

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our summer production was the Shakespearian comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Olivia Holm and her AD Juli Townsend. This production was both stunning in scenery and lighting, and don't get me started on the talent! Over two dozen talented actors, of literally all ages, graced the CLOTA stage and gave exceptional performances. That said, don't miss the CLOTA Spotlight interview *"though she be but little she is fierce"* with our youngest member, Abygale Moret.

*The Viewing Room*, written by Mark Edward Smith, is our upcoming fall production. I've personally taken the helm to direct this dark comedy along with my Assistant Director, Nicole Johnson, who has been at my side every step of the way. With rehearsals and set construction well underway, it's safe to say this cast will be putting the "fun" in "funeral".

No sooner than the casket closes on *The Viewing Room*, we're going to anchor down, jump off the gangway and plunge "20,000 Screams Under The Sea". Our annual Spookhouse fundraising event will once again be headed by Olivia Holm who will also be training actors via a "Sea Monster Boot Camp" during the October time frame. If you've ever wanted to become a sea dwelling tentacled beast of the deep, now will be your chance! If you're interested in participating, give us a gurgle! We'd love to have you join us at the bottom of the sea ... errrr ... I mean, on the CLOTA stage!

Speaking of Spookhouse, sources say Olivia has already begun to crochet an army of killer octopuses (or is it octopi?) and other sea creatures to sell at her *Spooky Bootique*. All profits from her sales are generously donated to CLOTA.

Last but not least, this holiday season will see a *close encounter of the hairy kind* with a Reader's Theatre Christmas Show 'Tis the Season to Believe: A Bigfoot Christmas Special which will be written and directed by myself.

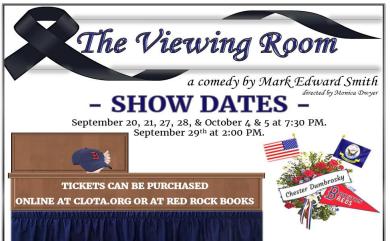
Already thinking ahead to 2025, the CLOTA Board of Directors have begun hearing directorial pitches so if you're interested in directing, CLOTA would be more than happy to provide you with a Director Proposal Form to complete.

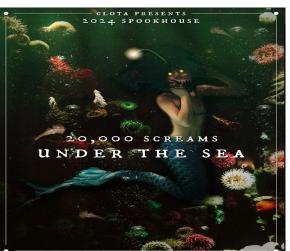
Thank you all for your continued membership, we couldn't do what we do without your support.

Best regards - Monica Dwyer, President of the CLOTA Board of Directors

## **COMING IN SEPTEMBER!**

## **COMING IN OCTOBER!**





# **IN REVIEW A DREAM OF A DREAM**

Directing A Midsummer Night's Dream was truly a dream come true. Every night, the cast blew it out of the park with their humor and wonderful shining abilities. Even once the show was underway, this beautiful cast surprised me in so many incredible ways, even if they did break a few props. This cast pulled together an incredibly beautiful show that made each and every audience laugh and fall in love with fantasy once more. Our Fairy Favor Raffle was an audience favorite. Some of the prizes included a replica of the mystical Love in Idleness flower, flower crowns, and two versions of the coveted "Ass Hat" used to transform Nick Bottom into the donkey we know and love.

A huge shout out goes to Elise Bechtel, our CLOTA Robe Winner for A Midsummer Night's Dream. Her dedication, passion and drive to lift up this show to its very best was an inspiration to everyone in the cast and crew.

#### **OUR HATS GO OFF TO YOU ELISE!**

I would also like to thank Daniel Stallings for all of his hard work and support throughout the entire process. From the initial concept, to auditions, rehearsals, and all the way through to the end. Everyone did such incredible work, giving it their all. I could never thank them enough for what they brought, not only myself, but to the audiences who packed our building each night.

