



The Montford Park Players
North Carolina's Longest Running
Shakespeare Festival

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Notice of Membership Meeting and Picnic

Membership Meeting & Picnic

The Meeting of the membership of The Montford Park Players will be held Saturday, August 25, 2018 at the Hazel Robinson Amphitheatre, from 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

Items on the Annual Meeting agenda include:

1. Selecting three plays for the 2019 Summer Season;
2. Electing one adult member of the Board of Directors;
3. Such other business as may come before the membership meeting.

Our bylaws define a member of The Montford Park Players, *for purposes of voting*, as anyone who has participated in any way at MPP during the past two seasons (beginning with 2017's *Merchant of Venice* through 2018's *Hamlet*, also including board and committee work, front of house volunteers, **AND ALSO** who is 12 years old or older). Guests and old members are always welcome, but do not have voting rights. Please sign in with the Executive Director on arrival to receive your ballot package. You will only be given one package so please do not lose it! Our Bylaws require that you be present in order to vote.

Picnic

Our membership meeting and picnic is a pot-luck affair. MPP will provide hamburgers, hot dogs (regular and vegan/vegetarian), buns and soft drinks. Casseroles, salads, chips, melons, cakes and pies are always welcome and will be devoured by our starving actors. Lunch will begin at 12:00 pm; **the business meeting will begin at 1:00 pm.**

Your Board of Directors

The board of directors of MPP is composed of 10 elected individuals (nine adults, one youth member).

Our current board membership is as follows:

Class of 2019

Stephanie Hickling-Beckman, Sec'y	1st Term	mzshick@gmail.com	(828) 279-0467
Jonathan Dunlap, Vice Chair	1st Term	JDunlap@vwlawfirm.com	(828) 237-4807

Class of 2020

Michael Fisher	1st Term	thebestdayever@me.com	(828) 747-2590
Jessica Frantz, Chair	2nd Term	jlfrantz@gmail.com	(828) 712-3486
Paul Mashburn, CPA, Treasurer	1st Term	pwmashburn@gmail.com	(404) 454-6346
John P. Mendenhall	1st Term	jpmenden@gmail.com	(505) 975-1030
Jennifer Pearson	1st Term	jpearson@frugalframer.com	(828) 258-2435
Charles Umberger	1st Term	cduforex@gmail.com	(828) 400-5909

Youth Representative Class of 2020

Haven Volpe	1st Term	havenvolpe@gmail.com	(828) 775-4406
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Principal Advisor

John Russell, Executive Director	john.russell@montfordparkplayers.org (828) 275-1454
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The Executive Director is the principal advisor to the board and to the Executive Committee, with voice but no vote.

NOTE: Adam Arthur, Class of 2018, has resigned from the board due to business reasons.

The board and staff are currently engaged in a Strategic Planning Process, facilitated by John Curtis of Integrated Organizational Development, Inc. The purpose of this process is to position Montford Park Players for the next several years as a thriving, mature theatre company adhering to the highest standards and operating on sound financial principles. This will include a Donor-Driven, Major Gifts fundraising campaign to begin late this year, along with changes in the manner in which the Board of Directors is operated. **The Board has transitioned from a Working Board to a board comprised of strategic thinkers and experts in the field of not-for-profit operations and fundraising. We encourage nominations of those persons who are capable of fulfilling these roles.**

The Governance Working Group has been recruiting a stellar group of candidates for the last two years, and the board recommends the following person for the Class of 2021, who has qualified as a Member of the Montford Park Players:

- Jessica Johnson – stage manager for *Robin Hood* and an active professional in the field of organizational development and fundraising

The membership will elect one adult for the Class of 2021. Members may make nominations from the floor; however, you must have the prior written consent of the person being nominated.

Selecting The 2019 Summer Season

The Artistic Working Group (composed of one board members, two staff members, and two non-board/staff members, and chaired by Stephanie Hickling-Beckman) has selected a “pool” of shows for the 2019 summer season, divided into three categories:

- a) Shakespeare blockbusters;
- b) Shakespeare second tier shows;
- c) Other shows, including shows we have never before performed.

After consideration of input from both members and audience members, the Artistic Working Group has selected the following shows to be voted on by the membership (The membership will select 1 show from each of the following categories):

a) Shakespeare blockbusters:

Macbeth, Henry IV pt 1, Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing

b) Shakespeare second tiers:

Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, Anthony and Cleopatra, Two Gentleman of Verona, Merry Wives of Windsor, Julius Caesar, Love's Labours Lost

c) Other shows: 10 nominations maximum; **No plays can be nominated from the two previous lists. This does not mean we will not produce them. They just cannot be voted on in this category. Each show nominated by a member must have 10 written endorsers on the nomination form, which may be in any written format.**

We're pleased to tell you that we've obtained the rights to perform *Shakespeare in Love* to open our 2019 season in May!

Executive Director's Report to the Membership

Dear friends,

I have the pleasure of telling you that 2017 was another successful year for the Montford Park Players. For the SIXTH year in a row, we ranked in THIRD place in total attendance among outdoor theatres in North Carolina, behind *The Lost Colony* and *Unto These Hills*, surpassing attendance for *Horn in the West*. Our total attendance was 10,806, and our production of *Peter Pan* recorded the highest attendance in our history, with 3,932 in attendance.

