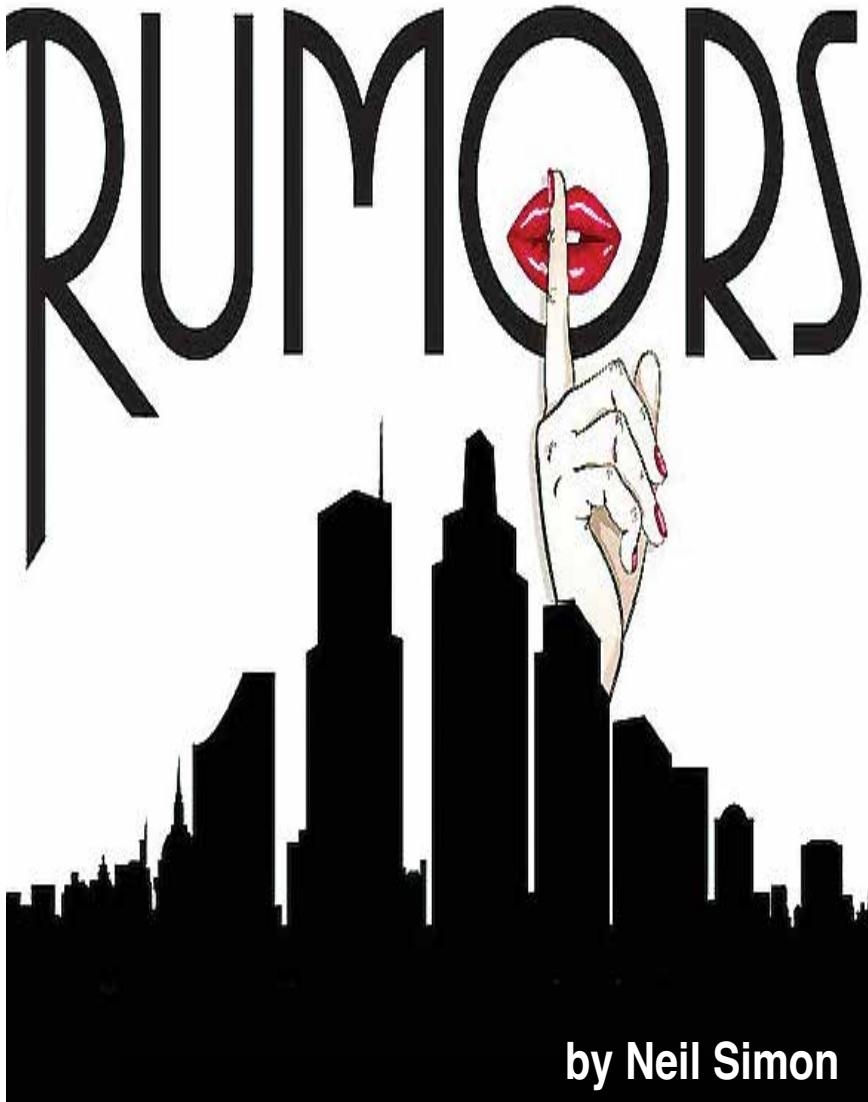


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presents



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A Message from the Director

Rumors by Neil Simon, is an interesting tale of lies, confusion, and, most importantly, “rumors.” The main theme of the play would best be summarized by the Mark Twain quote, “If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.” The entire play is about miscommunication and lying to avoid a scandal. In the process, the message gets garbled, and multiple different “truths” appear.

What evolves is a rather juicy, hilarious, and totally weird chain of events. The characters in *Rumors* would do well to follow Mr. Twain’s advice. However, as their “rumors” become increasingly convoluted, they struggle to remember them and keep their stories straight.


Hopefully, you will see the humor in their crazy antics as these characters struggle to keep up with their own ever-changing stories and the hysterics that ensue in Neil Simon’s farce, *Rumors*, which is no “rumor.”

