

News from the Yorktown Theatre Arts Department

BACKSTAGE**Letter from TAP Co-Presidents**

Welcome to Yorktown High School's theatre arts department! 2010–2011 promises to be another year of exciting opportunities for our students, who return to a very different school building than many of them left in June. Yet, even as many new classrooms and school offices are "open for business," our department has some more time to wait before all the new performance and rehearsal spaces are available.

The Yorktown Theatre Arts Parents organization (TAP) helps the department's lead teacher, Carol Cadby, and her associates Dawn Hunter, Patrick Mitchell, and Elaine Brown, offer our children a superlative educational experience. TAP provide practical help, such as transporting students, props, and costumes to competitions. Sometimes we help find or create costumes, props or scenery; often, we organize dress rehearsal meals and performance concessions. TAP fundraising makes it possible for Ms. Cadby to invite guest artists to share their expertise with Yorktown students. Our organization also raises funds to secure performance rights and to purchase equipment not covered by the school budget.

Whether you're ready to organize an event or only have a couple of hours to spare, we need you. Please consider becoming involved with TAP. We promise it will be rewarding—and fun!

--Patty Kime and Susan Nestleroth

Fall Theatre III & IV Show

For the 2010 VTA Secondary School Theatre Festival, theatre arts III & IV classes will perform "Bottom's Dream," an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. The play focuses on a mortal's encounter with magical fairies and the chaos caused by the two worlds colliding.

Performances: Friday, October 22, at 7 pm in the Yorktown Auditorium; Friday, October 29, at 5:50 pm in Theater A at the VTA Conference.

Call for Volunteers

Yorktown's award-winning theatre arts program doesn't happen in a vacuum. Many parents contribute their time and talent to help make productions possible. Please become part of this group!

Our most pressing needs are for an assistant newsletter editor and a coordinator for the Virginia Theatre Association (VTA) Conference. If you enjoy editing, design, or keeping up with YHS theatre news, consider helping newsletter editor Ruth Barzel put out the newsletter roughly four times a year. If you'd like a one-time commitment and are organized, the VTA conference coordinator may be the job for you.

Other urgent needs include a fundraising chairperson, ticket sales coordinator, meals coordinator, concession stand coordinator, and publicity chair.

Throughout the year, we'll need parents to work concessions; carpool; write grants; work on the annual awards dinner; serve as house managers, production assistants, and videographers; sew costumes; and more. If you have a talent, let us know! Please express your interest to Patty Kime, Susan Nestleroth, or Marian Thompson. Thanks, and we look forward to working with you!

Director's Notes

TAP (Theatre Arts Parents) Potluck,
Yorktown Cafeteria—September 15, 6:00 p.m.

Signature Theatre Exchange,
Signature Theatre—September 20, 9–4 p.m.

Auditions, 28th Street Improv,
Black Box—Date TBD.

Back-to-School Night,
Black Box—September 20, 7–9 p.m.

Potomac Overlook, Halloween Haunted Walk,
Potomac Overlook—October 30, 5–10 p.m.

Bottom's Dream Performance, *Yorktown Auditorium*—October 22, 9–4 p.m.

Virginia Theatre Association (VTA), Reston Hyatt—October 29–31.

VTA Performance—*Theater A, Reston Hyatt*—October 29, 5:50 p.m.

Interview with Eileen Sugameli

Backstage interviewed Yorktown graduate Eileen Sugameli about her college application experience. Eileen is a freshman at NYU-Tisch School of the Arts in the Stella Adler studio of acting.

Backstage: Tell me about the college application process. Where did you apply?

ES: I applied to Boston Conservatory, Juilliard, NYU, VCU, Elon (no audition), Carnegie Mellon, University of the Arts, Marymount Manhattan, and Pace. I figured why not apply to the big theatre schools, even when the competition is so high. It never hurts, and I learned a lot just from auditioning over and over.

Backstage: If others helped you with your applications, how did they help?

ES: My parents read over my applications looking for typos and made sure that I was saying exactly what I wanted to. Ms. Cadby and Ms. Habershtick helped me find monologues, but mostly watched me perform them and gave me notes. I also took an auditioning class at Signature.

Backstage: What was the most challenging aspect of the application process?

ES: The most challenging part by far was the auditions. The applications are difficult, but you can redo them as many times as you want. In the audition, you have just a few minutes to convince the school to accept you.

Backstage: You were very involved in theatre during your senior year. How did you handle the application process while also managing your other responsibilities?

ES: Doing *Nora's Lost* was one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. But it was exhausting. For a good part of the year, every weekend I would be traveling, either to a competition or to an audition. But such is the lifestyle of an actor. It forced me to think about whether I wanted to do that my entire life. Adding everyday pressures of school was stressful, and I had a very sleep-deprived year. But it was all worth it.

Backstage: How did you decide you wanted to major in theatre?



Photo courtesy of Jim Coates

ES: I have never wanted to do anything but theatre. I have loved performing my entire life. I did think about doing musical theatre, but I did one musical theatre audition and realized I do not have enough singing or dancing training. Also, although I do enjoy singing and dancing, my real passion is acting.

Backstage: Talk a bit about your acting experience. How old were you when you knew this was something you were really serious about?

ES: I always loved having an audience. As soon as I could, I began doing summer camps and taking any opportunity I could to perform. When I was old enough, I started auditioning for shows at Encore Stage and have been performing there ever since. I have also been in a few community theatre shows. It's something I've always known that I wanted to do, but as I got older it became less superficial, less about the applause, and more about a lifestyle that I want to pursue. *Nora's Lost* really changed the way that I want to do theatre. Before, I was far more interested in flashy musicals, but seeing the impact of that show made me want to focus more on shows that can change people. Stella Adler said "the theatre was created to tell people the truth about life and the social situation." By doing this, what I do onstage can reach out and actually change someone's life.

