



**Company News:**

## The Miracle Worker's Uplifting Message

by Tina McLure

Audiences never tire of watching *The Miracle Worker* and experiencing its uplifting message of hope.

Pullman Civic Theatre's March production was beautifully presented with John Rich at the helm.

The production was engaging, touching and one that will draw patrons back to experience more shows from PCT.

It was thrilling to see the work done by young actors Cyndi Kimmel, Joylissa Vleck and Jake Nelson.

Kimmel enjoyed supporting roles in PCT's *Years Ago* and *Peter Pan*. She was impressive in her first leading role as Helen Keller's feisty and determined school teacher, Annie Sullivan.

Kimmel was very focused in her work and had done a lot of research to get into character. She was confident in the role and she paid attention to many details, including the constant rubbing of her eyes.

The fight scenes between her and Vleck were exciting and well timed. A lot of rehearsal went into these scenes but the two made it look easy and the delivery was very fluid.



Photo: Dan Lawrence

Annie Sullivan (Cyndi Kimmel) signs words into Helen Keller's (Joylissa Vleck) palm in Pullman Civic Theatre's *The Miracle Worker*.

Vleck's portrayal of a blind, deaf and mute child was gripping. Her grunts and groans were realistic and her far-off stare was brilliant. Eyes were drawn to her in every scene as she stumbled around frustrated in her dark and silent world. A testament to her marvelous acting abilities, it was odd to see her come out and take a bow. Seeing her step out of the role during curtain call was like looking at a totally different girl.

Nelson was also very good in his portrayal of James Keller, Helen's sharp-tongued half-brother. His cool distance but snappy retorts were delivered with precision. Nelson has really come a long way on the PCT stage and hopefully there are many more productions to come.

Well-seasoned and excellent performances were given by actors Carolea Webb, Lee Hatley and Tracey Brelsford. PCT is glad to have such a talented pool of actors who lend their time and expertise. The actors continue to raise the bar when it comes to excellence in community theater.

Joe Kimmel stepped up to the position of stage manager and proved his salt as a "go-getter." Hopefully, he will be willing to try his hand helping other productions get off the ground.

The 20-member cast worked well together and was enhanced by having some unexpected additions including 5-month-old Julia Ragsdale and Sundance the dog. Details add so much to a production. ☆

**Coming Attractions:**

## Auntie Mame

by Diane Gillespie

Pullman Civic Theatre's next "extraordinary woman" play is the much loved Broadway comedy *Auntie Mame* by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. Char Fluster, last season's sultry Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, will play Mame Dennis. Sophisticated and elegant, flamboyant and free-spirited, Mame proves to be a kindhearted and devoted aunt to her conservative young nephew Patrick, played by Nate Stoneman, last seen as John Darling in PCT's summer production of *Peter Pan*.

Dick Domey, who will direct, loves this play with its Noel Coward style wit and zany characters. "Free spirits and

**Attractions:** Cont'd on Pg. 3, Col. 1

## INTRODUCING:

# Diane Gillespie

by Scott S. Campbell

Diane Gillespie is not a person who likes the acting spotlight. Then again, who says the only fun to be had in the theatre is on stage? Certainly not Diane!

Like many of us, Diane had her share of roles in high school plays, but there didn't seem to be a spark. Her real interest in theatre didn't blossom until her freshman year at the University of Minnesota.

She attended a college production of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. "I was so impressed with that production that I started to attend theatre regularly."

Eventually, Diane incorporated her interest in theater into her education as the study of drama as literature.

In her professional career as a University educator, Diane has covered many of the bases in the literature world. When it comes to research, however, her work often focused on modern British women authors of drama and fiction.

Diane is a well known authority in the field of Woolf studies around the world. When WSU brought Leonard and Virginia Woolf's personal library to Pullman, the University set out to find a Woolf scholar to join the faculty and utilize the library to its fullest. Diane Gillespie was their choice.

One of Diane's books, *The Sisters' Arts*, is a study of the relationship between Virginia Woolf and her sister Vanessa Bell, who was a painter. With Diane's interest in writing and her own sister's skill as a painter, Diane could easily identify with and appreciate the dynamics between a similar set of sisters.

The close relationship between writing and painting has always been an interest for Diane. That's probably why she is so comfortable behind the scenes -- she gets to paint!

Now a Professor Emeritus at WSU, Diane has more free time available to pursue her many other interests -- even though she still seems to always have a paper in the works and one or two presentations lined up.

