

Gateway Players Theatre, Inc.  
PO Box 171  
Southbridge, MA 01550

founded 1975  
December, 2025

Barbara Day,  
editor since 1991



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What a great year!!- productions, gala, 50 by 50, memorabilia exhibit at Jacob Edwards Library- gatherings to remember and revel in our 50 years as a vital arts organization. More to come as we proudly enter our 51st season.

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#### MESSAGE FROM GATEWAY PRESIDENT LOU-ELLEN CORKUM

Celebrating the End of Gateway Players' Theatre 50th Anniversary Year  
Reflecting on Five Decades of Community Theater Excellence  
The conclusion of Gateway Players' 50th anniversary year marks a significant milestone in the organization's storied history. Founded half a century ago, Gateway Players Theatre has become a cornerstone of the local arts scene, bringing together theater enthusiasts, performers, and audiences in a shared love of stagecraft.

### Looking Back: A Legacy of Community Engagement

Over the past five decades, Gateway Players has produced an impressive variety of plays, musicals, and community events. The group's dedication to fostering new talent and providing family-friendly entertainment has made it a beloved institution. Their commitment to inclusivity and artistic growth has enriched the cultural fabric of the community.

#### Highlights of the Anniversary Year

- Special anniversary productions revisiting shows that we have performed in our 50 year history (Plaza Suite, On Golden Pond, Fiddler on the Roof, Clumsy Custard Horror Show and A Candle in the Window).
- A wonderful Anniversary Gala at The Heritage Country Club showcasing the history and achievements of our theater group including recognition of founding members, long-time volunteers, and supporters who have contributed to the theater's enduring success.
- A one-of-a-kind event featuring local playwrights titled "50 short skits in 50 minutes". The talents of Kelly Dearn, Mikey Dearn, Ed Humphries, Jordan Miller and Mary Darling along with various actors entertained our audience at the Ruth Wells House.

#### Moving Forward

As the curtain falls on this golden anniversary year, Gateway Players looks to the future with renewed enthusiasm. The organization remains committed to its mission of providing quality theatrical experiences, supporting local talent, and bringing the magic of live performance to audiences for many years to come.

With gratitude to all who have been part of this remarkable journey—past and present—Gateway Players invites the community to continue supporting and celebrating the arts together.

Lou-Ellen Corkum  
Gateway Players Theatre  
President – Board of Directors



Gateway recently held auditions for "Remedial". the first production of 2026. Written and directed by Jordan Miller, Lou-Ellen Corkum is the producer. The cast includes: Patrick Bracken (Robin), Stephen Clarke (Jamie), Tey Ferron (Dr. Hamilton), Greg Glanville (Cameron), Asher McCoy (Blake), Vivian Eliza Nichols (Angel), Mary Tisdale (Devin), and Katie Walsh (Morgan). Production dates are Feb 27,28, March 6,7,8- at Fellowship Hall of Elm St. Congregational Church, 61 Elm St. Southbridge.

**Synopsis:**

Robin is a disillusioned author who reluctantly takes a job teaching remedial English to a group of adult students. Bitter from past trauma and career setbacks, Robin initially struggles to connect with their diverse students, each of whom carries their own burdens. As the story unfolds, the classroom becomes a space for unexpected growth, where Robin and the students challenge each other's assumptions and learn to confront their insecurities. Through humor, conflict, and shared vulnerability, "Remedial" explores themes of resilience, empathy, and the transformative power of understanding and human connection. Written by local playwright Jordan Miller, this is an adult production.

Tickets will soon be on sale- check website or fb page.



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Gateway Players Theatre in conjunction with Elm Street Congregational Church are hosting auditions for "Godspell". Written, conceived and originally directed by John-Michael Tebelak. Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. Auditions will be held on January 4th & 5th at 6:00pm in the church sanctuary at Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm Street, Southbridge.

