

LRP INVITES THE COMMUNITY TO 'A NICE FAMILY GATHERING'

Judy Adams Kaplan selected "A Nice Family Gathering" by Phil Olson to present to the Last Resort Players Board of Directors in 2017.

"A Nice Family Gathering" is a story about a man who loved his wife so much, he almost told her," the play's description reads. "It's Thanksgiving Day and the first family gathering at the Lundeen household since the patriarch died. At the gathering, Dad comes back as a ghost with a mission; to tell his wife he loved her, something he neglected to tell her while he was alive. After all, they were only married for 41 years. The problem is, she can't hear or see him — and the trouble continues when Mom invites a date for dinner."

Variety describes the script as "a pleasantly quirky tale" and defines the playwright as having "an understated, but exquisite, sense of humor." The play is both funny and warm and set to open at the Florence Events Center on June 8. It will run two weekends with both evening and matinee performances.

A play is like an elaborate dance, choreographed by the director, using actors to move around the stage with the musical notes of this dance being the words of the playwright himself. As director, Kaplan has been both directing and performing in productions of the Last Resort Players for the past 14 years. She, along with "Gathering's" assistant director Victoria Seitzinger, also founded It's About Time Productions, which specializes in comedy.

Kaplan and Seitzinger envisioned "A Nice Family Gathering" as an opportunity to showcase the talents of the Last Resort Players.

Beth Johnston has stepped up to take the role of stage manager for the play. As stage manager, she is responsible for timing, cues, curtains, set pieces, props, entrances, coordinating with lighting and sound and calls for "places" (notifying actors when to be at ready).

Seitzinger is not only serving as assistant director, but she's working her magic both in designing, building and painting the set. She is a talented graphic artist and has worked painting sets for productions for The Shedd and the Hult Center in Eugene. Most of the set construction work is done off-site at the LRP warehouse, donated by Arliss Ulman, and "loaded in" near the time of opening. Countless volunteer hours (hundreds, in fact) are spent on most sets providing stand-out backdrops that enhance and bring dimension to each performance.

LRP has a prop room in the loft of the warehouse with oodles of props of shows past — from the 14 swords handcrafted for "Les Misérables" to a life-sized cow and everything in between. Toni Young is the Prop Manager of A Nice Family Gathering. She makes sure props are put on and removed from the stage when required and tracks down mislaid props to be kept on a table offstage.



Leah Goodwin, often directs and stage manages, and, in this production, she is handling lighting and sound. She will be directing LRP's fall musical, Grey Gardens, this November.

If the director is the chief executive officer, then the producer is the chief financial officer.

"A Nice Family Gathering" is being produced by Paula Ziegelasch, who first appeared in LRP's production of "Chicago" and has found herself best-suited to the business end of theater — raising income for the production and tracking expenses to stay on budget. Promoting a production through television, radio, newsprint, social media and spreading word of the attributes of the production, she serves as each show's head cheer leader.

LRP held auditions for "A Nice Family Gathering" in February and rehearsals began in March.

The cast includes Dana Rodet, Linda Sherwood, Joe Mathews, Grant Harmon, Kristi Whittington, Sheri Susee, Chuck Knorr and Beth Johnston.

Actors are currently rehearsing four nights a week to practice, hone, and polish their performances. They are expected to be "off book" — meaning their lines must be committed to memory, as quickly as possible.

Then comes "tech week" where all the elements of set, props, sound, lighting and costumes come together. This is the intense week just prior to each show's opening, which involves most days and long nights to finalize the many



details that go into a production. A final dress rehearsal, the night before opening night is one last opportunity to get the kinks out and be ready for the play to put its best face forward.

The dedication and commitment to bring the best possible performance to the stage is Last Resort Players' signature, making LRP one of the coast's premier theater companies. That is exactly what they have been doing right for the last 25 years — and destined to continue for the next 25!

Bring the family to "A Nice Family Gathering" for a feast of comedic proportions.

Tickets are on sale now at the Florence Events Center Box Office, 715 Quince St., online at eventcenter.org or by calling 541-997-1994.