Some of those other pursuits include international travel, music, and cross-country skiing. When traveling, she and her husband, Dick Domey, enjoy the different countries, their sights, cuisines... and of course, their theatre!

Diane's first involvement with PCT was a collaboration on the set design for *84 Charring Cross Road* with Dick who was doing the

set design. "Designing a British bookstore and working the theme of books into the design of the set was a real thrill."

She enjoys working on sets with Dick because it is often a fun collaboration. "He is the expert, but we also bounce ideas off each other back and forth until we get something we like."

All told, Diane has been a significant contributor to the sets of all of PCT's summer musicals, and a large portion of the other mainstage productions as well.

However, Diane has not stayed behind the scenery the whole time, and we're very appreciative of that. Diane is a frequent front of the house contributor as well. She's done everything from house managing, to handling refreshments, to ushering.

To top it all off, Diane is also a member of PCT's Board of Directors. On the Board, she's taken on roles as Historian, which includes documenting our productions in scrapbooks, and Secretary. That list of jobs suggests that she's taking her academic skills to the community -- and we couldn't be happier!

Like many of us who have been working so closely with theatre productions, she often looks at plays she attends in a somewhat different light. "I



Diane Gillespie having fun working behind the scenes on Auntie Mame.

## SpotLight:

[www.pullmancivictheatre.com](http://www.pullmancivictheatre.com)

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### Pullman Civic Theatre Board of Directors:

**President:** Char Fluster, cfluster@turbonet.com

**Vice-President:** Kristine Zakarison, kristine@pullman.com.

**Secretary:** Diane Gillespie, domey@completebbs.com.

**Treasurer:** Nancy Kent, nekent@ontologos.org.

**Artistic Director:** John Rich, 509-334-7033.

**Members At-Large:** Betty Adams, Kay Bundy, Gail Miller, Pam McEachern, Jim Sato, and Rosemary Waldrop.

like plays with good sets! They can really transport you into the world of the show. They're also a great source of inspiration and ideas for our own set designs."

Currently she's spending her days writing in the morning and painting sets in the afternoon. "It's really a nice balance."

Her painting for *Auntie Mame* has gone far beyond the typical architectural set pieces for this show. There are actually several large canvases that Diane has covered with wonderful adaptations of real artwork.

"I've enjoyed painting these pictures more than putting wood grain on wainscoting. Really," she says, "working on this project is the most fun I've had."

Diane, we hope you'll decide to step out in front of the scenery again some day. In the meantime, thank you so much for all that you are doing behind the scenes!

But as you say, "You can have as much fun behind the scenes as you do on stage." ☆

**Attractions: Cont'd from Pg. 1, Col. 3**

conservatives may be caricatured.” he says, “but we recognize the reality behind them, and their collisions are as funny now as they were in the fifties.”

First produced in 1956, *Auntie Mame* recalls Prohibition (1920-33), the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the Great Depression, and World War II. Yet Mame Dennis finds booze for her parties, marries an oil tycoon after she loses her money and fails hilariously at every job she tries, and never has to see her nephew off to war. Auntie Mame is, after all, a comedy. Contemporary audiences, like those of the Eisenhower era, can benefit from a little escapism combined with a good laugh at human foibles.

Other members of the large cast familiar to PCT audiences include Gail Miller as Norah Muldoon, Troy Sprenke as Vera, Jim Sato as Ito, Tracey Brelsford as Gooch, Gary Labusohr as Lindsay Woolsey, Ron Sloom as Ralph Devine, Terri Schmidt as Mother Burnside, and Scott Campbell as Claude Upson. The cast also includes Josh Beaugregard, Shannon Bradbury, John Buscher, James Downes, Kat Downes, Chris Kelly, Carmel Minogue, Brian Murray, Erin Palmer, and Danielle Ragsdale.

Performances will be at 7:30 p.m. on April 29, 30, May 1 and May 6, 7, and 8 in the Gladish auditorium. ☆



*Photo: Dan Lawrence*  
Annie Sullivan (Cyndi Kimmel) talks to the Keller family about undermining all of Helen's accomplishments.

**From the President:**

## A Season of Extraordinary Women!

by Char Fluster

I remember it like it was yesterday. There I sat, my four year old self, at the bottom of our basement stairwell playing with my dolls. All of a sudden my mother called to me and I looked up the stairs.

of the season, *The Miracle Worker*, did just that and we look forward to amazing you with the rest of our shows as well.

