



KIRK PLAYERS SPOTLIGHT

Summer 2020

Meet Our New Members!



Lulu Arellanos

Lulu’s story with Kirk Players began when her family attended *Seussical* and learned about KP’s summer workshop for children. Her daughter Hannah had shown an interest in theatre and Lulu registered both of her children. The following year they attended *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and her son Diego announced that he wanted to be on stage. A month later he auditioned for *I Remember Mamma*, and made his debut as little Arne. Lulu volunteered to help backstage, giving her an opportunity to be with her children.

The rest is history; Diego has been in four plays and Hannah has helped with tech. Lulu has met wonderful people and considers KP an extension of her family.

Lulu works as a Special Ed Instructional Aid at Mundelein HS and is a school board member for D118. She is a black belt second degree in TKDO and so is her family. In her free time, she enjoys bike riding, crafting, and reading.



Doris Nagel

Doris’ interest in theatre began in high school and continued through college and after, until she put it aside temporarily for her career and family. She had roles as Ernestine Gilbreth in *Cheaper by the Dozen*, Sharon in *Finian’s Rainbow*, and bit parts and chorus in *Mame*, *Oliver*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Barnum*. She also has done hair and makeup, set building, and pit band for several productions. With her daughter off to college, she helped Kirk Players with props in recent shows.

Doris runs her own consulting and legal practice. Her daughter Julia is a senior at U of I in Champaign, majoring in Statistics. Her two furry little dogs are named Mooch and Phineas. She plays cello with the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra, makes handmade cards, and loves anything to do with the arts.



Vicki Herrick

Vicki has been passionate about theatre ever since sixth grade when she played Fern in *Charlotte’s Web*. During her teaching career, she has directed high school, middle school and elementary school students in a variety of plays. She loves co-teaching the youngest actors each summer at the children’s workshop

Her acting debut with the Kirk Players was as Philippa in the Zoom production of *A Murder Is Announced*. She enjoys writing and adapting skits for many different situations. Her favorite pastime is attending various performances, especially those at the Kennedy Center, where her daughter works as Accessibility Coordinator.



Natalie La Voie

Natalie never fathomed that an extemporaneous speech junior year in high school (with Jon Lynn Jr. no less!!) would have been the spark to her eternal passion of theatre flame! Some memorable roles include Anna Maurant in *Street Scenes*, Sally in *Drinking Habits*, Detective Tupolski in *The Pillowman*, Ynez in *Oscar & Felix*, Emily Brent in *And Then There Were None*, and Lois in *Wonder of the World*.

She’s also been involved in improv as a member of the Anti-Depressants and participated in murder mysteries and live radio shows with Brown-Ullstrup Performing Arts Foundation.

Other passions include the endless pursuits of knowledge and adventures, along with an unremitting love of animals (especially her furry baby, Punky)!

It was a dream to be a part of KP, going back to her first summer theatre workshop at the end of her senior year with John Lynn Sr. and coming full circle working with Jon Lynn Jr. again as Stage Manager for *Red Herring*.



2020 Highlights and Future Plans

Wow! It certainly seems like a long time since mid-March when we had to make the tough decision to cancel the remainder of the rehearsals and live performances of *The Jungle Book*. It has been a very challenging time and we all miss being able to meet in person and work on productions.

There have been some creative highlights during this time, including *The Jungle Book* virtual project for cast members and families. The production team of Jon M., Jenny T., Jeanna, Jessica R. Jeff H. and Susie truly went the extra mile to create a wonderful experience. We thank all cast and crew, parents, and all those who contributed to this wonderful effort.

Our Artistic Development Committee designed and led three weeks of “Brilliance Behind the Scenes” overview training sessions organized by Peter Grassl. Experts in different areas of theatre shared their approach to directing, stage managing, costume design, sound, etc. All our presenters did a great job and we look forward to more intensive trainings as soon as we have access to facilities. Here is a link to the [YouTube video](#) for all sessions.

In June, a group of 23 members participated in our Zoom read-through of *A Murder Is Announced*. It was a delight to see all our talented players enjoy acting on Zoom in this Agatha Christie mystery romp.