A Midsummer Night's Dream by Olivia Holm

No one can say that Olivia is not supportive of her cast. Olivia is pictured here with Abygale Moret (on her back), to her (L) Daniel Gamboa and to her (R) Fran Kelty

All in all, this show will go down in history and I will always remember it in my dreams and my heart. Magic is real and it lives in theater. Thank you to everyone who made this show the success it was. I never could have done it without you. - Olivia Holm, director of A Midsummer Night's Dream

### AMND SHOW REVIEW – BY LAWRENCE COSNER JR.

To begin, it was superb. The acting was uniformly excellent--strong cast in EVERY part!--the sets were FABULOUS, the directing excellent, all aspects of the technicals were great, it just all came together!

But I want to highlight two things. First, Jason Ertl as Puck. He was astoundingly good. I have seen many, many versions of this play, and have seen many striking portrayals of that crucial character. And while hitherto Stanley Tucci -- one of my boyfriends!! -- has been my favorite, it may be that he'll have to move over.

(By way of honesty and full disclosure, I should probably note that Jason is 'family'; part of my extended family. But I'd say all the above even were he not.)

Second, the swapping of the subplot -- the theft of the mortal boy -- between Titania and Oberon worked for me. Worked surprisingly well. Some of the dialog was a bit weird, to be expected. Oberon talking about his "big belly" (pregnancy). But, hey! I wanted to jump up in my seat and say "I'm right with you there, pal!" <sigh> (I understand that in Kabuki tradition, it is 'ok' for the audience to occasionally shout things. So why not here?)

Thus, all things considered it was a quite brilliant opportunity to fiddle a little with societal norms and expectations, and to see how it looked when the shoe was on the other hand (to bend an analogy). It definitely worked for me.

All in all, it was a tremendous experience. I was up HOURS past my bedtime . . . and didn't regret a moment of it!!



### A Midsummer Night's Dream PICTURES











pictures by Daniel Stallings



### A Midsummer Night's Dream PICTURES











### A Midsummer Night's Dream PICTURES



L to R: Calvin Johnson as *Oberon*, Cat Kreidt as *Titania*. Top L to R: Jason Ertl as *Puck*, Abygale Moret as *Sunflower*, Bottom L to R: Elise Bechtel as *Cobweb*, Chloe Wetzel as *Mustardseed*, Pearl Woolam as *Dewdrop* 



L to R: Calvin Johnson as Oberon & Kevin LaBrie as Bottom



L to R: Cat Kreit as Titania, Kaylee Morris as Hermia, Jonathan Blair as Lysander, Jason Ertl as Puck and Daniel Gamboa as Demetrius





Shiana Tyler as Flute



Armin Natividad as Snug

### A Midsummer Night's Dream PICTURES







L to R: Calvin Johnson as *Oberon*, Kevin LaBrie as *Nick Bottom*, Rachel Wetzel as *Mustardseed*, and Elise Bechtel as *Cobweb* 



Cat Kreidt as Titania



Jason Ertl as Puck



L to R: Elaine Stewart as Hermia, Jonathan Blair as Lysander, Kaylee Morris as Helena and Daniel Gamboa as Demetrius



### A Midsummer Night's Dream PICTURES



L to R: Star Woodbridge as *Fawn* and Pearl Woolam as *Dewdrop* 

ELISE BECHTEL WINNER OF THE CLOTA ROBE





The amazing cast of A *Midsummer Night's Dream* (also pictured is Director Olivia Holm and Assistant Director Juli Townsend)

# DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

by Monica Dwyer



#### Why did you choose The Viewing Room?

As I was checking CLOTA's e-mail last fall, I came across one from Mark Edward Smith, writer of *The Viewing Room.* At one point in the past (before I'd come back to CLOTA from an extended break), he'd submitted his script to CLOTA and was checking in to see if we had any interest in producing it. In all honesty, I hadn't heard of his play, nor had it been submitted to our Play Reading Committee (PRC) from what I gathered. Directing it myself was the farthest thing from my mind at that moment (considering I was neck deep in CLOTA administration duties, come to think of it, I still am). However, since he'd taken the time to reach out, I wanted to do right by him, and I sat down and gave it a glance before submitting it to the PRC. Without giving too much of the plot away, I'll just say this, this story (which is semi-autobiographical by the way) resonated with me in more ways than one. Considering it takes place in a funeral home, it may seem morbid to admit that for the next hour, I laughed out loud but laugh out loud I did and by the end of it, I was in tears, I had to direct it, and the rest is history as they say.

