

ELMIRA LITTLE THEATRE PRESENTS



a jones hope wooten comedy

DIRECTED BY
ANNA-BETH WHEATON

*Book by Jamie Wooten, Jessie Jones, and Nicholas Hope,
—a hilarious and touching comedy about five unforgettable
women and friendships that last forever.*



Jim and Alicia Hare

Elmira Little Theatre is dedicating this production to the memory of the late James Hare. His contributions to this company as an actor, board member, donor, and subscriber have been paramount in keeping this 82 year old company whole. Our hearts go out to his family and dear Alicia at this time. May his memory live on through the community that he has helped create over his timeless dedication to ELT.

—Craig Bond, *ELT Board President*

"Jim Hare started his acting career for Elmira Little Theater in the early to middle 1970's. He enjoyed being on stage and playing the foil or second banana in many shows. His true colors came across in his leadership skills on the Board of ELT and of course taking on the roll as President. Jim truly Enjoyed Live Theater."

—David Siskin

"I think Jim's most memorable role was Elwood P. Dowd in "Harvey." But my strongest memories of Jim are his portrayal of Hysterium in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" in the summer of 1978, a role he repeated in the ELT production in 1982. Jim was also, in 1986, in a rare local production of "1776" playing the role of the president of the Continental Congress, John Hancock - pretty appropriate for a history teacher!"

—Mike Kenna

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Directors' notes are always a little tricky to write. Do you make them funny? Sentimental? Do you thank everyone, or try to say something meaningful about the world?

As I sit here writing this on my 35th birthday, I can't help but think about the future—five, ten, fifteen years from now. Where will we be? What will the world look like? What will matter?

But the more I think about it, the question isn't really what... It's who.

Who will be there for us when we need them?

Who can make us laugh when we didn't think we could?

Who can see us for who we truly are—and love us anyway?

At its heart, *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club* is a story that answers that question.

This show touches on so many parts of life—love, loss, change, and growth—but it all comes back to the people who stand beside us through it all. Who shows up when life doesn't go as planned? Who cheers us on? Who holds us up when we feel like we can't keep going?

As you read this, you're probably already thinking about your own "who." Maybe it's family. Maybe it's lifelong friends. Maybe it's the people you chose along the way—those unexpected connections that become something you can't imagine living without.

Life is a long and winding journey. We all walk our own paths, but when those paths cross—when they intertwine—that's where something truly special is formed. That's where lifelong bonds are made.

The Sweet Delilah Swim Club captures those friendships so beautifully—the laughter, the struggles, the changes, and the love that holds it all together. Because life isn't perfect. It can be messy, unpredictable, and sometimes downright difficult. But with the right people beside you, it becomes something we can face—and even enjoy—together.

So for the next couple of hours, I invite you to set aside whatever life is throwing your way. Sit back, relax, and spend some time with these five incredible women as they navigate life together—lifting each other up, leaning on one another, and yes... having a splashing good time along the way.

And maybe, when the lights come up, you'll leave wanting to call someone who matters.

Because true friendships are never really gone... sometimes they just need a little jumpstart to be rekindled.

Anna-Beth Wheaton - "I luv U 2"

Special Thanks to the following Foundations:



OF THE SOUTHERN FINGER LAKES

This project is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Regrant program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes.



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7:30pm**

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2:00pm**

For show tickets, contact the
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Seating is General Admission. Please note: Convenience and Facility fees apply.

For more information, go to ElmiraLittleTheatre.org

THE CAST *(in order of appearance)*

ACTOR	ROLE
Gail Lewis.....	Sheree Hollinger
Robin Gaige.....	Lexie Richards
Melissa Norton.....	Dinah Grayson
Michelle Benjamin.....	Vernadette Simms
Kimberly Canale.....	Jeri Neal McFeeley

The characters in this play will be portrayed at ages forty-four, forty-nine, fifty four, and seventy-seven.

The location: The living room of a beach cottage on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

The time: One weekend in August

ACT I

Scene 1: 1997—Twenty-two years after the characters’ college graduation.

Scene 2: 2002—Five years later.

—15 minute Intermission—

ACT II

Scene 1: 2007—Five years later.

Scene 2: 2030—Twenty-three years later.

THE DEADLINE FOR ELT’S 2026 SCHOLARSHIPS IS COMING!

