



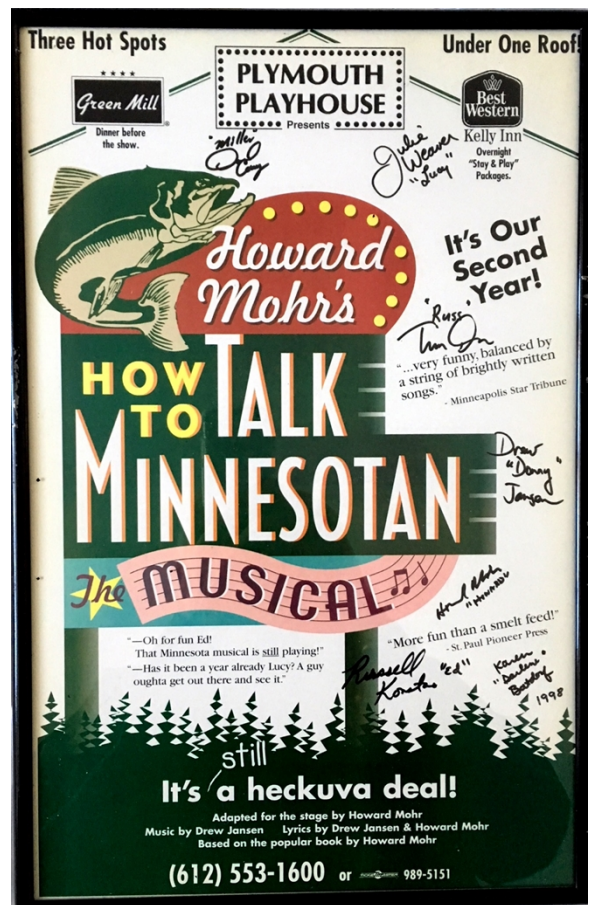
# PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2018

Winter

## Goodbye Plymouth Playhouse

CURT WOLLAN, FOUNDER OF TROUPE AMERICA, SAYS FAREWELL TO PLYMOUTH PLAYHOUSE AFTER FORTY YEARS



Chris Wollan donated several historical autographed posters to Plymouth Historical Society

*Hit-making impresario behind Church Basement Ladies—and many more—moves on*

PLYMOUTH, MINN.— November 29, 2017— After an amazing and influential forty years, production company Troupe America and its founder Curt Wollan are ready to take a final bow at the Plymouth Playhouse. The suburban Plymouth, Minnesota theater has been Troupe America’s home since 1988 and Wollan’s since 1978. Wollan is leaving the venue to focus on other directing and producing ventures.

“Looking back upon this incredible run, I’m extremely grateful and proud of the work we’ve created and shared with the Plymouth Playhouse as our home,” said Wollan. When I founded Troupe America three decades ago, I could never have anticipated how blessed we’d be to create amazing characters and send them into a world that welcomed them with laughs and so much enthusiasm—and the Plymouth Playhouse was the launch pad for the majority of our ideas.”

The Plymouth Playhouse, formerly the Radisson Playhouse, opened in January of 1974 under the banner of Don Stolz Productions. In 1978, Wollan directed a show there for the first time for the Minnesota Music Theatre. In 1981, under the banner of Stage Two Productions, his first production company, the Twin Cities Drama Critic’s Circle recognized the Plymouth Playhouse with three “Kudos” Awards for the Jesse James Musical, *Diamond Studs*, which won Best Production, Best Choreography, and Best Direction. By 1988, Troupe America was born and opened with the area premiere of *Nunsense* at the theatre, The new production company made Plymouth Playhouse its principal production venue. It was from the Playhouse that Troupe America developed its long run of successful original and area premiere musical comedies. Shows like *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, *The Lovely Liebowitz Sisters*, the *How to Talk Minnesotan* series, *Cottonpatch Gospel*, *Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?*, *A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline*, *Ring of Fire*, and —of course— the *Church Basement Ladies* series, entertained several generations of audiences. And it wasn’t just Minnesotans who delighted in the characters that Troupe America brought to life. Most of the Playhouse productions resulted in national tours spreading the Plymouth Playhouse name to all 50 states and Canada.