BJ Hughes

Director and Resident Scenic Designer



NEIL SIMON'S RUMORS



Director BJ Hughes

Stage Manager Keith Potter

Scenic Designer BJ Hughes

Master Carpenter..... Frank Dansby

Costume DesignNorma Richardson

ChoreographerElise Wright

Lighting Design and Technician.....Nate Barnes

Sound Design and Technician..... Scott Welborn

Production Assistant.....Janice Aiken

Set ConstructionBridget Burpee, Frank Dansby,
Bobby Jean Hannon, BJ Hughes,
Dan Jennings, Alan Manno,
Keith Potter, and Tony Seaman

PublicityNorma Richardson
and Marian Sorensen

Box Office Shirley Beall
and Phyllis Waldrep

SETTING

The living room of Charlie and Myra Brock on a quiet evening in the Palisades about twenty miles north of New York City.

TIME

May 1990

Act I

15-Minute Intermission

Act II

The Players *(In order of Appearance)*

Chris Gorman	Heather Shepherd
Ken Gorman	Mitchell Brinkley
Claire Ganz.....	Jill Shedd
Lenny Ganz	Chris Gansel
Ernie Cusack	Isaac Melton
Cookie Cusack	Karen Beyer
Glen Cooper	Will Pitts
Cassie Cooper.....	Elise Wright
Officer Welch	Brad Jester
Officer Pudney.....	Keith Potter



115 North Hill St. Griffin, GA. 30223



The Players



KAREN BEYER (Cookie Cusack) recently played the delightfully, dim-witted Millie in *Exit Laughing*. Previous MSP roles include Martha in *The Game's Afoot...* and Mother in *Barefoot in the Park*. Karen has worked in theatre for 40+ years onstage with The Alliance Theatre, ART Station, Theatrical Outfit, Stage Door and Peachtree Playhouse as well as theatres in N.J. and N.Y. She has also directed and choreographed dozens of musical productions for theatres in Georgia. Karen is a proud member of SAG-AFTRA, with 50+ film and television credits including *Poms*, *The Resident*, *Queen Sugar*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Army Wives* and recently, Lifetime's *Single Black Female 3*. Her 30+ year dance career included intensive study and performance with the Springer, Nashville, Tampa and N.J. Ballet companies. Karen is an assistant SCP instructor for Tai Chi and Sword. She thanks her husband, Bob, and the SCP community for their amazing support, and BJ, Norma and Marian for giving her another opportunity to be part of the MSP family!



MITCHELL BRINKLEY III (Ken Gorman) last appeared as Hoke Colburn in the 2023 sold out production of *Driving Miss Daisy*. He made the stage a part of his life at an exceedingly early age. Mitchell transitioned into community theatre by way of Theatre Macon, where he currently sits on the board of directors. In the years he has been on the board, he has been in many shows such as *Fences*, *The Elephant Man* and *Prom*. Outside of Macon, he has played in The Henry Players production of *Fences* and *12 Angry Jurors*. Mitchell is ecstatic to be back where he got his start outside of Macon!



CHRISTOPHER GANSEL (Lenny Ganz) appeared earlier this season as Felix Geisel in *The Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays*. Last season he played Leo Clark in *Leading Ladies* and Matthew/Jesus in *Cotton Patch Gospel*. Other roles at MSP include Ken de la Maize in *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*. Vanya in *Vanya, Sonia, Masha, and Spike*, the Man in *Now and Then*, Kris Kringle in *Another Night Before Christmas*, Watson in *Holmes and Watson* and C.C. Showers in *The Diviners*. Griffin audiences may also remember him as Gomez in Griffin Ballet Theatre's production of *The Addams Family*. Other favorite roles include Robert Kincaid in *The Bridges of Madison County*, Edward Bloom in *Big Fish*, Peter in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and both Freddy and Lawrence in different productions of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Chris is a two-time MAT Award nominee for his work as George Milton in *Of Mice and Men* and Dan Goodman in *Next to Normal*. For Beth: "I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest."



BRAD JESTER (Officer Welch) appeared last season as the eccentric upstairs neighbor, Victor Velasco, in *Barefoot in the Park*. Audiences may also remember him as Lou Cohen in *The 1940's Radio Hour* and Vinnie in *The Odd Couple*. He is delighted to be performing with the Main Street Players again! Brad is a speech communication and humanities instructor at Southern Crescent Technical College and lives in Griffin with his wife Liz and their twelve-year-old son Lincoln.



