

Knox College

theatre
presents

Our Town

By Thornton Wilder

Directed By Liz Carlin Metz



*"Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you.
Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it --
every, every minute?"*

Harbach Theatre, CFA

November 6 – 8, 2025 @ 7:30 pm

November 8, 2025 @ 2:00 pm

Tickets are available at the door:
\$10 for Adults / \$5 for Seniors & Alumni
Free to the Knox Community and all Students

**Welcome to the first Main Stage production of the Department of Theatre
2025-2026 Theatre Season.**

We are pleased to celebrate with you our work in the field of live theatre on both the Harbach and Studio Theatre stages. Knox Theatre students who participate in theatre productions come from across the academic disciplines, represent all four class-years, and annually number approximately 400.

Every year we seek to enlarge the classroom experience by manifesting on stage the ideas and skills investigated in books and discussions, with computers and construction tools, and through critical papers and experiential work in text and performance. Each year we choose plays that are in conversation with the human experience—past, present, and future. We select a range of plays, which, if considered over the four-year tenure of a Knox student, will expose that student to a wide range of lenses with which to view and experience the human condition.

Our current season of faculty directed plays examines human thought, experience, and action through three plays from the modern and contemporary American theatre.

The fall play, *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder and directed by Liz Carlin Metz, is considered an American classic. Its deceptively simple take on community in a small

American town “in our growing up, in our marrying, in our living, and in our dying” considers the mundane miracles of ordinary living that make human beings luminously extraordinary. The winter play, *Birthday Candles* by Noah Heidl and directed by Jeff Grace, chronicles nearly a century of a woman’s life through a whirlwind succession of birthday celebrations marking the challenges, joys, and remarkable moments that are the fabric of her being. Humor and poignancy and baking a cake take the audience on this journey of personal discovery and revelation. The spring play, *Men on Boats* by Jaclyn Backhaus and directed by Deana Nichols, reinvisions the John Wesley Powell 1869 expedition down the Colorado and Green Rivers through a sometimes hilarious sometimes moving lens that turns expectations upside down and sinks the traditions of who gets to tell and who gets to embody history.

Faculty designers Craig Choma and Allison Smith Hahn take the lead positions in designing the sets, lights, properties, videography, and costumes, working alongside approximately 50 student designers, actors, and technicians to realize

Knox Theatre productions.

— Liz Carlin-Metz, Chair

THEATRE DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Smith V. Brand Distinguished Prof of Theatre.....Liz Carlin Metz
Chancie Ferris Booth Distinguished Service Prof of Theatre.....Craig Choma
Associate Professor of TheatreJeff Grace
Assistant Professor of Theatre Deana Nichols
Director of Costume & Makeup..... Allison Smith Hahn
Professor of Practice Sherwood Kiraly
Interim Associate Technical Director.....Mei Zuch

Knox College Theatre Presents
Our Town
by Thornton Wilder

Directed by Liz Carlin Metz

Scenic Design by Emily Kunkel

Costume Design by Allison Smith Hahn

Lighting Design by Gwen Heidank

Sound Design by Mao Shirai

Properties Design by Siena Adwere-Boamah

Technical Direction by Mei Zuch

Setting: Grover's Corners, New Hampshire

Please: No photographs or video/audio recording
Turn off cell phones, notification alerts, or anything
that may emit light or sound.

The performance's running time is two hours and
ten minutes, including two ten-minute intermissions

Our Town is presented by arrangement with Concord
Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French Inc.

www.concordtheatricals.com

Cast

Stage Manager.....	Sherwood Kiraly
Emily Webb.....	Eleanor Decker
Mr. Webb.....	Jeremy Karlin
Mrs. Webb.....	Stephanie Liljedahl
Wally Webb, Ensemble.....	Clementine Odum
George Gibbs.....	Noam Mendelsohn Weininger
Mrs. Gibbs.....	Naelin Peffley
Doc Gibbs.....	Scott Rasso
Rebecca Gibbs, Ensemble.....	Max Russell
Simon Stimson, Ensemble.....	Jake Bender
Mrs. Soames.....	Noelle Brown
Samantha Craig, Ensemble.....	Jacque Butts
Ensemble.....	Scarlet Carter
Jo Stoddard, Ensemble.....	Gill Falco
Howie Newsome, Ensemble.....	Quin Jones
Josie Crowell, Ensemble.....	Jax Maharry
Sis Crowell, Ensemble.....	Sophia Merchant
Ensemble.....	Jack Olech
Constable Warren, Ensemble.....	Thunder Starkey
Professor Willard, Ensemble.....	Joseph Taylor

