



~ Newsletter - Fall 2023 ~

CLOTA's NEXT PRODUCTIONS:

By Janis Kunz

The rest of CLOTA's 2023 season is set to make you laugh, tug at your heartstrings, scare you out of your wits, and fill your spirit with Christmas warmth! First up in September is Robert Harling's *Steel Magnolias*, directed by *Witness for the Prosecution*'s Daniel Stallings, starring a double cast of Juli Townsend, Michelle Pugh, Shiana Tyler, Kaylee Morris, Emily Ommen, Britney Brown, Cat Kreidt, Randi Fisher, Loralynn Chrostowski, Fran Kelty, K. Pearl Woolam, and Nicole Johnson.



Steel Magnolias concept art by Daniel Stallings

Then in October is *Spookhouse: Here, There Be Monsters*, helmed by the talented *Spookhouse* alum Olivia Holm. And closing out our year in December is *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, a Reader's Theatre written and directed by Stallings based around the tellings of worldwide Christmas tales, which is set to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the beloved poem of a visit from old St Nick. So hold on to your play bills and be prepared for a roller coaster ride of comedy, drama, horror, and solid family entertainment!

❖ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Greetings and Salutations fellow CLOTA members!

First and foremost, thank you to all of you who volunteered at our Fireworks Booth this year. Your dedication and hard work (especially in this blazing heat!) allowed CLOTA to raise roughly \$18,000 which will go towards much needed restroom remodel as well as reviving our CLOTA Scholarship Fund. Although it's been a few years since we've been able to award one, we're happy to be back on the financial track to be able to do so on a much more consistent basis.

Auditions for *Steel Magnolias* (a comedy-drama, set in a beauty parlor in Chinquapin, Louisiana, written by Robert Harling and directed by Daniel Stallings) were held July 14th and 15th. I'm excited to report that we had an overabundance of local talent come to audition, so much so that the decision was made to establish a double cast! That said, CLOTA will be adding an additional performance to our schedule so that each cast is able to perform in an equal number of shows.

Performances for *Steel Magnolias* are scheduled for September 15th, 16th, 22nd, 23rd, 29th, 30th at 7:30pm, with TWO matinees on September 24th and October 1st at 2pm.

On the horizon is this year's Spookhouse, which will be headed by Olivia Holm. With the title of "Here, There Be Monsters" you should prepare to be creeped out by some infamous cryptids! Olivia will be training actors via a "Monster Boot Camp" during the October time frame. If you're interested in participating, give us a howl!

The CLOTA Board is still seeking to add members to our various committees (such as Spookhouse, costumes, fireworks booth, work parties, etc.). If you are interested in joining one (or several) of our committees and adding your expertise to our existing collective, please contact us at info@clota.org.

As always, CLOTA is on the lookout for new directors as well as play suggestions. CLOTA would be more than happy to provide you with a Play Suggestion Form and/or a Director Proposal Form to complete.

Thank you all for your continued membership, we certainly couldn't do what we do without your support.

Best Regards,

Monica Dwyer

President, CLOTA Board of Directors

CLOTA Is Reaching New Heights with Its Newest Member!

By Monica Lorenz and Josh Cotterell

Recently, CLOTA added a new *item* to their “toolbox” in order to revolutionize the way we reconfigure lights before each show. In the past, there may or may not have been dangerous aerial work involving shaky ladders and wooden planks that most likely would’ve caused OSHA to visibly shudder. Prioritizing the safety of our number one volunteer, Richard Jackson, CLOTA dug deep into its pockets, pulled out just enough funds amid a handful of lint to cover the purchase of a “new to us” scissor lift.

Let’s hear it for
EDWARD SCISSOR LIFT!
HIP HIP HOORAY!

Edward can extend nineteen feet in the air, carrying with it two people at a time. Edward will allow us to add, move, and adjust the lights from our ceiling safely and with ease.

Edward was purchased from United Rentals in Ridgecrest from their

overstocked fleet as a result of their acquisition of Ahern Rentals. What this meant for us is that we were able to purchase Edward at a discounted price, and with low hours. Prior to delivery, Edward underwent a thorough inspection by United Rentals to ensure it was mechanically and electrically sound and safe for operation.