#### What do you want audiences to take away from TVR?

I couldn't help but reflect on my own family the first time I read *The Viewing Room*. Having read the script now seemingly a hundred times whilst I constructed the blocking, wrote prop/costume lists, and not to mention read during rehearsals, you can imagine that my family has been steadily on my mind and in my heart. That said, what I would want audiences to take away from is the hope that familial fractures can always be mended given some understanding, communication, and love.

#### What do you enjoy about directing *The Viewing Room*?

I enjoy the collaboration between myself, my AD, and my actors in building their characters and perfecting their blocking. My directing is *middle of the road*, I have a basic structure of what I want but I also want my actors feel comfortable in sharing their thoughts and creativity. Rehearsals have been such a riot that it hardly feels like directing. I know it may be cliché to boast about feeling like family on the set but there it is. This production has already been such a bonding experience that the actors have willingly wanted to meet outside rehearsals to get to know one another better. Considering that all the characters in *The Viewing Room*, minus the Funeral Director, are related, this will only make the production that much more realistic and relatable, no pun intended.

#### What directing or other theater projects do you have planned for the future?

I'm currently in the process of writing a Christmas Show called '*Tis the Season to Believe: A Bigfoot Christmas Special* which I also play to direct. This will feature several of the zany characters from *Close Encounters of the Hairy Kind*, a play I wrote and directed here in CLOTA back in 2023. If you didn't have a chance to see it during production, it's on YouTube (just Google it!).

# CLOTA IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE RIDGECREST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



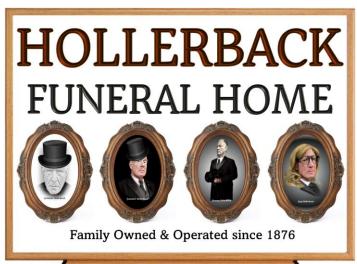
The Making Of ...

Story and pictures by Monica Dwyer

The Hollerback Funeral Home is the somber setting for *The Viewing Room* and because this play is semi-auto biographical, I wanted to ensure that a lot of heart, detail and depth went into creating a realistic venue beginning with a backstory for *Jay Hollerback*, the funeral director (played by CLOTA veteran John Slate). Pictured to the right, you can see a Hollerback ancestry, of sorts, which will be displayed in the viewing room of the funeral home to give it a more formal and familial touch although their stock of caskets may seem somewhat shady. As you can see for yourself, the resemblance in the Hollerback family is quite uncanny.



Rick Fisher working on *Chester Dumbrosky's* rather rustic looking casket.



The center piece of *The Viewing Room*, should go without saying. We had a custom "casket" built to ensure the recently departed Dumbrosky patriarch *Chester* (played by CLOTA newbie Rick Fisher) enough wiggle room to worm his way in and out as the script required. Upon receiving it, the casket was, for lack of a better word, rustic (*as you can see in the picture on the left*). In desperate need of some TLC, Rick (who also happens to be quite the handy man) went above and beyond, taking it upon himself to sand and stain and modify the hinges and what nots. As the director, I appreciate the extra effort Rick put forth into our production.



L to R: McKenna Sangren, Amber Stull, Fran Kelty, Ian Grant, Libby Mitchell (filling in for Jonathan Blair), Heather McGaha, and Rick Fisher (nestled comfortably in *Chester's* casket).



Rick is adding the finishing touches.



The Making Of . . . (continued)

#### SYNOPSIS OF **"THE VIEWING ROOM"**

Stern patriarch Chester Dumbrosky decided make has to amends. Unfortunately, he waited for the day of his 'wake' to do so. Lots of angst and laughs as his dysfunctional family tries to heal old wounds. - Mark E. Smith



As a self-styled prop queen, I have absolutely enjoyed creating the props for this production. A funeral wouldn't be a funeral without a personalized flower arrangement emblazoned with the name of the dearly departed, in this case "Chester Dumbrosky". Seeing as the script mentioned his service in the Navy and his love of Boston Red Sox, it only fitting to go with a patriotic theme and a pennant flag thrown in for good measure. For those needing to wipe away their tears on set, I created a customized tissue box just to be extra.

