



HERSHEY AREA
PLAYHOUSE

OUR TOWN





JIMMY BUFFETT'S

Escape to

MARGARITAVILLE

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THE WIZARD OF OZ

JUNE 6 - 16



presents

OUR TOWN

BY THORNTON WILDER

DIRECTOR	<i>Tom Blaisse</i>
PRODUCER	<i>Rosemary Bucher</i>
STAGE MANAGER	<i>Christina White</i>
COSTUMES	<i>Mary Manning</i>
LIGHTING DESIGN	<i>Miguel Santiago</i>
SOUND DESIGN	<i>Kevin Edward Gane</i>
LIGHTING TECH	<i>Jasmine Ammons Bucher</i>
SET CONSTRUCTION	<i>Jeff Miller, Carlton Hoke</i>
CREW	<i>Jo Dillon</i>
PHOTOS	<i>Toni Carosella</i>

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ON BEHALF OF SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

www.concordtheatricals.com

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Welcome to the Hershey Area Playhouse! I am thrilled to welcome you to our 25th Anniversary Season and this endearing production of *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder's timeless classic. Like a return visit to Hershey Area Playhouse, watching this production of *Our Town* is like reuniting with an old friend. Wilder's masterful storytelling transcends time and place, inviting us to contemplate the profound beauty found in the simplicity of ordinary moments. As the characters navigate the trials and triumphs of life, we are reminded of the universal experiences that bind us all together – love, loss, and the relentless passage of time.

What makes *Our Town* and many of this season's productions truly remarkable is its ability to resonate deeply with audiences across generations. Despite being set in the early 20th century, *Our Town's* themes remain relevant in today's fast-paced world, urging us to pause and appreciate the fleeting moments that make life truly meaningful. Congratulations to Tom Blaisse and the entire cast and crew for mastering this classic tale.

A production like this would not be possible without the unwavering support of our volunteers, as well as the dedication of our current and past Board and committee members. Their generosity and commitment to quality theatre in Central Pennsylvania paves the way for memorable performances like the one you are about to witness. We extend our sincerest thanks to each one of them.

As we continue the tradition of delivering exceptional theater experiences, we invite you to revisit us for our upcoming productions. If you find yourself captivated by the sincerity of *Our Town* and are in a position to support our ongoing efforts, we encourage you to share your own gifts at hersheyareaplayhouse.com. Your continued support is instrumental in keeping the arts alive and thriving in our community.

**JASMINE AMMONS BUCHER,
BOARD CHAIR**

“You’ve got to love life to have life. and you’ve got to have life to love life.” This is one of the major themes in Thornton Wilder’s 1938 Pulitzer Prize winning drama. It’s kind of a “vicious circle” in so far as the requirement for life is love and vice versa. Where do we begin?

Our Town begins in 1901, Grover’s Corners, NH, and follows the Webb and Gibbs family (specifically Emily Webb and George Gibbs) over a 12-year period. Act 1 is “Daily Life.” Act 2 (3 years later) is “Love and Marriage.” And Act 3 (nine years later)? Well you can guess what that’s about.

Tappan Wilder (Thornton’s nephew) commented in an interview that Grover’s Corners was believed to be inspired by a small village – Peterborough NH. “It’s everybody’s town,” Tappan said. “He (Thornton) used a town to talk about everywhere” - to tell a universal story that explores what it means to be human.

I began my journey with *Our Town* as a Freshman in College when I played Professor Willard. I came to love the play for its simplicity, its directness, and its truth. I can still vividly recall my college friends who played the lead roles, especially my friend, Charlie, who as a young man so aptly conveyed the wisdom of “The Stage Manager” (narrator.) Throughout the process of directing this play, I have also thought fondly of my college mentor, the late Gerard Schubert OSFS, who directed me as Professor Willard and guided me onto my long theatre journey.