Production Staff for Our Town

Director.....	Liz Carlin Metz
Set Designer.....	Emily Kunkel
Lighting Designer.....	Gwendolyn Heidank
Costume Designer.....	Allison Smith Hahn
Sound Designer.....	Mao Shirai
Properties Design.....	Siena Adwere-Boamah
Co-Assistant Directors.....	Delaney Edsall, Madelyn Pellegrino
Stage Manager.....	Chasyn Pollard
Co-Assistant Stage Managers.....	Elijah Ladd, Luna Takemoto
Costume Studio Supervisor.....	Allison Smith Hahn
Sound Board Operator.....	Luna Takemoto
Follow Spot Operator.....	Zan Peterson
Deck Supervisor.....	Elijah Ladd
Paint Charge.....	Grace Dinges
Scenic Artists.....	Hadley Mollman, Nida Baig
Lead Electrician.....	Nida Baig
Lead Carpenter.....	Andreas McDonald
Dramaturge.....	Delaney Edsall

Dramaturgy

by Delaney Edsall

“Our Town is not offered as a picture of life in a New Hampshire village; or as a speculation about the conditions of life after death[...] it is an attempt to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life[...] the recurrent words in this play[...] are ‘hundreds,’ ‘thousands,’ and ‘millions.’”¹

Often dubbed ‘the great American play,’ Thornton Wilder’s Pulitzer-winning *Our Town* is one of the most widely produced and well-known dramatic texts around the world. Wilder’s plays ride the line between time capsule and prophecy; his humanist approach to writing offers the audience unique opportunities to connect recent pasts to undeniable presents. Through *Our Town*, Wilder aimed “to reduce the dimension of eternity so that it can be encompassed by life itself.”² and in his attempt he created a timeless story that has inspired theatremakers for decades.

Thornton Wilder worked on *Our Town* from 1935-38, having initially drawn inspiration from his brother Amos’s wedding as he pondered the tradition of grooms and brides being barred from seeing each other on their wedding day.³ He set the play around the turn of the twentieth century, reflecting on a time when life felt slower and change stayed on the horizon for many small-town Northerners. Our production moves this time frame closer to the present, evoking a more recent sense of nostalgia and reminding the audience that life is never quite as simple as it seems in hindsight.

The fictional town of Grover’s Corners is based on Peterborough, New Hampshire, where Wilder wrote the bulk of the play at an artist’s retreat in the summer of 1937.⁴ During the years he spent working on the play, Wilder’s work as a writer and educator carried him around the world, leading him to write parts of the play while in Switzerland, or Long Island, or in the liminality of transit. He often incorporated conversations he overheard from strangers into his dialogue, translating cross-cultural tidbits into a specific New England vernacular.⁵ This image of Grover’s Corners reflects pieces of communities across the United States and around the world, allowing generations of audiences to project their lives and homes onto this mythical town.

Our Town was first produced at Knox in 1988, when Professor Emeritus Ivan H. Davidson directed the play right here in Harbach Theatre. It was described in *The Knox Student* as “a straightforward, clear depiction of life as it is[...] often ritualized, often frightening, life is shown as such through an example, a small town called Grover’s Corners.”⁶ A subsequent production was staged by Professor Emeritus Robert Whitlatch and Post-Bac Chris Storey in 2006. One of the iconic ladders (and many chairs) used for this production remained in Harbach and coincidentally were used during rehearsals for our current production.

One of the greatest gifts of *Our Town* is how every person involved in its production is asked to fall in love with the minutiae of everyday life. Designers, actors, and members of our production team bring specificity derived from their own life experiences, consolidating life itself into the otherwise bare stage representing a shared and imagined community. Much of the design of this production visually represents Wilder’s commentary on the cycle of life and death, and the interconnected social circles comprising communities. Importantly, the cast and crew includes a confluence of students, professors, and additional members of the Galesburg community, all of whom play key roles in defining our town.

