

# Ripples

## from the Community Circle Players at Riverwalk Theatre

Season 31 • Number 8  
January, 2020

228 Museum Dr. • PO Box 12249 • Lansing, MI 48901 • 517-482-5700 • Office Hours: Tues.-Fri. 10 am to 5:30 pm • e-mail: [RWT@riverwalktheatre.com](mailto:RWT@riverwalktheatre.com) • web site: [RiverwalkTheatre.com](http://RiverwalkTheatre.com)

### UNNECESSARY FARCE promises to banish winter doldrums

*Unnecessary Farce* may be the perfect show for the doldrums of winter: a little embezzlement, a little supposed tryst, a couple of undercover cops and some videotaping, all in a motel with LOTS of doors opening and shutting and opening again.

“This is a rare kind of comedy, a very special comedy,” said Jeff Magnuson, who directs *Unnecessary Farce* written by Paul Slade Smith, on the Riverwalk main stage February 6-9 and 13-16. “The characters are amazing. To a person, they’re delightfully written and performed.”

*Unnecessary Farce* made its world premiere in 2006 at the now-defunct BoarsHead Theater and has been performed nearly 300 times since. The reason?

“It’s wildly fun, the pace of it, the rapid-fire jokes,” Magnuson said. “It’s a classic in my eyes.”

Magnuson’s past work as an actor and director has included lots of drama, but he also loves comedy from the sophisticated laughs on *M\*A\*S\*H* and *Cheers* on ‘80s TV to classic farce by the Marx Brothers.

He also saw *Unnecessary Farce* in its debut run at BoarsHead, where his Spotlight Theatre mentor, Len Kluge, was one of the stars.

This production includes four Riverwalk newcomers: Steve Neal, Rachel Daugherty, Leigh Christopher and Derek Elstro as FBI agent Frank, as well as three Riverwalk veterans: Jesse Frawley, Gini Larson and Doak Bloss as the embezzling Mayor Meekly.

“Everyone is doing an amazing job of character development,” he said. He admits he finds himself laughing as they rehearse because he just can’t help it.

Fitting eight doors for slamming onto Riverwalk’s



thrust stage is a challenge, but Magnuson said Leroy Cupp and his construction crew have devised a way to make it work smoothly.

*Unnecessary Farce* is suitable for a PG-13 audience, with some innuendo, and those who come should have a rollicking good time.

“If you enjoy some good silly fun, this is the time to get out to the theater,” Magnuson said.

*Kathleen Lavey*

*Mayor Meekly (Doak Bloss) and his wife (Gini Larson) are shocked at such goings on.*

PHOTO BY [WWW.ARINIKO.COM](http://WWW.ARINIKO.COM)



Back to front:  
*Steve Neal, Rachel Daugherty, Jesse Frawley*  
PHOTO BY [WWW.ARINIKO.COM](http://WWW.ARINIKO.COM)

### WHAT'S ON AT RIVERWALK

February 6-9 & 13-16 - **UNNECESSARY FARCE** - comedy/farce - Director: Jeff Magnuson

February 22, Saturday, **SEASON REVEAL PARTY** - meet season 32 directors and celebrate! More info at [www.riverwalktheatre.com](http://www.riverwalktheatre.com)

February 27 and 28, Thursday and Friday, 6:30-8:30, **AUDITIONS for The Fantastic Mr. Fox**, at Hannah Community Center. Produced by All-of-us Express; ages 9-18 welcome for cast and crew; optional Audition Workshop Feb. 26 at 6:30; more info at [cityofeastlansing.com/allofus](http://cityofeastlansing.com/allofus) or e-mail [ecooke@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:ecooke@cityofeastlansing.com) (shows April 24-May 3, 2020)

March 12-15 & April 19-22 - **A HOTEL ON MARVIN GARDENS** - comedy - Director: Mary K. Hodges-Nees

April 24-26 - May 1-3 - **THE FANTASTIC MR. FOX** - fantasy adventure produced by All-of-us Express Children’s Theatre

**PLAYS:** 7 pm Thurs.; 8 pm Fri. & Sat.; 2 pm Sun. Fri./Sat./Sun. \$15 (\$12 sr/student/military) **Bargain Thursdays \$10/\$8**

**MUSICALS:** 7 pm Thursdays; 8 pm Fri./Sat.; 2 pm Sundays - \$24 (\$20 sr/student/military) (\$12 age 12 & under)

**BLACK BOX SHOWS:** 7 pm Thursdays; 8 pm Fridays & Saturdays; 2 pm Sundays \$12 (\$10 sr/student/military) **Bargain Thursdays \$10/\$8**