Our productions have been well received and highly-rated by audience members and critics alike!

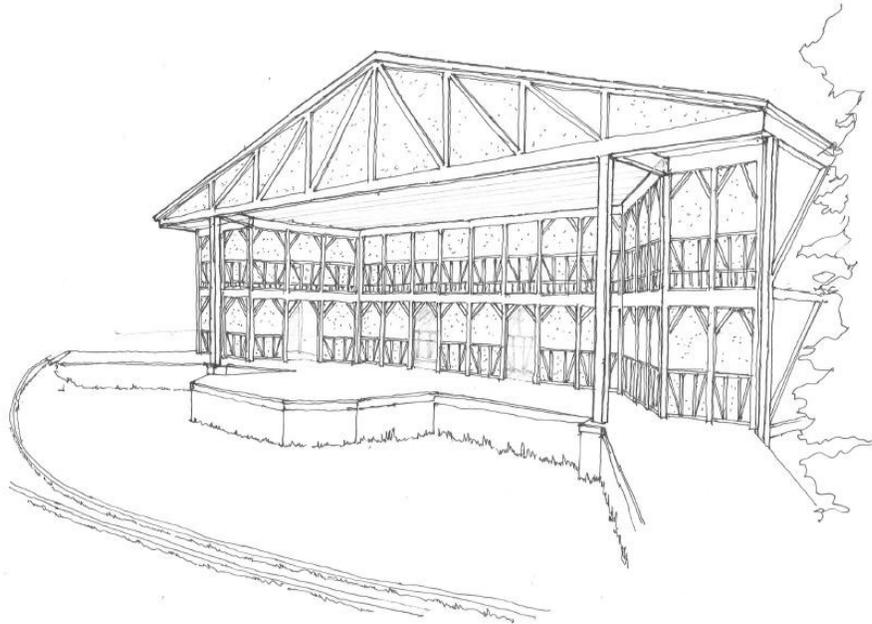
Our construction plans were submitted to Development Services two years ago for review. We have been in negotiations with them all year regarding issues that they want addressed, including additional parking spaces and handicapped parking. This is the principal reason why construction has not yet begun although our contractor is ready to start! I'm pleased to say that we've negotiated an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce to allow us to use up to 54 parking spaces on weekend nights, and that Parks and Rec is looking favorably on our idea of constructing six handicapped parking spaces into the hillside on stage right, with access from Jersey Street. In the meantime, The Tourism Development Authority is holding the \$125,000 grant awarded in 2012 in trust for us, to be paid upon completion of all aspects of our Phase 1 renovations, which include enhancement of audience enjoyment, and additions to the stagehouse. We're in the process of raising funds to 1) build the handicapped parking area; 2) redo the audience seating area, and we'll address the other parts of the capital project after these are constructed.

This year so far, we've managed to accomplish some great things!

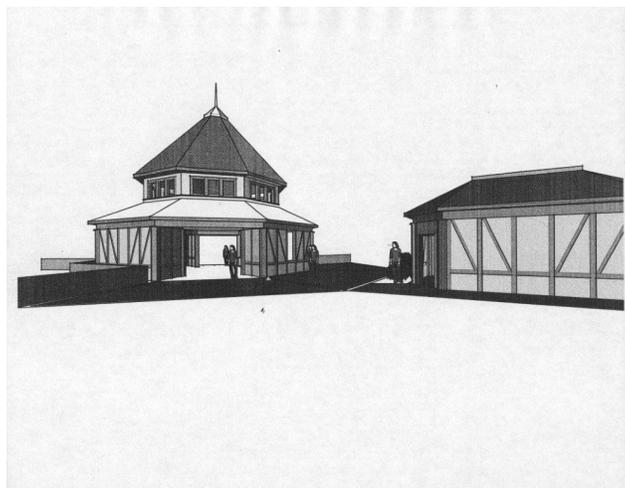
- Two of our shows thus far have eclipsed our attendance records: first, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with **4,273**, followed by *Robin Hood*, with **6,574!** Our season opener, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, recorded attendance 31% above what we projected. We've already recorded 12,161 for the season as of August 4, and expect great things from *James and the Giant Peach* and *Hamlet!*
- Our reviews have been stellar, as we continue to raise the bar on artistic quality.
- I'm extremely pleased with the progress of our Strategic Plan, and look forward to moving toward a Donor-Driven Major Gifts Campaign, under the leadership of John Curtis.
- Your Executive Director was appointed in July 2017 to the board of the North Carolina Arts Council by Gov. Roy Cooper, and also named to the Theatre Consulting Group at SETC.
- I look forward, as I know you do, to new facilities that will enhance our ability to perform Shakespeare and other playwrights, and that will enhance the comfort and enjoyment of our audience members.

In conclusion, we've had a very positive year so far. I am excited to be working with you this year and helping MPP raise the bar even higher.

Regards, John Russell, Executive Director john.russell@montfordparkplayers.org



Our New Stagehouse!
New Stagehouse Perspective Drawing by William Wheeler, Architect



New Welcome Center Perspective Drawing by William Wheeler, Architect