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**American Association of
Community Theatre AACT
NewPlayFest Winning Plays:
Volume 2 (2016)**

Lighthouse by
WILLIAM BAER

Laguna Beach, Ohio by
MALCOLM MACDONALD

Wash, Dry, Fold by
NEDRA PEZOLD ROBERTS

Gracefully Ending by
A.J. DELAUDER

The Emperor of North America by
THOMAS HISCHAK

Shades of Valor by
KAREN L. LEWIS

Get Out of Dodge by
JEANNE DRENNAN



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INTRODUCTION

The American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) is proud to present the seven winning scripts and playwrights of the second AACT NewPlayFest cycle. AACT NewPlayFest is an initiative by AACT to address the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe. It has been embraced by playwrights and theatres across the country, bringing exciting theatrical journeys to producing companies and joyful realization and anticipation to playwrights and their work.

AACT is pleased to partner with Dramatic Publishing Company for this program. AACT NewPlayFest is unparalleled in new play competitions, providing full productions of the winning scripts, plus publication and rights representation by a major theatrical publisher. Also thanks to Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc., for pioneering the way. Its TNT POPS! New Play Project served as the model for AACT NewPlayFest.

This second cycle of AACT NewPlayFest, ending in 2016, proved even more successful than the first. More scripts were submitted, and seven theatres across the country produced world premieres of winning scripts. This festival continues to benefit the producing theatres by giving them the excitement of bringing new works to their patrons, and the playwrights by experiencing quality productions of their work, and publication and representation by Dramatic Publishing. The benefits of AACT NewPlayFest will expand as additional theatres produce these top-notch plays.

We hope you will consider one of these plays for your next season.

Break a leg,

Julie Crawford, Executive Director
American Association of Community Theatre

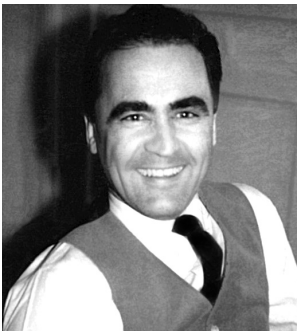
The American Association of Community Theatre is the resource connection for America's theatres. AACT represents the interests of more than 7,000 theatres across the United States and its territories, as well as theatre companies with the U.S. Armed Services overseas. To learn more about AACT NewPlayFest and AACT go to aact.org.

FOREWORD

Jack K. Ayre, born in Pittsburgh on July 9, 1921, celebrated his 90th birthday before passing away in December 2011. At his birthday party in Sunnyvale, Calif., he sang with a barbershop quartet—one of his favorite activities—and celebrated with his cousin and lifelong friend, Frank Ayre Lee. Though as adults they lived on opposite sides of the country, the cousins kept in touch through letters that displayed a love for the written word and an irreverent sense of humor. Jack had participated in theatre productions at Drew University in New Jersey and at a community theatre in Connecticut in his younger years, and continued that interest when he moved to California.

Frank, a chemical engineer by profession, was also an avid aficionado of theatre and had dabbled in playwriting, adapting Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* for a children's theatre production, and penning *McSteg*, a tongue-in-cheek discourse ribbing his cousin Jack and based on a scene in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation has been created by the children of Frank as a tribute to their father, who passed away in August 2012, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of Jack, who was an advertising executive and public relations director. The family is pleased to honor both men through a lasting legacy promoting new works for theatre.



Jack K. Ayre



Frank Ayre Lee

Photos: Courtesy of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.

