

## MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT



Jean Ciampi is a freelance writer, playwright, columnist, Dramatists Guild of America member, scuba diver, actress, director, Texan, Jesus lover and cilantro hater. If it weren't for a certain virus that will not be named, she'd also want to play roller derby and use her passport more. Her first play, *Potato Gumbo*, written while living in Saudi Arabia, placed in the Robert J. Pickering Award for Playwriting Excellence but did not win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. She still has sour grapes with *Hamilton* about that. Her light-hearted play, *A Very Holly Moosemas*, will be produced this holiday season in Boerne, Texas and in Coldwater, Michigan, and her latest comedy, *The Bold and Bob* will have a world premiere in Houston in 2022. Jean uses her super powers for conjugating verbs to write magazine features, corporate communications, and a snarky blog. She uses the Oxford comma indiscriminately and single spaces after periods.

## Note from the Director, Diane Harmon:

*So here is where I put on my director's hat to thank the many people involved in putting on this performance: 6 talented actors, multiple ideas for set design, a dedicated set construction crew, crafty props mistresses and their Christmas elves/set dressers, and the technical talents of our producer for organizing the advertising, developing the playbill, and getting butts in the seats. Yay! And THANK YOU, Jean Ciampi, for giving us a wonderful story to bring to life.*

### Special Shout Outs:

Good Better Best Shop

Diane Epps

The Frayley Family

Searing Mobile Safety

Elkins Family

Coldwater Elks Lodge 1023

Children's Museum

Jean Ciampi

Andrew Halldorson

Ye Old Store

Jean Blakely

**Stage Hands:** Mackenzie Searing, Suri Stout, Rusty Dolittle

**Lights:** Dave Brown

**Set Design:** Diane Harmon Leon Kiser, Mark Ludow

**Set Crew:** Deb Dalley, Jesse Manson, Mackenzie

Searing, Charlene Searing, Chris Donbrock, Rusty

Dolittle, Amy Blakely, Ann Brois, April Rose, Chris

Elkins

**Costumes:** Dusti Donbrock

**Sound Design:** Amy Smith

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## Branch County Community

### Theatre Presents:

# A Very Holly Moosemas

Written by: Jean Ciampi



December 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM

Robert J. Pickering/J.R. Colbeck

Award for Playwriting Excellence

Finalist

## MEET THE CAST

**Sister Frances Griffin:** Starting at age 9, Amy Smith performed in young audience musicals at Tibbits, including the 1993 BCCT production of *Babes in Toyland*. While in high school, she played flute/piccolo, was a member of Ladies First singing group and was a Coldwater High School Balladier. She also held lead roles in school and community theatre musicals until 2008 when she stepped away to get married and have a beautiful baby, Pierce. She returned to Tibbits in 2010 for *A Christmas Carol*, followed by *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Curtains* and Summer Stock's *Footloose*.

**Bear Matthews:** Quentin Villa, a graduate of Coldwater High, studied Theatre at Eastern Michigan University. He enjoys music and plans to pursue a career in the Arts. He has been cast in *Guys & Dolls* (Sky Masterson) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (Tevye) at CHS; in *Curtains* (Aaron Fox) at Marshall Civic Players; and in *Cabaret* (Herr Schultz) at EMU. This summer, he was Assistant Director for the MCP production of *Guys and Dolls*, but this will be his first return to acting since 2020. He is happy to have been given the role Bear!

**Holly Anderson:** April Rose is making her stage debut! A graduate of Kansas State University, she holds a Master's in Personal Financial Planning. April would like to thank her castmates, director and producer for being patient, kind and always available for extra rehearsals. She also sends a very special thank you to her husband Chris, and children, Cara and Caden, for supporting her in this adventure by always being willing to run lines. *To writer Jean Ciampi: I am absolutely in love with this script and feel so blessed to be part of this production. This is certainly "the biggest thing that has ever happened to me." Welcome to the "big leagues."*

## MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM

**Director:** Diane Harmon has been part of BCCT in one way or another since 1987. Musicals are what caught her attention first: about 8 of them as part of the cast. Then there were straight plays where "fleshing out characters" became part of the challenge. Being part of the production crew several times, Diane has an appreciation for the organizing, designing, and creativity that helps present the characters and their stories.

**Producer:** Charlene (Charlie) Searing, has been involved in theatre since she was a kid in Reed City, MI. She recently fell in love with the role of Producer and enjoys finding new ways to bring people to the theatre. She has been married to her husband Mike for 18 years and has 2 beautiful, red-headed children, Mackenzie (13) and Caiden (11).

**Stage Manager:** Debra Dally returns for her third Branch County Community Theatre annual Christmas production. She has assisted director Diane Harmon in two previous productions of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* in 2005 and 2019. The first always being special as her daughter and Diane's daughter, who remain good friends, were in that year's production. Debra has four children and is married to Tod Dally. She recently retired and looks forward to a higher level of involvement at the Tibbits Opera House.

**Prop Mistress/Stagehand:** Ann Brois lives in Coldwater with her kids Jadon and Loren. She has been in many BCCT productions and loves being behind the scenes and on stage. She is the director of the HIS Spot for Tot Children's program and, when not working, she keeps busy drinking coffee and crafting.

**Prop Mistress/Stagehand:** Amy Blakely lives in Quincy with her pet bearded dragon, Boo. She is a mother of 3 and has 5 ½ grandchildren (one due in 2022). A preschool teacher and childcare provider, Amy has been involved with BCCT onstage and backstage since she was a child.

**Bert Matthews:** Marking his fourth BCCT production, Shaun Briscoe plays "Bert," which, according to his youngest son, this part is not "acting." He was previously in *The Sin Eater* and other shows at Coldwater High School and TYA. His hobbies include coaching baseball, baking, and cheering his Michigan teams. Shaun would like to thank his beautiful girlfriend, his 3 children (the youngest still owes his dad laps), family, cast, and crew. He would also like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Jake Anderson:** Jesse Manson was last seen as "Derrick" in the recent BCCT production of *The Sin Eater*. Earning a Master of Fine Arts in Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature, Jesse has worked with theater companies across the country as a happy actor. Unfortunately, the happiness didn't last, and he returned to school to become a physical therapist assistant. He now works with adult and pediatric therapy at Promedica Hospital. While he loves his job, he is overjoyed to be creating characters on stage again.

**Trace McCalister:** Thomas Wright is pleased to be back performing and thankful for the community's support. His tenth Pickering/Colbeck show, he enjoys the process of creating characters from words on a script to actions on the stage. He extends gratitude to those who have been an influence in his life. That would be about everyone, including Diane for casting him in this show, Dave Brown for lighting up the stage, and to the rest of the cast for another fabulous experience. He sends thanks to Gina and to his mom, wishing she were here. "Theatre is one of the best ways to rediscover one's Soul." ~ Saurave Verma