

Little Women carried by standout acting

by Michael Blickstein

Little Women, New Trier’s Winter Play, sets the bar high with it’s acting prowess and beautiful set. Like most of New Trier’s plays (not musicals) Little Women, adapted from the book written by Louisa May Alcott, was held in the McGee Theater and transformed by an impressive set built almost entirely from scratch. The play is in two acts and starts with the four girls, played by Alyson Weber, Dee Browning, Sophie Lieberman, and Kate Wainwright, all showing how they got Christmas gifts for their mother, who they call Marmee, (played by Hannah Higgins). The first act continues to introduce more characters, including Theodore ‘Laurie’ Laurence, (Michael Olszowka), Old Lady Laurence (Leah Sherin), Mr. Brooke (Ryan Cason), and a small ensemble of other characters to round out the cast of fifteen characters. The second act is where the plot really kicks in and the conflict starts. Marmee finds out that her husband has been injured on the war front; one of the girls gets Scarlet Fever; Meg and Mr. Brooke fall in love, and so



The cast of Little Women posing for a post-production photo | Facebook

on. However, this whole two-act play, with a more than two-hour run-time, only covers the first half of the book. This play isn’t particularly different from any other winter plays in the past few years, but I’ve never seen the actors do a better job. It’s a realistic play, it had a small cast of characters, and the set was very ornate and well built.

It was funny and quirky, just like Almost Maine (2012) and You Can’t Take it With You (2013). Each play makes you feel pretty good at the end, and it’s not hard to empathize with some of their trials and tribulations. New Trier Stage Crew is well known for building amazing stages. On one side of the stage, they had a loom. They had a living area, a

bench, a lounge chair, a fireplace, and a piano. They also had an attic area, which was set on the edge of the stage, high up, and was very partitioned from the rest of the scenery. The piano on set wasn’t just there for looks. It was consistently played by a few of the characters and acted as the main musical outlet for the whole play. The music was composed by Olszowka and Lieberman and played throughout both acts. The most interesting and hilarious part of this play for me was the play within a play. Early on, it is revealed that one of the girls has written a Christmas play to perform for their mother. It’s that standard play within a play format: heavily dramatized, looks like it isn’t well rehearsed, and it gives a few good laughs. It was something that just happened to stand out from the rest of the play, and

definitely had me in for more than just a few laughs. This play is a standard New Trier Winter Play, but with every year that passes the performance sets the bar at a new high. You’ll really like it if you’re a fan of traditional American literature. You’ll like it even more if you know people in the play or can appreciate some of the inside jokes that the cast and crew throw in there to satisfy students and teachers. You’ll also love it if you appreciate the aesthetics and hard work put into the entire production process. However, it may not be for you if you have trouble sitting through a longer production, or if you have trouble with older, dryer humor. This is definitely a niche audience production, but I guarantee you will be surprised at how much you like it.

It’s beginning to look a lot like Hanukkah at NT

by Grace Paul

During this holiday season, some people will be dreaming of latkes instead of gumdrops, and warming their hands by the menorah instead of the fire. Sabrina Barkal, a New Trier Junior, has a traditional Hanukkah every year. “We eat latkes and light the candles. I like to play dreidel and eat the chocolate coins.” According to Barkal, food is one of the most important aspects about Hanukkah. While at Christmas, a typical family meal consists of ham, cranberry sauce, and mashed potatoes, Hanukkah includes latkes, bimuelos, and sufganiyot. According to Giora Shimoni of kosherfood.about.com, latkes are a form of potato pancakes, bimuelos are honey-drizzled puffs, and sufganiyot are a type of jelly-filled donut. Alex Levine, another junior, agreed with Barkal about the food, “My family traditions consist of cooking a very typical Hanukkah meal of brisket, latkes, and other Jewish food.” Levine also enjoys playing dreidel with his sister Michelle. Although food is a large part of celebrating Hanukkah, there are other equally important aspects according to Levine. “My favorite thing about Hanukkah is being able to spend time at my temple with people who share my religious beliefs.” Similar to Levine, Barkal thinks it is important to notice the religious aspect of the holiday. She explained that the lighting of the menorah is done to symbolize the oil which burned for eight days. Both Barkal and Levine are fine with the hype that Christmas gets instead of Hanukkah. However, according to Barkal, it would be nice if there were more Hanukkah songs and symbols because she knows all



