



The Weekender

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Saturday, April 21, 2018

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Another round!

Community
Theatre
presents
'Bartenders'

By RICK DANLEY
The Iola Register

Decades of shoe-leather reporting taught the New York journalist Joseph Mitchell that, as sure as the key to a good movie lies in the casting, the secret to a great story depends on the subject at its center.

But great characters don't fall from the sky; you have to know where to find them. Joe Mitchell knew where to find them. "The most interesting human beings, so far as talk is concerned," wrote Mitchell in the late-1930s, "are anthropologists, farmers, prostitutes, psychiatrists, and the occasional bartender." And there's enough evidence in this reporter's glorious 60-year career to suggest that he spent more time in taverns than he did on farms or in bordellos, and that, in the end, he probably valued the street-level wisdom of the local barkeep most of all.

The same sentimental approach to your average drink slinger is at work in Louis Mustillo's popular one-man show, "Bartenders," which



The Iola Community Theatre presents Luis Mustillo's play "Bartenders," which kicks off tonight at 7:30 p.m. and then again Sunday at 2 p.m. The show tells the stories of six New York barkeeps. Clockwise, from top, are actors Paul Vernon, Sarah Lundine, Shelli Sinclair, and Carri Sailor. REGISTER/RICK DANLEY



receives its first local staging tonight at the Iola Community Theatre. "Bartenders" weaves its story, an



anthology of sorts, around the whiskey-soaked monol-



See ICT | Page A3

Rotary celebrates milestone

By BOB JOHNSON
The Iola Register

Iola Rotarians will celebrate their 100th anniversary with a festive event Sunday evening at the Allen County Country Club.



The club was organized on Dec. 27, 1917, and chartered, under auspices of Chanute Rotarians, on May 1, 1918.

Following Sunday evening's obligatory introductions and recognitions, Judy Brigham, District 6110 governor, will discuss the impact Iola's Rotary Club has had through its many avenues of service.

Brigham is the third district governor spawned by the Iola club, following in the footsteps of Dr. A.R. (Baldy) Chambers in 1946-47 and Dr. C. Ellis Potter, in 2007-08.

She also was president of Iola Rotary in 2003-04, and her spouse, Tom Brigham, will take the reins for 2018-19. Making her Rotary role even more of a family affair, Judy's great uncle by marriage, Newton J. Brigham, was president in 1928-29.

She is well-known to Iolans for her several years as city

See ROTARY | Page A6



District Judge Daniel Creitz espouses the benefits of Drug Court Thursday at an Iola Area Chamber of Commerce educational breakfast. REGISTER/VICKIE MOSS

Judge happy to admit his drug court prediction missed

By VICKIE MOSS
The Iola Register

Judge Daniel Creitz admits he was wrong about the 31st Judicial District's Drug Court, an alternative to prison that requires intensive monitoring for those convicted or charged with drug-related crimes.

When then-sheriff Tom Williams, now a county commissioner, asked him in 2011 to introduce the program, Creitz wanted to say no. It would require a lot more work, especially for underpaid and overworked district court and community corrections staff.

It meant more drug testing and more intensive monitoring, which demand time and money.

"My problem with Drug Court wasn't that it wasn't a good program. It was that I was going to put this burden on my staff," Creitz told Iola Area Chamber of Commerce members at an educational breakfast Thursday. "But they bought into it and they love the program."

So far, 54 people have graduated from Drug Court since it began in 2013. The next graduation is at 4 p.m. May 3.

And after five years, just 2

See CREITZ | Page A8

HANDS-ON CONSERVATION



More than 150 fourth-graders from Iola, Marmaton Valley and Humboldt schools attended Earth Day activities at the old ACC farm north of Iola. Clockwise from left, conservationist Gerald Gray illustrates how the different types of water runoff affect plants and animals. To further explain, bottom right, Humboldt students Avion Seamster, Lilly Albin, Mila Westbrook and Dominique Ellsworth pour water onto various types of soil. At bottom left, Alex Lyons of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks shows a legless glass lizard, which is native to eastern Kansas, and is commonly mistaken for a snake. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN



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ICT: 'Bartenders' brings heartfelt stories to the local stage

Continued from A1

gues of six New York barmen — Bobby, Patty, Benny, Jimmy, Eddie, and Richard.