Our plan for Fall 2020 is to have Zoom events in October and December that feature short radio plays, as well as classic one-act plays and stories. Auditions for the October shows will be August 17 and 19, with callbacks on August 20 by appointment. Details will be announced very soon! **We are also looking for a Tech Director to manage the Zoom functions.**

We are in touch with St. Andrew and MHS regarding use of the facilities and have participated in webinars that discuss how to re-open safely when that time arrives. To that end we will be adding safety as one of the responsibilities of the Property/Facilities Committee this upcoming season.

Thank you to all our members for their contributions and we look forward to getting back onstage soon!

Peace! - Gretchen

Jungle Book “Zooms” Forward

In late May, Kirk Players decided to render a virtual version of scenes from the children’s play *Jungle Book*, which had been cancelled in March. Led by Jessica Rattanasena and the direction team (Jon Matousek, Jenny Tomlin, Jeanna Daebellienn, and Jeff Harding), we rounded up the cast and crew and began Zoom virtual rehearsals to perform a condensed version of the classic for our families. Throughout weekends in June and July, the band of 40 children, teen, and adult actors and the directing team persevered from their living rooms, kitchens, and family rooms to recreate scenes from the children’s show.

“This was an inspiration of mine that led to a lot of encouragement and support from the Kirk Players,” said Jessica. “We were amazed with the energy and dedication of the children to put aside their weekends and see the project through! We look forward to providing the children and adults the closure they so richly earned!”

“It’s really been a learning adventure for all of us,” chimed in Director Jon Matousek, “we didn’t know exactly what to expect but Jessica’s excellent organization and guidance along with exciting new Zoom techniques from Jeff and Martin have got us pumped for the KP rendering of *The Jungle Book*!”





Annual Banquet

As you know, we will not be holding our traditional face-to-face banquet at Dover Straights this year. Instead, we will be having a virtual celebration of our members and organization on Saturday, September 12. Details will be shared at our August 14 membership meeting. We look forward to seeing you all and sharing a virtual beverage to celebrate our perseverance in the midst of 2020s many challenges

Votes for Women Celebration

On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified, guaranteeing all women the right to vote.

To celebrate the 100-year anniversary of this monumental event, we will release the video of "Votes for Women" with a special social media launch that will begin in early August.

Over 200 people had the opportunity to see this wonderful event and now everyone will have the opportunity! How often do you get to see Jon Matousek portray Teddy Roosevelt or see the comic stylings of Betty Slack as Alice Duer Miller?

Please view the [videos on YouTube](#) and share our posts and links with your family and friends. It is a very entertaining way to celebrate the vote and the women who made it all possible.

Kirk Players' Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Kirk Players is committed to racial equality, equity, and inclusivity in all aspects of our organization and our work with the community. We see inclusivity as crucial to the success of both arts and culture, and communities-at-large. Everyone should feel that they have a safe space within our community.

We offer a theatre experience where everyone can feel that their art is valued, supported, and uplifted.

Since 1966, The Kirk Players has been working to entertain theatregoers in Lake County and give back to our community. We give away our profits every year by providing financial support to schools for their arts programs, support for local events, and scholarships to local high school seniors.

The Kirk Players Board of Directors and membership are working on plans for the upcoming season, prioritizing the safety and health of our patrons and performers.

We hope to see you at the theatre very soon!
Kirk Players is a 501c3 charitable organization.

September Annual Meeting

Our September Annual Meeting will immediately follow the monthly meeting on September 11, 2020. Due to the virtual nature of our meeting, there will be a few adjustments.

Board Elections: The slate for the board will be announced at the August 14 membership meeting. Nominations will close at the August 14 meeting. Voting by email will begin on August 15 and close on September 10. The new board will be announced at the September meeting.

Committees: We will provide an overview of the committees at the September Annual Meeting. There will be an online signup sheet launched on September 12. Members are encouraged to sign up for one or more committees that you are interested in. Sign up will close on September 18 and the new committees will be announced on September 25.