Actors should be prepared to sing a song from the show. Performance dates are March 20 & 21 at 7pm, and March 22 at 2pm. Rehearsals will be held on Sunday and Wednesdays beginning January 11th. Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). The cast consists of adults ages 18 and up. Directed by Lynn Boucher, produced by Lou-Ellen Corkum, with music director Chris Rubenacker. For more information, please contact Gateway at 508-764-4531.

**Synopsis:**

Prepare ye for the timeless tale of friendship, loyalty and love based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. A small group of people help Jesus Christ tell different parables by using a wide variety of games, storytelling techniques and hefty doses of comic timing. An eclectic blend of songs, ranging in style from pop to vaudeville, is employed as the story of Jesus' life dances across the stage. Dissolving hauntingly into the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, Jesus' messages of kindness, tolerance and love come vibrantly to life.

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Thanks to all who made Season 2025 a success. Below is the cast photo of "A Candle in the Window" our last production of the year.





Gateway was very saddened to learn of the recent passing of Peter and Joan Dirlam. Joan was in the cast of several shows- including Bye Bye

Birdie and Glass Menagerie, and Arsenic and Old Lace (cast photo above). She and Peter could always be counted on to join the audiences of so many productions.

**Southbridge:** Joan Merry (Jefferys) Dirlam, 92, passed away on Wednesday, December 10th, in her home after a brief illness. Her husband of 41 years, Peter B. Dirlam, passed away on November 26th, of this year. Joan was born in Augusta, ME the daughter of Frederick and N. Althea (Cole) Jefferys. She graduated from Brookfield High School in 1950. She received her bachelor's degree in teaching from UMass Amherst in 1954 and went on to receive her master's degree from Worcester State College. Joan started her teaching career teaching 3rd grade in Troy, NH. After moving to Sturbridge she taught 2nd grade at Burgess Elementary School in Sturbridge and retired many years ago after a 25 year career in teaching. Joan was an inspiring actress in her youth and was able to continue

her passion in her later years becoming a member of the Gateway Players in Southbridge. While with Gateway she appeared in their renditions of "Arsenic and Old Lace", "The Glass Menagerie" and her favorite role in "Bye Bye Birdie".

Her funeral service will be held on Monday, Dec. 29th, at 11:00am in the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, 36 N Main St, West Brookfield. Burial will be in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Southbridge. Calling hours will be held on Sunday, Dec. 28th, from 4:00 to 6:00pm in the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Gateway Players Theatre. There is a donate button on website, [gatewayplayers.org](http://gatewayplayers.org). and facebook page. Checks may also be mailed to Gateway Players Theatre, PO Box 171, Southbridge MA 01550

For complete obituary notice, go to [morrillfuneralhome.com](http://morrillfuneralhome.com).

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Our 50th Season was a very exciting year- with the November Gala a definite highlight. People traveled from several distances to join the fun. Food was delicious, setting beautiful, the SCTV debut was fun, just a fun time all around. Broadway producer Ken Davenport, Gateway youth actor, sent a video. Proclamations were presented from the Commonwealth from Gov. Maura Healy, the state senate and house of representatives, as well as the Town of Southbridge. Our 50 years were recognized as a significant milestone.

Below are some photos from the Gala.

For more photos- go to <https://share.picturesqr.com/umruwu/>

Presentations by State Rep. John Marsi and Town Counselor David Adams



Southbridge Town Manager Jack Jovan presenting town proclamation





Lynn Boucher, Bob Nesbitt, Billy Bolster and Erin Simpson



Linda Bouthillier and Carole Hayes- both members since the 1970's.





Charles and Susan (Day) Dubrovich- travelled from NYC. Susan started with Gateway at age 7- in Ant and the Grasshopper, directed by Carole Hayes.





Ed Bazinet, wearing original cloak from Young Dracula (1977) startled founding member Elaine Black.



Barb Lammert travelled from PA to come with son Mark and Hayley.



