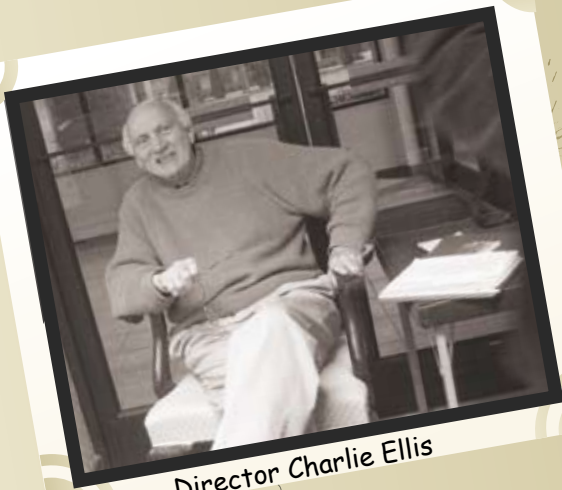


# THEATRE

## Our Town Presents . . . "OUR TOWN"



Director Charlie Ellis



"Our Town Cast"



Mrs. Gibbs (Julie Farthing) left &  
Mrs Webb (Shelly Wilson) right



Jessica Presnell &  
Brian Gay



John Schoo &  
Andy Harkin

by: Trimella Chaney

Yes, Blue Ridge Community Theatre, one of our area's oldest theatre organizations, is producing Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize winning play May 7-9 Director Charlie Ellis is bringing Wilder's town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire to life with characters you will recognize from daily life here in the High Country. The play deals with the everyday living of ordinary people and attempts to impart to the audience the importance of even the insignificant moments of life.

Cast member Shelley Wilson (Mrs. Webb) believes that OUR TOWN is "truly a meaningful drama about the precious nature of life." Shelley was in the very first BRCT drama, CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN, playing BRCT founder Janet Speer's daughter. With this production, she feels she has come full circle because now she is playing a mother's role. Currently Shelley is the pastor of the High County United Church of Christ.

Her involvement in that very first BRCT show as an Appalachian State University student provides Shelley with many wonderful memories and connections to people in our community.

Playing her friend and neighbor, Mrs. Gibbs, is Julie Farthing who really relates to her character's desire "to go across the big pond". Julie understands Mrs. Gibbs dreams and feels that playing this character "has awakened feelings within me to pursue my dreams and appreciate every moment."

A new face in the company is Clifford Charles (Howie Newsom), an area theatre student who is originally from Americus, Georgia but lives in Boone now and attends Caldwell Community College. "Grover's Corners reminds me of my small town where everybody knows everybody and everybody's family."

Andy Harkins is a well-known family man around town who is playing the role of Editor Webb in the production. He admits that his family is the reason he initially got involved in community theatre because he enjoyed being involved in their activities. Andy enjoys community theatre because “it is an opportunity for people who wouldn’t have the chance to do something to experience the thrill of the stage.” He believes his character, Editor Webb, is a very practical man who, like many Dads, has trouble reaching out on an emotional level. However, as editor of the town paper, Mr. Webb is certainly a person who knows what is going on in the town and is respected for this fact.

We learn facts about the town of Grover’s Corners from Professor Willard, played by our own Professor Robert Cherry, a BRCT veteran. Robert has appeared in numerous area productions including ANNIE, WORKING, and DEARLY DEPARTED. Other BRCT veterans included in the cast are Bill Barbour as Dr. Gibbs, Max Schrum as Constable Warren, and Tommy Brown as Sam Craig.

The well-loved roles of George Gibbs and Emily Webb are played by BRCT veterans Brian Gay and Jessica Presnell. Each of these talented teens has practically grown up on the stage in “our town”. It may be your last opportunity to see them before they go off to college. Another youngster in the cast is Colton Courtney (Joe Crowell) who remarked to me that he enjoyed theatre because “it’s fun to get in somebody else’s shoes.” Joining him is Collin Linnville (Wally Webb), Savannah Walls (Rebecca Gibbs), and Michael Navarro (Si Crowell).

Thornton Wilder uses the unique role of the Stage Manager to narrate the action of the play. John Schoo gently guides this production as the Stage Manager and moves the plot along with the pacing of each scene. John is a part-time resident of Blowing Rock and a realtor in the area. He has been involved in theatre both here and in Tampa, Florida.

True to life in any town, there are the troubled characters. “Some people ain’t made for small town life.” This well-known line from the script is describing the town’s alcoholic choir director, Simon Stimson played by Kyle Grove. As in real life, we don’t always realize what burdens our neighbors are carrying. We often “move about in a cloud of ignorance.....and waste time as though we had a million years.” With these lines, Wilder unlocks the character of the tortured musician.

In Act III when Joe Stoddard, the undertaker, played by Bryan Ellis, is hovering about the cemetery, the audience is treated to a glimpse of what wisdom lies beyond this life. It is this enduring theme which has prompted Director Ellis to direct his third production of OUR TOWN. “Age only deepens the meaning of this play,” states Ellis. Although Ellis is well-known as a professional musician, he also enjoys directing theatre because of the opportunity to work with others to help them discover the wonderful experience of performing arts and “I just enjoy the environment of a theatre.”

There are many stories to tell about the talented cast and crew of this production of OUR TOWN. They live and work right here with you each and every day and they are rehearsing almost every night to prepare the production for your enjoyment and insight. There is a very lovely wedding which I’m sure you will enjoy in Act II. I know I certainly enjoy it. But I’ve told you all I can say at this point. After all, I’m Mrs. Soames, also known as the town gossip of Grover’s Corners....and if you want more details about the events going on in OUR TOWN, come see the play. Ticket information available at [www.brctnc.org](http://www.brctnc.org).

***“Our Town” will be playing at the Valborg Theatre on Appalachian State University Campus. May 7th & 8th at 8:00PM and May 9th at 2:00 pm.***