

President's Annual Report - 2019-2020

The Players of Utica 2019-2020 production season saw a mix of successes and disappointments. We were able to make significant improvements to our building but had to postpone some that we had planned. We produced successful regular-season shows but had to cancel others. The “disappointments” were due almost entirely to the restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 epidemic.

- **Our Building.** Players made several improvements to our building at 1108 State St.:
 - Much needed flooring was installed in the lobby.
 - The lobby ceiling was painted.
 - New LED lighting and state-of-the-art switch board were purchased and installed in the Black Box theatre, completely replacing our old lighting system. (Some lights remain to be installed.)
 - Our work and storage area in the main-stage area was cleaned out (much discarded) and organized. Costumes, props, set pieces, and building materials were organized.
 - To watch costs, we decided not to purchase a marquee for the outside of the building; this might be done for next season.
- **Shows.**
 - Players produced three very successful regular-season shows: *Assisted Living: The Musical*, *The Clean House*, and *The Dixie Swim Club*. The COVID-19 restrictions forced us to cancel the last two shows of the season: *I Hate Hamlet* and *Always... Patsy Cline*.
 - Players also produced a Halloween Cabaret, a Holiday Cabaret, the Ryan Bliss Magic Show, and a few Open Mic nights.
- **The Board.** Unfortunately, Players experienced a drop in the overall number of Board members, although we did add some new names. At the close of the 2019-2020 Season, we had seven officers and seven non-officer Board members for a total of fourteen Board members (including a Past President).
- **COVID-19 Response.** By far, the most impactful event of the season was the difficult decision to cancel the last two shows of the season and effectively shut down the theatre. However, we wanted to continue to provide entertainment to our members and the community at large while soliciting donations. To that end, we created two ongoing online programs that were presented and promoted on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram:
 - #VirtualOpenMic - Videos of short musical and dramatic performances with one new performance roughly every week.
 - Players Radio Theatre - Audio plays (royalty-free) featuring many local actors with one new play presented roughly every week.
 - Other ideas are in the works.

Donations have thus far brought in several hundred dollars.

As we close out the 2019-2020 season, we continue to plan for the 2020-2021 season, although at this time (May 2020) we do not yet know how or if we will be able to re-open our theatre. All of the Board is doing their best to deal with a difficult and unprecedented situation to ensure that Players continues in operation for our 108th season as a vital and important member of the area's arts community.

Submitted May 19, 2020
Stephen Wagner, President