



# SPOTLIGHT

401 North 6th Street

January 27, 2022

www.fslt.org

**Dates:** Opening Night of *Smoke On The Mountain* will be Thursday, Feb. 10. Regular performances will be Feb. 11-12 and 16-19. Sunday Matinees will be offered on Feb. 13 and 20. A special Valentines performance will be Feb. 14.

**Show Times:** Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 6:45 p.m. Matinees begin at 2:00 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 1:15 p.m.

**Flex Pass Seat Selection:** Seat selection begins 7:00 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 29 for Flex Pass patrons. Select seats online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to request seats on the phone. Flex Pass patrons may also purchase a ticket for every pass they have.

**General Public Tickets:** General public tickets available beginning 7:00 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 3. Purchase online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to purchase on the phone. Opening Night and Valentines tickets \$20. Other performances \$12.

**Box Office Phone Calls:** Be prepared to leave a message with details about your seat/ticket request including a phone number where you can easily be reached. Volunteers will return calls during variable hours.

**Atten: Flex Pass Patrons:** Your 2022 pass code was included in the email you received when you purchased your Flex Pass. That code is required to select your seats online. If you don't know your code, and it does not appear when you log in for seat selection, a Box Office volunteer can provide it to you on the phone.

## *Smoke on the Mountain*

**FSLT Favorite Returns to Open  
75th Anniversary Season**

*"I'll press on and take this opportunity to welcome each and everyone of you to the first ever Saturday night sing at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church"*

– *Smoke on the Mountain*

It's 1938 in the Smoky Mountains during the last years of the Great Depression. The Sanders Family is at the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church for their first performance in five years. As Pastor Mervin Oglethorpe (Jon Gustafson) prepares his small congregation for a Saturday night sing, he must stall as the family singers have temporarily disappeared. Sanders daughter June (Meredith Rice) appears with apologies and a tale of the family bus overturning. But never fear for Mama Vera (Shanna Prater) and Father Burl (George Mann) arrive at last and envelope the sanctuary in the tornado of their family's eccentricities and musical talents.

Director Brandon Bolin and Music Director George Mann bring *Smoke on the Mountain* to life February 10-14 and 16-20. The script is based on a book by Connie Ray and story conceived by Alan Bailey with musical arrangements by Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick. This hilarious, down-home musical with a heart was an audience favorite when it was originally staged at FSLT in 1998. It proved so popular that FSLT produced both sequels *Sanders Family Christmas* in 2002 and *Smoke on the Mountain Homecoming* in 2008. FSLT is opening the 75th Anniversary Season with this nod to the past. The season will include past favorites and new productions as a tribute to the past, present, and future of the theatre.

Featured performers include Steve Dwiggins as Uncle Stanley Sanders, Jessica Smith and Wesley Fox as twins Denise and Dennis Sanders, Lynne Gustafson as Miss Myrtle and Jennie

*See Smoke on the Mountain on page 3*



## 2021 Annual Meeting

The FSLT Annual Membership meeting was held on November 22, 2021 at 7 p.m. Reports were given by officers and committee chairs. Five new Board members were elected to three-year terms: Charles Belt, Gary Cameron, Tina Dale, Ashleigh Mathews, and Jennie Mathews. Three members-at-large were elected to a one-year term on the nominating committee: Micki Voelkel, Eric Wells, and Rikke Black. The newly elected Board then met to elect officers for the coming year: Sherry Hester, President; Joanne Peterson, Vice President; Lora Rice, Treasurer; Jamie Lambdin-Bolin Secretary.



## Directors' Notes

We are eager to present this heartwarming evening of great gospel music and stories to our FSLT patrons. Spending an evening as a temporary member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church with the Sanders family will have you laughing, toe-tapping, and maybe even singing along as you experience their fantastic voices and their uncanny ability to draw you in with their stories of faith, mistakes, and their love for each other in spite of (or because of) it all. After having worked together for several shows in a director and actor capacity, it has been a joy to be able to work together as directors and to see just how well each of us complements the other as directors. Working with this cast has also been a thrill, as every single member, from the principal roles to the chorus to the instrumentalists is so unbelievably talented and adds so much to the quality of the show. Add in our amazing crew, led by stage manager Jamie Lambdin-Bolin, and we think we've assembled a great team to open the theater's 75th season! So if you like gospel or bluegrass music, enjoy listening to people's stories, and have always wondered what life for everyday people was like in 1938 rural North Carolina, make plans to join us for *Smoke on the Mountain*! We'll see y'all at Mount Pleasant Baptist!