Old Orchard’s holiday display featuring a menorah and dreidel | Pearlman

about the Christmas symbols and music due to their common presence. Levine states, “My favorite Hanukkah song is the Hanukkah song by Adam Sandler.” Whether this counts as a song of the holiday or not, Levine agrees that, other than Sandler’s tune, there aren’t nearly as many Hanukkah songs as Christmas tunes. According to the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Hannukah begins this year on December 16 and ends on December 24. The term Hanukkah means rededication. ifcj.org states that this is the name of the holiday because, “A group called the Maccabees, led by a man named Mattathias and his brothers, revolted against Hellenistic authorities. They regained control over the Temple, cleansed it from defilement, and rededicated it.” The story of the Maccabees is about a group of Jews who were forced to accept the culture of the Greek and Syrian forces, but decided to fight back for their religion. ifcj.org

says that they won the battle on the 25th day of Kislev, a Jewish calendar month, and that is why Hanukkah is celebrated during that time each year. The other background story of the holiday tells the tale of faith in God. In old synagogues and temples, there always had to be an “eternal flame” lit, which represented that God’s presence is always among us. The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews says that there was once a temple which only had one flask of oil left. The temple was not supposed to receive more oil for eight more days, but the rabbi went ahead and lit the flame anyway. “But they trusted in God, and a miracle occurred — the lamp that was only to last for one day stayed lit for eight days until the new oil arrived.” According to the ifcj.org, this is why Hanukkah lasts for eight days. ifcj.org states, “Because it typically falls so close to Christmas, Hanukkah carries with it a message of hope, miracles, and bringing light into the world that is embraced by both Christians and Jews.”

Tingle dazzles with Christmas lights



Tingle’s Christmas display on Evergreen Lane | christmasonevergreen.com

by Michael Dugan

Nothing says Christmas like family, snow, and, for most, time off from school -- unless you’re freshman Christian Tingle. Christmas lights are a huge part of the holiday season. Whether that means putting them up in the front yard, or merely taking a minute to appreciate them as your car drives by, the lights tie the holiday season together. But to Tingle, it’s not just that. It’s now tradition. Almost everyone at New Trier is familiar with the crazy light show at the house off of Thornwood Avenue in Wilmette, but Tingle’s house in Winnetka is just as eye-opening. Every year, he puts together an eye-popping array of colors and patterns on his front lawn and the roof of his house. As if that weren’t enough, he programs the lights to be in sync with the music streaming on the radio at 99.9 FM. Given that the display is jaw-dropping, it’s no surprise that the preparation is treacherous. “I started setting up in the first weekend of October,” Tingle explained. His house is not the easiest to find, given the fact that it is tucked at the end of, appropriately named, Evergreen Lane off of Hill Road in Winnetka. But Tingle puts forth an extraordinary amount of effort to make the experience worthwhile for the viewers he gets every day. “I took advantage of multiple long weekends to set up the lights, wire them and hook them up. I also have to work both days on the weekend, so I get my homework finished pretty early,” he continued.

To most students, breaks from school are a time to relax and do very little. Tingle loves free time to relax as much as the next student, but he also knows how to be productive during that time. “Over Thanksgiving break I was programming all of the lights,” he explained. “It was a lot of work, but the lights were running on Dec 1.” Not only does he voluntarily decorate his own home, but he has worked on the homes of his close family friends. “I don’t do the whole display for other people, but I do set up lights for them,” he said. Tingle’s passion was sparked from one moment in time. “When I was in 2nd grade my grandma showed me a video of a guy in Utah who used to do it,” he said. “Every Christmas I’ve asked for the equipment to do it myself. In 7th grade it finally happened.” At the beginning, it was just something to get the ball rolling. “The difference between the first and second year was crazy,” he said, “there was a huge jump [in production].” If you simply can’t wait to see the lights or refuse to see them in person, visit Tingle’s website (<http://christmasonevergreen.com>). Tingle has five videos from this year’s display as well as photos from previous years. Aside from the light display, Tingle and his family also have a Make-A-Wish donation box at the very front of the lawn. While encouraged to see the display, visitors are also encouraged to donate in any way they can to the Make-A-Wish foundation. Donations can also be made on the website listed above.