

Come on Down to the Beach...with The Dixie Swim Club

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Alton Little Theater closes out the 81st Season with another sparkling comedy by the writing team of Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope & Jamie Wooten. *The Dixie Swim Club* will be presented May 7th through May 17th at the Showplace, with special Mother's Day Gift Raffle on Sunday May 10th. Director Lee Cox has previously directed two other "southern" comedies by the same writing team: *Southern Hospitality* (2013) and *Hallelujah Girls* (2014) and was drawn to read all dozen shows that the playwrights currently have touring the country. Cox says, "*Dixie*...was the last play I read and it's the best of the bunch in my opinion; it has some hysterical moments to be sure, but it also has so much heart and deals with issues that every women faces ...relationship challenges, health and ageing issues, loss - it's all there and the play reminds us that our female friends are to be treasured!"

The play takes place at a Beach cottage on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where five women from a college swim team unite every August for a long weekend over the course of thirty years. "Life changes and bodies change but the women cling to each other because they make each other better!" says Cox. Debbie Maneke will be assisting with the production and she too loves the authors and their testaments to the sass and fortitude of the characters. A new cast of experienced actresses who have not appeared on ALT's stage (or any stage) for a while will take on the iconic Southern "types". The quintessential love-addicted Southern Belle will be portrayed by Shawn Chevalier; the anal-retentive Team Captain is portrayed by Kathy Bredenkoetter; Debbie Maneke takes on the sardonic pragmatic lawyer; Donna Minard plays a Nun with a change of heart and habit and Karen Wilson brings the team home with her much-beleaguered, self-deprecating humor.

Cox says that there was a huge turn-out for auditions for these roles, "actresses of a certain age love that these authors write such wonderful roles for women over 40 - these gals are funny and sexy and know their way around some very witty dialogue!: The production is challenging in that the ladies age over 27 years - so costumes, wigs, quick set changes all come with the territory." I love the Outer Banks and have spent several summers there," says Cox, "so I dug out all my décor items from living in Florida for two years - and I enrolled a couple of great guys to help out with the production". Kevin Frakes and Lief Anderson put together the set in record time, Gary Wilson will be on board for lights & sound and Michael Cox will have some fun playing a beach-bum-landlord who cleans up after the "girls" (on stage and in real life!).

Cox and Maneke hope that audiences will just have a blast getting to know five unforgettable women and an unpredictable story about friendships that last forever! Tickets can be obtained on-line at www.altonlittletheater.org or during Box Office hours: Tuesday thru Friday, 10am to 2pm at 618-462-3205. Interviews and photos can be arranged by contacting the director at (618) 531-3777. Theater lovers who attend the May comedy will have early-bird purchase rights for Season Tickets for the 82nd Season at 35% off the Door sale admission prices. The FUN never stops at Alton Little Theater!