United Rentals was easy to work with and accommodating, storing Edward for us until after the closing of CLOTA’s production of *Clue, The Musical*. While stored at their Inyokern location until we were ready for it to be delivered, it was discovered some of its batteries needed to be replaced and they quickly did so.

Once Edward had its final test, he was hauled out to its new home, CLOTA Center Stage. Josh Cotterell, one of our distinguished Board Members, proceeded to train Richard (as well as a handful of additional volunteers) on the operation and safety protocols of Edward. Looking a little worse of wear, the next step will be to give Edward a facelift so he will truly fit in. Next time you come by, you just might get to meet Edward and welcome him to the troupe yourself!



L: Board member Steven Dwyer trains [Credit: Josh Cotterell]

R: Edward at Center Stage [Credit: Janis Kunz]

SPOOKHOUSE 2023: *Here, There Be Monsters*

By Olivia Holm

Hello everyone! I am Olivia Holm and I am the new Haunt manager for the CLOTA Spookhouse! I have been volunteering for Spookhouse since 2013 with the Entrance to the Underworld haunt and took a leave of absence from 2021-2022. But this year I am in the saddle and ready to go and bring CLOTA's Spookhouse into a new Era. I have been doing makeup for roughly ten years now and I have been an avid horror movie watcher ever since I could peel my hands away from my eyes and actually watch them. I specifically love the psychological horror aspects of most movies, as well as the stylistic design of these new age horror movies.

This year's theme revolves around Cryptids, entitled *Here, There be Monsters*. Those horrific forest monsters that go bump in the night and rattle trees. The lurking presence of something just behind you but when you turn around there is nothing there. This year's theme settles on an overarching thematic design rather than focusing on individual rooms each with their own story. A dark and winding forest path taking you down to an unknown end filled with thick foliage and long branches threatening to snatch you when you least expect it. And while the new plans for the set are just the start, the monsters within the forest are just as horrifying as the disappearing forest.

Large looming beasts ready to tear into flesh and bone leaving no trace. Some are known to cause madness, others are an omen of bad news, and some are so intelligent they can seamlessly join your group, so that you will never be seen again. Some of the monsters who plan on making an appearance in our 2023 Spookhouse include, Bigfoot, Mothman, the Jersey Devil and many many more.

When it comes to the creative and technical sides of this year's Spookhouse, we are always looking for new members and volunteers to put their Halloween skills to the test. There is so much to do, between Ticket sales, acting, and working the technical aspects like set dressing, prop making, costuming, Set building, and design, everyone can find something they want to do within Spookhouse. There is a place for everyone, no matter their age or theatrical experience.

If you are interested in joining CLOTA's Spookhouse for this year, feel free to reach out on the CLOTA website or Facebook page or email me at olivia.holm@clota.org. We will have a preliminary meeting on September 9th, 2023, at 2pm to discuss the haunt and answer any questions people may have. I hope to see you there!



CLOTA Fireworks Booth Another Whiz-Bang Success!

Once again our community supported CLOTA's fundraising efforts with sparkling results. CLOTA's coffers were infused with proceeds to go toward the Building Fund for improvements to Center Stage and toward the CLOTA Scholarship fund which will benefit up and coming theatrical talent! Thank you to everyone who bought fireworks from our booth!



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RETRACTION: Our previous issue had misquoted the scenic painters responsible for the mural in *Lilies of the Field* in 2019 in the article "Drawing on Walls." The actual scenic painters responsible were Larry Lier, Kathleen Rodgick, and Anne Busby. Thank you for your artistry.

~ Upcoming Events ~

❖ September 15th, 16th:

Steel Magnolias – Opening weekend!

@ 7:30 pm (Doors open @ 7 pm)

❖ September 22nd, 23rd:

Steel Magnolias

@ 7:30 pm (Doors open @ 7 pm)

❖ September 24th:

Steel Magnolias – Matinee

@ 2:00 pm (Doors open @ 1:30 pm)

❖ September 29th, 30th:

Steel Magnolias – Closing weekend!