¹ Thornton Wilder, *Thornton Wilder: Collected Plays & Writings on Theater*, 1. print, ed. J. D. McClatchy, The Library of America 172 (Library of America, 2007), 686.

² Robert W. Corrigan, “Thornton Wilder and the Tragic Sense of Life,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 13, no. 3 (1961): 167–73, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3204823>.

³ Mary Blair, “A Journey Through ‘Our Town,’” Portland Center Stage, August 12, 2025, <https://www.pcs.org/features/a-journey-through-our-town>.

⁴ Blair, “A Journey Through ‘Our Town.’”

⁵ Penelope Niven, “Wilder Created ‘Our Town’ With A Bit Of Everywhere,” October 24, 2012, Article/Transcript, <https://www.npr.org/2012/10/27/163549440/wilder-created-our-town-with-a-bit-of-everywhere>.

⁶ Kelly Lynn Hogan, “Knox Presents ‘Our Town,’” *The Knox Student*, October 14, 1988, 96th ed.

The Cast

SHERWOOD KIRALY (Stage Manager) first appeared on the Harbach stage in *Thieves' Carnival* in 1967 and last appeared in Studio Theatre in his play *Prepityphs* during New Plays Festival V. He teaches playwriting and fiction at Knox and claims that Matthew Broderick once called him a good actor.

ELEANOR DECKER (Emily Webb) is a first year from Iowa City. She plans to double major in theatre and one of the social sciences. This is her first production with the Knox theatre department and she would like to thank Liz, Chase, and Delaney for this opportunity, and the cast and her loved ones for their support.

JEREMY KARLIN Syracuse '91, Loyola Univ. of Chicago, '94 (Mr. Webb) is originally from Western New York but has lived in Galesburg working as an attorney since 1995. He jumped back into community theater this past summer in the Prairie Players production of *Into the Woods*. He wants to thank his ever generous and patient wife, Gabe, for her unyielding support.

STEPHANIE LILJEDAHL (Mrs. Webb) is a former GHS graduate who came back to Galesburg 2 years ago after living in CA for most of her adult life. More commonly, she can be found performing with Prairie Players. Her last role had considerably fewer lines to learn, as she played Milky White (the cow) in *Into the Woods*!

CLEMENTINE ODUM '28 (Wally Webb/Ensemble), a Chicagoland-area suburbanite in love with the passionate theatre community thriving at Knox, has recently acted as Tim in *Phone-A-Friend*; Rocky in *An Irish Experience*, Russ and Butch Sappho in *From the Earth*, and Elena in *A Camp Counselor's Guide to Getting Fired* (New Plays Workshop); Brielle in *Twilight Bowl*; and Co-Narrator and Ensemble in *Into the Woods* (Fenwick HS). Many thanks to the whole *Our Town* team, friends at Knox and elsewhere, and family for all your support, whimsy, and brilliant awesomeness.

NOAM MENDELSON WEININGER '28 (George Gibbs) is from Chicago and is double majoring in Political Science and Creative Writing. This is his first main stage play at Knox. He wants to thank his girlfriend, mother, and sister for always supporting him. He also wants to thank his dad, who is the only reason he started acting.

NAELIN CRAIG PEFFLEY (Mrs. Julia Gibbs) is a junior majoring in Theatre with a Gender and Woman's studies minor, and they are a publicity coordinator for the Knox College Theatre Advisory Board. She was last seen at Knox as Evil Gabbi in *She Kills Monsters* and the Nurse in *Antigone* during Rep Term XX. Naelin is from Chicago, IL. They would like to thank their family for their love and support.

SCOTT RASSO (Doc Gibbs) is thrilled to be a guest artist in the Knox College Theatre production of *Our Town*. He is an educator, ballroom dancer, and theatre lover who has most recently performed as The Wolf (*Into the Woods*) and Kevin Rosario (*In the Heights*). His favorite role is as a father to Rafael and Dominique - together they enjoy cooking, fishing, reading, playing video games, and keeping up with their Blue Heeler, Junie.

MAX RUSSELL (Rebecca/Ensemble) is a sophomore from Appleton, Wisconsin and is majoring in English Literature and Theatre. Recently at Knox, they acted and wrote for New Plays Festival V and performed in *Twilight Bowl*. They would like to thank their friends and family and they hope you enjoy the show!