I am very pleased to share the role of “The Stage Manager” with Vicki, my most able partner in the show. She has shared much of her own insight into the play as being poignant and heartbreaking - full of longing and loss - from Mrs. Gibbs, who dreams of traveling to a country where they don’t speak English (and don’t even want to) - to Mrs. Webb, who suffers the greatest loss a mother can know - to the haunted soul of Simon Stimson. When Emily says, “Oh, Earth, you’re too wonderful for anybody to realize you,” Vicki also hears Wilder urging us to remember that the sacred is embedded within the mundane, though we too often “lose hold of it.” Near the end of the play Emily herself ponders, “Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it – every, every minute?” Perhaps only time and grace allow us to appreciate each of our precious moments in this life as we prepare for our eternal state. We hope that *Our Town* inspires you to do so.

Special thanks to Rosemary Bucher, Producer, and the HAP board for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I extend my sincere gratitude and kudos to the entire, very talented and committed cast members who have worked as an ensemble since Day 1. I also very much appreciate the staff and crew who have helped manage the production; build the set; costume the actors, light up the scenes, add sound effects, and sell the tickets. Additionally, I share a special memory of my own father, John D. Blaisse, whose voice you’ll hear introducing each Act of this play with 3 of his favorite (early 20th century) songs that he recorded in 1972 as a 25th Wedding Anniversary, to his wife, my mother. Rest in Peace, Mom & Dad.

**TOM BLAISSE,
DIRECTOR**

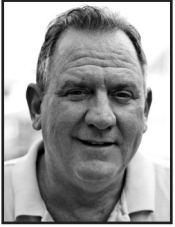
CAST

STAGE MANAGER	<i>Tom Blaisse</i>
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	<i>Vicki Forrest Kensinger</i>
EMILY WEBB	<i>Brittney Smith</i>
GEORGE GIBBS	<i>Logan Forrest</i>
DR. GIBBS	<i>Larry Sheaf</i>
MRS. GIBBS	<i>Sunshine Rishel</i>
MR. WEBB	<i>Frank J. Graeff, Jr.</i>
MRS. WEBB	<i>Shelley Fuge</i>
MRS. SOAMES	<i>Alicia Moss</i>
SIMON STIMSON	<i>Marley Amstutz</i>
REBECCA GIBBS	<i>Elliana Severs</i>
WALLY WEBB	<i>Gavin Willcock</i>
HOWIE NEWSOME	<i>KJ Samuels</i>
JOE CROWELL, JR./SI CROWELL	<i>Eliza Nurick</i>
PROFESSOR WILLARD	<i>Allen Swope</i>
CONSTABLE WARREN	<i>Alan Moss</i>
SAM CRAIG/MAN IN AUDIENCE	<i>Caleb Creviston</i>
WOMAN IN AUDIENCE #2	<i>Christina White</i>
JOE STODDARD/ WOMAN IN AUDIENCE #1	<i>Hannah J. Carpenter</i>

SETTING

Grover's Corners, New Hampshire

CAST/CREATIVE TEAM



Tom
Blaisse



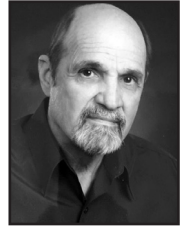
Vicki Forrest
Kensinger



Brittney
Smith



Logan
Forrest



Larry
Sheaf



Sunshine
Rishel



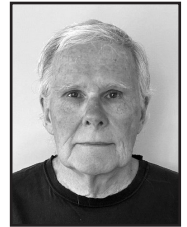
Frank J.
Graeff, Jr.