*FPO quote* “It’s breathtaking to look back on the extent of Curt’s contributions to our musical theater culture,” said Greta Grosch, performer and writer of works including many of the *Church Basement Ladies* series. “Troupe America allowed him to combine his skills working with performers with his smart business sense and his drive for originality, and the best thing about collaborating with him over the years is that it always felt like play! The result of all his hard work is these shows and characters that live on as regional and national touring productions bring them to life for new audiences. It’s a huge accomplishment, as is the fertile environment for artists he created. And of course, for all the performers, writers, and composers who have worked with Troupe America, we truly cherish his creation of a place where we could become family to each other.”

Wollan’s work as a producer will continue on a national level. He’s also keeping busy with his long-running summer production, *The Medora Musical*, a unique show in North Dakota’s historic town. The Plymouth Playhouse has not yet announced a new tenant for their theater.

Troupe America produces original musical comedies, including *Church Basement Ladies* which opened at the Plymouth Playhouse in September 2005 to a response so enthusiastic that its initial run lasted two-and-a half years. Five sequels have expanded the universe of these familiar and beloved “Steel Magnolias of the Prairie,” making *Church Basement Ladies* the most successful show in Troupe America’s 30-year history. Millions of Americans discovered a heartfelt connection to its deeply funny church matriarchs through regional and national touring productions, as well as myriad other productions like *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, *How to Talk Minnesotan*, and *Ring of Fire*.

*Note: Above information copied from Plymouth Playhouse website*

## Old Fashioned Christmas Event

On Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Old Fashioned Christmas event was held at the Old Town Hall and Plymouth Creek Park. It was another very successful event and great fun was had by all. The following are a few pictures from the event.



Our new Mrs. Claus had a hidden talent. When the families came up to see Santa she listened to their parents and if they had an accent she asked where they were from. Mrs. Claus was able to respond back to them in their native language - Norwegian, Spanish, French, Chinese and Hungarian. The parents were surprised and had very large smiles. It demonstrates how diverse the area is with local companies bringing high level professionals to work in the area for a few years.



Santa's Elves made paper chain links for each child. A total of 315 were made this year, Santa was busy.



Betty & Dennis Jacobson making decorations.



**Armstrong Singers braving the cold.**

## Website

The Plymouth Historical Society website is:

[www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com)

### *Check us out!*

Note: All past newsletters dating back to 1986 are available on-line in PDF format for viewing or printing.

Donated by: Barb & Bruce Jensen

- \$200 endowment from trust fund

Donated by: Curt Wollan

- Framed autographed posters and City of Plymouth Proclamations from the Plymouth Playhouse from the closing of the theater.

## Donations

Donated by: Heidi Daubec

- Antique school desks from District #51 and Holly Name Schools

Donated by: Pamela Atkinson

- \$50 for Kay Bertrand Memorial Fund



## Meetings

The Museum is also open the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month in the afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00 PM during the Spring, Summer and Fall.

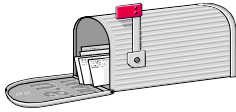
The monthly business meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN.

Open by special appointment in January, February & March.

## Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Dennis Jacobson	763-972-0988
Vice President	Vacant	
Secretary	Betty Jacobson	763-972-0988
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889



## Mailing and Membership List

If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call any officer above:

The 2018 annual dues are:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00

If you would like the newsletter delivered via

E-mail please notify Kay Bertrand or send an e-mail to:

[info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com)

If you do, it is a plus for both of us. When you receive via e-mail it will be in color. When sent by mail it is in black and white and costs PHS about \$2.00 per copy to print and mail