

Volume 22, Issue 1

September, 2011

TCT Presents

tuesdays  
with morrie

Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2011

7:30 p.m.

&

October 1, 2011

2:00 p.m.

Sponsored by



*A teacher touches eternity;  
he can never tell where his influence stops.*

—Henry Adams

TCT's season opener has two characters, both very real people: Mitch Albom, ambitious young national sports journalist single-minded in his pursuit of "the American Dream" and Morrie Schwartz, extraordinary college professor and "Coach" to Mitch – now dying of Lou Gehrig's disease.

But the play is about living – about learning to live. Sixteen years have passed since career-obsessed Mitch last communicated with his once-beloved mentor. Catching a breath between globe-trotting assignments, Mitch finds himself channel surfing one night and comes upon Ted Koppel of ABC's *Nightline* interviewing Morrie Schwartz. After learning that his condition was fatal, Morrie, ever the teacher, had begun sharing his observations on dying through writings that caught Koppel's attention.

Mitch, stung by guilt for not having kept his promise to stay in touch, is moved to pay Morrie a farewell visit. After noting Mitch's success, Morrie, the teacher, confronts him: "Are you at peace with yourself? Are you trying to be a human as you can be?" The uncomfortable moment passes, and Mitch, his duty to pay a farewell visit fulfilled, frenetically hits the road again. Basketball. Baseball. The Kentucky Derby. Three articles a day. Two interviews. As Mitch juggles interviews and stories, the teacher's words begin to haunt him. Soon the question draws Mitch back to his ailing teacher's side on a Tuesday afternoon. And on the next Tuesday, and on every successive Tuesday until Morrie Schwartz dies, Morrie shares with his student the lessons of a life well lived. "Learn how to live," Morrie says, "and you'll know how to die; learn how to die and you'll

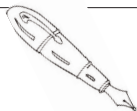
know how to live."

These sessions resulted in Mitch Albom's reflective memoir *Tuesdays With Morrie*, which has been read by many millions, including hundreds who have participated in this fall's inaugural Tupelo Reads program. The Tuesdays Mitch spent with Morrie also led to the collaboration between Albom and playwright Jeffrey Hatcher that produced the one-act, two-man play that opens Tupelo Community Theatre's 42nd season.

In the TCT production, Mitch is portrayed by Starkville resident and MSU videographer **Christopher Walrath**, whose theatrical career began in Pittsburgh almost thirty years ago and has continued in many cities in performing, technical and directorial roles. Since moving to Starkville, he has been actively involved with Starkville Community Theatre. The role of Morrie brings back to the Lyric Theatre stage ICC administrator **Harold Plunkett**, who last appeared in the lead role of Sheridan Whiteside in 2010's production of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. TCT audiences will also remember Harold's memorable performances as Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*.

*Tuesdays With Morrie* is directed by **Susan Tims**, whose twenty-three year association with TCT includes directing such shows dealing with death and the meaning of life as *Shadowlands* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Her husband Otis Tims serves as assistant director, scenic designer and stage manager. Davis Barton serves as sound designer and technician, and Geoff Carter is lighting designer. Mississippi College senior Lauren Hester, a Tupelo High School graduate, earned her collegiate theatre directing credit by serving as intern for this production.

Curtain time for the three night performances is 7:30 p.m. The October 1 matinee curtain time is 2:00 p.m.



# Notes from the President

The start of the school year and football season doesn't just mean that summer is fading – it also means the start of a great new season of shows at the Lyric! The board of directors for TCT is very proud to offer our patrons a great season lineup for 2011-2012 with *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *A Christmas Story*, *Second Samuel*, *Tuna Does Vegas* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

But before we talk about our new season, let's remember what a fabulous job Suzanne Oakley and her cast and crew did with Summer Youth Theatre this year. *Alice in Wonderland* has never been so enjoyable! Every cast member did a wonderful job and the set was very impressive. I saw it twice it was so

good! Many of the TCT "stars" today started in Summer Youth, receiving an excellent introduction to and training in the theatre arts.