The ICT production, however, under the excellent direction of Bryan Johnson, has converted Mustillo's solo piece into a superb ensemble, starring a six-pack of local actors, men and women both, and not a weak drink in the bunch.

The first bartender we meet is Bobby, played with convincing verve by the smoky-voiced Savannah Hannum. It's 9 a.m. at a drink hole somewhere in Midtown. Bobby, a veteran tender, is dispensing hard-won wisdom to a wet-behind-the-ears kid-trainee. *Never pour a full shot. Foreigners don't tip. Give the odd free drink to your locals. Make your own whiskey sour mix. If any customer goes three rounds without tipping, he becomes invisible — you don't take his order. Anyone who is not from Hawaii and orders a Pina Colada is not a real drinker.*

Next is Richard, the heartsick bartender torn to pieces by recollections of a lost love, who attempts throughout his monologue to douse the memories of his old flame by guzzling brutal quantities of clear vodka. A desperate, disenchanted sort of character, who seems to have stumbled straight out of "The Ice-man Cometh," Richard is played with a real, never mawkish pathos by ICT newcomer Paul



Vernon, who manages to rotate between anger and sorrow without ever letting his connection with the audience go slack.

Bartender number three: Patty. Patty, invoked with tremendous energy by Dave Glauner, erupts onto the stage, a loud, brash, wisecracking, white-ethnic bro of the sort still in evidence in small pockets of this country — in south Boston, parts of Chicago's south side, Staten Island, Queens — but a specimen certainly in demographic retreat.

Glauner is an excel-

lent mimic with a pliable face and superior comic timing, who embraces the stark poetry of the four-letter word as eagerly as Patty embraces his chosen profession. "I'm a bartender," philosophizes Patty, "and I'm [expletive] proud of it."

This is probably as good a place as any to issue a warning. Here it is: If you wouldn't take your kids into a bar, then you probably shouldn't take them to see "Bartenders." There are more f-bombs in this hour-long show than



ICT's version of Louis Mustillo's "Bartenders," under the direction of Bryan Johnson, converts the popular one-man show into a six-hander. Two of the night's six New York bartenders are, left, Dave Glauner, as Patty, and Savannah Hannum, above, as Bobby. REGIS-TER/RICK DANLEY

you'll find in an entire season of "The Wire." But that's as it should be: I mean, you're in a bar. And while they've banned smoking from every beer joint in Kansas, you're still allowed to cuss. In fact, in a town like Iola, where nearly all of the performance arts are rigorously family friendly, it's refreshing to find a venue where you're not asked to take your entertainment at the kids' table.

Or as Patty puts it at one point: "It's a bar. If you don't like it, stay home in your cocoon."

The fourth tender is Benny, whose plight — no money, no skills, no safety net — is the tailspin story of a great many of America's working poor, who live paycheck to paycheck, with only a thin, quivering layer of luck to protect them from the gutter. "If I lose this job," says Benny, "I'm done." Sarah Lundine gives a touching, tough performance as Benny.

The next-to-last bartender is Jimmy. Jimmy's story gives the lie to the image of the barfly as a romantic figure — the drunken poet or wet-brained philosopher. Jimmy, a once successful bar owner who threw it all over for a life of booze and drugs and who will soon die of AIDS in a flophouse on 12th Street, gives a final, moving testament to his life behind the bar.

Jimmy's story is a reminder that, whatever cheer you find in your mojito, the stuff is still a legal poison, and it's the bartender's bleak duty — so long as a customer's cash keeps spending — to continue feeding the pickled livers of the bottoms-up crowd, who seek their escape in

strong liquor. As F. Scott Fitzgerald, one of our greatest drunk poets, put it: "First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes you."