Laguna Beach, Ohio

By
MALCOLM MACDONALD

Laguna Beach, Ohio was premiered by Stage Right Productions at 2nd Street Theater in Bend, Ore., on March 25, 2016, with the following cast:

Will..... Jim Wurm
Eva Martinez..... CJ Wurm
Archy..... Shane Ketterman
Dove..... Fred Giacomini
Marsha..... Patricia West-Del Ruth
Lizzy Kate Andrews

Production:

Director Rick Jenkins
Assistant Director/Production Designer Kelley Ryan
Music Consultant Mike Ficher
Technical Director/Sound and Lights Shaun Limbocker
Lighting Assistant Jaje Fischer
Stage Manager Lori Lampe
Set Design Sandy Klein, Gary Loddo, Suzan Noyes
Costumes/Props..... Kelley Ryan
Running Crew Raechel Gilland
Set Painting and Construction..... Suzan Noyes, Sandy Klein,
Gary Loddo, Ed Dickey, Lori Lampe,
Kim Page, Greg Thoma, Kelley Ryan,
Nancy Scher, Samantha Mooney

In addition to the information on the Important Billing and Credit Requirements page (p. 3), all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*Laguna Beach, Ohio* was premiered in the American Association of Community Theatre’s AACT NewPlayFest by Stage Right Productions at 2nd Street Theater in Bend, Ore.”

Laguna Beach Ohio

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

LIZZY: Smart, sharp, manic.

ARCHY: Stylish, dramatic, fabulous.

DOVE: Lifelong surfer and stoner.

WILL: Solid, stoic, thoughtful.

MARSHA: Will's wife. Plump, happy.

EVA: An old classmate who was a sexpot in high school.

CHARACTER NOTES

All characters are in their 50s. LIZZY, ARCHY, DOVE and WILL were best friends in high school.

SETTING

The living room of an old Spanish-style bungalow in Laguna Beach, Calif. The decor is shabby, comfy and artistic. The living room spills downstage to a veranda with deck chairs, potted succulents and surfboards.

The house sits on a bluff, so when the actors look out toward the audience, they are looking out at the ocean.

Laguna Beach, Ohio

ACT I

Scene 1

(January 2, 2013. An old Spanish bungalow in Laguna Beach, Calif., filled with art, mementos and shabby furniture. The living room spills out onto the veranda.)

LIZZY enters, carrying bags.)

LIZZY. Hellooo! We made it. Anyone here? Dove? *(Stops to admire the view.)* Oh, my god.

(Offstage, ARCHY is belting a classic Broadway show tune timed to make his grand entrance, which he makes clutching a bottle of champagne. LIZZY ignores him.)

ARCHY. Where is everyone?! Some grand entrance! Why do I bother?

LIZZY. Archy, shut up and look at this view!

ARCHY. Gorgeous! The ocean is glittering. Gonna be a spectacular sunset. I can't believe we're here. Look at this house!

LIZZY. Everything's the same. Like his parents still live here.

ARCHY. Frozen in time like a Bohemian butterfly wing in amber. While the rest of the OC has become hideous, condo by condo. *(He flops on the couch.)* Lizzy, be a doll and open the bubbly. I have to unwind from that insane traffic.

LIZZY. Nothing's changed: the paintings, the fireplace, even the smell. Such memories. I lost my virginity here—

ARCHY. In this house?!

LIZZY. On this couch.

ARCHY. Aaagh! *(Jumps to his feet.)* Sorry, I just find hetero sex a little gross.

LIZZY. Yes, it was.

ARCHY. It's the same damned couch thirty years later?! Oh well. *(Flops back down.)*

LIZZY. Being here ... I feel like I'm seventeen again. *(She pops the champagne.)*

ARCHY. Happy New Year! Happy new life in paradise. Where's your glass?

LIZZY. I'm back on the wagon.

ARCHY. How dreadful! You're so much more pleasant after a cocktail or two.

LIZZY. Isn't everything? No, at Thanksgiving, my sweet little niece said, "Aunt Lizzy, you are a messy and obnoxious drunk."

ARCHY. What a horrible creature! Young people today don't know how to have fun! No smoking, no drinking, no gluten ...

LIZZY. I know, but ... I just can't anymore.

ARCHY. Well, good for you, Elizabeth.

LIZZY. Thanks for your faux compassion.

ARCHY. Is there any other kind? Cheers! *Toujours gai, toujours gai!* *(Savors the champagne.)* God, this is heaven. I can feel my shoulders un-knotting like reverse macramé.

LIZZY. Where is everyone?