**CHILDREN’S SHOW:** 7pm Fridays, 3pm Saturdays & Sundays - \$8 children; \$10 adults age 18+ (general seating)

**AUDITIONS** - more info at <https://www.riverwalktheatre.com/auditions.html>

**SPECIAL EVENT:** More info at [RiverwalkTheatre.com](http://RiverwalkTheatre.com)

## Boy Gets Girl Is a Thriller...and More

Brian Farnham has had a remarkable — and some would say exhausting — five months, beginning in September at Over The Ledge Theatre as director of *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*. By November, Brian was back on the Riverwalk stage charming audiences with the titular role in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Then, without a break, he moved on to Riverwalk's Black Box for a masterful turn as director of *Boy Gets Girl*, a dark and timely thriller and yet so much more.

Rebecca Gilman's script, which dates from 2000, has had a few tweaks, making it even more relevant to our "me-too" era. Brian's director's notes say it best: "This show strikes a note because it is real — and the sad truth is, it can happen to anyone."

It happens to Theresa Bedell (Janet Colson), a hard-driving and city-wise magazine writer, set up by a friend on a blind date. She meets Tony Ross (Michael Banghart) for a drink after work. Their awkward blind date banter sounds innocent enough. However, it's soon clear that Tony is a bit too optimistic about their romantic prospects. Theresa reluctantly agrees to a second meeting, where Tony's anger turns frightening when she refuses any further dates.

From there, Theresa's world begins to unravel. Within days, Tony's misogyny escalates from obsession into violence, forcing Theresa and her friends to confront issues of sexism, stalking, and to re-examine their notions of romantic pursuit. The characters' conversations are eerily

familiar; we quickly recognize their discomfort as our own.

"I love the discomfort in her dialogue," Brian says of the author. "Her writing is both infinitely relatable and savagely visceral."

Janet Colson is outstanding as Theresa, taking us along as her life unravels. "I'm not theoretical. I'm real," Theresa says at one point. And the audience watching Janet's performance would agree.

Michael Banghart's Tony is a talented change artist — at first a bit bumbling, but charming, before the innocence falls away to reveal a monster. I wish the script had called for more of him in the second act.

Greg Pratt, as Theresa's boss, and Ben Holzhausen, as her coworker, earnestly explore their own struggles around issues of sexism and romantic pursuit, but ultimately turn out to be the kind of loyal male friends that every woman wants and deserves.

Bob Purosky turns in a scene-stealing performance as Les Kennkat, a movie producer and 72-year-old connoisseur of women's breasts. Kudos to whoever dressed him in that cheesy checkered suit.

It's been a decade since backstage specialist Michele Booher-Purosky has been on stage. It was a pleasure to see her in the role of tough but empathetic Detective Beck.

Sabrina Dahlgren plays Harriet, the well-meaning, but dangerously ditzy assistant. It



Janet Colson & Bob Purosky

would have been easy to play that character over the top, but Sabrina found just the right tone.

The action takes place on a handsome multi-location set, designed, constructed and dressed by the director. Scene transitions — and there were several — seemed effortless. Brian also gets credit for props, and he and the cast handled costuming.

The production team included: Ted Daniel, lighting design; Leon Green and Matt Ottinger, sound design; Patty Wieber, light board operator; Ashley Hampton, sound board operator; and Gloria Vivalda, makeup.

Carol Ferris



Above: Janet Colson (L) and Michele Booher-Purosky



Right: Janet Colson (L) and Michael Banghart

PHOTOS BY WWW.ARINIKO.COM

## Hail the Four Workmen of the Building-ocalypse

Most Wednesdays (and a lot of other times, too) you can find one or more of these constructive souls working to make our building a better place to perform. Leroy Cupp, Tom Ferris, Leon Green and Bob Nees are uniquely talented and dedicated. Bob Nees also leads a Thursday evening crew of regular volunteers: Leon Green, Marlon Torres, Patty Wieber, Stephanie Jerick and Brittany Frost.

They have recently reinforced the stage-left upper level in the auditorium to safely support people and things — like the sound mixer and equipment — and added poured concrete steps to get up there. The opposite side was reinforced years ago for musicians, and is now sometimes used for actors. The new,

backstage-left, enclosed, musicians loft is one of this crew's recent accomplishments to help with sound balance and musician security.