—**Brandon Bolin, Director and George Mann, Musical Director**



## HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

The following policies will be in effect for *Smoke On The Mountain*. Your cooperation and compliance will help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all our patrons and volunteers.

- **ALL attendees, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear face coverings inside FSLT** except when consuming food or drink.
- To offer the best possible live theatre experience for our audience, performers will not wear masks while on stage. All cast members are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Attendance may be at full capacity. Physically distanced seating will not be imposed.

# Smoke on the Mountain opens February 10

Mathews as Miss Maude. The ensemble includes Ashleigh Mathews, Dave Whiteis, Gary Cameron, Wesley Musgrove, Donny Anderson, and Linda Dickson. In addition to Director Bolin and Music Director Mann, the crew includes Jamie Lambdin-Bolin as stage manager, Jorgi Anderson as Assistant Stage Manager, Sally Story as costumer, T.J. Dudley as props master, Bolin and Mann as set designers, and Ashleigh Mathews as choreographer.

Performer Steve Dwiggins (Uncle Stanley) says, "The small cast size is different from most musicals. The intimacy of a small cast is great fun, but it's also challenging as a performer." The gospel music in the show is a draw for Shanna Prater (Vera). "I feel like I have lived this show. I grew up in a small country town, singing these exact songs in church," she says. "This show has the most bluegrass music of any show I have ever been a part of at FSLT. That's where my roots and heart are." Meredith Rice (June) agrees. "Get ready, because the music and instrumentations in this show will blow you away!"

Director Bolin cites the show's relatable characters, heartwarming humor, and gospel music as key reasons for directing the production. "This is my first time directing a musical, so this is an enjoyable adjustment." Bolin is no stranger to musicals, however, having been featured in a number of popular FSLT musicals including *White Christmas* and *Singing in the Rain*.

While the show includes a number of veteran performers and crew members, there are some newer faces. Jorgi Anderson

began volunteering at FSLT with fall 2021's production of *Clue* then followed up backstage (with a few onstage cameos) in *Parfumerie* and *The Holiday Channel Christmas Movie Wonderthon*. She says, "It's a great group to be a part of if you want to make new friends."

Costumer Sally Story is also new to FSLT. As an instructor at UAFA with extensive theatre experience, she jumped at the chance to serve as costumer for this production. "Even though we are still in the early stages of the rehearsal process, I have learned so much about FSLT and what it is doing (a lot!) for this community," she says. "I think audiences will love this show. It's not only about a touring family that sings in church, it's about understanding each other, forgiving each other for our mistakes, and finding the humor in just about anything. The bonus is the beautiful music!"

Evening performances are at 7:30 p.m. February 10-12 and 16-19 plus a special Valentines performance February 14. Two Sunday matinees will be performed at 2:00 p.m. on February 13 and 20. Seat selection for Flex Pass Patrons begins 7:00 a.m. Saturday January 29. General public ticketing begins 7:00 a.m. Thursday, February 3. Tickets are \$20 for Opening Night and Valentines performances. All other performances will be \$12. Purchase tickets/select seats online at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) or call 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to purchase through a box office volunteer.

You'll tap your feet, slap your knees, and laugh out loud. Don't miss *Smoke On The Mountain!*



## Seat Selection / Ticketing

For Season Flex Pass patrons, seat selection begins **7:00 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 29**. Flex Pass patrons may also purchase an additional ticket for every pass they have. For the general public, tickets will be available beginning **7:00 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 3**. Purchase tickets/select seats online at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to order by phone.

## Seat Tickets Checked By Ushers

Seat tickets will be checked at the aisles. If you selected your seats online, you can bypass the Box Office when you arrive and show your print-at-home ticket or your ticket confirmation on your smart phone to an usher. Alternately, go to the Box Office upon your arrival, pick up your seat ticket, then proceed to an usher at either aisle.

## Sip Sip Hooray!

Oh the excitement of Opening Night! Courtesy of **Sodie's Wine and Spirits**, quality wine and champagne is served pre-show. At intermission, a special dessert is served along with brew from **Fort Smith Coffee**. By calling the Box Office, Flex Pass and Wednesday Night Subscribers can attend Opening Night for an \$8 fee.

## Last Chance To Buy A Pass!

FSLT is offering a great line up of shows for 2022 – our 75th Anniversary year – and 3 types of season pass packages with plenty of perks. Opening Night Same Seat Subscriptions \$100/person; a new option - Wednesday Same Seat Subscriptions \$80/person; and Flex Passes \$70/person. Buy online at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) before February 29. After that date, call 479-783-2966 (extn. 2 or 5) or email [fsltseasontickets@gmail.com](mailto:fsltseasontickets@gmail.com).

