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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ANN ARBOR CIVIC THEATRE

Welcome! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Civic Playhouse for another season of outstanding classic favorite plays and musicals. All eight of our regular productions have at last found their way home to our own Playhouse this year, and we couldn't be more excited!

We're in the process of sprucing up the theatre with new seats (thanks to our Chair Campaign donors!), a new look for our exterior (keep your eyes open for exciting design changes!), and a few other surprises.

For the past two seasons, AACT has presented more award-winning productions than any other theatre in the Ann Arbor area, with audience and critical raves alike. This season promises no less. We're proud to present: the classic plays On Golden Pond and Romeo and Juliet; the locally written Off-Broadway produced musical The Snow Queen; the sublime drama of The Trip to Bountiful and The Rainmaker; the hilarious one-liners of Neil Simon's Rumors; the Pulitzer-Prize winning musical How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying; and the time-honored heart-tugging The Sound of Music. This promises to be a season of favorites long to come.

Enjoy your evening at AACT. I thank you for joining us in celebrating productions that local critics have hailed as "eye-popping and perky", "magical", "magnificent", and "can't be topped." That was last season. There's more to come! It's no wonder that the single most common phrase heard around the box office this year has been "I'm coming back to Ann Arbor Civic Theatre." Welcome home. As usual, if you enjoy the show, please tell your friends.

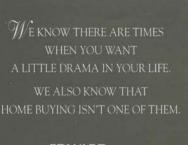
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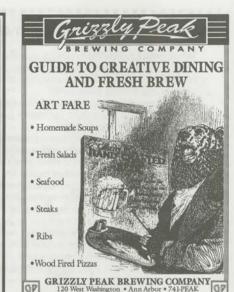
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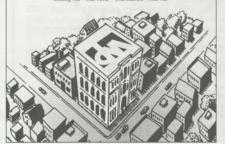
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RUMORS

Written by **Neil Simon**

Directed by Mark Bernstein

Assistant Director Stage Manager JEFF ZUPAN

Set Design BARB WELLS

Sound Design JEFF ZUPAN Costume Design
JOAN KORASTINSKI

Properties CARRIE WILSON

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Cast

(In order of appearance)

Chris	Karen Foran
Ken	Kevin Branshaw
Claire	Amber Neuenschwander
Lenny	Tom Underwood
Cookie	Roberta Morris
Ernie	Steve MacDonald
Cassie	Lorna Colon
Glenn	John Elliott
Welch	Jim Cox
Pudney	Susie Berneis

There will be one 15-minute intermission



The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash is strictly prohibited.



Personal pagers should be set to vibrate, and all cellular or digital telephones turned off inside the theatre.

Who's Who in the Cast and Crew

MARK BERNSTEIN (Director) is making his directing debut with Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, having previously directed Arsenic and Old Lace for the Ypsilanti Players. His onstage credits with AACT include My Favorite Year, A Little Night Music, City of Angels, and How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying. Many thanks to a talented and crazy cast, to the relentlessly organized and tremendously hard-working Jeff Zupan, to Barb, Joan, Carrie, Ron, and all the other folks who worked behind the scenes, and special thanks, as always, to Sharon, who doesn't even mind my having a rehearsal on *our* anniversary.

SUSIE BERNEIS (Pudney) Fresh (or nearly so) from *How to Succeed...* at AACT, Susie is more than ready for a show that does not involve singing and dancing. She is perfectly *thrilled* to be armed in this play and warns the audience that her distance vision is not perfect.

KEVIN LEE BRANSHAW (Ken) - Kevin hopes you'll remember his previous appearances on the AACT stage: Bill Starbuck in *The Rainmaker*, Tackaberry in *How to Succeed...*, Ali Hakim in *Oklahomal*, and Michael in *Dancing at Lughnasa* for which he won the AACT best actor award. Elsewhere, Kevin has played Nicely-Nicely Johnson in *Guys and Dolls*, Tommy Albright in *Brigadoon*, Seymour Krelborn, Orin Scrivello (D.D.S.), Audrey II, Bernstein, Patrick Martin, Skip Snip, and Mrs. Luce in *Little Shop of Horrors*. He has recently been reunited with the love of his life, a little yellow Miata named AUDREY2.

LORNA COLON (CASSIE) - Originally from Grand Rapids, she has been seen in *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *The Sound of Music*. She is a student at the University of Michigan where she is studying Spanish Education. She is really excited about being in this production.