Carri Sailor gives a dynamic, heartfelt performance as Jimmy, and floods the character with life despite his terminal prognosis.

The last bartender is Eddie, the play's final Scheherazade of the drunk-set, the knowledge-keeper of the twilight hour. Eddie, played brilliantly by Shelli Sinclair, has seen it all. Bartending, at the end of the day, says Eddie, is not what Hollywood would have you believe. "No one pays for a drink in the movies," complains Eddie. "Don't try that in New York." The TV show "Cheers"? Phony. The movie "Cocktail," starring a bottle-juggling Tom Cruise? A joke. Real bar life, says Eddie, takes a toll on the tender. Sure, maybe once in a blue moon you find among the broken peanut shells and soggy napkins some joyful artifact to root for. For instance, maybe one night some beautiful song swims out of the jukebox and catches you off guard, maybe it makes you remember your mother or an old girlfriend. Or maybe not. Anyway, it's a life.

"Bartenders" is for anyone familiar with the sounds of last call: the mournful tinkle of the beer glasses being returned to the crates, the sudden end to the music, the scrape of bar stools, the slurred chatter among the handful of diehards who wonder where they'll find the next drop. But it's a play, too, for the teetotaler, the creature of the day, whose Apollonian educa-

tion won't be complete until he knows how the other half lives.

OF COURSE not every heavy drinker is happy to have his ear bent by a voluble barman.

In the fall of 1956 an old drunk was overheard by a staff writer for the New Yorker Magazine lamenting the dawn of a new age in bartending. "The bartender of today," the old man grumbled, "has no more real knowledge of his trade than a smelt. It used to be that when you went into a saloon, all bowed with woes and worries, you'd find the bartender eager to listen to your troubles and as full of sympathy and patience as a kindly confessor. You could talk him dead, dumb, and blind on any subject—the sad state of your health, the arrogance of your boss, the unreasonableness of women, or the awful thievery of politicians — and he'd hear you out and try to soothe you, and if you burst into tears, he'd shed one or two himself, just to be obliging. But now the tide has shifted, and it's rare that a customer can get a word in edgewise, since the bartenders are always gabbling about the way things are affecting *them* — as if anybody gave a real damn. I've even heard some of them complain about hangovers, which is like having a medical man tell you all his afflictions while you're dying of yours. And they have more opinions on this and that than taxi-drivers, and they're only too willing to force them on you. I tell you, they make you long for quiet, but they've got the upper hand now and seem to think they're entertainers, and I doubt if anybody's going to shut them up in my time. You can see them right here, hovering around waiting for me to finish so that they can take over the conversation. Ah, well, I'm resigned to it. I'll have a whiskey and let them smother me in their guff."

BUT ICT'S production of "Bartenders" presents only the most entertaining gabble and a guff well worth being smothered in. The play kicks off tonight at 7:30 p.m., with another showing Sunday at 2 p.m., plus a final run April 27 and 28 at 7:30 p.m. All shows are staged at the ICT Warehouse, 203 S Jefferson St. Cheers!



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— Tracey Horton

Tracey Horton has only been staying with us for about three weeks, but she's very familiar with nursing care and Windsor Place. You see, Tracey was our MDS coordinator here at Windsor Place for six years. During that time, she assessed the functional capabilities of residents and helped develop their individual care plans.

Unfortunately, Tracey was forced to go on disability a few years ago and had to leave her job at Windsor Place. The bones in her feet are collapsing and she has endured three surgeries to correct the problems.

After the most recent surgery, Tracey and her husband, Larry, decided it would be easier for both of them if she would spend her recovery time at Windsor Place. Tracey would get the 'round the clock care and daily therapy sessions she needed and Larry would be able to go to work. He wouldn't even have to be concerned with finding care for her while he was away.

The choice to come to Windsor Place has been a blessing to both of them. Tracey is recovering nicely and Larry has been focusing on working and keep things at home in order.

Windsor Place

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