Shelley
Fuge



Alicia
Moss



Marley
Amstutz



Elliana
Severs



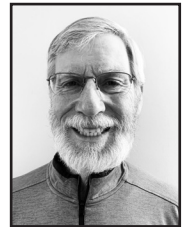
Gavin
Willcock



KJ
Samuels



Eliza
Nurick



Allen
Swope



Alan
Moss



Caleb
Creviston



Christina
White



Hannah J.
Carpenter

ABOUT THE CAST/CREATIVE TEAM

TOM BLAISSE (DIRECTOR/STAGE MANAGER) has been seen on the HAP stage in *9 to 5* (Mr. Tinsworthy) and in *Sweeney Todd* (Judge Turpin). Other Central PA credits include: *Miracle on 34th St.* (Kris Kringle); *The Little Mermaid* (Chef Louis); *Once* (Da); *A Christmas Carol* (Scrooge); *Oliver!* (Fagin), and *It Shoulda' Been You* (Albert). Guest director credits include: *South Pacific*; *Brigadoon*; *Godspell*, *Anything Goes*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Footloose*; *The Music Man*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Tom is the playwright/composer/lyricist of *Manifest the Glory of God*. Author, *We Are Climbers, All, a Book of Positive and Uplifting Poems*. (Amazon.com) He holds a BA in Theatre & Speech from De Sales University and an MA in Counseling Psychology from Rider University. Tom is very excited about directing one of Americas best dramas as a celebration of HAP's 25th anniversary. He/him

VICKI FORREST KENSINGER (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER) This is Vicki's first role in a live theater production, and she is humbly grateful to HAP for this amazing opportunity. She wishes to thank the director, the cast and crew for welcoming her and sharing from their years of experience. In the outside world, Vicki enjoys backcountry canoe camping, landscape photography, writing, attending live theater, reading (and reading aloud to her grandchildren). Like the characters in this play, Vicki has lived an 'ordinary' human life, and so she resonated deeply with the ideas expressed in Thornton Wilder's script. She hopes she has brought some tenderness and love for humanity into the role of the Assistant Stage Manager. She wishes to thank her husband, Don, for his loving support and encouragement, her granddaughters for modeling bravery, and all of her grandchildren who remind her how much she loves storytelling for the way it connects us. She/her

BRITTNEY SMITH (EMILY WEBB) is ecstatic to perform her debut show at Hershey Area Playhouse. Brittney grew up in California and recently moved to Pennsylvania in 2022. She is currently studying Film and Theatre at Harrisburg Area Community College and she plans to graduate with her AFA in 2025. Brittney has performed in numerous productions with her favorites including: *Heathers The Musical* (Veronica Sawyer), *The Crucible* (Mary Warren), *The Wolves* (#46), *Grease*, *Guys and Dolls* and *Oliver!* She wants to thank the entire cast and crew for making it possible for her to portray one of her favorite characters onstage. Special thanks to her parents, Jo and Brenda Eppley: your unconditional support and encouragement are appreciated. She/her

LOGAN FORREST (GEORGE GIBBS) is excited to be making his Hershey Area Playhouse debut in *Our Town*. He most recently performed in Lebanon Community Theater's *Evil Dead: The Musical*. Logan's previous credits include *Tobias Ragg* in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Phoebe de Martin in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and Lucas Beineke in *The Addams Family Young@Part*. Logan would like to thank his directors and the cast for this experience and Elise for her constant support! He/him

LARRY SHEAF (DOC GIBBS) has been performing in theatres in South Central PA for over fifty years. He made his debut at HAP as Teddy Deakin in *The Ghost Train* and performed in dual roles in *My Name is Asher Lev* and Mr. Potter in *It's A Wonderful Life*. In 2017 he directed *The Curious Savage*. And as always, he thanks his wife, Alison, for her continued support for the last forty-five years.

SUNSHINE RISHEL (MRS. GIBBS) is excited to return to Hershey Area Playhouse. She has appeared in *Dearly Departed*, *A Gift to Remember*, and *A Double Wide Texas Christmas* all at HAP. She also was in *And Then There Were None* at Lebanon Community Theatre. Last year she was a scare actor for Hershey Park's Dark Nights. When she is not acting she enjoys helping senior citizens with their Medicare and is looking forward to her daughter giving birth to twins. Thanks to a great cast and a wonderful and kind director. She/her