Elmira Little Theatre proudly awards two annual Theatrical Arts Scholarships of \$1000 each (one to a graduating local high school senior and one to a currently enrolled college student) to students who demonstrate a strong commitment to Theatre and the Performing Arts.

All applications must be submitted by **May 1, 2026**.

The scholarship application can be found on our website
elmiralittletheatre.org/scholarships



PRODUCTION AND RUN CREW

Director Anna-Beth Wheaton
Stage Manager Anthony Luta
Producer Maureen Mines
Dialect Coach Sara Love
Projection Design/Set Coordinator Helen Aaron
Costume Design Marshal Mitchell
Wig Styling Todd M. Lamar
Properties Master/Props Run Crew Kaliann Brill
Run Crew Wendy Love, Amanda Fenn, Levi Bradigan
Costume Run Crew Sara Love
Lights and Sound Board Operator Brenden Wendling

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CAST BIOS



Michelle (Vernadette Simms) Benjamin has been making a splash in community theater since 1992. She is thrilled to make her Elmira Little Theatre debut with these incredible ladies in *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*. You may have seen Michelle in shows with The Lake County Players, the Old Havana Courthouse Theatre, and dinner theater in the Watkins Glen area. She has also co-directed musicals at Watkins Glen High School for 20 years with her husband, Tim. When not at the beach cottage, Michelle can be found on-the-job at Watkins Glen International, or enjoying time at home with Tim and their dog, Luna. Michelle hopes you enjoy all the laughs in the show, and remember that strong friendship can outlast any challenges.



Kimberly (Jeri Neal McFeeley) Canale has enjoyed performing in theater since she was five years old and debuted as the Lead Butterfly. She spends most of her time creating art and teaching crafts – much more fun than housework! She is one of the original founders of Centre Stage Community Theatre and also loves working with the wonderful folks at ELT. This has truly been a fabulous experience with this amazing cast and crew. Now let's get a martini and some biscuits!!



Robin (Lexie Richards) Gaige has been a member of Centre Stage Community Theatre for nearly 20 years and with ELT for about half that long. She loves working with this dedicated cast and crew. When not masquerading as an actor, she serves as a wedding officiant through her business, EnGaiged. Robin loves Lexie and hopes she does her justice!

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CAST BIOS *(continued)*



Gail (Sheree Hollinger) Lewis is so thrilled to be doing this fabulous show about women's friendships with this wonderful cast! Women show friends are the best! Gail has been with ELT for over 20 years and was last seen as Shirley in Disaster! with CSCT and as Katherine Houghton Hepburn in The Creative Response to the Potential of Light. Doing two different accents in a row has been a challenge. In her spare time (Ha, what's that?) Gail hangs out every day with her grandkids and sings in two choral groups. Gail dedicates this performance to her best friends (you know who you are), and her other best friends: her daughters and her sisters! Now, let's have some beach weather!



Melissa (Dinah Grayson) Norton has been heavily involved with community theater since 2009 through more than 80 productions. Most recently, she performed as Mrs. Puff in The SpongeBob Musical, as Sue Bayliss in All My Sons, and as the Baroness Ravioli in a murder mystery. When not onstage, she is spending time with her family and boyfriend, enjoying all of life to the fullest. Melissa hopes you bring your martini shaker with you everywhere and take time to live life.

CREW BIOS

Helen Aaron (Charge Artist and Projection Design) has been involved in theater for decades and is happy to be collaborating with this group of wonderful humans for The Sweet Delilah Swim Club. You may have seen her work in Heathers and Kimberly Akimbo with the Elmira Little Theatre, as well as in The Spongebob Musical with the Lake Country Players. You may have also seen her at the Center Stage's Murder Mystery as Sly Sleaze. When she's not teaching or working on sets, you can find Helen enjoying her time with her children. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Jaimi Antes (Makeup Artist) has been designing and applying makeup for theater and events for 5 years now and is so excited to help bring the characters to life in The Sweet Delilah Swim Club! You may have seen her work in many places, such as Tagsylvania, Corning Painted Post High School musicals and the recent ELT shows Heathers and Sweeney Todd. In her free time, she loves hiking, swimming, practicing makeup and spending time with friends. This show has definitely made her want to take up swimming again, and has made her miss the beach! Jaimi hopes you love the show!

