



ANNISQUAM VILLAGE PLAYERS

2018 SEASON NEWSLETTER

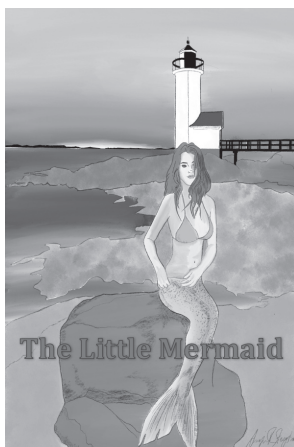
AVP Presents *The Little Mermaid*

This summer the Annisquam stage will be transformed into an underwater kingdom, as the AVP takes on *The Little Mermaid*, a time-honored story of a young woman's journey to follow her impossible dream. Based on the 1837 Danish fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen, *The Little Mermaid* was reinvented in the 1989 animated Disney movie and the 2008 Broadway production. What a perfect show for Gloucester, with its sea-faring traditions and stories of those enamored by the sea, a theme which the AVP will clearly highlight this summer.

The Broadway production was cited by *Time Magazine* as "one of the most ravishing things I have ever seen on the Broadway stage," and its two female stars, Ariel and Ursula, were nominated for outstanding actress and outstanding featured actress. But *The Little Mermaid* almost didn't make it to the Broadway stage because the producer said, "We haven't found a way to do the water." That has never stopped the AVP. Not to be outdone by flying in the 2014 production of *Peter Pan* and the rain scene in the 2017 production of *Singin' In The Rain*, this summer's show is sure to amaze audiences.

The AVP will beat Hollywood to the punch, with its production preceding the 2018 live-action movie featuring Lin-Manuel Miranda, the composer and star of the Broadway hit *Hamilton*. In fact, Miranda stated that *The Little Mermaid* sparked his interest in musical theater, and Miranda named his son Sebastian, after one of the leading characters in the show. This year's academy award winning movie "The Shape of Water" has many similarities with our show Mermaid — you be the critic.

The original Broadway recording was nominated for a



Grammy Award. The songs from *The Little Mermaid* are a combination of 1960s rock music, vaudeville, and cabaret, including such crowd-pleasers as "Under the Sea," "Kiss the Girl," "Part of Your World," and "I Want the Good Times Back." There will be many show-stopping numbers involving sea creatures, seagulls, mermaids, sailors in a storm at sea, singing princesses in a competition, and singing chefs serving a fish-eating banquet.

There are many fabulous roles for men, women and children. Parts for women include Ariel (the indomitable mermaid), Ursula (the evil sea-witch, and one of the best female roles on Broadway), Ariel's 6 singing mermaid sisters, Carlotta (Prince Eric's maid who befriends Ariel), princesses who vie for Eric's hand in marriage, and maids, chefs, sea creatures and gulls.

Parts for men include Prince Eric, who falls in love with Ariel, King Triton (king of the underworld and Ariel's father), Grimsby (Eric's faithful and cranky servant), Scuttle (the word-challenged seagull) and Sebastian (the Jamaican crab who is Ariel's benefactor), both of whom bring comic relief. There is also Flounder (Ariel's love-struck friend), Flotsam and Jetsam (Ursula's conniving and slippery eel henchmen), Chef Louis (the comic and bombastic French chef of Eric's palace), the pilot of Prince Eric's ship and a raunchy crew of sea-worthy sailors.

Many of the aquatic roles can be played by either men or women. The children's scene will bring sea creatures of all types to the underworld grotto, who will swim, dance, sing and fly in the mysteries and beauties of the deep sea.

Auditions will be held on Sunday, May 27, at 6 PM at the Annisquam Village Hall, with callbacks on Monday, May

Continued on page 4

AVP's Third Annual Cabaret Night

The AVP's third annual Cabaret Night was a grand success! The event was held on Saturday, February 10 at the Annisquam Village Hall to a sold-out audience. The AVP team of designers, Chicki Hollett, Mary Flaherty, Evy Stewart and Tom Moriarty set the stage for an elegant evening of wine, hors d'oeuvres and outstanding entertainment.

This year's lineup included a dazzling variety of performers from the North Shore, including singers and dancers, comedians and actors, and even a silk acrobat. The night kicked off with Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken and City Council president Paul Lundberg serenading each other with "You're Just My Style" and "Under My Thumb," and opened with the entire cast, led by soloist Bethany Vahn, singing "Cabaret."

They were followed by some of the stars of last summer's *Singin' in The Rain*, including leads Emily Whalen, Ben Fuller, and Ts Burnham, as well as Emily Frick who sang a song from the new Broadway musical based on 9/11. Rhiannon Hurst blew the audience away with her solo of "Stormy Weather;" Allison Doody's rendition of "Crazy" made us believe that Patsy Cline was on our stage; Thom

Smoker and Andrew Hankinson did a comic duet of "I'm Not Alone" from *Spamalot*; and Hannah Anderson's aerial ballet on silks dangling from the ceiling was jaw-dropping.