FRANK J. GRAEFF JR (MR. WEBB) makes his debut at the Hershey Area Playhouse in *Our Town*. This show also represents Frank's first time "tripping the boards" since 1980! In his previous "theatre" life, his favorite performances were as the Leading Player in *Pippin*; Billy Bibbit in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*; Jerry in *The Zoo Story*; *Godspell* (three-state tour, solo: "All Good Gifts"); and Curly in *Of Mice And Men*. Frank also was a featured performer in numerous variety shows and caberets, primarily in Scranton, PA and Wilmington, DE; and managed the stage crew for various musicals at Bishop McDevitt High School, where he met and worked for this show's director, Tom Blaisse, a few times. Frank is fully -- and quite happily -- retired after 40+ years in the lottery industry. (No, he

doesn't know the Powerball numbers for the next draw....). Frank thanks his lovely wife Denise for encouraging him to audition for this show and for her constant support throughout the production period. He/him

SHELLEY FUGE (MRS. WEBB) is excited to be cast in her first show at the Hershey Area Playhouse! No stranger to the stage, Shelley has a history of being cast in High school and College productions, which included *Our Town* (Emily), *Cheaper by the Dozen* (Ernestine), and *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (Mrs. Dexter), among other opportunities throughout her adult life! When not performing, Shelley is a local business owner, mother to three amazing kids, and proud wife to her husband of 18 years! I am thankful for the loving family God has given me and their support to get out and do something that I love to do! Thank you to the Playhouse for creating an opportunity for people like me to share their love of acting!

ALICIA MOSS (MRS. SOAMES) With a decades-long passion for performance, Alicia Moss has made a lasting impact on theater and entertainment. Beginning in NYC's vibrant theater scene in the early 1980s, she co-founded Manhattan Players, curating unforgettable experiences both on and offstage. In 1987, Alicia launched Spanish Moss Productions, championing emerging playwrights and nurturing artistic talent. Alicia's influence extended beyond the stage when she founded a beloved Doggie Day Care Center in 1991, dedicating herself to furry companions for over two decades. Transitioning to music in 2014, she captivated audiences with her soulful melodies in neighborhood venues. Moving to Long Island in 2016, Alicia continued to shine, from open mic nights to becoming a sought-after performer in local restaurants. Joining Senior America in 2018, she brought her energy to new audiences, spreading joy in senior centers across the country. Now settled in Pennsylvania, Alicia shares her passion for music and performance, bringing heartfelt joy to senior homes. Her career, marked by creativity and dedication, continues to inspire aspiring performers everywhere. She/her

MARLEY AMSTUTZ (SIMON STIMSON) Like an ashy phoenix, Marley is returning to the HAP stage after a lapse of many years - since the new paint was just drying at this Playhouse, in fact. Mostly, he can be seen walking dogs - an activity compatible with memorizing lines. In any case, he is pleased and humbled to join this enthusiastic and talented cast and production staff and to share the universal themes of community, connection, and appreciation from the pen of Mr. Wilder. Shout out to the unflagging support of DF. He/him

ELLIANA SEVERS (REBECCA GIBBS) is thrilled to perform at the Hershey Area Playhouse theatre. She attended a summer camp here last summer. She also performed in *The Wizard of Oz* at Open Stage in Harrisburg. Currently, she is a 6th grader at St. Joan of Arc and will be performing in their production of *Seussical*. Thank you so much for allowing me this great opportunity. She/her

GAVIN WILLCOCK (WALLY WEBB) is a sixth grader at Mountain View Middle School. *Our Town* is Gavin's fourth performance. For his first role, he portrayed the Cave Guardian in *Aladdin Kids*, followed by Arty Kurnitz, in Neil Simon's *Lost in Yonkers*. Gavin also portrayed a Sardine Devotee and ensemble in *The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition*. When not performing, Gavin enjoys singing, drawing, fishing, hunting, rugby, soccer, Dungeons and Dragons, Renaissance Faire Cosplay and playing Fortnite. He has stated that, "He has had such a phenomenal time performing along side the cast, and that he has learned valuable information from the production crew of *Our Town*." He would like to thank his family, friends, and fellow cast mates for their support. Enjoy the show! He/him