Annual Reports: Annual reports will be e-mailed out in advance of the Annual Meeting. Please review the reports in advance. There will be a brief recap at the meeting with opportunity for members to add commentary and ask questions.

Strategic Planning Committee

Every so often, an organization needs to reassess its vision, mission, goals, and guiding principles. With all that has transpired in recent months, it is time to reimagine the future of community theatre and of our 55-year-old organization. The board has identified two board members to facilitate a series of strategic planning sessions that will include of diverse group of members who will serve as a core planning team. Details will be shared at our August 14 membership meeting.

Don't Forget to Thank Our Sponsors!

Before the pandemic, we encouraged Kirk members and their families to thank our sponsors whenever they bought goods or services from them. Due to the pandemic, all businesses are struggling. To that end, the Board had decided to extend the sponsors ads by an extra year FREE of charge. They are welcome to donate if they wish; however, we will keep their ads in our programs and other vehicles for an extra year for free.



Welcome Amy Sharer – Administrative Director



We welcome Amy Sharer to the Kirk Players Board as our Administrative Director for one year. Amy became involved with KP in October 2014 as Stage Manager for *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Her first on-stage appearance was the next year as the Train in *Velveteen Rabbit* and then Sigrid in *I Remember Mama*. Her favorite on-stage experiences are Mrs. McCarthy in *Red Herring*, (who can forget, "a pair of handcuffs and a ripe tomato") and being part of the incredible ensemble of *Sounds and Sweet Aires*.

Her most memorable backstage experiences include stage managing *Postmortem* and creating the "play around the play" while Assistant Directing *Fairy Tales and Fables*. She has also enjoyed all the special productions including *Unauthorized History of the Kirk Players* and *Votes for Women*.

Amy is also involved in improv with the Picard Players and performed in Shakespeare Shorts last summer for the Mundelein Arts Commission.

Welcome Amy!

Farewell - Fred!

The Kirk Players are truly sad to say good-bye to our fabulous longtime member and friend Fred Vipond. Fred has made a huge impact on our organization, from his wonderful onstage performances, amazing costume design, set design and décor, writing and playing catchy jingles and being a fantastic Board and committee member. We wish him the best as he moves back to Michigan to care for his mother and work as Music Director at a Church in Grand Rapids.

Fred first heard about Kirk Players from Sue Matousek who mentioned that her husband Jon was in *Blithe Spirit* at the Cuneo. He says that within a few minutes of the opening curtain he knew that he wanted to be a member.

Fred says that his favorite role(s) were playing Sherlock Holmes, getting the opportunity to pretend to be Basil Rathbone. He also enjoyed running around in a dress and high heels with Dominic Basso in *Leading Ladies*.



When asked to share thoughts on the different theatre assignments, Fred advises actors to remember that everything you do on stage is for the benefit of the audience, not your pleasure; say your lines loudly and clearly. And to set designers, decorators, and costumers: your work should transport the audience into the times and design vocabulary of the era of the play: do your research; don't fear strong color: stage lights wash out pastels and subtle effects; be fearless and TRY. If it fails, paint over it, cover it with a picture, or replace the costume.

As far as what lies ahead, Fred shares that his Mom's care is paramount at this point and participation in theatre will be on pause. But, when the time comes, Grand Rapids Civic Theatre is one of the best community theatre organizations in the country.

We are so grateful to Fred for sharing his talent with us these many years and we will miss him greatly. Fred shared these final thoughts for his fellow players:

"Embrace the adventure of theatre. Audition for every play, even if you don't think you'll be cast: it stretches your acting and auditioning skills. Take on a new tech challenge: it exercises your imagination and improves your problem-solving skills. Observe others and learn how to stage manage and direct, you'll appreciate every aspect of a production even more. And help put out posters."



