

## Hilarious and haunted: A Christmas play

By VICKIE MOSS  
The Iola Register

Some of the best Christmas tales are spooky stories. Think: “A Christmas Carol” or “The Nightmare Before Christmas.”

You can add “The Colbern County Radio Broadcast Interruption: A Modern Ghost Story” to that list. It’s a terrifically terrifying twist on a haunted Christmas, written and directed by Piqua resident Nic Olson.

The Iola Community Theatre Warehouse troupe offers performances at 7 tonight through Saturday at the ICT Theatre, 203 S. Jefferson Ave.

The play is a modern take on a classic radio show, “but I wanted something weirder,” Olson said.

Olson initially conceived part of the idea as a potential podcast. He’s written plays before, when he was a student at Allen Community College. When another ICT board member asked him to



Rhiannon Jordan and Ben Olson play radio DJs navigating twists and turns of a caller trapped in a haunted house in “The Colbern County Radio Broadcast Interruption: A Ghost Story,” performed tonight through Saturday at the ICT Warehouse Theater. The play was written by Piqua’s Nic Olson. REGISTER/VICKIE MOSS

take charge of a performance, he combined the podcast idea with a short story.

It’s a story of light and

sound. Most actors appear as shadows, hidden behind three lighted panels. When an actor appears, a white light

silhouettes their character. When no actor is in the panel, it displays whatever color fits See PLAY | Page A6

Humboldt, Crest tip off at tournament



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Supply chain issues ease up for now

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China eases ‘zero COVID’ measures

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## Zelenskyy named Time person of year

LONDON (AP) — Time Magazine on Wednesday named Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy its person of the year, awarding him the accolade “for proving that courage can be as contagious as fear.”



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Editor-in-chief Edward Felsenthal said the choice of Zelenskyy — alongside “the spirit of Ukraine” — was “the most clear-cut in memory.”

“Whether the battle for Ukraine fills one with hope or with fear, the world marched to Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s beat in 2022,” he said.

A comedian-turned-politician who was elected to lead Ukraine in 2019, Zelenskyy has worked ceaselessly since Russia’s invasion on Feb. 24 to inspire his country’s resistance and marshal international support for Ukraine.

Felsenthal said Zelenskyy’s decision when the war started “not to flee Kyiv but to stay and rally support was fateful.”

“For proving that courage can be as contagious as fear, for stirring people and nations to come together in defense of freedom, for reminding the world of the fragility of democracy — and of peace — Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the spirit of Ukraine are TIME’s 2022 Person of the Year,” he added.

The magazine also highlighted people said to embody the spirit of Ukraine.



## Rockin’ the holidays

A rollicking good time filled the Bowlus Fine Arts Center on Tuesday evening as Iola Elementary School’s kindergarten and first-grade classes presented their winter program under the direction of music instructor Kate Vernon. Here, kindergarteners sing “Jingle Bell Rock.” REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

## Warnock wins Georgia runoff against Walker

ATLANTA (AP) — Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock defeated Republican challenger Herschel Walker in a Georgia runoff election Tuesday, ensuring Democrats an outright majority in the Senate for the rest of President Joe Biden’s current term and capping an underwhelming midterm cycle for the GOP in the last major vote of the year.

With Warnock’s second runoff victory in as many years, Democrats will have a 51-49 Senate majority, gaining a seat from the current 50-50 split with John Fetterman’s victory in Pennsylvania. There will be divided

government, however, with Republicans having narrowly flipped House control.

“After a hard-fought campaign — or, should I say, campaigns — it is my honor to utter the four most powerful words ever spoken in a democracy: The people have spoken,” Warnock, 53, told jubilant supporters who packed a downtown Atlanta hotel ballroom.

“I often say that a vote is a kind of prayer for the world we desire for ourselves and for our children,” declared Warnock, a Baptist pastor and his state’s first Black senator. “Georgia, you have



Georgia Democratic Senate candidate U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Georgia) celebrates his election runoff win. (WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES/TNS)

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# Play: ICT Theatre offers a Christmas ghost story

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the mood of the scene. When things are calm, it's green. When things go awry, well, that's when it gets weird.

Just two actors are seen in person, with a brief appearance from a third near the end of the show. Rhiannon Jordan and Ben Olson portray radio DJs, ready to relax by allowing callers to phone in with the hottest gossip and rumors about the latest sighting of Big Foot — "They prefer Big Folk."

The snarky banter between Jordan and Ben Olson is perfect for the classic odd-couple pairing, "Jamie" and "Mike." She's frantic, skeptical and exasperated. He casually tosses one-liners and is a staunch Big Foot supporter.

Jordan also serves as assistant director and has been integral in pulling the show together, Nic Olson said.

Ben is Nic's brother. Initially, Nic didn't plan to cast his brother, but when he asked Ben to read the script with other characters, he soon realized Ben was perfect in the role. It was the right move.

**THE RADIO** call-in night is interrupted by a bizarre call from "Kelly," played with the right touch of sweet innocence and desperation by Morgan Lea. She's haunted by her failure as an EMT



In "The Colbern County Radio Broadcast Interruption," radio DJs Rhiannon Jordan and Ben Olson take a call from a frantic Morgan Lea, shown in the background in silhouette.

and discovers a mysterious door in her kitchen. Nosy neighbor Helen — delightfully portrayed by ICT newcomer Diana Dashnaw whose silhouette shows the outline of a bathrobe and cigarette — calls into the radio show to describe the scene in graphic detail.