ARCHY. Maybe Dove took Will and Marsha down to the beach.

LIZZY. Marsha. Darling Marsha. *(She imitates MARSHA's giggle.)*

ARCHY. Now, don't be mean.

LIZZY. I just hope she doesn't get all "praise the Lord" on us.

ARCHY. I love Marsha.

LIZZY. Oh, come on. That giggle?! *(She imitates MARSHA's giggle again.)*

ARCHY. I like it! She's enthusiastic.

LIZZY. Cut the PR spin. She's a cow ... A nice cow.

ARCHY. She raised three kids in Ohio, what do you expect?

LIZZY. Let's just agree to disagree. I know you two have this "thing."

ARCHY. You'd better get over it, girl, or this whole plan will go up in smoke—

LIZZY. I know. I'll be good. *(Beat.)* I just always thought Will would end up with someone more ... exotic.

ARCHY. Ohio is very exotic! I opened a ballet with Baryshnikov in Cincinnati. Trust me, it's another world.

LIZZY. Said the man who lives in a penthouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side. That's another world.

ARCHY. Darling, that's the *only* world. That, and Paris ... and this house.

LIZZY. Have you ever been to Thailand? You would love it. I did a month-long meditation retreat above Chiang Mai—

ARCHY. I'm more of a Western Hemisphere boy. Just promise me you won't get into it with Marsha. She was so adorable back in the day. She just hasn't aged well. Anyway, Will's put on a few pounds himself.

LIZZY. I guess that's all you can do in Ohio—eat.

ARCHY. That is one of the great tragedies of our time. Will had the hottest body in high school ... To let that go. Such a pity.

LIZZY. I was too intellectual to notice those things back then.

ARCHY. Oh, puh-leeze! You don't remember his chest, his abs, his thighs ... Our champion swimmer. Remember the state finals?

LIZZY. When he pulled off his swim cap, and his long blond hair tumbled down like a Botticelli angel.

ARCHY. The Golden Boy. (*Indicating with his fingers.*) He beat Dove by *this* much. I was so proud to be their friend.

LIZZY. Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack.

(DOVE enters in a wetsuit, holding a surfboard. He is still wet.)

DOVE. Texas Jack, at your service, ma'am.

ARCHY. Dove! Darling Dove! Look at YOU! I would hug you, but this is a \$400 shirt.

DOVE. Seriously?!

LIZZY. I'll hug you! (*She does.*) Oh, what a beautiful man-child you are.

DOVE. I meant to be here to greet you. But the waves got too good. Where's Will?

ARCHY. Apparently, everyone's on "Surfer Time."

DOVE. Right on! So psyched to see you guys. Let me jump in the shower, then I'll make some margos.

(DOVE puts his board on the veranda and sheds his wetsuit.)

ARCHY. Dove's margaritas! So many wonderful memories.

LIZZY. And a few horrible ones.

ARCHY. Lizzy has made a Middle Eastern feast. Our car is filled with hummus and pita and baba ghanoush!

DOVE. Sweet! Did you do grape leaves?

LIZZY. Of course, sweetie, just for you.

DOVE (*rubbing his flat belly*). Mmmmmmm mmm ...

ARCHY. Dude!

DOVE (*cutely mocking him*). Yes, dude.

ARCHY. How is it possible that you have zero percent body fat?
And abs!! It's not fair.

DOVE (*teasing*). What's it like, Archy ... being in your fifties?

ARCHY. Screw you! You're older than all of us.

LIZZY. But he looks ten years younger.

ARCHY. Speak for yourself, bitch!

LIZZY. Go get ready Dove. Should I try to call Will?

ARCHY. No!! Put your phone away. Turn it off! There were never any cellphones in this house. I turned mine off hours ago. Let those drama queens fill up my voice mail.

DOVE (*exiting*). Far out! I LOVE that. Let me throw on some clothes so I can get the margos ready before Will and Marsha— (*Stops.*) Oh, and by the way, we might have another special guest drop by: Eva Martinez.

ARCHY. NO! Eva Martinez!!