ISAAC MELTON (Ernie Cusack) appeared as the Telephone man in last year's production of *Barefoot in the Park* and Reverend Duncan Wooley in *Leading Ladies*. He has been in local productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* as Leonato and Adolfo Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*. He is thankful to his wife Shelly and his three sons for all their support.



WILL PITTS (Glenn Cooper) appeared earlier this season as Simon Bright in *the Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays* and as Paul Bratter in *Barefoot in the Park* and Butch Meyers in *Leading Ladies* last season. He graduated from Gordon State College with an associate's degree in Theater Arts. He has had many lead roles throughout his career including Jesus (*Cotton Patch Gospel*), Trinculo (*The Tempest*), The Ghost of Christmas Present (*A Christmas Carol*), and Vlad Popov (*Anastasia*).

Lisa Cesnik Ferguson, Patrick Horne, and Lori Bush provided his theater training. Will has won awards for his acting, singing, and pianist work. Some awards include first place at regional literary for Duo-Interpretation, second place at regional literary for Male Quartet, and 6 years of superior ratings from the National Federation of Music Clubs. He is also in a small-town local band called MOD 20. Will is extremely grateful for this opportunity and would like to thank Aubree, his family, friends, cast, and most importantly Jesus for all they have done!



KEITH POTTER (Officer Pudney) appeared as the "out of breath delivery man" in *Barefoot in the Park* and was a musician (guitar) in *Cotton Patch Gospel* last season. Prior to this, he had been involved in theater for many years while serving in the US Army in Korea and Germany where he participated in productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Greater Tuna*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Annie*, *Cyrano De Bergerac*, and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. He is in his third season with MSP, serving

as a volunteer in set construction, sound tech, stage management and stagehand work. He has been involved at MSP for the productions of *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*, *Tin Woman*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Miracle on South Division Street*, *Leading Ladies*, *Driving Ms. Daisy*, *Grace and Glorie*, *The Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays*, *I DO! I DO!* and *Exit Laughing*. He was the recipient of the Most Valuable Volunteer for the 2023-2024 season. Keith loves collaborating with the staff and actors at MSP and is blessed to be able to take part in the magic that is The Main Street Players.



JILL SHEDD (Claire Ganz) just appeared as the nervous, lonely Connie in *Exit Laughing* and delighted audiences earlier this season as the caustic critic, Daria Chase, in *The Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays*. Other roles at Main Street include Meg Snider in *Leading Ladies*, Bernice Roth in the *Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* and Masha, in *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike*. Favorite roles with other companies include the Ice Queen, Jadis, from *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe*; Muriel, from *Dirty*

Rotten Scoundrels; Sylvia from *The Women*; and Rona Lisa Peretti from *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Most significantly, she was able to perform as Francesca from *Bridges of Madison County* just as stages everywhere went black for the pandemic. She thanks the good Lord for talents and gifts, but more importantly, for an understanding husband who enjoys the performing arts.



HEATHER SHEPHERD (Chris Gorman) appeared earlier this season as the sassy Agnes in *I DO! I DO!* and Madge Geisel in *The Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays*. Last season she musically directed and played multiple roles in *Cotton Patch Gospel*. She is so glad to be on stage again here with her MSP family. This is her tenth show with Main Street- she sends her love to the whole cast and crew- they have been amazing to work with! Her last show with The Henry Players was *Next*

to Normal which earned her a MAT award. She sends a huge thank you and love to BJ, Marian, and Norma for every opportunity to be a part of their family here. Shout out to her bestie, friends and family, and the best bandmates ever. Greatest love and ultimate shoutout to her husband Paul, their children, and grands



ELISE WRIGHT (Cassie Cooper) is a regular at Main Street. Some of her previous roles include Rachel (*Exit Laughing*), Aggie Wheeler (*The Game's Afoot...*), Gloria Whitmore (*Grace and Glorie*), Corrie Bratter (*Barefoot in the Park*), Shelby (*Steel Magnolias*), Helsa Wensel (*The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*), Karol (*Another Night Before Christmas*), and Abby (*Now and Then*). Elise graduated from Lees-McRae College with a theatre arts degree and has her master's degree in arts administration

from the University of Oklahoma. She is also grateful to everyone who comes to support the arts!

