

The Tallgrass Times

Fourth Full Season Roars on to the Tallgrass Stage

Cast Discovers Formula for Brilliant Show

Tallgrass Theatre Company kicks off the 2009-2010 season with Tom Griffin's *Einstein and the Polar Bear*, directed by Jessie Phillips. Actors and designers have been tirelessly working to bring Griffin's sharp-tongued comedy to life on the Tallgrass stage.

Griffin's script has offered welcome challenges to the actors. Josh Visnapuu (Bill Allenson) says about his character, "Bill has some pretty heavy dialogue. Getting the words that you don't use every day into your muscle memory has been one of the bigger challenges."

Gabe Thompson (Bobby Bullins) quells any worry about the audience's reaction to this "high-brow" comedy. "There are quite a few big words and references to 'semi-famous' people in the play, but surprisingly, the comedic effect is not lost on you if you're unfamiliar with the word or reference. The audience is not going to need a dictionary to enjoy the show."

The cast and crew have spent many hours getting to know this script. According to director Jessie Phillips, the group has benefited from continued discussions about the characters and the actors' interpretation of them.

First-time Tallgrass actor Jim Arthur (Andrew Allenson) says, "One of the most interesting aspects of this show is sorting out the underlying motivations for the actions of the characters." All of the actors have been working on developing this understating of their characters. Anne Arthur Frett (Helen Bullins) says of her character, "I have been spending a lot of time thinking about Helen and what makes her tick. I think Tallgrass has a laid-back but serious approach to the way they tackle a piece. This approach makes me feel

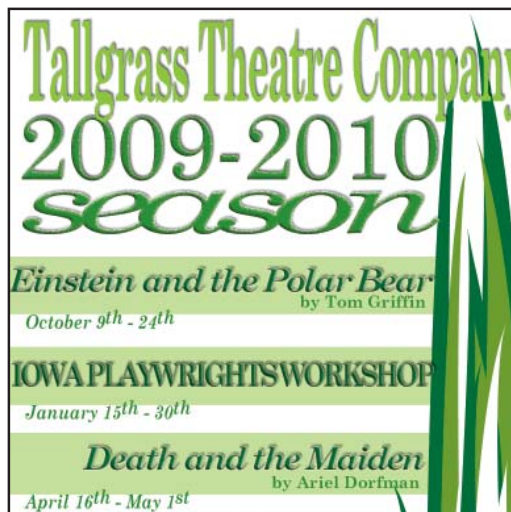
comfortable to try new things, but also makes me want to push myself as much as I can."

The characters drive Griffin's tale. Visnapuu says, "The characters are so very three-dimensional. There is nothing simple about any one of them. The intricacies of their personalities and the relationships they have to each other are really cool to explore." Bob Baskerville (Charlie Milton) agrees: "Folks may be able to relate to the internal struggles each of these characters goes through."

For one cast member, this show has allowed him to go from audience member to actor on the stage. Arthur says, "Through the years, my wife and I have enjoyed watching many shows put on by Tallgrass Theater Company, but this is the first opportunity I've had to be 'behind the scenes.' The friendly, cooperative atmosphere has made the experience a delight."

The production team, led by Technical Director James Stephenson (who is also the set designer), consists of Stage Manager Kelly Mayhew, Tracy Stewart (lighting), Fran Moline (costumes) and Nathan Ohrt (props).

Einstein and the Polar Bear runs October 9-24.



Upgrades Galore Improvements at Rex Mathes Add Convenience for Patrons

Once again, Tallgrass has been investing in infrastructure over the summer months in order to provide a better theatrical experience for our patrons. You'll notice new lighting positions in the house, credit/debit card convenience at the door when purchasing your tickets, and a toll-free phone number through which you can contact us. To top it all off, a new Tallgrass website will be launched this fall to keep you on top of all the happenings.

What you may not notice (but will certainly see the fruits of) will be several new "backstage" improvements, including a lighting power distribution system to increase our cabling efficiency and reduce the clutter above your heads.

We've also completely revamped our shop and installed new tools, including panel and radial arm saws. Our costume storage area has also been reorganized with new shelving and storage.

Of course, none of these things would be possible without your continued support. It is solely through your patronage; through your attendance at our productions and generous donations, that Tallgrass is able to grow and thrive in our community.

—James Stephenson, Technical Director

Tallgrass Seeks Volunteers

All Types of Skills Needed

Tallgrass Theatre Company is always on the lookout for volunteer help. Here are just a few of the ways in which volunteers can help Tallgrass Theatre Company:

- Building and painting sets
- Sewing costumes
- Hanging lights
- Writing grants
- Graphic design
- Web site development
- Hanging posters or sending e-mails to promote upcoming Tallgrass events
- Selling tickets or concessions
- Handing out programs at performances
- Running light or sound controls during performances
- Assisting actors with hair and makeup for performances
- Helping on-stage with set and costume changes during performances

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact info@tallgrasstheatre.org.



Why I Volunteer

Volunteers Tell Why Volunteering with TTC Feels so Good

Rick Wilson

My favorite time as a volunteer is opening night of a show when I go to the theater and see a set that I had a small part in constructing. Volunteering with Tallgrass also provides a lot of great time to enjoy the other people who are helping put the show together. -



Erin Bishop

I enjoy volunteering with TTC in many different aspects from helping with set construction and painting the sets to working the front of house and handing out programs for our shows. The group of people who have volunteered at our Saturday set builds are a great bunch of folks, and we have a ton-o-fun!

