



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

**92 Gay Street**

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<https://www.montfordparkplayers.org>

## **Notice of Membership Meeting and Picnic**

### **Membership Meeting & Picnic**

The Meeting of the Membership of The Montford Park Players will be held **Saturday, Sept. 7, 2019** 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 2020 Summer Season;
2. Electing two adult members of the Board of Directors;
3. Electing a youth representative to the Board of Directors;
4. Voting on changes to the Bylaws of the Corporation;
5. 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 2018's *Importance of Being Earnest* through 2019's *Sixteen Years Tried*, 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 current 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](mailto: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      jlrfrantz@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](mailto:jpearson@frugalframer.com)      (828) 258-2435  
Charles Umberger      1st Term      cdforex@gmail.com      (828) 400-5909

### **Class of 2021**

Jessica Johnson      1<sup>st</sup> Term      [jesslbjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:jesslbjohnson@gmail.com)      (860) 908-2030

### **Youth Representative Class of 2020**

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

### **Principal Advisor**

John Russell, Executive Director      john.russell@montfordparkplayers.org  
(828) 275-1454

The Executive Director is the principal advisor to the board and to the Executive Committee, with voice but no vote.

**NOTE: due to business reasons, Stephanie Hickling-Beckman and Jonathan Dunlap have decided not to stand for re-election.**

The board and staff have been engaged in a Strategic Planning Process. 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 persons for the Class of 2022, who have qualified as Members of the Montford Park Players:

- Stan Ingber – attorney-at-law and retired Professor of Constitutional Law at CCNY;
- Ashleigh Millett Goff – co-founder and director of the Montford Moppets.

The membership will elect two adults for the Class of 2022. Members may make nominations from the floor; however, you must have the prior written consent of the person being nominated.

Additionally, Haven Volpe has decided to step down as Youth Member, so we'll be electing a youth member for a three-year term. A youth member must be under 18 years of age, and will serve a three-year term, or until the first annual meeting following her/his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## Selecting The 2020 Summer Season

The Artistic Working Group (composed of two board members, three staff members, and one non-board/staff member, and chaired by Stephanie Hickling-Beckman) has selected a “pool” of shows for the 2020 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:

**As You Like It; Macbeth; Much Ado About Nothing; Tempest; Twelfth Night**

- b) Shakespeare second tiers:

**Antony & Cleopatra; Comedy of Errors; Cymbeline; Henry IV.2; Pericles; Two Gentlemen of Verona**

- 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.**

## VOTING ON CHANGES TO BYLAWS

The Governance Working Group of the Board of Directors has been working on updating the Bylaws of Montford Park Players, due to changes in our operations and to ensure compliance with NC law. After the proposal was submitted to the Membership last August, we discovered that one provision in the re-write did not comply with current NC law, so we will be voting on them again this year at the Annual Meeting.

You can download a copy of the proposed Bylaws here:  
<https://www.montfordparkplayers.org/about-us/members-page/>

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## Executive Director's Report to the Membership

Dear friends,

I have the pleasure of telling you that 2018 was another successful year for the Montford Park Players. For the SEVENTH 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 **18,326**, and our production of *Robin Hood: The Legend of Sherwood* recorded the highest attendance in our history, with 6,574 in attendance. Our summer attendance last year was **93%** higher than in 2017!

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

Our construction plans were submitted to Development Services and Parks & Rec staff three 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.

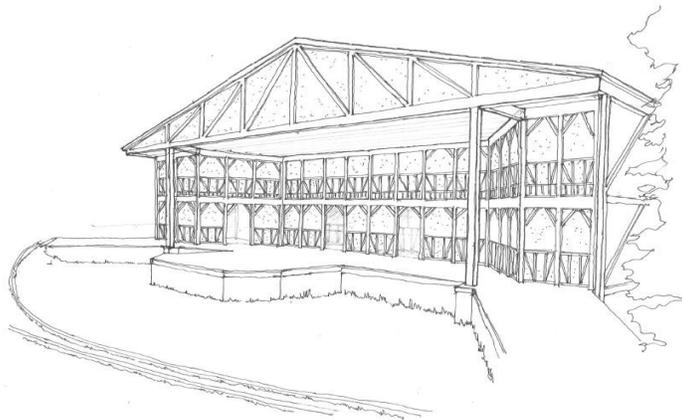
**This year so far**, we've managed to accomplish some great things!

- Using unrestricted funds, we've been able to hire and I'm pleased to introduce you to Beth Coakley, our new Director of Donor Relations. She's an expert in fundraising, with previous experience at Virginia Commonwealth University and The United Way. Working with our current and prospective donors, she'll lead us in our fundraising campaign for capital improvements and staff enhancement.
- Our reviews have been stellar, as we continue to raise the bar on artistic quality.
- 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.

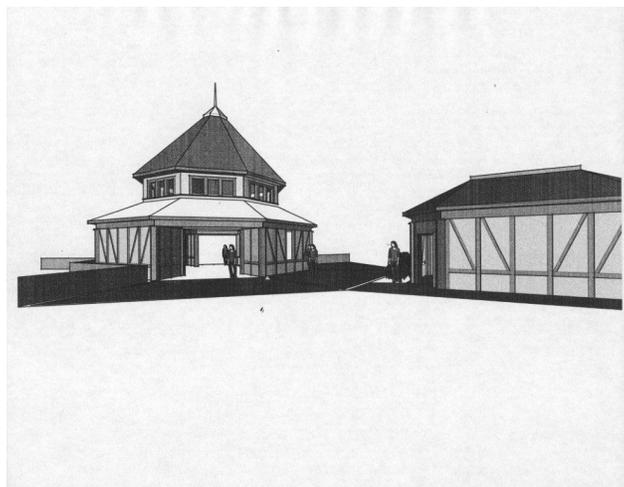
In conclusion, we've had a very positive year so far. I am excited to be working with you this year and helping MPP raise the bar even higher.

Regards,

John Russell, Executive Director [john.russell@montfordparkplayers.org](mailto:john.russell@montfordparkplayers.org)



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



**New Welcome Center Perspective Drawing by William Wheeler, Architect**

# Montford Park Players Accessible Parking Project



- A. Re-pave Jersey Street entrance drive from Courtland Avenue
- B. New handicap accessible parking lot
- C. New accessible walking path to amphitheatre
- D. Brick paved accessible seating level

Estimated completion - three months after reaching fundraising goal of \$100,000