

# Holiday Events Theatre

## Stage Right Invites All to Step Back in Time with *The Christmas Story*

### December 6 - 22

Stage Right of Texas, resident non-profit theatre company at the historic Crighton Theatre in Conroe, invites all to ring in the holidays with laughter as they present the classic, *A Christmas Story*. Christmas is a time of great expectations, especially through the eyes of a child. For nine-year-old Ralphie Parker that great expectation is a genuine Red Ryder 200 Shot Carbine Action Air Rifle. No self-respecting cowboy would be without one. Unfortunately, his mom, teacher and even the Santa Claus toiling away at Goldblatt's Department Store share the same reaction to his Christmas wish: "You'll shoot your eye out!" Based on the book by humorist Jean Shepherd and adapted from the classic film for the stage by Philip Grecian, the play has all the scenes you've come to love in the movie; the flagpole, the bunny suit, and the infamous lamp!

You'd have to have a Grinch-sized heart to not feel a smile spreading across your face when you see 11-year-old Ian Montez take the stage as Ralphie Parker in his quest 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 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." However the question still remains: will he have it, or not? If his mom won't get it for him, he'll enlist the aid of his teacher, Miss Shields. If she falls through, there is always the big man himself: Santa Claus.

We'd like to give you a glimpse at the folks that are going to bring this classic holiday favorite to life. Behind the scenes, the stage manager is Amber Babcock, who has performed in more than 50 musicals and started directing shows in the early 80's. Amber founded, wrote, directed and

choreographed Austin's Murder Mystery Musicals (a dinner theatre company) and was a founding member of North x North-west Theatre in Austin. Assistant director is Stage Right founder and board member Amy Sowers. Amy is an audience favorite, especially in the Jones Hope Wooten comedies. Amy is founder and director of Bravo Company, Stage Right's performing arts school for youth 5-18 years.

On stage will be newcomer Steven Binns as the narrator, Ralph all grown up, popping in and out of scenes as he guides you through the hilarity of a Christmas that seems to be going very wrong for one little boy. While Steven is new to the Crighton Theatre, he has been performing in one way or another since he can remember! Stage Right is very happy to welcome two more newcomers: John Wallace Barton, who portrays Ralphie's friend Schwartz, and Delaney Johnson, who plays Esther Jane, one of Ralphie's classmates. You may recognize young Stephen Twinney from the Crighton's summer production of *The Wizard of Oz*, as he will be playing another of Ralphie's friends, Flick. Ashley Wienecke is joining the show from Bravo Company, Stage Right's performing arts school, to play Helen. Ashley was in the production of *Annie* a few years ago.

The mother will be played by Patrice Kentimenos. She played Frankie Futrelle Dubberly in *Southern Hospitality* and *Dearly Beloved*. The 'old man' (Ralphie's father) will be played by Todd Brady, who recently played Cousin Purvis in *The Red Velvet Cake War*. Todd took flight across the stage of the Crighton this past summer as the head flying monkey in *The Wizard of Oz*. The no-nonsense Miss Shields will be played by Diana Egley, who is new to the Crighton stage. It will be interesting to see Billy Cox try his hand at being a mean person as he portrays Ralphie's arch nemesis, Scut Farkas.



Ralphie, Red Ryder and an official Red Ryder BB gun in Stage Right's production of *A Christmas Story*.

You can't have a good show without a good leader, and that takes us to the director of the show, Melody Montez. Melody has directed many shows and acted in many more; her favorite roles include Roz in *Moon Over Buffalo*, and Rhonda Lynn in *Christmas Bells*. She has been with Stage Right since its first production and also teaches the teenage class of Bravo Company. She last directed the production of *The Red Velvet Cake War*. Melody is excited to be directing her two sons Ian, who plays Ralphie, and Ian's younger brother Robben who ironically will play Randy, Ralphie's younger brother in the show!

Stage Right spotlights a different non-profit community assistance program for each the shows that they produce. For this show they would like to shine the light on the Salvation Army. You are encouraged to bring an unwrapped personal care item such as soap, shampoo, bath and body items, deodorant, nice note paper, pens, cleaning items and laundry detergent for senior citizens.

Stage Right will also have volunteers from the Literacy Volunteers of America - Montgomery County in the lobby to distribute information about their organization. The mission of LVA is to reach adults whose literacy skills are very limited or non-existent and to provide volunteer tutors who can teach reading, writing, and English speaking skills. Looking for a

way to volunteer your time to benefit your community? Give yourself the gift of giving to others this Christmas.

As an added treat, the handbell choir from New Danville (lead by our own Miss Shields - Diana Egley) will perform at 1:30 p.m. prior to the 2:00 matinee on Sunday, December 15. Come early and listen to the beautiful sounds of the talented men and women of the New Danville handbell choir. New Danville is "a self-sustaining, master-planned integrated community where adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities can live, learn, work and grow emotionally, socially, and spiritually with their non-disabled peers."

As always, shows are geared for the family and promise to keep you in stitches. Come 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 December 6 - 22 on Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. and three Sunday matinees on December 8, 15, 22 at 2 p.m. Tickets can be obtained online at [www.stage-right.org](http://www.stage-right.org) or by calling the Crighton box office at 936-441-SHOW (7469). Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors and groups of 15 persons, and \$15 for youth and senior groups of 15 persons or more. Please call the box office to purchase group tickets. We 'double-dog dare you' to miss it!