



## Local theater lights up fall

By JAMI KUNZER – [jkunzer@shawmedia.com](mailto:jkunzer@shawmedia.com)

At McHenry East Community High School, a cast of 24 students is working with black light to recreate “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

Having taken over for long-time, beloved advisors, Kells said she sought a smaller scale production, but also one she always has wanted to do. “Born Yesterday” tells the story of a vulgar, egotistical millionaire junkman who comes to Washington to make crooked deals with government big-wigs. He brings with him a charming ex-chorus girl, whose lack of social grace embarrasses him.

An idealistic magazine reporter agrees to educate her, and she soon learns about history, politics and who this junkman really is.

“It’s kind of timely right now, it being an election year,” Kells said. “He uses her as sort of a shield to spread money around, do some shady deals ... She starts to put her foot down. Knowledge is power. I thought it’d be good for students to see a character like that who stands on her own two feet after doing a little reading and educating herself.”

At McHenry East Community High School, a cast of 24 students is working with black light to recreate “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” under the guidance of Deb Swinford, a 1984 graduate of Johnsburg High School. Many of the production’s scenes involving fairies are done in black light, Swinford said.

“They’re very tribal in instinct. They’re very ancient and futuristic all at once,” she said. Students also have created their own costumes, painted murals of a forest and “really dived into the artistic process” as they’ve learned Shakespeare, she said.

“Shakespeare wrote for actors,” she said. “When you perform it, all of a sudden it makes sense.”

More information on the shows mentioned above as well as others throughout the area follows:

**“ALMOST, MAINE,”** 7 p.m. Nov. 2 and 2 p.m. Nov. 4, Marian Central Catholic High School, 1001 McHenry Ave., Woodstock. Marian Central’s fall play by John Cariani. On a cold, clear, moonless night in the middle of winter, residents of Almost, Maine find themselves falling in and out of love in unexpected and often hilarious ways. Tickets: \$8 adults, \$4 seniors and students available at the door. Information: 815-338-4220 or [www.marian.com](http://www.marian.com).

**“ANTIGONE,”** 7 p.m. Nov. 1-3, Crystal Lake Central High School, 45 W. Franklin Ave., Crystal Lake. Play by Sophocles to be presented by Crystal Lake Central High School Theatre. Tickets: \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and students available at the door. Information: 815-459-2505.

**“BLITHE SPIRIT,”** Nov. 2-18, Woodstock Opera House, 121 Van Buren St., Woodstock. TownSquare Players latest theater production by Noel Coward. A British novelist comes face-to-face with his first wife seven years after she dies. Schedule: 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 3 p.m. Sundays. Tickets: \$23 adults, \$20 seniors and students at 815-338-5300 or [www.woodstockoperahouse.com](http://www.woodstockoperahouse.com).

**“NOISES OFF,”** 7 p.m. Nov. 1 and 7:30 p.m. Nov. 2-3, Cary-Grove High School, 2208 Three Oaks Road, Cary. Tony Award-nominated play by Michael Frayn and presented by Cary-Grove High School Drama Club. The farce is full of slapstick comedy, as the audience witnesses a touring theater company’s production from behind the scenes. Tickets: \$8 adults, \$5 seniors and students. Information: 847-639-3825.

**“TWELFTH NIGHT,”** 7:30 p.m. Nov. 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, Black Box Theatre at McHenry County College, 8900 Route 14, Crystal Lake. The magical comedy is filled with William Shakespeare’s most indelible comedic characters and sidesplitting situations. Presented by McHenry County College Theater Department. Tickets: \$15 general public, \$10 MCC students, faculty, staff, alumni and seniors at 815-455-8756 or [jgeller@mchenry.edu](mailto:jgeller@mchenry.edu).

**“BORN YESTERDAY,”** 7 p.m. Nov. 8-9 and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Nov. 10, McHenry High School West Campus Theater, 4724 W. Crystal Lake Road, McHenry. This classic comedy centers around the vulgar, egotistical junkman Harry Brock who comes to Washington to make crooked deals with government big-wigs. He brings along charming but dumb ex-chorus girl Billie, who eventually educates herself with the help of idealistic magazine reporter Paul Verrall. Tickets: \$5 for students/seniors and \$7 for adults at 815-385-7077 or email [kellsangie@district156.org](mailto:kellsangie@district156.org). Pre-sale preferred seating is available for an extra \$1 per ticket.