@ 7:30 pm (Doors open @ 7 pm)

❖ October 1st:

Steel Magnolias – Matinee

@ 2:00 pm (Doors open @ 1:30 pm)

❖ October 27th, 28th, 29th, & 31st:

Spookhouse 2023: Here, There Be Monsters

From 6 pm - 11 pm

❖ November 3rd, 4th:

'Twas the Night Before Christmas auditions

From 4 pm - 6 pm

CLOTA PRESENTS

'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

200TH ANNIVERSARY



2023 SEASON

A CHRISTMAS PLAY

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
DANIEL STALLINGS

AUDITIONS:
NOVEMBER 3 AND 4
4 TO 6 PM.
CLOTA CENTER STAGE
(1425 N. INYO ST.)

SHOW DATES:
DECEMBER 15 AND 16 AT 7:30 PM.

The Archiving Continues...

Special Thanks to Larry Lier, who provided us programs for *Incorruptible* 2007, *Wayside Motor Inn* 2007, *Bus Stop* 2009, *The Foreigner* 2008, *Lilies of the Field* 2019, and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* 2008, along with production materials for *Charlotte's Web* 2019. Thank you to Greg and Cindy Côté for providing us with the program for *Honk* 2006. And thank you to Janis Kunz for providing us with the programs for *Baskerville* 2017, *Café Murder* 2016, and *I Hate Shakespeare* 2020.

If you have access to any of the below missing programs in our CLOTA archive, please feel free to contact Historian Daniel Stallings at historian@clota.org to help us complete our digital library of past CLOTA productions. Thank you!

Missing CLOTA Programs:

1967 – A Man for All Seasons	1986 – Trial of the Big Bad Wolf
1967 – The Odd Couple	2001 – As You Like It
1969 – A Thousand Clowns	2016 – All I Really Need to Know
1969 – Brigadoon	I Learned in Kindergarten

DIRECTOR INTERVIEW:

Daniel Stallings, *Steel Magnolias*

By Janis Kunz

Steel Magnolias is a well-known movie. How will the play differ from audience expectations coming in and what, if anything, are you doing with promotion or staging to address that?

Daniel: “I think the biggest and most noticeable difference is that there are no men onstage in the show. While the characters of Drum and Jackson and Spud and so on were mentioned in Robert Harling’s original play, they never appear onstage. The story centers on the women. All of the action remains in Truvy’s beauty shop. The film expanded on the play’s setting and gave us more locations to see, but the lines are very much the same, because Robert Harling was both the playwright and the screenwriter. So all the Southern sass, warm receptions, and heartfelt stories are intact. The play came first, so this is *Steel Magnolias* at its most essential. I think the key is to remain honest about the work I am staging. To stay true to what Harling gave us and the stories of these women. To not try to bring the film into the stage play but to let our production breathe its own life.”

The play takes place in a very specific location: Truvy’s carport-turned-beauty-parlor. What challenges or advantages are there at Center Stage for staging this story?

Daniel: “Center Stage is already a carport! Just teasing. But as I felt with *Witness for the Prosecution* last year, the architecture of Center Stage, I feel, enhances the story in the play. I don’t have to work as hard to help audiences imagine that this beauty shop used to be a carport and that it has an intimate, homegrown appeal to it. I want audiences to feel like they too are regulars in Truvy’s shop, and CLOTA Center Stage’s close-knit atmosphere helps bring that to life.

The greatest challenge is that I want the set to reflect the naturally cluttered, lovable chaos of long, fully lived lives in one’s home. A home set in the late 1980’s. And that means a lot of period set dressing and props. Thankfully, CLOTA’s long archive of props and furniture has been a goldmine of authentic period pieces to build the world of Truvy’s shop. I am thrilled!”

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CLOTA Wall of Stars

Every year, CLOTA receives donations from individuals who see the beauty and work that we do within our theater as well as the promising future that we will have set for generations to come. These gracious benefactors have assisted us for the past 50 years and counting and we look forward to what you and others will do for us in the next 50 years. Your help is pivotal to us and your generosity should not go unnoticed; hence, the establishment of the CLOTA Wall of Stars. We would like to invite you, the members of CLOTA, to be given the opportunity to get a star on our theatre wall where your gift to our actors and audiences will be displayed and seen by all in our community.