### Projects completed in the last 5 years or so:

- built musicians loft, stairs, and second exit over the vomms with new stairs to the auditorium and down to the lobby
- added hand rails in the center section of the main auditorium
- shored up the front portico
- built two lumber lofts in shop
- replaced rusted back doors with new doors
- carved out new closets in the hallway under the center section
- built the risers in the black box
- built new room in the upstairs furniture loft
- created a new electrical room for the electrical upgrade to three-phase power
- re-ran the plumbing in the men's restroom to avoid freezing pipes in the outside walls.

Manager Mike reports, "They are always willing to help when needed — WITH SMILES!"



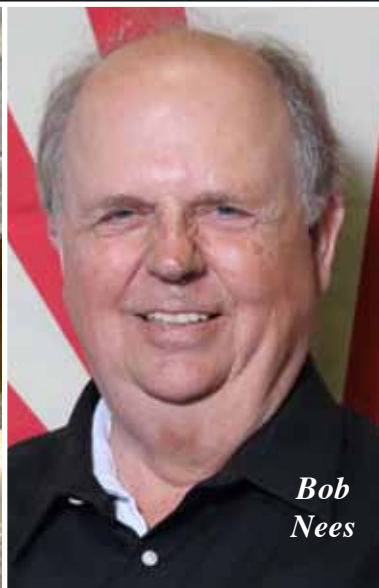
*Tom Ferris*



*Leroy Cupp*



*Leon Green*



*Bob Nees*

## Have you EXPIRED?

**RWT membership runs July - June.**

Revenue from membership funds at least a quarter of our show budgets as well as general operations. Keep Riverwalk thriving for years to come!

**Actor** — \$15-24, Ripples, voting on board members & Members Choice favorite show award.

**Technician** — \$25-49, Ripples, voting, program listing

**Stage Manager** — \$50-99, Ripples, voting, program listing, and one comp ticket

**Director** — \$100-249, Ripples, voting, program listing, two comp tickets

**Producer** — \$250-499, Ripples, voting, program listing, four comp tickets

**Star** — \$500-999, Ripples, voting, program listing, six comps, name on the-atre seat

**Angel** — \$1000+, Ripples, voting, program listing, 12 comp tickets, name on a theatre seat and on the donor board in the lobby

### IT'S EASY TO JOIN OR RENEW:

Go to [riverwalk-theatre.com](http://riverwalk-theatre.com). Click "more" then "get involved" to join online. Or just mail/give a check to Mike at the office, P.O. Box 12249, Lansing 48901. We're 501c3 tax deductible.

## RIVERWALK THEATRE

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## Riverwalk Theatre

P.O. Box 12249 • Lansing MI 48901

Next to Impression 5,  
 228 Museum Drive, south off  
 Michigan Avenue, across from  
 the Lansing Center

## Volunteer? and/or Donate a TUX for Prom?

THE COSTUME SHOP is still looking for donations to **increase our collection of TUXEDOS** that we offer at a discount to local teens during Prom Season. If you can help us out, please contact the shop by email: [Costumes@riverwalktheatre.com](mailto:Costumes@riverwalktheatre.com)

**Free Hat February:** rent a full costume and get a free hat for your outfit.

A great way to beat those Mid-winter blues is to **throw a theme party!** How about a Murder Mystery? Or a Princess Tea? Let the Costume Shop bring a little fun into your life!

**Volunteer at The Costume Shop** - Honor Society students needing Community Service hours — or anyone just wanting to have fun and help — is welcome. You can hang up costume returns, treat and wash soiled clothing, do minor needle-and-thread repairs, organize stock in our inventory, help customers create their dream costume outfits and just be on hand with a bright greeting!

Thanks to our patrons in the community! Without you we could not exist! When you rent from us you are supporting the arts in Lansing!



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



Open Tuesdays & Thursdays 3-6 pm • Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm

1131 May St., Lansing, 48912, just east of Pennsylvania Ave.

Phone: (517) 484-9199

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# UNNECESSARY FARCE

by Paul Slade Smith

FEBRUARY 6-16, 2020



Tickets:  
 Adult: \$15  
 Military/Senior/Student: \$12  
 Bargain Thursdays: \$10/8  
 Thursdays: 7pm  
 Fri/Saturdays: 8pm  
 Sundays: 2pm  
 Directed by Jeff Magnuson  
 For tickets call 517.482.5700  
 or visit  
[www.RiverwalkTheatre.com](http://www.RiverwalkTheatre.com)



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