JAKE BENDER '27 (Simon Stimson/Ensemble) is a History Major hailing from New Hampshire. He was active in the Theatre club at his high school, acting in plays such as *Noises Off*, *The Music Man*, and *Puffs*. He traveled to Boston in August to visit friends and go to FanExpo, where he met Catherine Tate and Troy Baker.

NOELLE BROWN (Mrs. Soames) is a senior at Knox College majoring in Anthropology/Sociology and Theatre. She was previously seen on the Knox stage as Laura (*The Pretty Trap*) and Vera (*She Kills Monsters*) among many other roles. She would like to give massive thanks to her family, friends, and teachers. Noelle is from Gilberts, Illinois.

JACQUE BUTTS (Sam Craig/Ensemble) is a first year from Urbana, IL. This is their first production at Knox, but they've been doing theater (both acting and tech) since 5th grade. In lieu of flowers, Jacque accepts all well wishes and compliments in the form of pumpkin spice chai lattes from Starbucks.

SCARLETT CARTER '29 is from Normal, Illinois, and is majoring in both History and Psychology. She played cello in *Annie* (High School) and has worked on the crew for other shows in Normal, IL. She was also a dedicated member of the Bloomington-Normal Youth Symphony, as well as other ensembles. She was last seen in her 8th-grade fall play and is making a theatre comeback as a member of the ensemble.

GILL FALCO '29 (Jo Stoddard/Ensemble) is from Lombard, IL and is double majoring in Music Performance and Sociology. She has been acting for over a decade and is so excited for her first show at Knox! Thank you to my directors, Sara Corkery and Regina Wathier, and my friends and family for showing up always.

QUIN JONES '28 (Howie Newsome/Ensemble) is an elementary Education major from Chicago. He is delighted to be playing Howie The Milkman and perform in the ensemble of this production of Our Town. Stay cool, brother Iain!

JAX MAHARRY '28. (Josie Crowell/Ensemble) is from Chicago land and is majoring in Creative Writing and Asian Studies. She has acted in Twilight Bowl and New Plays Festival V at Knox, as well as lots of other productions in high school.

SOPHIA MERCHANT (Sis Crowell/Ensemble) is a First Year planning to major in Music Education. They are excited for their future here in the theatre department and to make some new friends here at Knox!

JACK OLECH '28 (Ensemble) is from Chicago, Illinois and is planning to major in Environmental Science with a minor in Film Studies. Even though he isn't planning on studying theatre, he loves to be involved in the theatre department in as many ways as possible! He would like to thank all of his family and friends for their constant support, especially his grandma Darlene, who inspired him to become an actor.

THUNDER STARKEY (Constable Warren) is a first year and hails from Sevierville, Tennessee and has not yet determined his major. He performed in Murder mystery at the Murder mystery.

JOSEPH TAYLOR (Professor Willard) is from Green Bay, Wisconsin, and is the Archivist and Special Collections Librarian at Knox College. He earned his graduate degree from UW–Madison in 2020.

The Production Team

LIZ CARLIN METZ (Director) is in her 30th year at Knox and is deeply moved to be directing *Our Town*. She would like to thank all the passionate and deeply talented artists on the production team and in the cast for making this experience one of the highlights of her 45 year directing career. Liz is chair of the Department of Theatre and the Integrative Business and Management Program.

DELANEY EDSALL '27 (Dramaturg, Understudy, and Co-Assistant Director) is from Bangkok, Thailand, and is double-majoring in Theatre and History. Last summer, she was a Teaching Intern at Des Moines Performing Arts and studied theatre in Edinburgh through the Scottish Universities International Summer School. She serves as PR Manager and Treasurer for Terpsichore Dance Collective and is Co-Production Manager of the Theatre Advisory Board. Previous work at Knox includes *She Kills Monsters* (Tilly), *The Coast Starlight* (Anna), *Rat Play* (Director), and various New Plays. She would like to thank her late Nana Eileen for encouraging her passion for theatre.

MADELYN PELLEGRINO '26 (Co-Assistant Director) is from Chicago and is majoring in Anthropology and Sociology with minors in Psychology and Biology. She has directed/acted in numerous New Plays Workshops, directed Dorothy and Alice, and choreographed for *She Kills Monsters*. She would like to thank her family and friends for their support and encouragement through her many artistic endeavors.

