

SEARSPORT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL REVIVES THEIR AWARD WINNING ONE-ACT PLAY
ON THEIR TOWN'S SEAFARING HISTORY FOR THE PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM IN JULY.

Written by Dilyla Brown, Student at Searsport District High School

Based on a true story, *The Waterspout*—adapted by high school director Christi Goosman—follows Oliver Winslow Park (1849-1930) as he watches his new crew perish during an intense storm. Within all this tragedy, there is comedic relief, a scandalous romance, and astounding partner work—it's truly an epic scope. If you want to see committed actors build an immersive story around themselves, Searsport is where to look. *The Waterspout* crew is bringing their show back this summer for the Penobscot Marine Museum on July 1st.

If you aren't familiar with the One-Acts, Goosman calls it the “play-offs of theater.” Let's set the scene: a festival full of theater kids, making friends and bonding over what they love. Eight or nine schools perform forty-minute shows with five minutes to set up their stage and five minutes to take down. Judges critique all the shows, then finally, decide the winner. Winners get to compete for a second time at the state level. Searsport has been competing since the 1970's at least, but this win is special. It symbolizes an appreciation for Searsport's marine history.

Goosman, writing a play for the 2024 Searsport Elementary School summer theater program, stumbled upon a story at the Penobscot Marine Museum, dictated by Oliver Winslow Park. The show was so charming that she brought it to the high school level. With Goosman's direction, this group of high schoolers get to represent their town with pride.

“These were real people who lived and worked, and many died going down with the ship. It has been really cool to bring them back to life for a generation of students and community members who may have never heard of them, but who have a connection through being citizens or students in Searsport. Very excited to do the show in summer for the July festivities to get the story to even more people!”

This committed crew of sailors attended rehearsals for about two months. One act season is known to be grueling, but so thrilling. *The Waterspout* cast and crew shared that the rehearsal process was exciting, supportive, and chaotic.

“It's all worth it because rehearsals never really feel like work,” Nellie Stanley, actress portraying Catherine Elizabeth Park, states. *“You are with people who make you laugh and support you, and by the end, those people become your favorite people.”*

This feeling of support was even carried to the competition. The cast and crew shared that their opposing teams were friendly and encouraging. Stanley remarks, on the subject:

“there is so much talent and love in one place and it makes the whole experience unforgettable.”

SDHS was not only awarded with the overall win at regionals, they also received special commendations for costuming, makeup, and partner work. Everything about the One-Acts is student-led. Therefore, costuming and makeup is solely credited to Keira Saball. She took on a very large project on her own, and completed it beautifully. Actors were comfortable, listened to, and most importantly, decked out in 1860s sailor fashion. Here is what she has to say about her process:

“I wanted something to represent 1860s Searsport. I wanted it to be pretty cookie cutter, so it was mostly slacks and white button downs with a bit of embellishment that would highlight some of the characters that I wanted the audience to focus on. For example, Oliver got this really nice vest with a hat. Captain Greene Park got a completely different cut for his jacket; it was long in the back and short in the front.”

The partner work commendation was awarded to Rosa Amaro and Anna Traves for their characters: the comedic reliefs Alexander and Maurice. Traves and Amaro worked together tirelessly to compliment each other's characters. They built their scene chemistry from the ground up, making it impossible not to feel it from the audience.

“Having a scene partner is like working together with someone to create something bigger. Whether it’s in the back or the center of the stage, having a scene partner is always fun,” Anna Traves comments. *“I think this reflects on theater as a whole by showing how much you need to collaborate with other people to create something amazing.”*

SDHS performed at the state level on March 21. Even though they didn’t take home the win, they were given special commendations once again. Lillian and Maddie Boyd, Isabella Seekins, and Nellie Stanley were recognized for handling the water prop. The water brings together every setting with beauty and destroys all the characters with fierceness.

The Waterspout cast and crew thanks the Penobscot Marine Museum for letting them take this performance further and share it with their community. We hope to see you there!