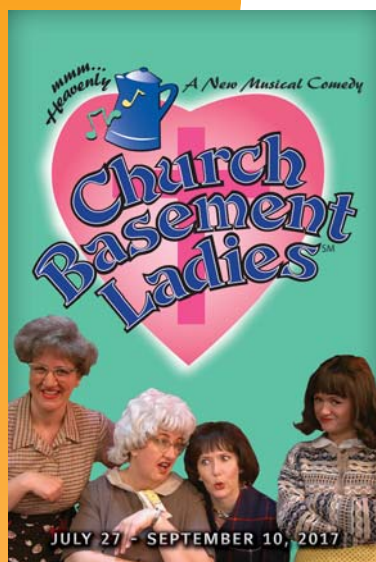


Paying Tribute to the Church Ladies!



"The first time I saw the show, even though my background is as far removed as can be from the characters in this show, I found myself totally caught up in their lives and totally engaged in their story."

— Ed Flesch

I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE SHOW WE'LL BE PRESENTING ON JULY 26TH - CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES. THIS SHOW HAS BEEN WILDLY POPULAR IN THEATRES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. IT'S A CELEBRATION OF THE CHURCH BASEMENT KITCHEN AND THE WOMEN WHO WORK THERE.

The show features four distinct characters as they organize the food and solve the problems of a rural Minnesota church. From the elderly matriarch of the kitchen to the young bride-to-be learning the proper order of things, the book and music give us a touching, funny look at their lives as we see them handle a record breaking Christmas dinner, the funeral of a dear friend, a Hawaiian Easter Fund raiser, and a steaming hot July wedding. What has made this show so successful is that audiences will instantly recognize these ladies. The first time I saw the show, even though my background is as far removed as can be from the characters in this show, I found myself totally caught up in their lives and totally engaged in their story.

I'm not directing CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES. Instead, we are bringing in the original director who conceived and created the show - Curt Wollan. Curt commissioned the creative writing team of Jim Stowell, one of Minnesota's favorite storytellers

and Jessica Zuehlke, a performance arts educator and daughter of a Church Basement Lady, to develop the script based on books by Janet Letnes Martin and Suzann Nelson.