JIM COX (Welch) - recently returned to Ann Arbor after a stint in the U.S. Army, which included an all-expense paid tour of Bosnia (courtesy of Uncle Sam). He has been acting (and acting up) since middle school in the booming metropolis of Almost, MI (pop. 1700 on a good day). His most recent acting experiences come from doing *Oklahoma* at the 5 Pfenning Theatre in Hanau, Germany (where he played Curly — a very appropriately named character due to his crew cut the Army insisted he keep) and *Cabaret* and *A Christmas Carol* at the Keller Theatre in Giessen, Germany.

JON ELLIOTT (Glenn) - has appeared with the Burns Park Players and thanks his family for their support, always. He is tickled to make his AACT debut in this production, with friends Karen and Tom, both AACT vets, where he gets to kiss Karen and yell at Tom. Life is sweet.

KAREN M. FORAN (Chris) - Karen's last role for AACT was as flower and snowflake wrangler, a.k.a. Property Manager, for December's The Snow Queen. She also put in some cold winter mornings at the traffic and ski report desk for AAA Michigan's Icicle Network. For her next trick, simultaneously with Rumors she is currently working as a multimedia specialist for Ford Motor Company and planning her wedding in Spring 2000 to Tom Underwood. You heard it here first...love ya kiddo.

JOAN KORASTINSKI (Costume design) has designed and built costumes for many productions over the years at AACT, most recently *Big River*, *The Rainmaker* and *A Little Night Mu*sic. Next season she will be designing costumes for the musicals *Steel Pier* and *A Chorus Line*.

STEVEN MACDONALD (Ernie) - This is Steve's debut on the AACT stage. Recently, he has appeared as Ralph in the Albion Community Theatre's production of *HMS Pinafore*. He also appeared in Albion as Annas the priest and Simon Zealots in *Jesus Christ, Superstar* (making him terminally schizophrenic working for both the good guys and bad guys in the same play- at the same time...); which well prepared him for this role as an analyst. With this character under his belt, Steve now feels qualified to publish his new book, "How to Psychoanalyze Your

Friends for Fun and Prophet". On a more serious note, he would like to dedicate this performance to his children; Luke, Renee, and Joshua.

ROBERTA MORRIS (Cookie) - like the character she plays, Roberta is a native New Yorker who likes to cook. This production marks her return to the stage, both figuratively and literally, after a long absence (unless you count her extended run as "Adjunct Professor" in *Patent Law* at the University of Michigan Law School). She has also written book and lyrics to one and a half musicals. Her most memorable song is "The Thought That the Thought of Me Cheers You Up Cheers Me Up".

AMBER NEUENSCHWANDER (Claire)- Now a Theatre Major at Eastern Michigan University, while at the same time competing vigorously in the Forensics program, Amber has continued to eat, sleep, and breathe theatre and performance studies for the past four years. She is ecstatic to be working for the first time with AACT- especially on a Neil Simon play. She and Simon are not close friends, but she really likes his plays. PS- "All my love to everyone I know who's ever laughed at me. :-)"

TOM UNDERWOOD (Lenny) - not quite the grouch he pretends to be, Tom has been entertaining audiences since 1990 with his unique blend of wry humor, facial expressions, and vocal acrobatics. AACT members may remember seeing Tom in Love Letters, The Nerd, RUR, Accomplice, or one of his many character roles. Truth to tell, Tom just enjoys the opportunity to be different people. Tom would like to thank Mark, Jeff, and especially Karen who makes every day a little brighter.

BARB WELLS (Set design) has designed sets and served as a stage technician for countless productions at AACT, most recently winning the Best Set award for last season's Jesus Christ Superstar. She can also be seen on stage occasionally as in You Can't Take it With You.

JEFF ZUPAN (Ass't Director, etc.) - Jeff can't count high enough to list the number of shows he's been involved with, not only with AACT, but Saline Area Players, Dexter Community Players and Comic Opera Guild. He's been everything from stagehand to director. This time, he performs admirably as Mark's right hand man (luckily he's right handed) as well as stage manager and sound designer. In his copious spare time, he is an amateur zymurgist.

Thank you to all of our patrons, volunteers, and donors for making the 1998-1999 season our most successful ever!

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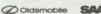
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