This production's scenic artist is none other than the much talented Marian Murdoch. Behind the casket is a wooden cross hanging on ornate curtain rod from which painted drapes hang. On either side of the drapes are a set of delicately detailed plants atop ancient Rome-inspired pedestals.

Marian has plans to paint a set of stained-glass windows. Other than asking her to include a monogram "H" (for Hollerback) she has artistic control of the windows, and I have no doubt they're going to be amazing.







## **SPOOKHOUSE 2024**

In the deepest caverns beneath the anxiously unbridled sea lay a vast region of toxic waters, vibrant horrors, and unknown creatures. Anyone who dares to seek out the illustrious treasures below, will come face to face with monsters twisted with toxic colors and an ever-growing hunger for fresh food found in the surface world.

If you somehow survive the sea, those that quietly stalk along the sand will not let you escape so easily. Centuries of horror and terror echo unwaveringly across the caverns, along the beaches, and in the minds of those who follow in their footsteps.

#### CAN YOU ESCAPE THE SEA? OR BE TRAPPED BY THOSE WHO WAIT BELOW?

For anyone wanting to participate in Spookhouse, there will be a kick-off meeting at CLOTA (1425 N. Inyo St.) on September 21<sup>st</sup> @ 3pm. No experience is necessary! All ages are welcome!



Top Row, L to R: Jason Ertl, Shiana Tyler, Elaine Stewart, Devanne Fredette, Elise Bechtel and Calvin Johnson Bottom Row, L to R: Armin Natividad, Olivia Holm and Monica Dwyer (*picture by Daniel Stallings*)

The Ridge-Con fantasy festival was held May  $4^{\text{th}}$  at the Desert Empire Fairgrounds. Proceeds of this family-friendly event went to the non-profit organization "The Friends of the Fair" who help support our fairgrounds. CLOTA had a great turnout of festively costumed cast members at its booth to help promote the summer production *A Midsummer Night's Dream* including several cast members not pictured (Allison and Libby Mitchell) as well as board members (Steven Dwyer & Tristan Risden, not pictured, who helped set up/tear down). Kudos to the Olivia Holm, director of *AMND* who went above and beyond by donating over 200 fairy favors of all colors which included a mini-flier advertisement for *AMND*, little trinkets such as bubbles, slinkies, fairy stickers, and costume jewelry for kids. – Monica Dwyer

CLOTA POINTS!

CLOTA Points can be earned for volunteer participation in a wide-range of CLOTA activities. Every activity has a point value that is based principally on the amount of time and effort given towards that particular activity.

Points are earned by taking part in activities such as:

- CLOTA Board/Officer
- Productions (Director, AD, Actor, etc.)
  - Clean-up days
    - Tech days
  - General Meeting attendance
    - Box Office & Concessions
    - Committee involvement
      - Fundraising

A POINT TRACKER WILL BE MAILED TO ALL MEMBERS TO KEEP TRACK OF THEIR POINTS!

> PINS ARE AWARDED ANNUALLY AT THE JANUARY BANQUET CEREMONY

### POINTS ARE CUMULATIVE!

THERE IS NO END TO THE OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN MORE!

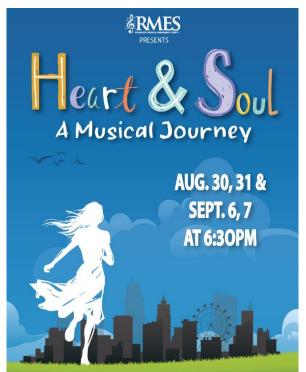


### A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

Red Rock Books Hernandez Handy Man Greg Perry, Locksmith Safecracker Desert Valley's FCU Warren's Automotive Sam's Auto Body & RV Sam's Auto Body & RV Maturango Museum Casey's Restaurant China Lake Museum S&M Collectibles

### IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SPONSOR, PLEASE CONTACT US!

CLOTA is proud to feature upcoming events from other performing arts organizations, especially one that supports the Sierra Sands School District!