Betsy Cartwright

My favorite moment volunteering would be working with the kids during "Play in the Day." It was great feeding off all of their energy. I enjoy volunteering for Tallgrass because I get to meet and hang out with a lot of interesting people with great ideas.



Robin Boelkes

My favorite thing about volunteering with TTC is seeing the end product when the show goes up. It's great to see how everything comes together after all of the hard work and creativity everyone put in during the weeks leading up to a show.

Josh Visnapuu

I enjoy working with Tallgrass because they are not afraid to take risks in the material they present and are genuinely interested in providing a different kind of theatre going experience for an audience that may be looking for something away from the norm.



JoAnne Kuehl

My favorite part of volunteering with Tallgrass is when they have a list of the props they need, and I can help them out by furnishing them with something they have difficulty finding. Also, I like just being around the cast and the other volunteers. I'm being a part of something I enjoy.

Past Productions

2008-2009 Season



Prelude to a Kiss, Fall 2008



Sleeping Dogs, Winter 2008-2009



Crimes of the Heart, Spring 2009

Tallgrass To Present Fourth Annual Playwrights Workshop

Winning Script Announced

Tallgrass Theatre Company is pleased to announce the winning script for the fourth annual Iowa Playwrights Workshop—*Flutter the Dovecotes* by Christine Meinecke.

You are invited to attend staged readings of *Flutter the Dovecotes*, which will be held November 5 and 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Rex Mathes auditorium. At the readings, local writers, actors and community members will have a chance to provide feedback directly to Meinecke and engage in a question and answer session. This process will allow Meinecke to step out of the writer mode and view the play from an audience standpoint.

Following the staged readings, Meinecke will have the opportunity to make revisions to the script based on the feedback. With a completed script, Tallgrass will hold auditions November 16 and 17, and mount a full production of *Flutter the Dovecotes*, directed by Maranda Miller. Performances will be January 15–30. Don't miss this unique opportunity to see an original production of a script by a local writer!



Advertise with Tallgrass

Prime Ad Space Available in Show Programs

Over 1,000 patrons attended Tallgrass productions and events last year, and you have the opportunity to reach this unique audience by advertising in our programs. If you are interested in purchasing an ad or have any questions, please feel free to contact Jessie Phillips at Jessie@tallgrasstheatre.org or at (866) 745-4535.

Single Show Rates (six performances)

1/8 page	1.75" x 3.1"	\$25
1/4 page	3.55" x 3.1"	\$35
1/2 page	3.55" x 6.3"	\$50

(less than \$9 per performance)



Sounds of Freedom Parade

Tallgrass Board of Directors Meet Neighbors

On July 3, members of the Tallgrass Board of Directors and some loyal TTC friends braved a downpour of rain to participate in West Des Moines' annual Fourth of July parade. This year's theme, "Sounds of Freedom," brought out the group's patriotic spirit. Board member Sarah Lepert says, "The Fourth of July parade was a blast—even with the rain. It was great to mingle with the community and get the

word out that there is high-quality, affordable theater right in the Valley Junction area."

Tallgrass would like to extend a special thank you to Tracy Stewart for lending us his truck and driving talents and to Nathan Ohrt for being the best (and soggiest) Uncle Sam in the parade.



**Tallgrass Theatre Company
Board of Directors**

Jeff Phillips, President
 Nick Wilson, Vice President
 Marietta Wilson, Secretary
 Robin Boelkes, Treasurer
 Erin Bishop
 Sarah Lepert
 Sarah Noll Wilson
 Jessie Phillips, Artistic Director
 James Stephenson, Technical Director

Patron Support Integral To Tallgrass' Success

Thank you to all of the patrons of Tallgrass Theatre Company for a wonderful 2008 - 2009 season! We certainly could not provide the theatre experience we do without the support of our patrons and volunteers.

We continue to grow our roots deep in the community and in our performance space at Rex Mathes Auditorium. We are thankful that you have supported the growth of our theatre company in the past and I would like to encourage

you to continue your support for the 2009 - 2010 season.

We begin the season off with *Einstein and the Polar Bear* by Tom Griffin. This show opens Friday, October 9th. We look forward to seeing you!

—Jeff Phillips, Board President

Tallgrass Theatre Company Donors

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ING on behalf of Zach Leiser, Marc Schmidt & James Stephenson
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P.O. Box 219
Dallas Center, IA 50063

Tallgrass Theatre Company Donation Form

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____ to Tallgrass Theatre Company.

Please complete this form and return with check to:

Tallgrass Theatre Company
P.O. Box 302
Dallas Center, IA 50063

Credit card donations can be made at www.tallgrasstheatre.org/donate.

Name

Address

E-mail

I would like to receive the following e-mails from Tallgrass Theatre:

Show Notices Newsletters Volunteer Opportunities Audition Notices

Thank you for your support!

Donation Levels

Patron – \$250 or more
Enthusiast – \$100 to \$249
Sponsor – \$50 to \$99
Friend – \$20 to \$49