Ken Davenport joined Gateway at age 5 in Steadfast Tin Soldier, 1977. See Ken's anniversary tribute video on facebook

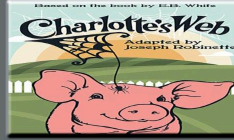




## Gateway Players Theatre 2026 Season

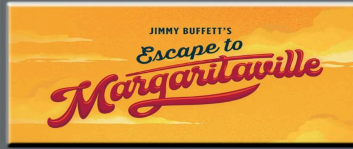


Remedial  
February 27, 28 March 6, 7 & 8



Charlotte's Web  
May 1, 2, 3, 8 & 9

51st  
season



51st  
season

Escape to Margaritaville  
July 31 August 1 & 2



The Outsider  
October 9, 10, 16, 17 & 18



The Spirit of Christmas or  
The Story of Ernestina Scrooge  
December 4, 5 & 6

Call For Tickets 508-764-4531  
Online at <https://gateway-players.ticketleap.com>

### Announcing Gateway's 2026 Season!!

**Remedial** - Robin is a disillusioned author who reluctantly takes a job teaching remedial English to a group of adult students. Bitter from past trauma and career setbacks, Robin initially struggles to connect with their diverse students, each of whom carries their own burdens. As the story unfolds, the classroom becomes a space for unexpected growth, where Robin and the students challenge each other's assumptions and learn to confront their insecurities. Through humor, conflict, and shared vulnerability, "Remedial" explores themes of resilience, empathy, and the transformative power of understanding and human connection. Written by local playwright Jordan Miller. This is an adult production.

**Charlotte's Web** - All the enchanting characters are here: Wilbur, the irresistible young pig who desperately wants to avoid the butcher; Fern, a girl who understands what animals say to each other; Templeton, the gluttonous rat who can occasionally be talked into a good deed; the Zuckerman family; the Arables; and, most of all, the extraordinary spider, Charlotte, who proves to be "a true friend and a good writer." Determined to save Wilbur, Charlotte begins her campaign with the "miracle" of her web in which she writes, "Some pig." It's the beginning of a victorious campaign which ultimately ends with the now-safe Wilbur doing what is most important to Charlotte. This is a beautiful, knowing play about friendship. Adapted by Joseph Robinette. Based on the book by E.B. White. This is a Youth Production. Presented by permission through special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing.

**Escape to Margaritaville** - Jimmy Buffett's *Escape to Margaritaville* is a musical comedy featuring the most-loved Jimmy Buffett classics, including "Cheeseburger in Paradise," "Margaritaville," "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere," "Fins," "Volcano," and many more. With a book by Emmy Award winner Greg Garcia ("My Name is Earl," "Raising Hope") and Emmy nominee Mike O'Malley ("Survivor's Remorse," "Shameless"), this



hilarious, heartwarming musical is the party you've been waiting for! Book by Greg Garcia and Mike O'Malley. Music and Lyrics by Jimmy Buffett. This is an adult production. Presented by permission through special arrangement with Broadway Licensing.

The Outsider - Ned Newley doesn't even want to be governor. He's terrified of public speaking; his poll numbers are impressively bad. To his ever-supportive Chief of Staff, Ned seems destined to fail. But political consultant Arthur Vance sees things differently: Ned might be the worst candidate to ever run for office. Unless the public is looking for... the worst candidate to ever run for office. A timely and hilarious comedy that skewers politics and celebrates democracy. Written by Paul Slade Smith. This is an adult production. Presented by permission through special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service..

The Spirit of Christmas or The Story of Ernestina Scrooge - This is an adaptation of Dickens' A Christmas Carol. What happened to Ebenezer Scrooge after the immortal Christmas Day? It seems he married and had a son, who had a son, who moved to America and had a daughter, Ernestina, who is the leading lady of this play. Written by Tom Fuller. This is an adult and youth production. Presented by permission through special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing.

## **GATEWAY MEMORIES**

We are looking for YOUR memories-  
your time at Gateway, favorite roles,  
people and productions that impacted  
you. Anything you would like to share.  
Please send to Barbara Day,  
[bldaycare@verizon.net](mailto:bldaycare@verizon.net).

We will compile your thoughts and  
publish on website.

**THANKS**

**50 YEARS DOWN-  
MANY MORE TO COME!!**



Try email marketing for free today!