



Serious about comedy

BIGFORK COMMUNITY PLAYERS

BACKSTAGE

Act? Who, me?

Of course you like theater. Of course you've seen plays. Surely you've heard of the Bigfork Community Players. But have you acted in a play? Have you ever thought about acting in a play? Well, if you haven't, maybe you should.

OK, the idea of being in a play can be intimidating. Sure, you have to audition. And you have to learn lines. There's the director telling you to do this and not to do that. And then you have to be onstage in front of all those people. How scary is that? You've never done it before. You could say the right line at the wrong time. Or you could draw a blank and not say your line at all. Now wouldn't that be terrible?

No, that would be live theater. The charm of live theater is that there are real people acting out a contrived story in as honest a manner as they can. The people, the actors, are normal—just like the rest of us. Only the story is made up. And the essence of acting is to be as real as possible, as honest as you can, within the contrived circumstances of the story. Really nothing to it, when you think about it.

All right, it's not quite that easy, but that's what makes it fun. So what really happens when you're in a play?

It starts with the audition. At the professional level, auditions can be really scary. You have to learn a monologue, a long speech. And then you have to perform it flawlessly onstage in front of a critical panel of judges, probably including the director, the assistant director, the producer, the stage manager, maybe even the lighting guy. And if you're not perfect, talented, or the right look, well it's back to waiting tables.

Auditions with the Players aren't nearly so intimidating. First, there's the director. Most likely he or she is a really friendly, sensitive person with a track record of not scaring the heck out of the cast. (Important in community theater, because the people doing the acting are often the same people who choose the director.) In all likelihood, the director is someone just like you with a day job who's here solely for the fun of it. About as scary as the cashier at the grocery store.

And the audition itself? Often as not, the director passes out a pile of scripts and everybody gets to read one of the characters. Then they switch around and you get to read another one. Sometimes you get to play a role: Pretend you're a cop giving your grandmother a ticket for drag racing. And sometimes you get a part. Don't go into an audition thinking you've failed if you don't get the role you want, or a role at all. We do three plays a year. Most people don't act in all of them. You'll get your chance.

Rehearsals? How will you find time for rehearsals? Well, if you want to be in a play, be prepared to spend 80-90 hours rehearsing. But it happens over a couple of months. And not everyone has to rehearse at the same time. So, unless you're going to be out of town for blocks of time, the director will probably be able to schedule

around your conflicts. And even though we talk about working at rehearsals, the difference between work and play is a matter of whether you do it for money or fun. And there's a reason we call it a play.

Learning the lines? It always seems an impossibility at the beginning. And sometimes it's not done as well as it should be. But most people with average memories are able to learn the lines of a play. Granted, it does take some effort. And you can't really begin to act until you've learned the lines. But rest assured, if you have the will, you'll have the ability.

And being onstage in front of all those people. What if you flub a line? Well, that's part of live theater. It's what keeps it alive. In rehearsals, we start by cuing you for missed lines. Then you learn to cover. Think the thoughts, say the lines. That is, know the story and know what you want to say. The words will come. And, in the event they don't, make them up. That's called covering. And if someone else forgets a line, or says the wrong thing, react honestly and say what makes sense. That's what makes it live theater.

We, the Bigfork Community Players, exist to provide our community both with live theater and the opportunity to participate in live theater. We work hard at the craft to produce the best live theater that we can. If it sounds like fun, come join in the merriment.

And if the result is not quite Broadway, so be it. Neither is high-school football the NFL. But both can be equally exciting.



Cast and crew of last year's production of *Rumors*.