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# **CLOTA CLASSIFIEDS**



CLOTA generously receives donations from individuals who see the art, beauty, and hard work we do within our community theater as well as the promising future that we help pave for generations to come. These gracious benefactors have assisted us for the past 50+ years and we look forward to what they will do for us well into the future.

Donations are pivotal to us and should not go unnoticed, hence, the establishment of the CLOTA Wall of Stars.

Based on the amount of each donation, a personally engraved Bronze, Silver or a Gold star will be placed on our theatre walls where your generosity can be appreciated by our community for all time.

The star type depends on the amount donated during the calendar year:



SILVER STAR: \$250 - \$499



**GOLD STAR:** \$500 +



# FOR CLOTA TECH DAYS

Do you have a knack for hitting the *nail* on the head?

Would you say you're on the *level*?

Have you ever wanted to climb the ladder?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR EXPERIENCED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP BUILD SETS FOR OUR PRODUCTIONS!



## **CLOTA CONTACT INFORMATION**

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An interview with Aby Moret, cast member of A Midsummer Night's Dream and CLOTA's youngest member - by Monica Dwyer

#### Have you acted/danced before?

*Aby:* I had never done a real play before, but I have acted a little bit in my musical theater dance class at Simplicity Performing Arts Studio. I danced in "It's a Hard Knock Life" (Annie) in December 2023 and got to be Peter Pan in "Adventures in Neverland" in May 2024. I have been dancing since March 2022. I take ballet, musical theater, Tap, Jazz, and am learning modern dance. My favorite styles are musical theater, tap, and modern! It's hard to pick a most favorite because I love dancing too much!

#### Why do you want to be an actor/dancer, what do you enjoy most about it?

*Aby:* I thought it'd be fun, and it is so much fun! It's my happy place! When I was little, I played soccer. When everyone looked at me, it made me cry so I didn't want to play anymore. I decided to join dance and having to dance in front of people made me get over my fear of people staring at me. Dance is lots of fun! I love being different characters, smiling, and making people feel good. I love being silly!

#### Where did you hear about auditions for AMND?

*Aby:* My mom found a post on Facebook, and she asked if I wanted to audition to see what it's like. I felt very surprised that I got a part in the show... like very surprised because it was only for grown-ups! The fact that I got a part was surprising and very, very, very exciting!

#### Tell us about your AMND character and your fairy dance routine.

**Aby:** Sunflower is a little girl fairy that did lots of tricks that everybody thought was so cute. She is Titania's fairy and is very loyal to her. Sunflower is mischievous, cute, and loves to dance! Miss Olivia taught the fairies at rehearsals. I rehearsed and practiced at home and got into character. My teacher Miss Emma helped me with my solo. It wasn't hard to learn. I wished I could have been in even more of the show because it was super-duper fun!

#### Who made your costume?

Aby: My mom bought it on Amazon and Daniel (Stallings) added accessories!

#### What were some of your favorite moments of AMND?

*Aby:* Some of my favorite moments of AMND were doing my back walk over into the splits in my solo, doing the Makeba dance, and getting to act for the very first time on stage! I thought it was so funny when Bottom fake stabbed himself and Flute starts screaming! When she took out her paper, pretending to forget her lines, and said, "his eyes are... green" it made me laugh!

Now that AMND is over, is there a project you are looking forward to?

Aby: Spook house!!!! That is coming up next and I can't wait to scare people!

#### Would you like to do more acting and dancing with CLOTA?

*Aby:* Yes, for sure! I can't wait to do more performances with CLOTA! The first one was super, duper, duper fun! I'm looking forward to more acting, dancing, and bigger parts (roles)! I'm thankful for everyone at CLOTA!





Brag contribution by Juli Townsend (pictures by the Sierra Academy of Dance)



L to R: Elspeth Pomazal, Chloe Wetzel & Sela Townsend



L to R. Chloe Wetzel, Sela Townsend & Elspeth Pomazal

CLOTA members Selah Townsend, and Chloe and Rachel Wetzel, dancers with the Sierra Academy of Dance, took part in a seven-week summer intensive that finished with a bang at a national dance convention and competition for Tremaine Dance in Anaheim, CA in July.