The season opener, *Tuesdays with Morrie* is directed by Susan Shaw Tims. This heart-warming story offers a familiar face, Harold Plunkett, in the role of Morrie Shwartz with newcomer Christopher Walrath as Mitch. Based on the best seller by Mitch Albom, it is the story of a "young man, an old man and life's greatest lesson." Don't miss it – production dates are September 29-October 1.

TCT's leadership continues to get stronger with its newest board members. Josh Wise has joined the TCT board for the first time and Kenneth Griswold, Lynn Nelson, Judd Wilson,

and Craig Helmuth return. Please join us in welcoming them!

With the start of our new season we would very much like to invite you to come be a part of TCT in some form or fashion. There is something here for everyone—comedy, drama, music. There will be great acting, great sets, great costumes, a great venue and great fun! All we need is you! We hope you will join us this year. Your support—gifts, season tickets, and your presence at the shows—means we can continue to provide Tupelo a community theatre that is second to none!

See you soon at the Lyric!

-Tracie Maxey Conwill,  
President

## Season Tickets - A Really Hot Item!

It sounds like a cliché, but season tickets for the 2011-12 TCT season are a hot item and moving at a brisk pace – and according to Lisa Hall, business isn't showing any signs of letting up. "We're really encouraging folks to renew their season tickets now so they will be assured of their same seats," said Hall, TCT box office manager. "We also want first-time patrons to go ahead and purchase now. We've got a strong season lined up and we've gotten a lot of positive feedback."

The season opens with the award-winning play *Tuesdays with Morrie*, and includes *A Christmas Story*, *Second Samuel*, *Tuna Does Vegas*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Reserved seat season tickets for all five shows are only \$50 each. Wild Card tickets are only \$45 and offer the flexibility of choosing your



night and seat just before each show. There are also five levels of tickets with a few added perks:

STAR – \$125 for two tickets and listing in all regular season programs.

DIRECTOR – \$225 for two tickets, one ticket to the annual spring street fiesta, and listing in the programs.

PRODUCER – \$350 for two tickets, two fiesta tickets, and listing in the programs.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – \$550 for 4 tickets, 4 fiesta tickets, and listing in the programs.

STAGE ANGEL — \$1000 for 8 wild card tickets, 8 fiesta tickets, and listing in the programs.

For complete information contact Hall at 662-844-1935 or by email at [tctboxoffice@bellsouth.net](mailto:tctboxoffice@bellsouth.net).

## Workers Needed for Haunted Theatre

TCT's Haunted Theatre has grown in just six years to be the largest "haunted house" venue in north Mississippi. It takes approximately 30 volunteers, actors and workers each night to present the scariest guided tour around. Last year, the Haunted Theatre scared more than 1600 patrons. Steve Miller is coordinating this huge crowd pleaser again this year. He needs help building sets, actors impersonating ghouls and ghosts, as well as ticket takers and guides. Please consider helping Steve and his crew out—no prior experience is necessary!

The festivities will run October 20-22 and October 27-29 this year. For more information or to volunteer, contact the TCT office at 844-1935 or director Steve Miller at [steve.miller@sodexo.com](mailto:steve.miller@sodexo.com).



# Interns and Volunteers Work Magic

How many times have you looked into your closets at home and thought that it needed a major purging and reorganization? Thanks to two of TCT's interns and two student volunteers, our costume rooms have had just such a revamp. The Lyric has three rooms with more than 560 square feet of space upstairs devoted to costuming. That seems like a huge area but when you start organizing hundreds of dress, skirts, blouses, suits, pants and specialty costumes, you realize it is a very small space.

