

**STAGE
RIGHT**
Presents

A CHRISTMAS STORY



By: Tom Lockhart

Once again we come to that time of year that many love and dread: Christmas time. It seems that we just celebrated the season only last week, yet here it comes again. When I was a child I would wait anxiously for that present that I wanted so

badly. One year it would be a football and another it would be a model airplane. Every year was something different. The only thing that I knew, for the most part, was Santa was gonna bring it to me.

For one child that wish is for "an official Red

Ryder carbine action 200 shot range model air rifle with a compass and this thing that tells time built right into the stock." That's right, little Ralphie can literally feel that blue steel and wooden stock resting in his hands as he defends his home from the likes of Black Bart. No one would dare come on his land and harm his family if he had "old blue." The only problem is that he doesn't have it yet, and the question still remains: will he have it or not. If his mother has her way, he will not. "You'll shoot your eye out!". However, Ralphie has a secret plan. He will enlist the aid of his teacher, Miss Shields. If she falls through, then there is always the weapon of last resort, the king of gifts himself Santa Claus, surely the main man would help him. Will he get that Red Ryder air rifle? You will need to come to the Crighton Theatre to find out.

The cast for this show is led by the ever talented Joe Witcraft, who has appeared many times on the Crighton stage the last time being as the kindly doctor in our production of Cheaper by the Dozen. Joe will be playing the narrator, Ralph all grown up. He will be jumping in and out of the scenes as he guides you through the hilarity of a Christmas that seems to be going very wrong for one little boy. Newcomer Peter Mc Poland plays Ralphie. Peter joins us from Class Act where he was last seen in Suessical and Les Miserables this past summer. Another newcomer is Trace Black-ketter who portrays Ralphie's friend Flick who never seems to be able to avoid troubles; be it with a bully or a cold flagpole! Bravo Company, STAGE RIGHT'S performance school, provided many of the youngest talent on stage. Bravo members Ethan Hackney, Lauren Ferro and Megan Jones



portray Ralphie's classmates. Young Coulter Barzilla, also in Bravo Company, will be playing Ralphie's younger brother Randy. Coulter loves the fact that he is encouraged to play with his food on stage! Rounding out the young cast are understudies Raleigh Erwin and Josh Beck. Jenna Witcraft and Rayne Brown will assist as Santa's elves.

The mother will be played by Patrice Kentimenos. You may remember her from our Jones, Hope and Wooten shows Southern Hospitality and Dearly Beloved where she played Frankie Futrelle Dubberly. The 'old man' (Ralphie's father) will be played by Katt Gilcrease, who has been on the Crighton stage many times during the last several years, but most notably as Will Stockdale in No Time for Sergeants. The no nonsense Miss Shields will be played by STAGE RIGHT artistic director Carolyn Corsano Wong. She will be sharing the stage with her son Michael Wong for the first time in a long time as he portrays the part of Ralphie's arch nemesis Scut Farkas. It has been fun watching Michael try his hand at being a mean person.

You could not have a good show without a good leader and that leads us to the director of our show, Jim Bingham. Most of you know Jim as the Executive Director of the Crighton Theatre Foundation but Jim is an actor and director as well. Jim directed Stage Right's acclaimed production of Always...Patsy Cline this past February. Assisting Jim is Amy Sowers as assistant director. Amy is the founder and director of Bravo Company, STAGE RIGHT'S performing arts school.

The show is about a child who has a wish



Carolyn Wong with last year's haul of toys-let's fill that box again this year!

to get a particular gift for Christmas, yet there are many kids in our community who want to get certain gifts, but will be lucky to get any gifts at all. For these kids, one place their parents look for help is the Toys for Tots campaign which is sponsored by the United States Marine Corp. For those of you who are familiar with

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Stage Right, you will know that we like to throw a spotlight on different non profit community assistance programs while we are also telling you about the show that we produce. We

Lifebuoy - yuck!



have brought to your attention in the past, the Food Bank, Animal Shelter, and local Heroes that have served this country with honor and pride. For this show we would like to point that spotlight at this fine non profit organization. I had the opportunity to speak to the director of the Montgomery County office for Toys for Tots, Bob Quinn and was made aware of a great many things.

The Toys for Tots program was actually the brain child of a Marine's wife in 1947. She had made a Raggedy Ann doll and asked her husband to find a needy child that would enjoy it for Christmas. She told some of her friends about what she had done and they all decided to join in

and do the same. In that first year over 5,000 toys were made or collected and distributed to needy children, because of this kind gesture, many kids had smiles on their faces that year. The giving has grown and become a national campaign to help needy children wherever they may be. In Montgomery County, last year alone, there were 5,154 kids that were given 15,582 toys. There were over 435 million toys donated and given to children nationwide last year alone.

It's amazing to see what can happen when one person decides that they want to make a difference. We at Stage Right would like to ask you to bring an unwrapped toy to the Crighton Theatre in the next several weeks. Every toy that is given will be passed on to the local Toys for Tots office so that children in our community can have a better Christmas. There will be a box located in



Ralphie and Mom have a difference of opinion about Randy's eating habits.



I double-dog-dare you!

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the lobby of our lovely theatre where you can drop off your donations. Even if you can't come to the show, please support the local youth with your toy donations. There will be donation boxes located all over the county, and you can even come to the theatre during normal business hours and drop off toys that you have. We realize that at this time of economic upheaval, many of us do not have the extra income that we are used to. That only means that the need is going to be that much greater. Please do what you can to help us make this a better Christmas for a lot of little kids out there. This is just one more way that we can support the men and women in uniform that give us the liberties we so greatly enjoy.

We hope that you will come out and join us for some great times and good old family fun. As always, the shows that we do are geared for the

family and promise to keep you in stitches. Come on in and check your troubles at the door, see the 'Crown Jewel of Montgomery County' dressed in all her Christmas finery and enjoy the show. It

will run from December 2-18 at 8 pm on Fridays and Saturdays, with two Sunday matinees on the 11th and the 18th at 2 pm. Tickets for the show are on sale now at the box office, and you can reach them at 936-441-SHOW (7469). You can also purchase your tickets online at www.stage-right.org. Tickets are \$12 for kids \$15 for seniors and \$17 for adults. Since this

show will be a 'step back in time' for our more seasoned patrons, we are offering a special rate for senior groups: \$10/person for senior groups of 10 or more persons. We hope to see you at the Crighton this Christmas for A Christmas Story - we double-dog-dare you to miss it!

Thanks for your support in the past and we wish you and yours a very happy holiday! ♦



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