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Interview with Eileen (cont'd)

Backstage: How many auditions did you do? Was it hard getting to all the auditions? How did you manage that?

ES: I auditioned for eight schools, plus VTA (Virginia Theatre Alliance) and SETC (Southeastern Theatre Conference). It was difficult getting to all the auditions, especially when doing *Nora's Lost*. I planned my traveling early in the year. One thing that I did not do but would be very helpful for others is the Unified Auditions (www.unifiedauditions.com). The other very important thing to keep in mind is plan and sign up as early as possible.

Backstage: What was auditioning like? What was the best and worst thing about it?

ES: My favorite part of auditioning was when the auditors would give you feedback. It doesn't happen often, but sometimes they will ask you to try again a different way, or they will work the monologue with you. This is great, because you can always do better, and sometimes they ask you to try something that works really well that you can use the next time you do it. The worst part of auditioning is the amount of pressure placed on just a few minutes. Those were probably the most stressful auditions I will ever have to do. Usually, there is always another audition for another show just around the corner. But these auditions decide the next 4 years of your life.

Backstage: Was the auditioning you did at SETC and VTA helpful?

ES: My VTA audition was helpful because it was my first audition, so it was good practice. I actually learned that one of my monologues did not work at all. SETC was incredibly helpful because at that point I had not gotten into any theatre program. I got a good number of callbacks, including a few schools that said if I got into the school, I would automatically get into the program. These auditions are extremely helpful for providing more options.

Backstage: Are you happy with where you're going to college?

ES: I'm very happy. NYU was my best audition experience.

Backstage: How do you feel about going to college? What are you looking forward to, and what will you miss?

ES: I'm really excited for all the new experiences and the

new people. I think it will be really fun to live in a dorm! But at the same time, I've never moved in my life, so I think I will miss the familiarity of my house and my street. I will certainly miss the Yorktown theatre environment, I've never felt the same ensemble spirit anywhere else. But I'm excited to enter into a new theatre experience.

Backstage: What advice would you give to seniors currently involved in the application process (especially if they are interested in majoring in theatre)? How should they prepare for auditions?

ES: Make sure to put effort into your applications as well as your auditions! And even if you're not doing theatre, do them early! Choose monologues early so that you have plenty of time to practice your monologue. Nerves can really mess you up, but if you feel well-prepared and are confident, it makes the entire audition process better. Also, make sure to memorize the monologue way in advance and not the night before the audition! No matter how good you think you are at memorizing, it always goes badly.

Backstage: Do you ever worry about going into such a competitive field? Do you have a back-up plan for how you will support yourself after college, in case you can't earn a living as an actor right away?

ES: I always joke that I will be living in a cardboard box that I will decorate with crayons, but I am very worried. I've gone through quite a few back-up plans in my head, but nothing seems to stick. Maybe I'll find something in college.

Backstage: What do you imagine yourself doing 10 years from now?

ES: I would love to say I see myself on Broadway 10 years from now, but I'm not that confident. I think it would be awesome to play a princess at Disney World! But who knows? I'm going to see where the next 4 years take me and go from there.

Find Information About Studying Performing Arts in College

www.apsva.us/156420810153422313/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=65658

Meet Yorktown’s Theatre Teachers!

Elaine Brown

Elaine Brown is the long-term sub for Dawn Hunter. She recently completed her Masters of Education degree at George Washington University with a concentration in English, although her first love has always been theatre. Elaine has worked in many capacities in regional and community theatre since high school, most notably as a stage manager. She is excited to be working at Yorktown and hopes to become a more permanent member of the Arlington theatre community!

Carol Cadby



Carol Cadby (B.A., Grinnell College; M.A.I.S., George Mason University with a focus on self-development through arts education; a student of Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof) has been teaching acting and theatre for more than 25 years. In addition to teaching at Yorktown since 1995, she teaches acting at George Mason University and has taught acting at New World School of the Arts Conservatory in Miami, FL. She also lectures, coaches, directs and teaches across the country through her company, Cadby Production, LLC. Carol was a professional stage and film actor for 10 years. and is trained in Viewpoints, Laban Movement, and Meisner Acting Techniques. She is also an active board member of Educational Theatre Company and is the theatre arts lead teacher and a mentor teacher for Arlington Public Schools. Carol has received numerous directing and teaching awards, including a Wolfrap Scholarship for Performing Arts Teachers (2008-09) among many others.

Dawn Hunter

Dawn Hunter has a BFA in theatre studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She taught in Texas public schools before moving out east and ran a multi-million dollar arts center at a private school in Maryland before joining Yorktown's theatre arts department. Last year was her first with Yorktown as the technical director for *James and the Giant Peach*, and theatre I/technical theatre teacher. She's looking forward to a great year at Yorktown when she returns from maternity leave in October!

Patrick Mitchell



While working towards becoming a teacher, Patrick was expanding his skills by working behind the scenes at the Synetic Theater and the Classika Childrens Theatre in 2008 as a production manager. While with Synetic he had the privilege of working on *Carmen* at the Kennedy Center. He then traveled to Ireland with the Keegan Theatre, performing as Aide Warren in and working as the master carpenter for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. He has since been focused on working primarily in education and is beyond thrilled to be working with the great staff at Yorktown High School.

Backstage is a quarterly publication of Yorktown’s Theatre Arts Parents (TAP).
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