Remembering Fred and Bobbie O'Donnell

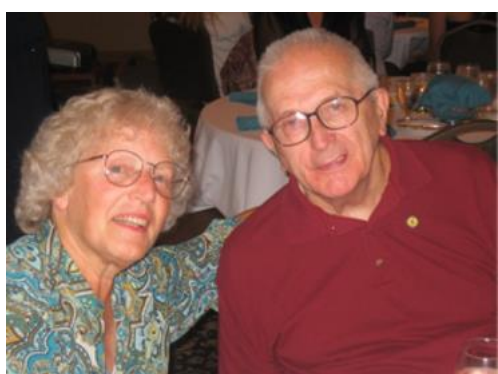
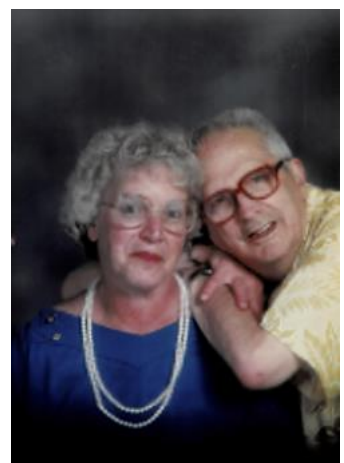
By Jon Leslie Lynn

The Kirk Player family is mourning the loss of Fred and Bobbie O'Donnell, who passed away within a few months of each other this winter into spring. They were both original members of the Players from 1966. Fred was famous for his sense of humor and the bright, blue or gold Japanese kimono he usually wore to Banquet. His wonderful wife Bobbie was our first Musical Director, and both were very busy in our Summer Workshop. Fred was my first KP director when I was only 12 and 4 years later, we won an O'D Award for Best Scene with me directing him!

Fred distinguished himself with 22 years in the Navy as an Electrical Engineer and Communications expert, which is why he was so good as a Sound and Special Effects leader on 30 productions! The Navy sent Fred and family to California in 1968, and my father named all the Summer Workshop Awards in their honor. The O'D Award was named after Fred for his remarkable contributions to the Summer Workshop as both actor and director over the years and for Bobbie who had always helped with the Children's Workshop. What a blessing for all of us when, in 1972, the family moved back and they both rejoined the Players!

As involved as they were with the Players and their choral group, between 1958 and 1968, they produced and nurtured 5 great kids! Fred would go on to be an active Player for 29 years and rack up 55 assignments. Besides his humor, Fred could be one of the most focused, most intense people to work with. He played the District Attorney in our very first production ever, *THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 16TH*. He would repeat the role when we did it in 1979. No one could have been as meticulous and as driven as Fred in that character. His Rev. Hale in our production of *THE CRUCIBLE* was remarkable. So honest, so passionate – but that's who Fred was. Another stand-out role was his Dr. Montague in *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE*. If we needed someone to bring out the incredibly intellectual, scientific, sharp mind of the character, Fred was all over it! On the flip side of the coin, when he played Felix in *THE ODD COUPLE*, his ridiculous, meticulous side had the audience laughing until it hurt. But it was his precious creation of dreamer Elwood P. Dowd in the classic comedy *HARVEY* that could not have done better at capturing more of Fred's warmth, kindness, friendliness, and gentle humor.

Later in his career, Fred spent most of his time as Stage Manager or on Sound. Both Fred and Bobbie shared great strength, spirit, and determination. After Fred's health took a few terrible turns, it did not deter their determination to stay connected to the Players. For years, as difficult as it was, Bobbie would see that Fred could make it to our plays and come down afterward to talk to his old friends, often offering praise and insights and ideas. His mind was still as sharp as a tack, despite his other difficulties. We will miss the wonderful spirits of Fred and Bobbie O'Donnell. They made all our lives a better place to be. Their kindness, love, and generosity touched so many. May they rest in peace.





Congratulations to our 2020 Scholarship Winner Colby Willis



The very deserving winner of this year's John W. Lynn Scholarship is Colby Willis. Colby was involved in several productions at Mundelein High School, exhibiting his talents in drama, comedy, and music. He also served as assistant director and worked several technical crews. His commitment to the productions was always evident. Jonathan Meier reports that he was always the first student to arrive at rehearsal and the last to leave.