The stars are different metals and the donor's name will be engraved where your person, generosity, and assistance will be remembered for all time. The metals of the stars depends on the amount that has been donated during the calendar year:

The Bronze Star \$50 up to \$249

The Silver Star \$250 up to \$499

The Gold Star \$500 and above

If you wish to know how to make a donation or to inquire about the Wall of Stars, please feel free to contact us for more detail and information.

Thank You!

The CLOTA Board

Monica Lorenz-Dwyer, President
K. Pearl Woolam, Vice President
Amber Stull, Treasurer
Janis Kunz, Newsletter Editor

Josh Cotterell
Steven Dwyer
Jon Blair
Olivia Holm
Marian Murdoch



Contact us @ www.clota.org or (760) 446-2411

Follow us on FB @ [RCCLOTA](https://www.facebook.com/RCCLOTA)

IN REVIEW: CLUE The Musical, directed by Angie Pritchard

By Ed and Valerie Kramer

[CLUE The Musical closed in June of 2022. Here are two audience member's thoughts.]



The cast of CLUE The Musical sing about who to blame for Mr. Boddy's murder on closing night of the hit summer musical.

Musical based on the popular board game, very fun, 6 suspects whodunit with multiple endings and audience participation for each show. Clue stars a veteran cast of local actors and musical talent who bring life to the set on a board game.

Knew we were in for a treat when the audience line started forming outside CLOTA 10 minutes before door opening past the CLOTAs red carpet into the parking lot.

What a great production! From the vivid colors and memorable costumes, you always knew which cast was talking by simply looking at each cast costume.

Terrific props, live music above the production in the CLOTA's mezzanine, well-acted and choreographed made a truly enjoyable evening.

There was never a 4th wall as the audience was immersed into the Clue game and felt like we were on the board game itself. Cast running on and off stage with murder weapons in at least EIGHT exits/entries surprised there wasn't a collision.

Technical crew as spot on. Lighting, paint boss and paint crew deserve special note for creating each room as truly special.

Great credit to all directors, and stage manager for choreographing a memorable and flawless performance!

Raise those legs higher during line dances, the cast were kicking smurfs, having fun looking at each other and the audience!

Ready for Ridgecrest-opoly next!

Stallings, cont.

What are you most excited for about this production?

Daniel: “Most people know me as the mystery guy. However, those are not the limits of my theatre knowledge or passion. When it comes to plays and musicals, most of my favorites are outside of the mystery genre. I’m excited to show a different side to my directing. I’m also excited for the chance to experiment with some new staging ideas for the play. *Steel Magnolias* follows two years in these women’s lives. Change and growth are core themes in the script. I want to show the audience these gradual changes over time with the scene changes. Give them a more complete vision of these women’s stories as they live, love, laugh, and mourn. There’s also a little, sweet surprise I have planned for the end of the play.

Have you directed a play similar to Steel Magnolias before? What are some differences between it and the kinds of plays you typically write/direct?

Daniel: “*Steel Magnolias* has a special brand of natural humor. While it’s witty and funny, it’s not slapstick nor caricature. It’s written in a style I very much enjoy—humor derived from character, personality, wit, and word play. The women remind me, favorably, of *The Golden Girls*, one of my favorite TV shows. So while I have yet to write or direct something exactly like *Steel Magnolias*, it’s a style I have cherished many times over the years. I also wanted to helm a production very much unlike the previous mainstage show I did for CLOTA—*Witness for the Prosecution*—which was a stylized, dramatic courtroom thriller. And what I am aiming for is Truvy’s favorite emotion: “Laughter through tears.””

What is it you’d like audiences to take away from watching Steel Magnolias?

Daniel: “The key is always that the audience should have a good time. The play is funny, light, heartfelt, and humble. It’s not about huge, overarching, trendy themes, but universal ones. Love, family, friendship, sacrifice, life, growth, and change. Things we all feel and experience. I want the audience to laugh at the jokes and cry at the story. To feel. To connect with these characters. To see and cherish the bond between them. To appreciate the beauty of ordinary life. And I want them to fall in love (for the first time or for the hundredth time) with the heart of *Steel Magnolias*.”

***Steel Magnolias* opens Sept 15th @ CLOTA Center Stage!**



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CLOTA Center Stage

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