Duncan Nelson, Annisquam's own poet laureate, feted the Mayor, and AVP's King Arthur, Doug Brendel, performed a unique and highly entertaining version of "I Wonder What the King Is Doing Tonight." Tom Moriarty brought the house down when he appeared on stage as half man, half woman for his one-man duet of Neil Diamond and Barbra Streisand's "You Don't Bring Me Flowers." And Larry Cook crooned his hit from last summer's show, "Beautiful Girls," this time surrounded by a different set of "beautiful girls" — Terry Sands and his merry gang of men in drag — who cackled out the old barroom ballad "Seven Old Ladies Locked in The Lavatory." Dirt Murray, who did an in memorium appearance for his dad, even joined the gang. You can watch the Cabaret on the AVP website.

It was a wonderful evening that helped raise much needed funds for the AVP summer musical and its new scholarship fund, as well as the new AVH sound system. Don't miss next February's fourth annual Cabaret Night.

Theatrical Arts Scholarship

In 2017, the AVP was excited to launch a Theatrical Arts Scholarship as part of its mission to "enrich our community" and "provide an opportunity for local Cape Ann residents, young and older, to engage and develop their talents for musical theater." The needs-based scholarship offers up to \$1000 to students aged 8-18 who have demonstrated a commitment to developing their artistic talent in acting, voice and/or dance.

The first recipient of the scholarship was 10-year-old Xander Lovelace of Rockport, whom attendees of last year's show, *Singin' in the Rain*, may know better as young Cosmo Brown. Xander was new to the AVP but quickly made a strong impression with his outstanding dance moves and his ever-cheerful attitude.

Xander's mother, Jennifer Lovelace, noticed Xander's grace and agility at an early age. She took him to Michele Shaw's Elite Dance Centre in Gloucester to look into classes. "I probably should've taken him even earlier," she said, but he had no trouble getting up to speed. Only five at the time, Xander auditioned for the competition team and was accepted immediately. The dance teacher remarked

that it was as if he'd already been training with them. He participated on the team for five years, dancing up to eight hours a day and traveling all over New England for competitions.



This year, with his father beginning graduate school, Xander's parents did not anticipate being able to sign him up for any dance classes, which was a difficult blow for Xander. The combination of his talent and dedication and his apparent need stood out in Xander's application, making him an ideal candidate for the AVP's Theatrical Arts Scholarship.

With the scholarship money, Xander was able to sign up for tap dancing classes at the Hamilton Wenham School of Dance, owned by AVP choreographer Donna Viau. He also signed up for an adagio class at his regular studio, to keep up his partnering skills. The Elite Dance Centre, inspired by the AVP's scholarship, offered Xander a ballet class as well, which provides the foundation for adagio and many other styles of dance.

Xander is very thankful for the AVP scholarship. "He wouldn't have been able to dance this year without it," his

Continued on page 4

Meet Kathryn Hollett (Chicki)

Kathryn Hollett, better known to most of Annisquam as Chicki, has been lending her artistic talent to the Annisquam Village Players since 1992. That year, her granddaughter Carla was in the first production of *The Sound of Music* and revealed that Chicki could help with sets. Before Chicki knew it, she was the official Set Designer, a position she has held ever since. The AVP is deeply indebted to her for her artistic vision, dedication, and unflappable good humor.

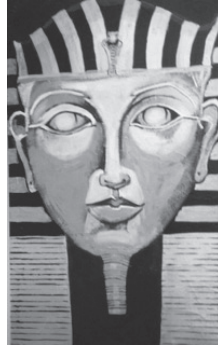
Artistic talent clearly runs in Chicki's family. Her father was a graphic designer, and two of her grandchildren, Carla and Ari, are artists who regularly paint backdrops and set pieces for AVP. Chicki took art courses while raising her children, and in 1981 earned a degree in Interior Design from Chamberlayne Junior College (now part of Mount Ida College). Throughout her career, she has done everything from staging condominium models and show houses, to setting stages for fundraisers, to remodeling homes.

Chicki's professional experiences were excellent preparation for working on the sets of the AVP, as were her personal projects. She has built two homes in Annisquam. All that experience with floor plans came in handy this year when the Gloucester Building Department required a floor plan of the Village Hall in order to sign off on continued use of the building. Chicki's offer to draw one up ensured the Village Hall could be utilized throughout the coming year. This is just one example of her invaluable contributions to the community.

"My friends wonder why they only get invited to the beach house in the winter," she joked, but if they saw what her summers with the AVP entail, they would understand why. She spends much of her time, day and night, in her garage or down at the Village Hall, creating impressive sets that transport audiences to another time and place.

"Every show has its specific challenges and every show has its specific rewards," Chicki said. The first *Sound of Music* "was one of the bigger productions," she recalled, "and one that reminded us all of how desperately we needed air conditioning at the Village Hall." Next was *South Pacific*, then *Oliver*, "which came with its own challenges, specifically space challenges — a cast with a jillion kids and a set with a jillion beds and limited space back stage, oh, and the London Bridge ... and still no a/c.... Those hills came alive again in 2008, but this time with a/c!"

