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**Volume 1 • Issue 2**

**Maple Grove • Plymouth • New Hope • Crystal • Robbinsdale**

**February 2004**

# “Meet Me in St. Louis”

There's an art treasure in Northwest Hennepin county – Cross Community Players (CCP), and this treasure has a heart of gold. This year, CCP celebrates 24 years of providing high-quality musical theatre. And, how they've been able to keep going is nothing short of a miracle.

Local stage talent will bring another musical to life, “Meet Me in St. Louis,” February 20-29, 2004 at Osseo Senior High School's Auditorium.

CCP relies almost totally on a volunteer staff, including the actors. “We are a non-profit organization, whose profits go to support local foodshelves such as C.R.O.S.S. (Christians Reaching Out in Social Services) and CEAP, the Community Emergency Assistance Program.,” says Board President Renee LaPlume.

“We appreciate our relationships with the local schools providing us with the use of their facilities. However, our expenses to use those facilities have sky-rocketed,”

*Rehearsals and set-production for “Meet Me in St. Louis” are well underway*

“As a result, any profits will be squeezed this year more than ever. We may only be able to give a fourth of what we were able to give the foodshelves last year,” he adds.



liaison, Nancy Moorman. “Ideally, we'd like help funding individual performances. The cost to use the school facilities averages out to about \$1,000 per performance,” she adds.

Two stage plays are slated for 2004, “Meet Me in St. Louis,” in February and “Brigadoon,” in June.

Last June CCP presented eight performances of “West Side Story” at Osseo Senior High. The group considered it a resounding success. CCP solicits written feedback from its audience. Those results from “West Side Story” tell it from an audience perspective, “The music is great. The action is fast paced. Very professional.” “Excellent singing and dancing.” “Great play! Real characters. Great singers/actors. Orchestra was superb!” Success might also be measured in the continued careers of some of the actors. After “West Side Story,” two of the actors went on to audition at the Ordway Music Theater.

CCP also asks its audiences to provide suggestions on improvement. “Do three weekends...” “Offer more daytime performances.” The audience also makes suggestions for future

shows such as “Grease” and “The Sound of Music,” among other popular musicals.

It is clear that the community needs this organization if theater is going to be a presence in Northwest Hennepin County. CCP is the only community theater in the area. And, it is considered quality theater at affordable prices.

CCP draws from grant resources to help with their operating budget, such as the Minnesota Regional Arts Council, Target Corporation, Wells Fargo, Thrivent and Boston Scientific. “It's nice to have local businesses involved, because CCP represents the community, providing a creative outlet for young and old – it kind of pulls us together like a family,” says business

Auditions for “Brigadoon” will begin the second weekend in April, with rehearsals beginning the third week of April. Rehearsals continue Monday through Friday up to the performance dates (except Memorial Day). There will be eight performances.

Tony Johnson, a parishioner at St. Joseph the Worker in Maple Grove, will direct “Meet Me in St. Louis,” and his wife, Laura, will choreograph the show. More than 100 people auditioned for the show, and 40 people were cast, along with a 25-person orchestra.

Sounds like a lot of work, but we hear the results are fantastic. Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles – school chums, and talent scouts, come on down and, “Meet Me in St. Louis!”