Our next production, *Auntie Mame*, takes a lighthearted look at life. We may



*Four extraordinary women: Kristine Zakarison (Vice-President), Nancy Kent (Treasurer), Char Fluster (President), and Diane Gillespie (Secretary).*

There she stood, framed by a window and silhouetted by the sunlight streaming in from behind her, with a lazy summertime haze floating around her head like princess fairy dust. I gasped and thought, “I want to be just like her!” To this day I have no idea what we talked about. I only remember staring up, transfixed and dizzy from the vision.

As our 2004 season honoring extraordinary women gets underway, we hope to similarly inspire you, to have you also transfixed and dizzy from our vision. I am sure our debut performance

not have you gasping but you are sure to chuckle and maybe even guffaw! Spring is here, it is time to lighten our load, smell the fresh air and treat ourselves to a comedy. Inspiration will be found in lighter tones, presented with panache.

Remember, extraordinary women are all around us. You just have to open your eyes and look. And I'd hazard a guess that telling that special someone just how extraordinary she is will go a long way. Heck, you can even treat her to a performance of *Auntie Mame!* ☆

**Theatre Trivia:**

## No Whistlin' Dixie!

by Diane Gillespie

Whistling on stage is considered unlucky because, during the nineteenth century, scene changers whistled to signal when a new piece of scenery should be lowered from above. An actor

who whistled at an inopportune time risked being knocked out by descending scenery.

(Victoria and Albert Theatre Museum web site) ☆

## Community Support:

### Many Thanks to Ric-O-Shay!

by Char Fluster

When local proprietors Yvonne Skinner and Walt Zylowski, owners of Ric-O-Shay in downtown Pullman, discontinued their costume rental business, they had to decide what to do with their costume inventory. The costume rentals were only a sideline to their mainstay business which offers new, quality imports of clothing, beads, jewelry, lamps, and home decoration items from around the world.

Luckily for Pullman Civic Theatre, they donated the costume rental inventory to us. Luckily for them, PCT is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation, so

their donation of costumes, worth in excess of \$700.00, was tax deductible.

Are you or your business doing major spring cleaning soon? Pullman Civic Theatre would be happy to be the recipient of useful items: vintage clothing, household items that could come in handy as props, or even a motor in good condition we could use to propel our Cinderella carriage this summer. Give us a call at 509-332-8406. Many thanks again to Ric-O-Shay owners Yvonne and Walt for thinking of us as a destination for their donation. ☆



*Ric-O-Shay of Pullman offers a variety of quality imports, beads, jewelry, lamps, and home decorations.*

## Pullman Civic Theatre History:

### Tastes Change?

By Diane Gillespie

Early Pullman audiences attended their share of then-popular minstrel shows, most of them put on by touring companies, but some mounted locally.

In January of 1904, for instance, the Pullman Hose Co. No. 1 put one on at the Pullman Auditorium. Although many of the men had no stage experience, the draft of an article (attached to the back of a formal photograph now in Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections at the WSU New Holland Library) dismissed their amateur status.

"It is quite common to laud home talent and say extravagant things in praise of their frequently mediocre efforts, but we are not inflating the truth nor are we indulging in extravagation when we say there were no amateurish streaks visible."

The show included singers in blackface (masquerading as Sambo, Kimbo, and Rastus). A skit called "The Return of the Prodigal" included the "impersonation of a female character." Kirk Dysart "surprised his friends by the artistic manner in which he rendered 'Chicken on the Brain.'" Prof. Harry Smith did "trick piano playing, ...executing among other things, a familiar selection on that instrument with his nose and blindfolded."

There also were demonstrations on the punching bag, and of heavy lifting.

What do you think is our current equivalent in popular entertainment? ☆

## Volunteer of the Year:

### Carolea Webb!

by Char Fluster

Every year Pullman Civic Theatre selects a Volunteer of the Year to honor. We rely on so many volunteers and to select just one is a difficult process. We certainly hope those of you who donate your time understand how much we appreciate it and that we could not put on the quality performances we do without you.

That being said, it is with great pleasure that we honor the special efforts of **Carolea Webb** as our 2003/2004 Volunteer of the Year for Pullman Civic Theatre.

Carolea came on board with a bang last year and hasn't stopped

contributing since. She has been involved in some aspect of every PCT show since our debut 2003 season performance of *Years Ago*, in which she was an actor. Carolea ushered for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Peter Pan*, and as a parent of an actor in Peter Pan she was called upon to fulfill a myriad of

volunteer duties.