ALLISON SMITH HAHN (Costume Design) is an instructor, resident costume designer and Costume Studio manager. She graduated from Knox in 2010, spent several years designing costumes for theatres in Chicagoland, got an MLIS (University of Illinois), and came back in 2019 to teach and design at Knox. She is grateful to her hardworking TAs, her family, and Margo.

EMILY KUNKEL '27 (Scenic Designer) is from Wisconsin and is majoring in Creative Writing with a Minor in Theatre Design and Technology. She spent her summer traveling with her family and working as a camp counselor at The Wayfinder Experience. She performed as Liliith (*She Kills Monsters*), Guard #3 (*Antigone*), and Assistant Scenic Designer (*Antigone*) In Rep Term XX. Emily would like to thank Craig Choma for recommending her for this opportunity and all the wonderful people in the scene shop who helped bring her dreams of circles to life.

MEI ZUCH (Interim Associate Technical Director) hails from Portland, Oregon and is a '25 Knox graduate with a major in Theatre. Mei's main focus was the theatre department, both acting (Monster, She Kills Monsters; Antigone, Antigone) and serving as Lead Carpenter on the two Rep Term XX productions, as well as spending three years on the department's Theatre Advisory Board. Most recently, Mei portrayed Cinderella in the Prairie Players production of Sondheim's Into the Woods.

SIENA ADWERE-BOAMAH '26 (Properties Designer) is from California and is majoring in Psychology. Her background in prop design comes from making LARP equipment and she also worked on props for Clydes (winter 2024). Most recently, she was a stage manager for The Coast Starlight (spring 2024).

CHASYN POLLARD '28 (Stage Manager) is from Sibley IL, and is double majoring in Theatre and Computer Science. Chasyn is also a Cross Country & Track runner. Chasyn is a House Manager for the Theatre Advisory Board and works in the scene shop.

ELIJAH K LADD '28 (Co-Assistant Stage Manager) is from California and will probably major in Theatre. He works in the scene shop and has fun building stuff for all the shows!

LUNA TAKEMOTO '29 (Co-Assistant Stage Manager) is from Hyogo, Japan. Our Town is her first time working backstage. Thank you to my family for supporting me studying abroad.

MAO SHIRAI '28 (Sound Designer) is from Japan and has a keen interest in graphic design and religious studies. If you see someone with a red bob dancing at WAC, it's probably her. She would like to thank everyone who has supported and encouraged her passions.

Special Thanks

Daniel Liang Mohan, Luna Takemoto, Craig Choma, Hadley Mollman, Provost and Dean of the College Melissa Glass, The Elizabeth Jahnke Metz Memorial Theatre Fund, The Dorothea Tanning Fund for the Creative Arts, Emma Thompson, Matt Reed, Penny Gold, and The Galesburg Public Library

This production is made possible in part by alumni donations to
The Liz Jahnke Metz Memorial Fund for Theatre
Contribute to Knox Theatre by donating at: knoxtheatre.org

Administrative Staff

House Manager.....Chasyn Pollard,
Max Russell, Sienna DeSuza
Box Office.....Student Volunteers
Ushers.....Student Volunteers
Social Media.....Naelin Peffley
Poster Design.....Craig Choma
Program Design.....Madelyn Pellegrino
Work Study Teaching Assistants.....Alan Plascencia,
Nida Baig, Andreas McDonald, Beckett Andersen, Chase Pollard,
Elijah Ladd, Grace Dinges, Leah Binzel
Scene Shop Volunteers.....Cassie Wefel, Daria Klinck,
Nati Mulcahy, Sid McCasland
Costume Studio Teaching Assistants..... Soran Rubio,
Carissa Medlock, Aspen Sorenson, Vishnupriya Acharya,
Mack van Lier, Emily Kunkel
Costume Studio Volunteers.....Malia Mei Nells, Wynn Khuri,
Kendall Dakof, Katie Nguyen, Kacy Tran, Huy Tran, Yusra Ali
Azat Shakirov, Maude McGill

Forthcoming Productions

Birthday Candles by Noah Haidle
Directed by Jeff Grace (February 26-28th)

Men on Boats by Jaclyn Backhaus
Directed by Deana Nichols (May 14-16th)

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