## Spend Time With Your Valentine

A special Valentines Night performance will be offered Monday, February 14 at 7:30 pm. Attendees will enjoy wine, champagne and soft drinks prior to the performance as well as dessert and coffee at intermission. Plus some lucky person will take home

a dozen red roses courtesy of **Johnston's Quality Flowers**. General public tickets are \$20. By calling the Box Office, Flex Pass and Wednesday Night Subscribers may attend for an \$8 fee. Don't miss out on this unique evening!



Fort Smith Little Theatre  
**SPOTLIGHT**

P.O. Box 3752, Fort Smith, AR 72913

[www.fslt.org](http://www.fslt.org)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**2022 FSLT Board of Directors**

Sherry Hester, President

Joanne Peterson, Vice President

Lora Rice, Treasurer

Jamie Lambdin-Bolin, Secretary

Charles Belt  
Scott Black  
Gary Cameron  
Tina Dale  
Joe Graham  
Ashleigh Mathews  
Jennie Mathews  
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Meghan Partain  
Meredith Rice  
Audra Sargent

## From the Top...

Things have certainly changed since I wrote a President's letter this time last year. COVID-19 is still with us, but vaccinations are available and live theatre is once again alive and well! In addition to offering a wonderful line up of shows for 2022 and three types of season packages, we are celebrating our 75th Anniversary. Be sure to check out the celebratory activities listed in this newsletter and at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org).

Amidst the mammoth amount of historical information we have read, catalogued, and archived, we found some delightful newspaper articles. One from 1948 entitled "Well, What Is A Little Theatre Anyway?" contained this quote: "There is no class distinction in the Little Theatre. There is a place for everyone. A grocer can paint scenery and girl who works at her typewriter by day can act at night." While no one works on a typewriter anymore, the rest of that quote remains true after 75 years.

Another article from 1952 stated, "A small group of faithful and enthusiastic persons who refused to be discouraged can feel proud today." While there are no living members of that original group, I'm delighted to say some of their descendants are bursting with pride. During our historical research, we were able to locate the daughter and grandchildren of Flo Pattee, the woman who proposed that the Young Ladies Guild of Sparks Hospital sponsor a theatrical production as a fundraiser – a decision that literally "sparked" the formation of FSLT. Flo's family, residing in Louisville, was thrilled to be contacted and proud to hear of our success.

My favorite newspaper quote was printed in 1960: "This Little Theatre has two purposes – to provide entertainment and have a good time doing it." This upcoming production of *Smoke On The Mountain* is the epitome of that sentence. I hope you'll grab a mask, grab a friend, and join us for this knee slapping, foot tapping, laugh out loud musical comedy.

It's going to be a great year. FSLT has a long past and a strong future. There's much to celebrate, and it's exciting to be 75 Years Young.

- Sherry Hester, *President*

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## Next Up

*A Southern Exposure*, directed by Lora Rice, will be performed March 31-April 9. This production was previously cast in 2020, prior to our pandemic forced closure. That same cast will perform in 2022.

Auditions for *Moon Over Buffalo* will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 2. Callbacks will be held on Tuesday, May 3. The cast calls for 4 males between the ages of approximately 25-55+ and 4 females approximately 20-70+. Production dates are June 9-18. For more information on this classic comedy directed by Duff Taylor, visit [www.fslt.org](http://www.fslt.org) or find us on social media.



**Season Flex Pass patrons are urged to select seats before February 3**



## Celebrating 2022: FSLT Marks Major Milestone

As the oldest community theatre in Arkansas, FSLT is excited to be celebrating our 75th Anniversary. Along with an awesome season of shows, we are pleased to announce these celebratory activities.

Others are still a secret — so stay tuned!

### 75th Commemorative Booklet (keepsake publication)

Not only is FSLT fortunate to be celebrating our 75th Anniversary, we are fortunate that our volunteers through the years preserved a treasure trove of historical documentation. The amount of information was mammoth, but the research was fascinating! Now compiled into a summarized history, it will be published as a keepsake booklet for your enjoyment.

**RESERVE  
YOUR COPY  
TODAY!**

**Quantities are limited!** To reserve your copy, email [fslt.communications@gmail.com](mailto:fslt.communications@gmail.com), leave a message at 479-783-2966 (extn.11), or tell a Box Office volunteer at *Smoke On The Mountain*. Distribution will begin March 31 at performances of *A Southern Exposure*. [While there is no required booklet cost for 2022 Season Pass Patrons, we ask that everyone consider making a donation of \$5 to offset printing cost when you pick up your booklet.]