**“ALL THE WAY HOME,”** 7:30 p.m. Nov. 8-9, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Nov. 10, Johnsburg High School Theatre-in-the-Round, 2002 Ringwood Road, Johnsburg. Pulitzer Prize drama by Tad Mosel. Tickets: \$8 for adults and \$5 for students/senior citizens at 815-385-9233, Johnsburg High School or at the door.

**“PETER PAN,”** Nov. 9-11 and Nov. 16-18, Huntley High School Performing Arts Center, 13719 Harmony Road, Huntley. Presented by Spotlight Youth Theater, join all your favorite characters: Peter Pan, Wendy, John, Michael and the dastardly Captain Hook for this classic tale which never ages. Schedule: 7 p.m. Fridays; 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Saturdays; 3 p.m. Sundays. (School day shows are scheduled 11:45 a.m. Nov. 13 and 9:30 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. Nov. 15.) Tickets: \$12 for adults and \$9 for children, seniors, groups of 15 or more and Spotlight alumni. Cost is an extra \$2 at the door. (School day tickets cost \$9 for individuals or \$10 at the door.) Call 847-516-2298 or go to [www.spotlight.org](http://www.spotlight.org) for tickets and information.

**“JAY O’CALLAHAN: FATHER JOE,”** 8 p.m. Nov. 10, Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake. A riveting and poignant tale of the cost of a hero’s journey. Told by expert storyteller Jay O’Callahan, this true story of a man whose courage saved the USS Franklin from sinking after being bombed off the coast of Japan on March 19, 1945, plays with time and the listener’s imagination as only O’Callahan’s stories can. Tickets: Start at \$30 at 815-356-9212 or [www.rauecenter.org](http://www.rauecenter.org).

**“A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM,”** 7 p.m. Nov. 15-16; 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Nov. 17, McHenry High School East Campus Theatre, 1012 N. Green St., McHenry. McHenry East Campus presents one of Shakespeare’s most famous comedies. The story takes place in Ancient Athens. As the play begins, a love square is revealed: Helena loves Demetrius who loves Hermia – who loves Lysander. Tickets: \$5 for students/seniors and \$7 for adults at 815-385-1145 or email director Deb Swinford at [dlswinford@teachers.org](mailto:dlswinford@teachers.org). Pre-sale preferred seating is available for an extra \$1 per ticket.

**“THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST,”** 7 p.m. Nov. 15-17, Marengo Community High School, 110 Franks Road, Marengo. Popular Oscar Wilde comedy. Tickets: \$6 for students/seniors and \$8 for adults. Opening night performance includes a British-themed dinner theatre option put on by the Marengo Community High School chefs class. Tickets for the meal and play cost \$30, and early reservations are required for guaranteed seating with the dinner theatre option. To reserve, call high school secretary Debbie Gorter at 815-568-6511, ext. 1303.

**“THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER,”** 8 p.m. Nov. 23-24, Nov. 30, Dec. 1; 4 p.m. Nov. 25; 2 p.m. Dec. 1; 3 p.m. Dec. 2; Woodstock Opera House, 121 Van Buren St., Woodstock. Woodstock Musical Theatre Company presents the well-known Christmas tale and comedy about a couple struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant. Tickets: \$18 all seats; \$16 for groups of 10 or more at 815-338-5300 or [www.woodstockoperahouse.com](http://www.woodstockoperahouse.com).

**“IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE – A RADIO PLAY,”** Nov. 23- Dec. 14, Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake. Presented by Williams Street Repertory and inspired by the classic holiday film, this production is presented as a 1940s live radio broadcast in front of a live audience. Tickets: Start at \$22 at 815-356-9212 or [www.rauecenter.org](http://www.rauecenter.org).

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