KJ SAMUELS (HOWIE NEWSOME) is delighted to be returning to the playhouse in this famous drama. He was most recently seen in *School of Rock* right here at the Hershey Area Playhouse. KJ is the 2016 Hershey Theatre Apollo Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Musical - Recipient. Regional Theatre - *Jesus Christ Superstar* (John/Totem Pole Playhouse), *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Chorus/Fulton Theatre), *Titanic: The Musical* (JH Rogers/Servant Stage Company), *2020 Virtual Summer Concert Series* (Servant Stage Company), *Gifts of the Magi* (City Him/Cavod Theatre), *Who Killed Elliot Hale?* (Alexander/Gretna Theatre). Favorite credits include *Addams Family* (Fester/Creative Pursuits), and *Shakespeare in Love* (Fennyman/Creative Pursuits) both directed by Broadway actor Matthew Hydzyk. Other credits include - *The King and I*, *The Secret Garden*, *The Music Man*, *Spring Awakening*, *Bat Boy*, *Frankenstein*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Damn Yankees*, *La Boheme*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Singing in the Rain*, *South Pacific*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, *Godspell*, *The Ever After*, and *The Addams Family*. Film/TV include - *Draculaw*, *Brave The Dark*, Sheetz commercial. He/Him/They/Them

ELIZA NURICK (JO CROWELL, JR./SI CROWELL) is so happy to be doing her 2nd show at the Hershey Area Playhouse. Previous shows she has performed in include *School Of Rock* (James), *The Little Mermaid* (Maid), *Annie* (Lily), *Willy Wonka* (Grandma Josephine), *Once Upon A Mattress* (Lady in Waiting), *Beauty and the Beast* (Silly Girl), *Mary Poppins* (Mrs. Corey), *Twelfth Night* (Olivia), *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* (Gregory), *Macbeth* (Witch 3), *James and the Giant Peach* (Ensemble), and more. She has previously written and directed *Cosmo Disco* at Gamut Theatre Summer Academy. Eliza has done theatre since the age of 6 starting in New York. In her free time Eliza does chorus, band, and has participated in Dauphin honors chorus and ACDA. She is currently a freshman at Central Dauphin High School. Eliza would like to thank her family and friends for all the support throughout her life. She/they

ALLEN SWOPE (PROFESSOR WILLARD) is happy to make his Hershey Area Playhouse debut. He is very excited to be back on stage. Allen is reprising his role of Professor Willard. He has played the son, and years later one of the fathers in *The Fantasticks*. He also was in the ensemble of *Hello Dolly!* and was one of the school board members in *The Music Man*. Offstage, Allen is enjoying retirement after 44 years of teaching students science. He and his wife enjoy travel, and spending time with their grandchildren.

ALAN MOSS (CONSTABLE WARREN) PA Acting Debut! He/him

CALEB CREVISTON (SAM CRAIG/MAN IN AUDIENCE) is new to Hershey Area Playhouse, but is excited for the opportunity he has been given to act again! Caleb is a junior at Manheim Central high school, and has been in three of these productions, including *The Sound Of Music* (Rolf) and his personal favorite, *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame*. (Saint Aphrodisis/Phoebus) Caleb is glad he was invited to be a part in this production, he thanks all the people who made this show possible, and wishes everyone will enjoy the show! He/him

HANNAH J. CARPENTER (JOE STODDARD/WOMAN IN AUDIENCE #1) is a junior at New Covenant Christian School. She have been involved with plays and musicals since fifth grade. She has completed two Theater Academy sessions at Hershey Area Playhouse. Hannah has acquired much experience from the musicals and play she has been in, such as *Double Knit- Gretna Glen- 2023*, *Hamlet Thrill-ma-geddon*- Hershey Area Playhouse, *Newsies*, *Aladdin*, *Lion King Jr.*, and *Mary Poppins Jr.*- NCCS. Hannah continues to grow and learn with each experience. Musical, plays, and performing arts, are where Hannah's passion and heart illuminate her. Hannah hopes to pursue performing arts at Lancaster Bible College after she graduates in 2025. She/her