### 75th Diamond Bracelet Raffle

Since diamond is the gemstone associated with a 75th anniversary, FSLT is excited to celebrate our major milestone with a diamond bracelet raffle. One lucky winner will be wearing a stunning Vahan 14k gold and silver bracelet accented with a bar of diamonds (valued at more than \$2,220) generously provided by our friends at Newton's Jewelers. Vahan is renowned for bracelets that are both elegantly designed and durable for everyday wear.

Raffle tickets, priced at \$10 per ticket or 3 for \$25, will be sold in the lobby before all FSLT public performances February 10-August 13. At intermission of each performance, one ticket will be chosen for the final draw on August 13. There will only be 40 tickets in the final drawing! For more information, or to purchase raffle tickets apart from lobby sales, call 479-783-2966 (extn. 11) or email [fslt75anniversary@gmail.com](mailto:fslt75anniversary@gmail.com). Someone's going to win—it could be you!



*Newton's Jewelers*  
CERTIFIED GEMOLOGIST APPRAISER



### Wear It — Share it (purchase anniversary apparel)

Wear FSLT Anniversary Apparel and share in the celebration of this major milestone! Make your purchase online at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) or email [fslt75th@gmail.com](mailto:fslt75th@gmail.com) for more information. Choose from tee shirts, long-sleeved tees, sweatshirts, and masks. Hurry—quantities limited!

*more>>*

## Walk Down Memory Lane (written remembrances)

Let us hear from you! We are collecting comments from volunteers, patrons and their families as part of our anniversary celebration. The collected remembrances will be used to create a virtual scrapbook. Submit your favorite memories, how you became involved, or simply a quote about what FSLT has meant to you.

**SUBMIT  
YOUR  
MEMORIES  
AT FSLT.ORG**

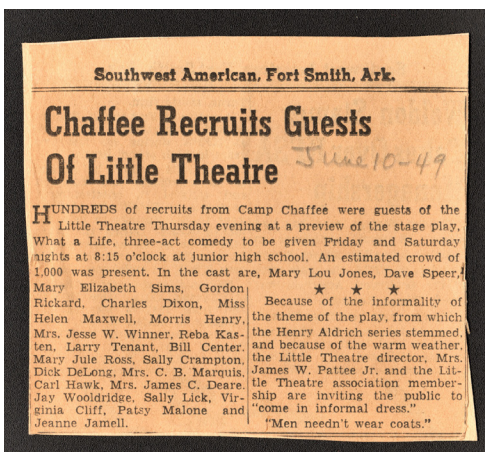


## Worth A Thousand Words (pictorial remembrances)

Pull together your favorite FSLT photos and share them as part of our 75th celebration. Backstage, on-stage, cast parties — share your good times and good memories. Your photos will be used to create a collaborative Facebook album called “Your FSLT” — a scrapbook sure to evoke fond memories and good laughs. You might even find yourself in someone else’s pics! Simply upload your pictures to <https://www.yogile.com/yourfslt/upload>.

## Volunteers Make It Happen (cast and crew photos)

Our success as a community theatre has been made possible by the countless volunteers who have given their time and talent to FSLT. In recognition of all those on-stage and off, we will be providing a virtual picture album on Facebook compiling all available cast and crew photographs organized by significant eras of FSLT history. We hope you’ll enjoy this tribute to 75 years of volunteers.



## And The Rest Is History (the past in print)

In May 1947, Flo Pattee proposed that the Young Ladies Hospital Guild of Sparks Hospital sponsor a theatrical production as a fundraiser. The vote was yes, and the rest is history. Newspaper articles and other historical documents will be posted on social media to reveal interesting tales through the years. From stories about Camp Chaffee soldiers attending FSLT productions to a show performed by candlelight when the power went out — there will be plenty of interesting reading.

## In recognition of FSLT’s 75th Anniversary Sponsor

The formation of our community theatre was “sparked” by a fundraising project sponsored by the Young Ladies Hospital Guild of Sparks Hospital. As Baptist Health-Fort Smith now continues the legacy of care previously provided by Sparks Regional Medical Center, it is quite fitting to have Baptist Health as our 75th Anniversary Sponsor. FSLT is grateful for their generosity through the years and specifically their support of our anniversary celebration. Not only is Baptist Health dedicated to their patients, but also to the communities they serve. Thank you, Baptist Health!

