husband, **John**



Volunteer Extraordinaire **Cher Kelly** with granddaughter **Megan Lopian**



Future members and present day 1776 actors from left: **Coy Branscum, Caden Dean, and Kera Harmon**

Relaxing on the Playhouse deck, **Pete and Rita Anderson**, with Players' president **Al Sander**



Behind
the
curtain
with

P L A Y M A K E R S

It's about *all*
the people who
magically transform
a starkly empty
stage into a
wonderfully
performed and
produced play.

Proudly Published by The Wimberley Players

Vol. 2, Number 3

The Village Store... It's a success story where we all benefit

Playmakers come in many guises. Important among them are the volunteers who work away from the theatre lights at The Village Store on River Road.

The Village Store opened for business just a few years ago. Its mission is to provide a service to the community and to help finance local non-profit organizations. Seven non-profits participate in the program. The Wimberley Players has been among them since the store began operation. Volunteers choose to which organization they credit their hours. Each month's profits are shared with the participating organizations on the basis of the number of volunteer hours worked. With total sales of \$438,275.77 since it opened, the Village Store is approaching having generated close to half a million dollars in sales.

Happily for the Players' Building Fund, the work of our volunteers has often resulted in a monthly share for the Players of approximately \$1500 - \$2500.

Volunteers who donate their hours for the benefit of the Players: **Sharon Coe, Joyce Collier, Dorothea Dare, Sally Davenport, Barbara Eakin, Charlie Fleming, Betty Flournoy, Evelyn Guidry, Mary Goulden, Susan Holt, Jo Hudson, Shirley Kopp, Kay Little, Jackie Martin, Wanda Martin, Barbara McCall, Darlene Shuttlesworth, Dorothy Threton, Ruby White and Nelda Williams.** They work enough hours to allow The Players often to rank second in monthly income earned.

Volunteers at the store work two-hour shifts during regular hours assisting customers and staff. It is up to each volunteer how much time they have to give.

Volunteer **Jo Hudson** told us she works at the store only a couple of hours, while **Kay Little** sometimes puts in as many as four and five hours on Mondays and Fridays, her chosen days. She told us her work includes hanging clothes, sometimes helping with the cleaning and running the vacuum. "The people I work with are nice and we all enjoy working together. On Mondays when the store is closed we're there working and we pool our money for a fried chicken lunch. Another thing I enjoy is being able to go to see the dress rehearsals of each play."

Ruby White has worked at the store for two or three years. "I do whatever needs to be done. I enjoy the work and the people who come to the store as well as my fellow volunteers. I really like knowing that the time I spend is helping our local organizations financially." **Betty Flournoy** said she also works all over the store. "I also enjoy the work and the people." Each of these ladies said they recommend volunteering and would encourage anyone to jump right in.

If you would like to join the Wimberley Players volunteers, call **Nelda Williams** (847-1283) or **Hugh Campbell** (847-7231) for more information.



From the left: Jo Hudson, Dorothea Dare, Nelda Williams, Kay Little, Shirley Kopp, Betty Flournoy and Mary Goulden (Other volunteers not available for photo op)

Charlotte and Michael Caldwell

They epitomize what Playmakers are about

After retirement, **Charlotte and Michael Caldwell** left Fort Worth, went to California for a time, looked around Santa Barbara and the Santa Ynez valley and then came back to Texas, put their house on the market and set out looking for a home in the Hill Country. Charlotte says Wimberley was it. They moved here last April and soon discovered the Greenhouse Theatre just across the creek from their new home. After seeing *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks*, a “totally charmed and hooked” Charlotte got in touch with **Judith Laird** and soon both she and Michael joined the ranks of that enthusiastic group called the Wimberley Players volunteers. The Caldwells’ work was on display at each performance of *1776* at the new Wimberley Playhouse. Michael handled the show’s lighting from the tech booth and Charlotte worked on lighting and was one of the backstage managers.

In addition to his work during performances, Michael helped to get the new theatre ready in time for the grand opening. He worked with **Adam Witko** on finishing the stage, hanging lights and curtains and building the set for *1776*. “He got home at midnight more times than I could believe,” says Charlotte; “he didn’t work that hard when he was paid!” When Michael found out he was to be lighting tech for the Players; next production, he got hold of a book and began to study up on stage lighting. Audiences will enjoy the fruits of his study when *A Christmas Carol* opens on November 24.

Charlotte told us she has always loved live theatre and even wrote and starred in a grad-

uation play for her eighth grade class. As for her current stint in the theatre, she says, “I am barely a Girl Friday for the cast and crew, and I happened to fall into the best job at the theatre, running the spotlight. That enabled me to see the marvelous performance of *1776* for a dozen times. The actors and

singers got better with each performance and I was literally depressed that the show had to come to an end.” However, she will be back at work at the theatre as Assistant Director of *A Christmas Carol*.

The couple has traveled extensively and had many adventures, including learning the ins and outs of saltwater sailing.

Charlotte told us that Mike is a self-taught Renaissance Man. “He can fix anything. He can build anything. He is a gourmet cook, and pretty good photographer.” Mike retired early from Southwestern Bell and Charlotte retired two and a half years ago from Johnson and Johnson.

Judith has high praise for both Charlotte and Michael. “The Caldwells are huge production volunteers.”

The Wimberley Players are proud and lucky that they have made their way to town and found us. Wimberley is fortunate in having new residents such as the Caldwells come to us bringing their energy, enthusiasm and knowledge. They are among the chief contributors to what makes Wimberley unique among the small towns of Texas.

Would you like to be a part of the Wimberley Players productions? Check the Volunteers section of our web site, www.wimberleyplayers.org, for information on how you can become a Playmaker, too!



Charlotte and Michael working the lights for *1776*