Artistic Staff and Crew



JANICE AIKEN (Production Assistant) has helped behind the scenes with many MSP productions. Onstage performances include *War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast*, *A Trip to Bountiful*, *Inherit the Wind* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She was recognized by the GAAA Heart for the Arts as Main Street Player's Most Valuable Volunteer for the 2016-2017 season. Janice serves on our board and has been volunteering for Main Street Players since the fall of 2012. She has been invaluable

to our organization and has worked the Box Office, sold concessions, ushered, trained others to usher, answered the phones, helped clean the theatre prior to openings, worked set construction, repaired props and is an integral part of our Theater for Young Audiences program.



NATE BARNES (Lighting Designer/Lighting Technician) has been the Griffin Spalding County School System's Auditorium manager for the past eleven years. During this time, he has worked in both audio and lighting. Nate has experience in lighting and audio for several theatrical, ballet, and concert organizations. Nate also volunteers on the audio and visual team at Oak Hill Baptist. He is honored to work with MSP again.



FRANK DANSBY (Master Carpenter) was Main Street's most valuable volunteer for the 2018-2019 season. He and his wife, Martha, are lifelong supporters of the arts and in particular theatre. They are active members at St. John Lutheran Church. Eight years ago, Frank joined Resident Scenic Designer BJ Hughes backstage at Main Street Players as a volunteer and quickly became a tremendous asset to the production team. Three years ago, he was added as Master Carpenter. With

his background as an airplane mechanic and owner of a small home repair business (Frank's Fix It Factory) plus his vast knowledge of DIY (do it yourself), he quickly noticed the construction techniques specific to theatre. With his construction and carpentry skills, he has allowed BJ to expand his vision of what our productions can look like, resulting in even more professional looking sets and scenery. Thank you, Frank, for being part of the Main Street family!!



BJ HUGHES (Resident Designer) is enjoying his fourteenth season with Main Street Players. He is even more delighted to be celebrating his 53rd anniversary in professional theatre during which he has worked as an actor, teacher, director, and designer. During his career he has produced, directed, and designed over 150 productions. BJ is originally from New Jersey. After obtaining a degree in theatre, he spent four years touring America in classical repertory before settling in Atlanta

where for the next 30 years he acted, taught, and directed at the Alliance Theatre. He extends special thanks to Norma and Marian for inviting him to Griffin and providing a home with this creative theatre company.



NORMA RICHARDSON (Director/Artistic Director/ Costume Design) has been involved with theatre for most of her life and has appeared on several Atlanta stages, among others. As a director her credits include, *I Do! I Do!*, *Cotton Patch Gospel*, *Miracle on South Division Street*, *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*, *Another Night Before Christmas*, *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Honky Tonk Highway*, *Nunset Boulevard*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Titanic, the Musical*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *Every Christmas Story Ever Told (and Then Some!)* in 2015 and 2019, *Mama Won't Fly*, and *Our Town*. On stage performances include *Foxfire*, *Now and Then*, *The Wild Women of Winedale*, *Fireflies*, *The Lion in Winter*, *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*, *Southern Comforts*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Love Letters*, *The Little Foxes*, *The Guys*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Grace & Glorie* (2 times), and *Same Time Next Year*. Her career in television began with Turner Broadcasting/CNN. After leaving Turner, she was an Executive Vice President with Primerica and General Manager for their corporate television production department for over 20 years. She is a native of Griffin, Georgia and is the Founding Artistic Director of Main Street Players.