CREW BIOS (*continued*)

Levi Bradigan (Stage Crew) has been involved with theatre for several years. He has a range of characters he likes to play, but his favorite love is writing. He has a poetry chapbook being published very soon. He is a writer of not just poetry but also sci-fi, horror, short stories, plays, songs and wherever else the pen takes him.

Kaliann Brill (Properties Master) is excited to be back with ELT for her third show with the company (and fourth production overall). She loves hunting down the perfect props and helping build the little details that make the world of the show come alive. When she's not backstage, she enjoys writing, crafting, and fostering kittens. She hopes you enjoy *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club* and all the laughter, friendship, and beachy chaos it brings.

Amanda Finn (Run Crew) is thrilled to be joining the wonderful cast and crew of *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*. This is Amanda's second production ever with ELT. She was last seen on the ELT stage many moons ago in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*.

Todd M. Lamar (Wig Stylist) became involved with ELT during last year's production of *Shakespeare in Love*. He is currently a serving member on ELT's Board of Governors. He will be seen this June in CSCT's production of *Perfect Arrangement*. When not on stage, Todd can be found teaching art to K - 5th grade students at Carder Elementary in Corning.

Sara Love (Dialect Coach / Costume Run Crew) has been involved in theatre for more than 25 years and is thrilled to be helping out the cast and production staff of *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club*. You may have seen Sara on the ELT stage in *Emma* in 2023, or in last fall's production of *Kimberly Akimbo*. This summer, Sara will be bringing the Keuka Lake Players back to Oz as she directs their 40th anniversary mainstage production. Sara would like to congratulate Anna-Beth, who has successfully mastered Sara's most important theatrical skill - getting people to become involved in productions they did not initially intend to do. It has been an honor and a joy to get to help with this show.

Wendy Love (Stage Crew) has been participating in theatre since infancy, first appearing as the changeling child in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at 18 months old. Other favorite roles include *The Nutcracker* in *The Nutcracker* in Toyland, *The Baker* in *Into the Woods*, Jr. and *John Watson* in *Sherlock Holmes* and the *Bad Case of Whine*. When not spending time on stage or backstage, Wendy enjoys diamond art, playing the saxophone and intense discussions about movies. Wendy hopes you enjoy the show and that you are moved just as much as she was when she first heard the cast run through the show back in the ELT building!

CREW BIOS (*continued*)

Anthony Luta (Stage Manager) may be stage managing his first production with Elmira Little Theatre, but it's not his first foray into theatre. He has worked with multiple other theatre groups including Centre Stage Community Theatre, Keuka Lake Players, and The Clemens Performing Arts Center, among others. He is thankful to the Wheatons for teaching him everything he knows about working backstage, and to his family for always supporting him in his endeavors. He dedicates this show to those of his family who've passed throughout the years. Be careful what you wish for because you might just get it.

Maureen Mines (Producer) has worked on two other ELT productions and is grateful to Anna-Beth for welcoming her to this team of talented theatre artists. She has previously worked on productions at Corning Community College, the late, great Shipping Dock Theatre in Rochester, and Blackwater Theatre in Toronto.

Marshal Mitchell (Costume Designer) is pleased to dress up another talented cast of actors at ELT! They have costumed 3 other shows in the area, including Urinetown (Muse Of Fire Theatre), Boy My Greatness (Dart Frog), and Rabbit Hole (Elmira Little Theatre). In his free time, Marshal is a seamster, crochet artist, and embroiderer! He would like to thank you all for coming out and supporting local artists and theatre; we are nothing without our audiences! Please enjoy the show!

Brenden Wendling (Light and Sound Board Operator) hopes you enjoy this wonderful show and the amazing work the cast and crew have put into it. He hopes you come away from this with a feeling of joy for all the friendships you may have just like this swim club.

Anna-Beth Wheaton (Director) has been making waves in theatre for over 35 years and is beyond excited to be working with this amazing group on The Sweet Delilah Swim Club. You may recognize her from LCP's The SpongeBob Musical, or maybe you've spotted her stage managing—or quietly lurking in the shadows making everything run smoothly. When she's not knee-deep in a show, she's usually dreaming up the next one. For the first time in a long time, though, the horizon is wide open... and she hasn't picked what's next just yet (which is both exciting and mildly concerning). A huge thank you to everyone who poured their time, talent, and heart into this production. She hopes you love the show as much as she does. "I luv U 2."



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