LIZZY. Who's Eva Martinez? I don't watch TV.

DOVE. "Eve."

ARCHY. Eve ... "Eve Mártiness!"

LIZZY. Eve Mártiness?! That slut from high school with the big boobs that all the boys were drooling over?

ARCHY. Not all the boys!

LIZZY. How is this possible, Dove?

DOVE. I bumped into her yesterday in the health food store. Is that a trip?! She's here in Laguna for the weekend, so I told her to drop by for a drink.

LIZZY. But ... why is she "Eva Martinez"?

ARCHY. She's Mexican. I always liked her. Such a naughty girl.

LIZZY. Eve Mártiness was Mexican?? Does Will know about this?

DOVE. That she's Mexican?

LIZZY. That she's coming over. Today!

DOVE. No, it was just spur of the moment. No biggie. She seems really cool.

ARCHY. Forget that. How does she *look*? She wasn't the most beautiful girl in school, but she was definitely the hottest.

LIZZY. It wasn't a very big school.

ARCHY. What's she look like, Dove?

DOVE. I don't know ... like a middle-aged woman, I guess. Baggy sweatshirt, baseball cap ... She's cool—

LIZZY. I hate to be the mother hen here, but this is so important.

We've got business to discuss, and ... Will is going to freak—

ARCHY. Calm down, Lizzy. I agree with Dove, it's no biggie.

(ARCHY sits on the couch.)

LIZZY. It is a massive biggie! Will and Marsha ... and Eve! I mean, she was Will's "first" ... She deflowered him right here—

ARCHY. Here!? *(Jumps up from couch.)*

LIZZY. No, on the terrace.

DOVE. What? Are you shittin' me?

ARCHY. Oh come on, Dove, you knew that.

DOVE *(trying to be cool)*. No. I didn't. When was that?

ARCHY. Prom night. It was a total scandal!

DOVE. Wow. Can't believe Will never told me!

LIZZY. He never told anyone. I told Archy. Will was embarrassed. I mean, Eve was hot, but dumb as wood.

ARCHY. She *was* hot. Like a horny little Raquel Welch.

DOVE. He told you, Lizzy?

LIZZY. What difference does it make! The point is, Will and Marsha and Eve ... It's not a good idea!

DOVE. Yeah, fine. I'll just call her and tell her not to come.

LIZZY. Yes.

ARCHY. No! There's nothing better than a surprise guest. It'll be fine. One drink—just to get a look at her. Believe me, Marsha won't care.

LIZZY. But Will *will*!! Call her Dove.

ARCHY. No! I absolutely forbid it! Can't we just "be here now," communicate face to face. I mean, isn't that why we're all here tonight? To let it all hang out and see if we can do this thing? Now, go! I'm desperate for a margarita.

(DOVE exits.)

LIZZY. Eve Mártiness was Mexican? But she was kind of blonde.

ARCHY. So was I.

LIZZY. This is a terrible idea. What is with you? “No phones!” “Be here now.”

ARCHY. Oh come on, it will be fun. Aren’t you just a little curious to see how her body has ... evolved?

LIZZY. No, I’m not! Stop being such a fag. (*Nervous, vulnerable.*) I hated that girl in high school— And, Archy, this is too important. (*Beat.*) Tell me the truth. Do you honestly believe this deal can happen?

ARCHY. Yes! Would I fly out here if I didn’t? Will and I have been in communication for months and he’s filled me in—

LIZZY. So fill me in, please!

ARCHY. You have to relax, darling. Seriously. I just want Will to explain it. He’s figured it out ten different ways with spreadsheets and contracts. My lawyer was very impressed. (*Taking her hand.*) It’s totally doable. But ...

LIZZY. But what?

ARCHY. Just that, ultimately, it’s all up to Will.

LIZZY. And Marsha.

WILL. Hello! We made it.

(WILL appears at the door, followed by MARSHA, who lets out a squeal and runs to hug ARCHY.)

ARCHY. Marsha!

MARSHA. Archy, you gorgeous beast!

