

A letter from Paul Allan:

It has been more than 60 years since Daisy, our family cow, was pushed out of the barn to make way for scenery, props and dressing rooms. My grandfather and his young family including my mother, aunt and uncle, began a theatrical venture on a farm in Bellport, which was unique to the Long Island arts scene. Initially called the Gateway Theatre, the mission was to produce quality theater while providing a stomping ground for up and coming talent on their way to Broadway, Television and Film. Robert Duvall, David Carradine, James Darren, Ken Howard, Wendie Malick, Julia Migenes, Gene Hackman, and many renowned designers, directors and technicians are on a long list that continues to the present. Back then, they all took part in a tradition called "Summer Stock."

Summer stock theatres thrived throughout the 50's and '60's and Gateway was no exception. In the 70's, the public's taste for theatre became more sophisticated. Instead of coming to see up and coming stars, people wanted to see fully seasoned performers in slick and professional productions. Gateway adapted to those changes and continued to thrive through the '80's and '90's while many of the original summer stocks closed their doors. Even though we persevered through those tumultuous years, the recent downturn in the economy has triggered another change – an opportunity to serve the community in a new and exciting way.

Beginning this year, a new, non-profit company, The Performing Arts Center Of Suffolk County, will be running the shows at the Gateway Playhouse and Gateway shows at the Patchogue Theatre. A Board of Directors has been named, including myself, Robert Durkin, a theatrical director with over 40 years of experience and Gale Edwards, formerly the General Manager of Gateway. One of the Board's main directives will be to ensure that the artistic and production values will remain at the same high level you have come to expect.

Our community will benefit by hosting a world class performing arts organization that infuses art and culture directly into our environs while putting dollars into the economy. We now know that ticket sales alone do not sufficiently cover the cost of creating top notch theatre. As a non-profit we will be eligible for additional funding through government grants and sponsorships by major corporations. These changes will ensure that we can continue the legacy of professional theatre in Bellport.

We will be reaching out to private donors as well, and this is where we need you. Even though you may not be in a position to give additional financial support, your patronage as a subscriber is vital to our survival. Remember, as a subscriber you have the unique opportunity to see fully professional productions of new and classic Broadway fare, close to home, still at affordable prices. No other theatre on Long Island can match Gateway's legacy of producing live theatre.

Please confirm your subscription for 2011, spread the word about our shows, and help the Performing Arts Center of Suffolk County flourish for many years to come.

Thank you,