One of Chicki's most memorable AVP experiences was in 2009, creating the Pharaoh's backdrop for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Bobbi Kovner had arranged to borrow a backdrop, but when it arrived the day before opening night, they realized it was far too big for the Village Hall's small stage. "We had to improvise



— and fast!," Chicki said. Her granddaughter Carla — now a dedicated artist — was staying with her while recuperating from shoulder surgery. "Evy Stewart and I hoisted Carla on top of a table in my garage (where the bulk of sets have been produced) and handed her the paint and brushes. Left handed, Carla painted the Pharaoh while Evy and I labored on the gold stripes. It was a very close call. Almost dry by intermission, we rushed it in for Act II! Phew!"

Chicki not only creates the sets but runs the set changes during shows, which can be quite a challenge in the small space backstage. But no amount of chaos, no daunting set requirement or seemingly impossible set change seems to rattle her. She maintains her gracious demeanor and sense of humor through it all, which is no small feat and one of many reasons why she is loved by all at AVP.

Chicki has enjoyed working with so many over the years, and is particularly grateful to Joline and John Hentschel, Tom Moriarty, and Evy Stewart, all of whom have helped her "invent and construct set pieces as well as dream up pseudo-scenery that can take one from Neverland to Oz to Camelot." She also feels privileged to have had much creative input and assistance from, among others, Shaun McNiff, and Diane Jacquith. She always welcomes volunteers; anyone interested in helping with sets should come join the fun.

"I feel extraordinarily fortunate in being here to witness the revolving door of talent and diverse artistry over the years," Chicki said. "Yet what prompts my deepest gratitude is the treasured friendships that have grown through my association with Mary and Terry and the village of Village Players.

"We'll be underwater (again) this coming season," she added. "I'm looking forward to it!"

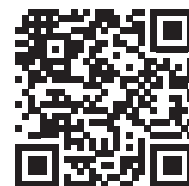
Comment from a New AVP performer (Spike Ramsden) About the AVP

When Terry first convinced me to play one of the "Seven Old Ladies", I was a little intimidated. I don't live in Annisquam, and have always thought that as a strong little community, perhaps a bit exclusionary. My fears were totally unfounded! Everyone I encountered from the AVP was warm, welcoming and super-friendly. As a first-time cast member, I really appreciated the supportive environment!

AVP IMPORTANT DATES 2018

Auditions: May 27, 6:00 pm
Callbacks: May 28, 7:00 pm
Rehearsals: Beginning mid-June
Show Dates: August 7–12, 2018





Facebook page: annisquamvillageplayers
www.annisquamvillageplayers.org

Annisquam, MA 01930
50 Leonard Street
Annisquam Village Players



AVP Presents *The Little Mermaid*, from page 1

28, at 7 PM. Children, and adults who want to audition for the chorus, should prepare a verse from "Under the Sea." Adults who wish to audition for a character should learn a verse from a song by that character. There will be special roles for those with dance experience. And the AVP is always looking for any creative talent both onstage and off.

This is a family show for all ages. Rehearsals start the middle of June, and the show runs from Tuesday, August 7, through Sunday, August 12. The AVP will also produce a musical float in the Gloucester Horribles Parade on July 3. For additional information, please visit our website at annisquamvillageplayers.org, and follow us on Facebook.

New Sound System for Village Hall on Its Way

Audience members straining to hear dialogue from the back seats in our acoustically-challenged Village Hall may soon be a thing of the past. The AVP and the Village Hall Association recently agreed to share the cost of installing a new sound system in the hall. Installation is expected to be completed prior to the summer season.

Theatrical Arts Scholarship, from page 2

mother added. Xander's hard work was on display at this year's Cabaret Night, where he performed a tap solo and an adagio with his partner, Katie Hautala. The AVP is honored to have been able to contribute to the development of such a promising young performer.

For others interested the AVP Theatrical Arts Scholarship, applicants must have participated in at least one AVP production in the past three years. The scholarship funds can be used for any artistic development, such as classes or private instruction in acting, voice or dance, or tuition to a school or camp program offering such instruction. Application guidelines and the 2018 due date will be posted in May on the AVP website, annisquamvillageplayers.com.

Please Support Your Local Community Theater

Please support the Annisquam Village Players, a gem of the Village, one of the oldest continually-operating community theaters in the country. Each year it brings Broadway quality productions to the Village. Costs of the productions rise each year. The AVP is now a tax-exempt 501C3 charitable non-profit organization and contributions to the AVP are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by the law.



Annisquam Village Players 2018 Dues:

- ☐ Individual: \$40 ☐ Family: \$70
- ☐ I/We would like to make a donation
- ☐ I/We would also like to get involved with *The Little Mermaid*

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please make checks payable to: **Annisquam Village Players**
And return to:

Stevie Neal, Treasurer

50 Leonard St., Gloucester, MA 01930

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