Not only did they work hard, often dancing for 7 - 9 hours a day learning moves and techniques, but their pieces were also humanitarian statements, shining a light on topics such as bullying, addiction, and child sex trafficking. Their guest choreographer, Justyce, deserves much appreciation, seeing as she choregraphed graphic truth from first-hand experience. All who took part danced bravely about hard-hitting topics! Everyone is so proud of them, walking away with five trophies out of five group dances, placing! They won these four pieces:

2<sup>nd</sup> - "Disrupt the Demand" (SENIOR GROUP) 2<sup>nd</sup> - "War Room" (TEEN GROUP) 2<sup>nd</sup> - "A Sisters' Bond" (TEEN LYRICAL DUO CATEGORY) 3<sup>rd</sup> - "Bullying Stops With Me" (PRE-TEEN LYRICAL CATEGORY)

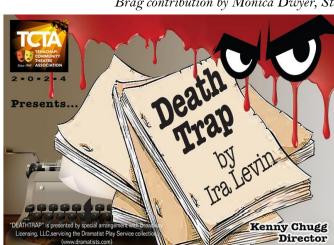
Selah took part in 2023's *Spookhouse: Here There Be Monsters* and served as the make-up designer in this summer's production of the Shakespearian comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* while Chloe and Rachel Wetzel performed as the characters of *Mustardseed* and *Peaseblossom*, respectively.



L to R: Chloe & Rachel Wetzel



Selah Townsend



#### Brag contribution by Monica Dwyer, Steven Dwyer, Heather McGaha and Amber Stull

CLOTA member Ed Kramer, who debuted on our stage in our 2022 fall production of Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution*, is currently appearing in the Tehachapi Community Theatre Association's production of *Death Trap* by Ira Levin at the BeeKay Theatre.

Board members Heather McGaha, Amber Stull, Steven Dwyer and myself ventured to Tehachapi just last night in order to catch a performance and support Ed. His performance, as Sidney Bruhl, was hands down remarkable and the cast was simply amazing. The play itself was completely engrossing and memorable. We were on the edge of our seats the entire time! The good news is that there are still a handful of performances left! **16** 

# ~ UPCOMING CLOTA EVENTS ~

## **SEPTEMBER**

- September 20: The Viewing Room @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm) OPENING NIGHT!
- September 21: Spookhouse Kick-Off Meeting @ 3:00 pm
- September 21: The Viewing Room @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm)
- September 27: The Viewing Room @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm)
- September 28: The Viewing Room @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm)
- September 29: The Viewing Room @ 2 pm (doors open @ 1:30 pm) SUNDAY MATINEE!

## OCTOBER

- ➢ October 4: The Viewing Room @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm) CLOSING WEEKEND!
- ➢ October 5: The Viewing Room @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm)
- > October 25: Spookhouse from 6:00 pm 10:00 pm
- ➢ October 26: Spookhouse from 6:00 pm − 10:00 pm
- ➢ October 27: Spookhouse from 3:00 pm − 7:00 pm MATINEE!
- ➢ October 31: Spookhouse from 6:00 pm − 10:00 pm



➤ November 1: Spookhouse from 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm



## DECEMBER

- **December 6:** *'Tis the Season to Believe: A Bigfoot Christmas Special* @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm)
- **December 7:** *'Tis the Season to Believe: A Bigfoot Christmas Special* @ 7:30 pm (doors open @ 7 pm)

# **Bigfoot is Comin' to Town!**



There's no need to go out night *SQUATCHING* in the woods because Bigfoot is Comin' to Town in *Ridgeview* this holiday season.

The zany characters from the comedy, *Close Encounters of the Hairy Kind*, written and directed by Monica Dwyer in 2023 will be back for more laughs in this Reader's Theatre Christmas Show production aptly named 'Tis the Season to Believe: A Bigfoot Christmas Special.