

*The Phoenix Players*  
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 Phire Phlies

**Newsletter**

Spring 2010

***ALICE IN WONDERLAND***

The cast of the new Phire Phlies show has been set and rehearsals are well under way for the May production of Lewis Carroll's classic book.



We will be doing an adaptation by playwright William Glennon that is so close to the original in intention and feeling that audiences might suspect that

Carroll himself had written it. In this version, a group of performers find themselves unable to perform the play because there is no one willing to play Alice. Magically, however, Alice herself appears, ready for the adventure to begin. With innovative staging designed to appeal especially to children, the wit, nonsense, and fun of Lewis Carroll's delightful book is presented in a way that makes the story enjoyable for even the youngest playgoer. For this play, the Phire Phlies will be working with a *Commedia Dell'arte* type of performance, adding to their acting training. This style includes quick changes of character and scenes, fast wit, a scenario style, rather than a fixed plot, physical humor combined with clever word play, and minimal set and props.

The play will be presented on Saturdays, May 1, 5 & 22 at 1 & 4 p.m. and Sundays, May 2, 6, & 23 at 2 p.m. There will be no shows on Mother's Day weekend. Advance sale tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors & students, and \$ 8 for children ages 13 and under. Tickets at the door, when available, will be \$12 for all ages.

- The cast is (in alphabetical order):
- |                  |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Emily Bobel*     | Cheshire Cat/Mock Turtle**       |
| Emma Branch      | Alice                            |
| Ava Carter       | Dormouse/Cook                    |
| Jared Cassoutt*  | Knave of Hearts                  |
| Valdon Cassoutt  | King of Hearts                   |
| Brendan Connolly | Fish Footman/<br>Seven of Hearts |
| Cassidy Connolly | Mock Turtle                      |
| Bailey Hannah    | Mad Hatter/ Duchess***           |
| Mitchell Hannah  | Frog Footman                     |
| Trevor Hannah    | Two of Hearts                    |
| Katie Higgs      | Duchess                          |
| Alexis Oyster    | March Hare/<br>Queen of Hearts   |
| Brad Oyster      | White Rabbit                     |
| Elise Oyster     | Swimming Mouse                   |
| McKenna Sabon*   | Gryphon                          |
- \* New member  
 \*\* Mock Turtle - May 1, 2 only  
 \*\*\* Duchess - May 22 only

***BLITHE SPIRIT***

Blithe Spirit closed on March 13 after an amazingly successful run. reception from the audiences was uniformly glowing, and as one theatergoer stated in an email:



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*Blithe Spirit is one of my favorite plays. I decided to treat a friend today, it was his birthday, to your last performance. It was a long drive but thank god I did! We completely enjoyed ourselves - the acting was first rate, comedic timing was perfect, better than any play I've seen at more expensive venues. You have a wonderful, talented group of actors (ALL of them!) - thank you for the wonderful Sunday afternoon. We will be back. Congratulations and thanks to all of the cast and crew who worked tirelessly to make this such an incredible production.*

## CASINO NIGHT FUNDRAISER & 50/50 RAFFLE

Whether you support organized gambling or not, it is a fact that one of the few ways left for nonprofits to make money for their organizations is by hosting Casino or poker nights. The state allows four licenses per year for each group and most of the large venues get booked years in advance. We are lucky to have secured three dates for 2010, one at the new Links of Whitmore Lake Poker Palace and two at the very popular Doc's Lounge in Livonia. The bulk of the work is done by the venue, but according to the rules, only the nonprofit that holds the license may handle any money. Thus, we have to have people available each night to sell and cash in the chips and do some basic bookwork to keep track of the funds. We are currently asking for volunteers to sign up for our first two dates: May 13-May 16 at Whitmore Lake and July 3-6. There are two shifts: 5-9:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.-2 a.m. and two people are needed for each shift. Because we do not have much choice with regard to dates, we take what we can get (there are so many nonprofits earning money this way that the large venues have little room for "newcomers."). Thus our "Links" nights are during the run of *Alice in Wonderland* and the "Doc's" nights during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. As Doc's is known as one of the most lucrative venues for nonprofits, we were only able to get the July booking because they opened up a second room. Within a few days of announcing it, however, the year was again fully booked. Thanks to Jim Branch's fast work, we got both the July dates and a later one in December there.

The sign-up sheet for the shifts is online at: <http://spreadsheets.google.com/cc?key=0AqSSiEzsiuoXdEFjUF9VT1dTalVfRTlOeDRqXzIMSFE&hl=en>. You can add your name and save the page. You can sign up for any date, but those that are empty or only have one person are where we need the help most. If you can only make a date where there are two people, sign up anyway.

New this time is a 50/50 raffle. We will be selling tickets in advance and at the Casino nights with the drawing being held at the end of



the evening on May 15. More information and tickets to sell will be available shortly.

Please help out at these most important fundraisers, as other sources of funding are almost nonexistent for small organizations in this economy (see story below).

### FUNDRAISING NEEDS

Like all arts groups (and many other individuals and groups), the Phoenix Players is having some difficult financial times. It took a large amount of our treasury to ready the Hall for our theatre productions, and while we are careful in our spending, and everyone volunteers their time, it still takes significant money to put on a show. For example, we pay royalties of about \$60-\$75 for each performance of a show that we do. For an eight show run, that adds up to about \$400-\$500. Scripts cost about another \$7.50 each (and it is a violation of copyright for us to make copies for cast members, so we have to buy enough for each one). Our advertising is not extensive, but just to get the word out in the local papers costs us about \$550 (with only three total ads). Advertising is directly linked to free publicity to the shows, as the advertising director always makes sure that the news editors do stories about us. Thus, for only two items, we have over a \$1000 bill before we start with the actual production costs for set, costumes, props etc. We are currently giving GOTHs \$2 for every ticket we sell for the leasing of the premises, which barely covers their cost of heating, lights etc.

Our most recent grant request from the state was turned down but considering that large organizations such as the Grand Rapids Symphony went from a grant of \$224,200 last year to \$11,200 this year this was not a surprise. The total grant amount available for all arts and grants organizations this year was \$1.5 million, down from \$7.9 million last year.



Right now we are unusual in that there are no honorariums given to any of the production crew, from Directors to Tech staff. We really need to come up with enough funds to rectify that, as all other community theatres give stipends to at least the Director, Stage Manager, Production Managers, and Heads of Tech and Set. Please help out in any way you can. **Our future depends on it.**