MARIAN SORENSEN (Associate Artistic Director) began her journey in theatre 54 years ago in a summer stock production of *Man of La Mancha*. She received a minor in Speech and Drama from LaGrange College but received most of her theatrical training at the Alliance Theatre School at the Woodruff Arts Center. While there, she was contracted as a teacher (her other passion) for both their youth and adult programs. She served as the Assistant Director of the School from 1981-1986. Marian has performed and/or directed on

the stages at The Alliance Theatre, Theatrical Outfit, Open City Theatre and Theatre in the Square. For MSP she has directed *Steel Magnolias*, *The Tin Woman*, *Foxfire*, *Now and Then*, *The Lion in Winter*, *The 1940's Radio Hour*, *A Tuna Christmas*, *War of the Worlds: The Panic Broadcast*, *The Dining Room*, *Driving Miss Daisy* (2011), *Grace and Glorie*, and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. She was the 2021-2022 recipient of the most valuable volunteer award for MSP. She would like to thank her husband, Neil, for his continued support.



SCOTT WELBORN (Sound Design and Technician) is no stranger to the theatre. He has worked with audio and lighting in a variety of theatrical and concert venues over the years and has found himself most comfortable behind the scenes with the technical aspects of the theatre, though there have been a few rare forays on the stage. Scott enjoys lending his talents where they are needed including volunteering on the Audio/Visual Team at First Baptist Griffin and looks forward to whatever opportunities may come his way moving forward.

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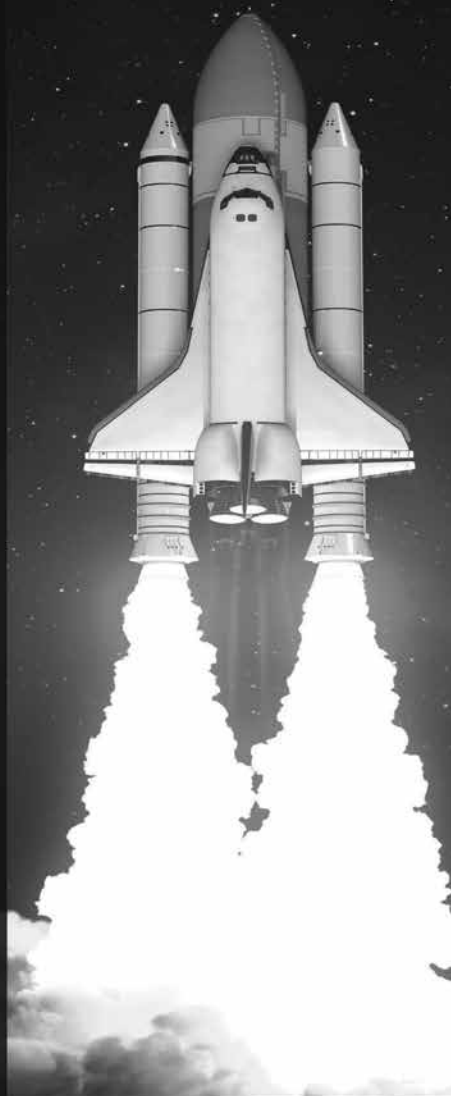
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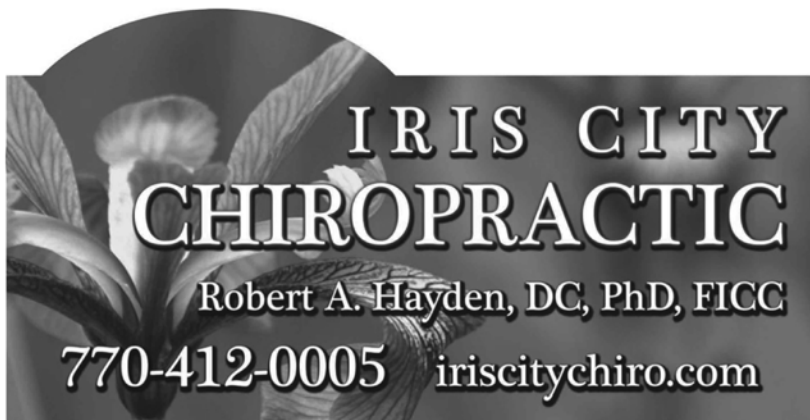
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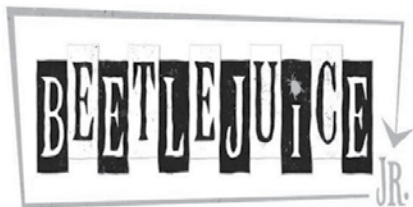
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