Alison Fees plays a serious deputy who may have an illicit tie to a certain radio personality.

The radio show also has a series of wacky callers played by Wayne Stephens, Cole Moyer, River Hess and Tiffany

from two years earlier. Hooper.

Three children — Mat Olson, Winston Jordan and Lanie Mileham — play the shadows of younger versions of characters who share their own creepy stories.

**AFTER** intermission, the radio show returns for a Christmas Eve special. It's 10 days after Kelly's disappearance, and the whole town is obsessed with the mystery.

Up on a rooftop, Moyer kicks off the second half with a rocket-launcher

and a provocative social commentary, both aimed at "that red-suited tyrant shaming children for generations."

Merry Christmas. Another fascinating section comes via a "news break" with a reporter played by Connie Brown, who recaps the events surrounding Kelly's disappearance. If it sounds like Brown has the perfect — and familiar — radio voice, that's because she spent decades working as an actual DJ, including a popular morning news program in Kansas City. For those of us from a certain era in the Midwest, it's a fun bit of nostalgia.

Jenna and Tom Morris appear as part of the news break.

No spoilers, but the show ends with a surprise twist by ICT veteran Mandy Moyer, who has secret connections of her own.

The play offers genuine spooky moments that make your skin crawl, while also making you laugh out loud. The cast rises to the challenge of playing only in shadows, making the most of their voices and body movements.

**TICKETS** are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, and can be purchased online at [iola-communitytheatre.org](http://iola-communitytheatre.org) or at the door.

## Juul reaches settlement in 5,000 cases

By the Associated Press

Juul Labs has reached settlements covering more than 5,000 cases brought by about 10,000 plaintiffs related to its vaping products.

Financial terms of the settlement were not disclosed, but Juul said that it has secured an equity investment to fund it.

Buffeted by lawsuits, Juul announced hundreds of layoffs last month and bankruptcy appeared increasingly likely as it secured financing to continue operations.

The e-cigarette maker faced thousands of suits brought by individuals and families of Juul users, school districts and Native American tribes. This week's settlement resolves those cases, which had been consolidated in a California federal court pending several bellwether trials.

"These settlements represent a major step toward strengthening Juul Labs' operations and securing the company's path forward," a company spokeswoman said in a statement.

Juul rocketed to the top of the U.S. vaping market five years ago on the popularity of flavors like mango, mint and creme brulee. But the startup's rise was fueled by use among teenagers.

# Election: Democrats get 51-49 majority in Senate

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been praying with your lips and your legs, your hands and your feet, your heads and your hearts. You have put in the hard work, and here we are standing together."

In last month's election, Warnock led Walker by 37,000 votes out of almost 4 million cast, but fell short of the 50% threshold needed to avoid a runoff. The senator appeared to be headed for a wider final margin in Tuesday's runoff, with Walker, a football legend at the University of Georgia and in the NFL, unable to overcome a bevy of damaging allegations, including claims that he paid for two former girlfriends' abortions despite supporting a national ban on the procedure.

"The numbers look like they're not going to add up," Walker, an ally and friend of former President Donald Trump, told supporters late Tuesday at the College Football Hall of Fame in downtown Atlanta. "There's no excuses in life, and I'm not going to make any excuses now because we put up one heck of a fight."

Democrats' Georgia victory solidifies the state's place as a Deep South battleground two years after Warnock and fellow Georgia Democrat Jon Ossoff won 2021 runoffs that gave the party Senate control just months after Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate in 30 years to win Georgia. Voters returned Warnock to the Senate in the same cycle they re-elected Republican Gov. Brian Kemp by a comfortable margin and chose an all-GOP slate of statewide constitu-

tional officers. Walker's defeat bookends the GOP's struggles this year to win with flawed candidates cast from Trump's mold, a blow to the former president as he builds his third White House bid ahead of 2024.

Democrats' new outright majority in the Senate means the party will no longer have to negotiate a power-sharing deal with Republicans and won't have to rely on Vice President Kamala Harris to break as many tie votes.

National Democrats celebrated Tuesday, with Biden tweeting a photo of his congratulatory phone call to the senator. "Georgia voters stood up for our democracy, rejected Ultra MAGAism, and ... sent a good man back to the Senate,"

Biden tweeted, referencing Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan.

About 1.9 million runoff votes were cast in Georgia by mail and during early voting. A robust Election Day turnout added about 1.4 million more, slightly more than the Election Day totals in November and in 2020.

Total turnout still trailed the 2021 runoff turnout of about 4.5 million. Voting rights groups pointed to changes made by state lawmakers after the 2020 election that shortened the period for runoffs, from nine weeks to four, as a reason for the decline in early and mail voting.

Warnock emphasized his willingness to work across the aisle and his personal val-

ues, buoyed by his status as senior pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. once preached.

Walker benefited during the campaign from nearly unmatched name recognition from his football career, yet was dogged by questions about his fitness for office.

A multimillionaire businessman, Walker faced questions about his past, including his exaggerations of his business achievements, academic credentials and philanthropic activities.

In his personal life, Walker faced new attention on his ex-wife's previous accounts of domestic violence, including details that he

once held a gun to her head and threatened to kill her.

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