Colby managed all these many activities while being in the top 30 percent of his class academically and volunteering with The Penguin Project, a community theatre group that provides children who have physical or mental disabilities the chance to perform onstage in a musical. Colby has been involved in the program since the age of twelve.

Congratulations to Colby. We wish him the best as he moves on to college!

Checking in with a Couple of Our Past Scholarship Winners to See What They are up to!

2015 Scholarship Winner Natalie Lawrence

Last year Natalie graduated from The Theatre School at DePaul University with a degree in Theatre Management. During undergrad, she expanded her marketing and publicity skills, interning at theatres around the Chicagoland area including Northlight, Victory Gardens, and Goodman Theatre.

What initially drew her to working in theatre was making a meaningful impact on communities. She enjoys surrounding herself with dedicated people who champion an organization's mission.

After graduation, she continued working with mission-driven organizations when she accepted a job at a K-12 student travel company. Lately, she has been working at a branding studio that partners with purpose-driven businesses. Her background in the arts has helped her think more creatively, strategically, and collaboratively in everything she does.



2016 Scholarship Winner Thomas Ferro



Thomas is now a rising senior at Millikin University where he is currently pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre, as well as a minor in Dance. Since receiving the John W. Lynn Performing Arts Scholarship from the Kirk Players, Thomas has been performing both in and out of college! His most recent credits include *The Joint is Jumpin'/'80s Rock* (Six Flags St. Louis), *Sweeney Todd* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival), and Ted in a staged reading of *Propaganda: The Musical!* (Millikin University). This summer, Thomas is once again performing in *The Joint is Jumpin'* and *80s Rock* at Six Flags St. Louis.

He will also be seen this September in *Some Enchanted Evening* at Millikin University. Thomas is incredibly thankful to the Kirk Players for helping instill a love and passion for theatre in him, and he cannot wait to finish his degree and enter the industry (as soon as it becomes safe to do so).



What's News with You?

Bev Karns - We had a small graduation party for our granddaughter Lorelai who graduated 8th grade! This made her so happy, since all activities had been cancelled. We are so proud our granddaughter Carly graduated from nursing school in May, and just received her certification!

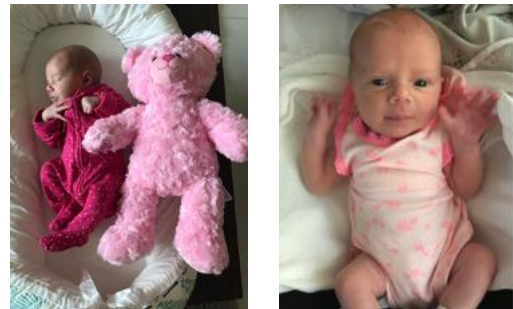


Franny Pollack - This August is my grandson's August's 1-year birthday. We are celebrating at my daughter's house! I love him so much and love being a grandma .

Happy 45th Anniversary to my husband Michael. Love, Franny
Happy 36th Birthday to Scott Eliot Pollack. Love, Mom and Dad - July 26

Randy Rice – On June 29, Randy Rice welcomed his fifth grandchild into the world! She decided to come seven weeks early, weighing in at 4 lbs., 12 oz. but she and mom are home and doing well now! They are still in Qatar until the travel bans have been lifted a bit.

Welcome Ella Elizabeth Rice, daughter to Andrew and Michelle Rice!



Betty Slack - Baby shower for my niece and her husband--first child for them, first grandchild for my brother and sister-in-law, my first time bring a great aunt (I've always been pretty good, but now I'll be great!).

Participated in a virtual 5K fundraiser for Northern Illinois Food Bank.

With some of my volunteer buddies at Northern Illinois Food Bank, marched in Mundelein Peaceful Protest for peace and justice.



How Have You Kept Theatre Alive These Past Months?

Betty Slack - Trying to interest my cats in some theatre activities, e.g. dressing up as Puss in Boots, singing a tune from *Cats*, reciting lines from *The Cat in the Hat*, but they are decidedly uninterested and uncooperative. Besides their inner monologue consists of only two sentences: "Feed me now!" and "Don't bother me, I'm sleeping."