Interns Clara Seitz and Lauren Hester, along with help from volunteers Madeline Derveloy and Lindsey Tanner spent several weeks this summer organizing the multitude of various garments housed in our facility. Clara has been an intern at TCT for several semesters and is a student at MUW. Lauren Hester is a senior at Mississippi College. Lindsey Tanner is a long time TCT volunteer and is a junior at MUW. Madeleine Derveloy, who spent time in Tupelo visiting her father in Tupelo, is a high school junior in Pennington, N.J. All of these students are either majoring

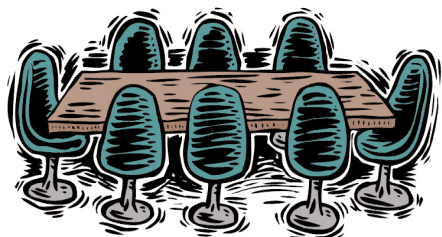


I-to-r Lauren Hester, intern and Madeline Derveloy, student volunteer

in Theatre or have a strong interest in it. The laborious process included gutting the entire wardrobe area and thoroughly inspecting each piece of clothing. The next phase was to arrange each item of clothing into categories: how the piece would be used, what time period the item illustrated, or the style/cut of the garment. The accessory department also had a turn at organization. This new organized set up will create a more efficient system for locating the perfect garment to be seen on stage in upcoming shows.

Your donations to our costume room, props, or warehouse are greatly appreciated. Thanks for thinking of TCT when you are interested in donating items. If the item is a "period piece" (from a different era – like a 1960's "mod" dress or a military uniform, for example) or unique, it is probably something TCT would love to have. However, if it is something most people might already have in their closet, it is usually better to donate to your favorite charity. And of course, you may always call the TCT office for more information 662-844-1935.

## Changes to the Board



Tupelo Community Theatre's board members are elected to terms of three years. The terms are staggered so that approximately one-third of the

board members are elected each year, with the other two-thirds of experienced members continuing to serve. An elected board is a tradition that helps define *community theatre* and the TCT board is a hard working group that strives to bring our patrons the best in community theatre.

We would like to extend special thanks to board members rotating off this year – Suzye Sheffield, Rob Rice, Michelle Waits, Josh Mabus and Jauna Ellis. Their years of service to

TCT have been phenomenal and are greatly appreciated. Returning to the board after a short time away are Lynn Nelson, Kenneth Griswold, Judd Wilson and Craig Helmuth. Joining the TCT board for the first time is local attorney and long-time patron Josh Wise. Working together, the board pledges to fulfill our vision of being THE model for community theatre and our mission to stimulate, promote, teach and develop interest in the dramatic arts!

### TCT PERSONNEL

**TCT**  
 201 North Broadway  
 P.O. Box 1094  
 Tupelo, MS 38802  
 662-844-1935

Visit us online at  
[www.tct.ms](http://www.tct.ms)

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[1tct@bellsouth.net](mailto:1tct@bellsouth.net)

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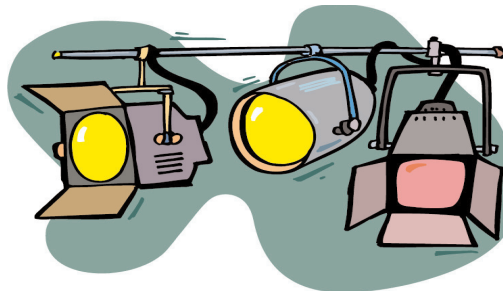
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## Auditions, Auditions, Auditions!!!

**Y**ou'll shoot your eye out! Certainly everyone is familiar with those words uttered repeatedly to young Ralphie in humorist Jean Shepherd's memoir, *In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash*, about coming of age in the 1940s Midwest. Perhaps you best remember Shepherd's work as the film adaptation, *A Christmas Story*, in which the 9-year-old Ralphie wishes fervently to find a Red Ryder BB gun under his family's Christmas tree. Auditions for the TCT stage version of ***A Christmas Story*** by Philip Grecian will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 18, and at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 19 in the Rehearsal Hall at the Lyric Theatre. Roles are available for two men ages 30 to 50; two women ages 30 to 50;



five boys ages 9 to 12; and two girls ages 9 to 12. Production dates are December 8-10.

But wait...there's more! On February 2-4, 2012, TCT will present Pamela Parker's ***Second Samuel***, a story about small-town Southern life that offers not only a good dose of humor, but also some wonderful messages about acceptance. Auditions for this Pulitzer Prize nominated play will be at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 21 and Tuesday, Nov. 22 in the Rehearsal Hall at the Lyric. Parts are available for 11 adult men and women high school age and older.

For more information, call the TCT office at (662) 844-1935.