(WILL and LIZZY embrace.)

LIZZY. Oh, Will. Look at you.

MARSHA. Hi, Lizzy. It’s been too long. You look wonderful.

LIZZY. And you ... Your hair is perfect.

MARSHA. You’re too kind. (*Giggles.*)

LIZZY (*aside*). It wasn’t a compliment.

WILL (*embracing ARCHY*). Marsha’s right. You are a gorgeous beast.

MARSHA. Oh ... this house! The view! It’s just ... heaven. And look at us, January second and we’re in shirtsleeves! (*To ARCHY.*) And that shirt is divine, by the way.

WILL. So ... tell me everything you guys. What are we drinking?

ARCHY. Champagne.

WILL. Bring it!

LIZZY (*exiting to the kitchen*). I'll find some more glasses.

ARCHY (*following her out*). I want to see the kitchen.

(*MARSHA savors every detail.*)

MARSHA. I love this fireplace. Look at these tiles.

(*WILL stands in the center, taking it all in, transfixed.*)

WILL. This house ... this house.

(*MARSHA smiles radiantly.*)

MARSHA. I love it.

ARCHY (*entering with glasses*). The kitchen is exactly the same.
I'm dying!

WILL. Where's Dove?

ARCHY (*pouring champagne*). In the shower. He just arrived five minutes ago, dripping wet like Venus on the half-pipe. He's going to make margos, but let's have a quick toast.

MARSHA. Oh, yes! And Lizzy?

LIZZY (*entering*). Lizzy is drinking Tab.

(*ARCHY makes an "ugh" face.*)

MARSHA. Good for you, Lizzy.

LIZZY. Dear, lord!

MARSHA. Oh, and we just bought a dozen tamales—

ARCHY. I *live* for tamales.

WILL. That's what I love about California. This neighborhood is filled with million dollar houses, but you can still buy homemade tamales out of the back of someone's pick-up.

LIZZY. NO tamales! Don't even *think* of taking them out of your car.

MARSHA. You don't like tamales?

LIZZY (*agitated*). I love tamales, Marsha. But I told you guys I was making Middle Eastern food.

WILL. We just happened upon them. They're fresh.

MARSHA. No, Will. Tamales don't fit. Sorry, Lizzy, we'll keep them in the trunk.

ARCHY (*raising his glass*). Well, that's settled ... Here's to dear old friends.

WILL. Should we wait for Dove?

ARCHY. Darling, this is just a little "pre-toast." Like when we used to "pre-drink" before going to a party.

(MARSHA giggles.)

LIZZY. To the best friends I ever had, and ... Marsha.

ALL. Salud! Cheers! Hear, hear!

WILL. This champagne is amazing.

ARCHY. It better be, Bernadette Peters gave it to me.

MARSHA. Oh, I love her.

LIZZY. So where are you guys staying?

MARSHA. At the Ritz Carlton—just a few miles down the road. It is gorgeous!

LIZZY. Wow, I guess teachers do pretty well in Ohio.

WILL. Archy got us a ridiculous price. Why aren't you guys staying there?

LIZZY. Because we're staying here!

MARSHA. Archy, can I see the kitchen?

ARCHY. You must! Classic 1920s California ... (*Leading her off.*)
But you've been here before ...

(LIZZY and WILL take each other in. She gives him another quick hug.)

LIZZY. So, this house, huh? When was the last time you were here?

WILL. Fifteen years ago. That time we brought the kids to Disneyland.

LIZZY. That was fifteen years ago?! We haven't seen each other in fifteen years? How is that possible?

WILL. Well ...

LIZZY. But it feels ... the same, doesn't it? Being in this house.

WILL. It does.

(A moment.)

LIZZY. So all three kids are in college now?

(They migrate to the terrace.)

WILL. Our oldest already graduated and is now a financial advisor. Susie's a senior at SMU, and Jake is a freshman at Ohio State. So the nest is empty.

LIZZY. I just got a new kitten, since Sasha died. Did you know Sasha died? She was 17 years old. Boy, I forgot how much work kittens are. You can't imagine.