Bev Karns - This April and June I did two short *Taming of the Shrew* scenes as videos, as part of the "Sofa Shakespeare" from MAC. It was comical playing different male parts. I also participated in the reading of *A Murder Is Announced*, which was so much fun! I have been reading a variety of plays. I hope we can do another play reading / dramatization through Zoom with Kirk Players soon.

Add "...due to the pandemic" to Your Favorite Theatre or Movie Quotes

Barb - "A plague on both your houses They have made worms' meat of me...due to the pandemic" (*Romeo & Juliet*)

Vicki - "Love means never having to say you're sorry...due to the pandemic" (*Love Story*)

Randy M - "Mother, uh, what is the phrase? 'She isn't quite herself today...due to the pandemic.'" (*Psycho*)

Randy M - "No, I just think I'm gonna barf...due to the pandemic." (*Fargo*)

Barb - "You can't handle the truth...due to the pandemic." (*A Few Good Men*)

Randy M - "I am big. It's the pictures that got small...due to the pandemic. (*Sunset Boulevard*)

Barb - "We're on a mission from God...due to the pandemic." (*Blues Brothers*)

Barb - "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore...due to the pandemic." (*Network*)

Jack Nicholson - "Heeere's Johnny...due to the pandemic." (*The Shining*)

Betty – "I am a wild turkey...due to the pandemic." (*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*)

And if you don't believe me, I have the photo to prove it!





Membership Anniversaries (May – Sept)

50+ Years	Building Momentum
Jon Leslie Lynn – 9/1/68 (52 years)	Franny Pollack – 8/10/12 (8 years)
20+ Years	Nat Brautigam – 5/6/16 (4 years)
Brenda Sparks – 9/2/93 (27 years)	Jeanna Daebelliehn – 9/8/17 (3 years)
Patrick Blake – 9/2/93 (27 years)	Ron Otrembiak – 9/8/17 (3 years)
Chuck Fitz-Hugh – 9/3/98 (22 years)	Randy Margison – 9/14/18 (2 years)
Fran Hansen – 9/7/00 (20 years)	Betty Slack – 9/14/18 (2 years)
10+ Years	Henry Hogan – 9/14/18 (2 years)
Mandy Stebbins – 5/2/03 (17 years)	Barb Selvaggio – 6/12/19 (1 year)
Marilee C.C. Rusiniak - 6/2/10 (10 years)	Jessica Rattanasena – 6/14/19 (1 year)
	Tracey Horn – 6/12/19 (1 year)



...and Belated Birthdays!

Randy Rice – May 15
 Chuck Fitz-Hugh – May 16
 Fred Vipond – May 16
 Nat Brautigam – May 30

Mike Lieberman – June 3
 Randy Margison – July 10
 Henry Hogan – July 15

Jon Matousek – August 23
 Mandy Stebbins – August 27
 Franny Pollack – September 5
 Marilee C.C. Rusiniak – September 10

Kirk Players Calendar

Monthly Membership Meeting	August 14 (Fri) 7:00 pm	Zoom Meeting
Monthly Membership Meeting	September 11 (Fri) 7:00 pm	Zoom Meeting
Annual Membership Meeting	September 11 (Fri) following Membership	Zoom Meeting
Auditions for October virtual show	August 17 and 19, Callbacks on August 20	Zoom Auditions
Virtual October performance	October 3 (Sat)	Zoom Performance
Auditions for December virtual show	TBA	Zoom Auditions
Virtual December performance	December 5 (Sat)	Zoom Performance
Auditions for <i>Trials of Robin Hood</i>	TBA	Location TBA
<i>Trials of Robin Hood</i> performance	Mar 26-28 (7 pm Fri/Sat, 2 pm Sat/Sun)	Mundelein High School

Our 55th Season

Virtual Shows TBA Fall / Winter, 2020	The Trials of Robin Hood By Will Abrill March 26-28, 2021	The Diary of Anne Frank By Kesselman, Goodrich, and Hackett June 4-6, 2021
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