Our Volunteer of the Year became a contributing writer for the *Spotlight*, lending a helping hand to all of us involved with its publication. She also

worked at the PCT county fair booths in September and then had perhaps her biggest job: House Manager for *This Day & Age*.

Many of you may also be familiar with her articles in the *Moscow Pullman Daily News* written in diary format, chronicling her experience as a cast member of *The Miracle Worker*. Those articles were a major factor in

our sold out run of that show.

If you see Carolea, congratulate her on her award, but mainly just thank her for all that she has done. And if you have a hankerin' to be House Manager for one of our future plays ... well, just give us a call. ☆



*Photo: Dan Lawrence*

*Carolea Webb played Mrs. Keller in The Miracle Worker.*

**News Bits:**

by Scott S. Campbell

**Auditioning Tips for Cinderella**

It's nearing the summer months, and Pullman Civic Theatre will soon be holding auditions for it's musical, *Cinderella*. For those of you with or without children who might be auditioning for the show, we put together a few guidelines and suggestions to make the process smooth as silk.

1. **Be slightly early to the audition.** There will be a short form for you to fill out and then sorted by the staff.
2. **Be prepared to stay the whole time of the audition from 3p to 7p.** If you need to leave early, tell a staff person and write it at the top of your form. Please bring snacks & drinks if you think you'll need them.
3. **Be prepared to sing a small bit (30 secs) of a song without piano accompaniment.** This can be as simple as "Happy Birthday."
4. **Please bring dance shoes if you have them.** Do not wear rubber soled shoes if you can avoid it.
5. **Be prepared to relax, and have fun!** You're among friends and everyone is as nervous as you. ☆

PCT Quarterly Calendar						
March 2004						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Spring Begins
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
April 2004						
			1	2	3	
4 Daylight Savings Starts	5	6 Passover	7	8	9 Good Friday	10
11 Easter	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 Board Mtg.
25	26	27	28	29 Auntie Mame Curtain 7:30p	30 Auntie Mame Curtain 7:30p	
May 2004						
						1 Auntie Mame Curtain 7:30p
2	3	4	5 Cinderella Aud. 3pm - 7pm	6 Auntie Mame Curtain 7:30p	7 Auntie Mame Curtain 7:30p	8 Auntie Mame Curtain 7:30p
9 Mothers' Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Memorial Day (Obs.)					

**Key:** Auds. = All *mainstage auditions* listed on this newsletter calendar will be held in the Gladish Little Theatre, Pullman. All members of the community are invited to audition for roles in our upcoming productions or to get involved behind the scenes.

**Auntie Mame = Our spring production of the 2004 season: Auntie Mame by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. Performances will be held in the Gladish Auditorium, curtain at 7:30 pm.**

**Board Mtg.** = PCT's Board meetings are open to all current members of Pullman Civic Theatre. Call 332-8406 for location.

☉ CUT ME OUT! ☉ CUT ME OUT! ☉ CUT ME OUT! ☉ CUT ME OUT! ☉



Salutes Extraordinary Women:

**2004 Season**

*The Miracle Worker*

**Next Up: ☆ Auntie Mame ☆**

*Cinderella*

*Pride's Crossing*

**Auditions:**

***Cinderella***

***By Rogers & Hammerstein***

**Wed., May 5, 2004**

**3 p.m. to 7 p.m.**

**In the Gladish Auditorium**

For additional information, call director John Rich 334-7033

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**Company News:**

## Sold Out Run Breaks Records!

**By Char Fluster**

What better way to start off a season than by selling out the whole run of a show? That is exactly what happened with all six shows of our 2004 season debut performance of *The Miracle Worker!* Satisfying as it was to set a record for a first time sold out run, we wished we could have seated everyone who came for a night out at the theatre.

The tension was high at the Box Office every evening as all signs indicated yet another show would sell out. Would the phone ever stop ringing off the hook at the office with reservation requests? Would

tardy season ticket holders arrive in time for the show, or could we assign

number who could and still start the show close to the scheduled curtain time.

Although it was thrilling to realize that John Rich and the cast & crew of *The Miracle Worker* had created such a quality performance that was in high demand, it was painful to have to turn so many people away at the door and on the phone.

We are therefore happy to announce that our next show, *Auntie Mame*, will be performed in the larger Gladish Auditorium with a much higher seating capacity. Still, make sure you get those tickets on time and arrive early enough for a good seat. After all, you wouldn't want to miss another record being broken, now would you? ☆



Annie Sullivan says good-bye to the girls at the school.

Photo: Dan Lawrence

their seats to the many patient patrons on the waiting list?

would you? ☆