CHRISTINA WHITE (PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER, WOMAN IN AUDIENCE #2) is thrilled to be a part of this production of *Our Town* at Hershey Area Playhouse for their 25th anniversary as the Production Stage Manager. She is currently a student at Harrisburg Area Community College in the Film and Theatre department and has a passion for stage management. She would like to thank her mother, father, step-father, sister, and grandmother for all of their help and sacrifices for her to get to where she is. She/her

ROSEMARY BUCHER (PRODUCER) is an NYC-based producer, director, writer, singer, arts administrator, graphic designer, therapist for theatre teachers (amateur licensing associate at Concord Theatricals), and HAP board member. rosemarybucher.com. She/her

MARY MANNING (COSTUMES) is excited to return to the Hershey Area Playhouse after working on several shows last season! She has been involved in 10+ shows with the Palmyra musical program. Mary has a bachelor's from Millersville and currently teaches PreK at Noah's Little Ark Preschool. She/her

MIGUEL SANTIAGO (LIGHTING DESIGN) has worked in all aspects of theatre from performing to involvement on the technical side. He specializes in lighting design and has worked as a designer on numerous shows, some of which include *School of Rock*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Kodachrome*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Bandstand*, *9 to 5*, *First Date*, *Newsies*, and *Tuck Everlasting*. Miguel maintains a busy schedule working on and performing in productions at a number of Central PA theaters and organizations. He also serves as the Technical Director for the Hershey Area Playhouse. He/him

KEVIN EDWARD GANE (SOUND DESIGN) is a music director/keyboardist who has been involved with productions in both the Philadelphia and Central PA areas. He has worked with such companies as Palmyra Theatre, The Media Theatre, The Players Club of Swarthmore, and Upper Darby Summer Stage. Kevin serves as Director of Music and Organist at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church and is artistic director of their music series Music on High. He is an adjunct professor of music at Lebanon Valley College teaching classes in music theater. kevingane.com. He/him

JASMINE AMMONS BUCHER (TECH ASSISTANT) is a vocalist, director, producer, and HAP board chair. Bucher is an instructor and director of educational technology at Lebanon Valley College. She received an Honorable Mention for the 2018 Tony Award for Excellence in Theatre Education. This is her fourteenth year directing productions at Palmyra Area High School, where she is president of the Palmyra Theatre Boosters and troupe director for International Thespian Society Troupe #8430. Directing projects at HAP include *Rock of Ages*, *The Wedding Singer*, and *9 to 5*. She/her

JEFFREY MILLER (SET CONSTRUCTION) is a retired Superintendent of Schools from the Methacton School District (Norristown, PA). Previous to his service in Methacton, Jeff was Superintendent of Schools in the Lower Dauphin School District from 1991-2003. A former member of the Board of Directors of the Playhouse and current Operations Manager, Jeff has been in the Playhouse's productions of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Sound of Music*, *Annie*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Oliver*, and *Fiddler on The Roof*. Jeff is happy to have partnered with Carlton Hoke to build many of the sets for Playhouse productions. Jeff lives in Hershey with his wife, Bonnie and their cat and has been an active supporter of the Hershey Area Playhouse. He/him

CARLTON HOKE (SET CONSTRUCTION) retired from teaching in 2005 after 35 years of teaching art and computer classes in the Derry Township School District. Since then he has designed, constructed, or painted stage settings at the playhouse for many of our productions. He says that working with Jeff on Playhouse projects is the perfect retirement job. He/him

JO DILLON (CREW) is excited to work with Hershey Area Playhouse. Previous credits include *Anything Goes* (Set Builder). He wants to thank the cast and crew for this opportunity as he was glad to be a part of the process! He/him



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

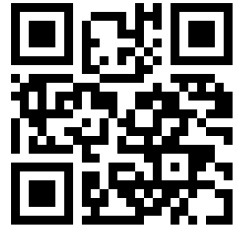
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Amy Jo Brixius
Tony Bender
Rosemary Bucher
Karen Krok
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2024 SEASON



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