WILL. No.

LIZZY. I'm just so happy we're all here together.

(MARSHA and ARCHY return.)

LIZZY *(cont'd)*. The four Musketeers reunited—

MARSHA. DOLPHINS! Look, you guys, DOLPHINS! *(They all react.)* I have never seen dolphins in nature!

ARCHY. They're so sleek. Look, a baby!

MARSHA. Ooooh.

LIZZY. I think this is a cosmic sign. The dolphins are blessing this reunion ... this union.

(DOVE enters, sneaks up on WILL and grabs him hard as if to push him off the edge.)

WILL *(shaken, but grinning)*. Damn you! Give me a heart attack! *(They share a warm bear hug.)* Look at you, you dick. You look ten years younger than us.

ARCHY. Speak for yourself!

MARSHA *(hugging DOVE)*. Oh ... It's so good to see you! I'm just over-flowing right now. Look, dolphins!

DOVE. Yeah, they cruise by every afternoon.

ARCHY. We have to go down to the beach for sunset.

WILL. Definitely!

DOVE. Of course!

LIZZY *(smelling DOVE)*. Is that patchouli or weed?

DOVE. Welcome to the Hotel California! *(They laugh.)* Who's ready for a margo?

WILL. Relax, we're fine.

DOVE. No, I already squeezed the lemons, it's ready to go.

(DOVE exits, followed by MARSHA.)

MARSHA. I want to see how you make them.

LIZZY. So, Will ... You tell him, Archy. Before she gets here.

WILL. Before who gets here?

ARCHY. Darling Dove, always one to keep us on our toes, ran into an old high-school friend yesterday, and invited her by for a quick margo.

WILL. That's great. Honestly, that's what I miss about this life, random people dropping by, adding to the mix.

(ARCHY smiles "I told you" at LIZZY.)

LIZZY. Yes, Darling Dove invited Eve Martínez.

WILL. Funny. You're messing with me, right?

(Sound of the blender from the kitchen.)

LIZZY. Archy thought it was a fabulous idea.

WILL *(anger bubbling up)*. How did that happen? Jesus, Dove! What an idiot.

LIZZY. I told him to call her and tell her not to come.

WILL. Thank god!

(Doorbell rings.)

ARCHY. But, he didn't. *(Calling out.)* I'll get it!

(DOVE and MARSHA come out with drinks. ARCHY opens the door.)

ARCHY *(grandly)*. Eva? Eva Martinez?!

EVA. Archy?! Oh my god!

(They kiss on the cheeks while everyone else is paralyzed.)

ARCHY. Look everybody, it's Eva Martinez!

(Everyone stares at EVA. She is gorgeous, glamorous and sexy.)

LIZZY *(under her breath)*. I'm killing myself.

WILL. Hey, what a surprise!

(MARSHA steps forward, hand outstretched.)

MARSHA. Hello, I'm Marsha. Will's wife. Look at those gorgeous flowers! I saw a vase in the kitchen.

(MARSHA takes the flowers to the kitchen.)

EVA. Thank you. *(Making the connection.)* Lizzy! Am I right? How fun!

LIZZY. Yes! So fun!

EVA. Will. How nice to see you after all these years.

(EVA goes to hug WILL, but he sticks out his hand instead.)

WILL. Good to see you, Eve. What a surprise.

EVA. Dove told you I was dropping by?

WILL. No. He didn't.

DOVE. Everybody grab a margo. I want to do a proper toast.

ARCHY. Yes, yes, yes!

(They all get drinks, except LIZZY. MARSHA sets out the flowers.)

MARSHA. I've never seen more beautiful flowers!

DOVE *(raising his glass)*. I'm so grateful to have my best friends in the world here together. This house brought us together once again, and ... it's just so awesome. I mean, people come and go, like the waves on the beach, and it's ... just a miracle. Salud!

ALL. Salud!

(They all settle in.)

MARSHA. So, Eva, you also went to high school with these guys? Were all the schools in Pasadena that cool, or just the small private ones?