

## THEATER

# Theater Company makes a play for new works

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If there's such a thing as a theatrical saint, Jan Radcliff might be it.

"She's put her heart, mind and soul into this venture," said Livonia playwright David MacGregor. "She's interested in the creative process."

Radcliff, a Birmingham resident, is one of the founders of Heartlands Theatre Company, producers of the fourth annual Play by Play 12-hour marathon, on Saturday, April 1 at Roper School in Birmingham.

MacGregor's comedic play, "Revelation," will be among the 22 original works, ranging from 6 to 15 minutes. The plays will be presented twice between noon and midnight, an average of three to four plays each hour.

"We provide a venue to showcase new plays," said Radcliff. "We keep discovering new people."

Play by Play is Heartlands Theatre Company's only fundraiser. The event features the combined work of more than 100 writers, actors, directors and the-

ater artists.

Among those expected to attend are people from the Screen Actor's Guild, artistic directors of local and regional theater companies, theater buffs and of course, relatives of those people performing on stage.

"It does expose actors who regularly work at the Detroit Repertory Theatre and other venues to new audiences," said Radcliff. "We asked them to list where they're performing next in their biography."

Heartlands Theatre's focus is on developing and nurturing the artistic theater company. "We're not defining content," explained Radcliff. "We're interested in the process of writing plays."

But something happened over the last four years. They found that audiences "were blown away by the level of talent," said Radcliff. "I'm blown away by the talent and quality of the scripts we receive. We got 120 short scripts from all over Michigan and the world, the 22 we selected are really quite remarkable."

Play by Play has also become a place where people in the theater community network with one another.

## Play by Play

What: Features 22 new works by local and regional authors. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

When: noon to midnight Saturday, April 1. Seventh inning stretch 6:30-7 p.m.

Where: Roper School, Adams Road campus, between Maple and Big Beaver Roads, (three blocks north of Maple on west side of Adams Road), Birmingham.

Cost: All day admission \$20, hour-by-hour tickets \$5. Tickets sold at the door on day of marathon, first come, first served. Cash or check only. Call (248) 988-1094, Ext. 1 or (248) 433-1233 for more information. Proceeds support Heartlands Theatre Company's writing programs and productions.

"They're so involved in plays that they don't get to see other people's work," said Radcliff. "This gives them an opportunity to watch and support that work. It creates a sense of community." Radcliff will present "A Big Girl Now," a drama about a woman who has put her father into a private-care residence, and how she feels about leaving him.

Actor Mary Rychlewski will perform in Radcliff's play.

"It's beautifully written, honest," said Rychlewski, who co-founded Heartlands with Radcliff. "It's about her own guilt for not being there when her father

was well. Now it's up to her to make him comfortable, and how she feels about having to leave him."

MacGregor, who teaches English and a film class at

Wayne State University, participates in the marathon because it's just plain fun.

"Writing plays is a long tortuous process," he said. "To get people to look at your play makes it complete."

Playwrights seeing their works on stage is much like the feeling an artist gets when their work is exhibited.

"If you've never been to the theater before, you'll learn how important it is," said Rychlewski. "How it brings up issues, makes you laugh and cry. If I get you into the theater and you like it, you'll come back."

Heartlands Theatre Company works with artists year-round encouraging them to develop new scripts. Two of this year's

playwrights participated in Heartlands's Young Playwright's program at Fitzgerald High School in Madison Heights.

If you can't attend the marathon, but want to make a tax deductible donation, send checks to Heartlands Theatre Company, P.O. Box 2014, Birmingham, MI 48012

## Retreat

This year the group is presenting a Writer's Retreat for anyone interested in learning about the craft of dramatic writing, Friday-Sunday, May 5-7 at the Skyline Conference Center in Almont, Mich. The cost is \$200 per person.

For more information, call (248) 988-1094, Ext. 1 or (248) 433-1233.

## WHAT'S COOKING

Check out the new menu at Panini Cafe & Grill, 42087 Ford Road, (between Haggerty and Lilley) Canton, (734) 981-7000.

Owner Adib Yassine has introduced more vegetarian items, combos and sandwiches. The Middle Eastern style restaurant offers freshly squeezed juices, a

variety of salads, soups, appetizers, sandwiches, and entrees. Panini Cafe & Grill is open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, closed Sunday.

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