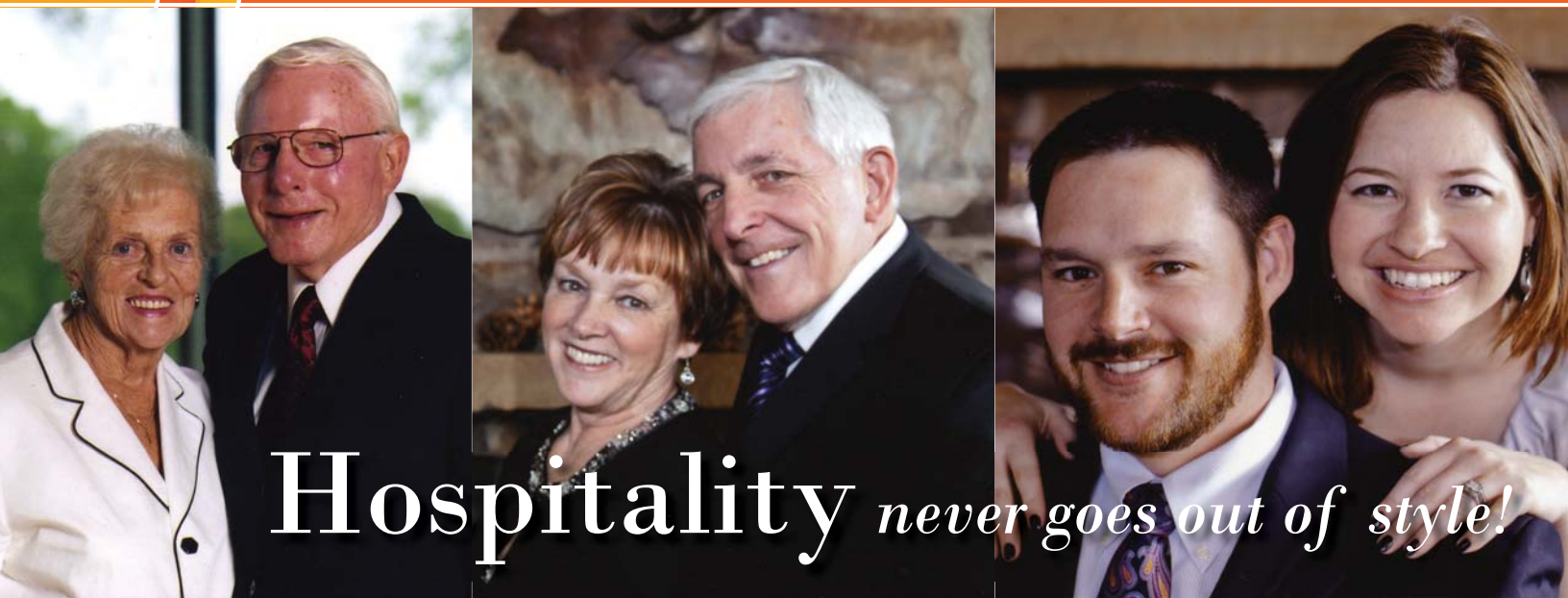


This husband and wife duo collaborated with composer and songwriter Drew Jansen, well-known for his creation of the music for the popular homegrown hit musical, HOW TO TALK MINNESOTAN - The Musical. Inspiration for the show was also found

in Curt's mother, who was such a well-respected church kitchen lady that her church named their new stove in her honor.

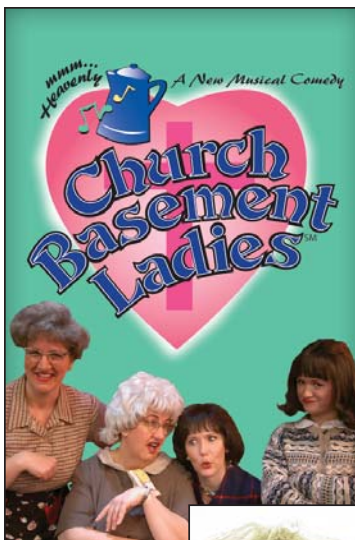
I've known Curt for a long time and am very excited to have him come to The Fireside to re-create this show on our stage. He brings a unique set of talent and experience and personal investment in this piece. I'm very much looking forward to enjoying CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES along with all of you!

Ed Flesch



Hospitality *never goes out of style!*

THE IDEA BEHIND GREAT WORKS OF ART, WHETHER IT'S THEATRE, MUSIC, BOOKS, PAINTINGS, OR ANY OTHER FORM OF CREATIVE EXPRESSION CAN COME FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF PLACES. THIS SEASON ALONE WE HAVE FAIRY TALES, POPULAR MUSIC, WORLD WAR II, AND YOUR LOCAL CHURCH BASEMENT!



The idea for turning the work of authors/humorists Janet Letnes Martin and Suzann Nelson into a musical came out of a conversation Curt Wollan had with his in-laws about how to celebrate the work of the women that ran the church kitchen. Both 100 percent Norwegian-American Lutheran, Martin and Nelson are high-demand speakers and performers. The two

met in 1964 during Freshman Week at Augsburg College in Minneapolis and became lifetime friends and partners in writing. Together they've co-authored nine Scandinavian American "heartwarming humor" books, including "Growing Up Lutheran: What Does This Mean?" which was a national best seller and won them the 1998 Minnesota Book Award for Humor.

enjoyed this musical - they're also very entertaining! Here's a few reviews from their earlier productions:

"... an affectionate peek at community life with a pinch of whimsy ..."

- St. Paul Pioneer Press

"... a clever take on worship life, no matter what your stripe."

- Minneapolis Star Tribune

"You don't have to be Lutheran to get all the gags ..."

- Fargo Forum

"Bus drivers report people are still doubled over with laughter when they get back on their chartered bus."

- Minot Daily News

Rita Flynn

Photo courtesy of Curt Wollan from the original production of CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES.



CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES is funny and down to earth, and will no doubt bring back memories for many of you. Perhaps some of you are church ladies yourselves, or were raised by one. My experience is that they are the salt of the earth, the heart of the community, and having



Learning from each other

*“The best way to promote a trip is to personally contact people that you know.”
– Mari Fager*

**MARI FAGER LEADS THE
TRAVEL GROUP FOR IMMANUEL
LUTHERAN FELLOWSHIP**

Mari Fager is a retired 4th grade educator, wife of Dan, mother of two, and grandmother of three. She is also the tour leader for a group that visits The Fireside from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kewaunee, WI, a town of about 3,200 just east of Green Bay on Lake Michigan. It sounds like a quiet enough life on the surface, but Mari is SO much more than all of that.

Among her list of activities, she is chairman of the weekend committee at Immanuel, a group that is responsible for serving at weekend funerals. That alone qualifies her as one of our favorite Church Basement Ladies! She is also co-chair for the Family Living tent at the upcoming Farm Technology Days being held in Kewaunee County July 11 - 13. (P.S. You're all invited.) Plus, she's co-president for Kewaunee County Home & Community Education (HCE) which is a program of the UW Extension she describes as 4-H for Moms. All of these are completely volunteer positions.

While Mari's Immanuel Seniors group only travels to The Fireside, she's planning a lot of other trips, too. There's a local one in June touring the county, an annual three day trip for HCE to different areas of the

state, an August trip to a Brewers game, and a September trip to Wisconsin Dells for the HCE state convention. She also takes a group to the Kewaunee Grade School to teach polka dancing to grades 3 - 6 to keep that cultural tradition alive.

Mari and Lois Siegmund started the Fireside trips many years ago. Mari backed away while she was busy teaching and stepped back in when she retired. When Lois retired, Mari kept it going and hopes to pass it along to someone else when the time comes. Their trips to The Fireside are a long 13 hours with a 7:00 a.m. departure and just a rest stop each direction. She fills the trips with Immanuel members as well as others from the community. In fact, her trip to CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES is a joint tour with the Catholic church in town. She believes the best way to fill a trip is through the personal touch of contacting those that have gone with her before and reaching out to people she meets.

The Home and Community Education group Mari leads has monthly meetings not unlike her many years as a 4-H general leader. They work on a wide variety of projects. Recent programs include learning about incorporating ancient grains into a healthy diet, how to be the "queen of green" with

safer natural cleaning methods, learning to knit, and computer classes. They also do community service projects such as collecting school supplies for both local students and partners in Nicaragua.

As a 4th grade teacher, the Social Studies curriculum focused on Wisconsin so Mari knows the state well. Her students' work included planning a three day Wisconsin vacation including an itinerary, lodging and dining plans, and a budget. She always enjoyed it when families actually took the trip their child planned.

Mari is looking forward to The Fireside's annual group leader appreciation event on April 22nd. She has several conflicting activities on that day already so she's trying to sort it out so she can come. The photo above is from our 2013 party when she won one of the grand prize drawings.

Mari is a Wausau native and UW Stevens Point grad, where she met her husband. They moved back to Kewaunee where he was from, and have lived in his childhood home for the last 44 years. She is gracious, extremely humble, and will someday leave very big shoes to fill for the next group leader. Hopefully not anytime soon as we love having her visit The Fireside!

Introducing Director Curt Wollan



As you probably know, our resident Artistic Director, Ed Flesch, has directed nearly all of the 189 productions in The Fireside's 40 seasons of theatre. So you can imagine that if we're going to have someone guest directing a show, they must be pretty good at it!

Curt Wollan is not only the creator of CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES, but he has directed many, many productions of it since it first premiered at Minnesota's Plymouth Playhouse in 2005.

Curt graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa in 1973 with a degree in Speech and Theater with an emphasis in Directing. He went on to receive an M.F.A. in Directing from the University of Iowa. He is currently the President and Executive Producer of Troupe America, Inc., a theatrical production company located in Minneapolis. Troupe America produces theatrical productions for Twin Cities area theaters and the national touring circuit. In past seasons, Curt directed the national tours of A CHRISTMAS CAROL, BIG RIVER,

PUMP BOYS AND DINETTES, DRIVING MISS DAISY, STEEL MAGNOLIAS, OIL CITY SYMPHONY, ON GOLDEN POND, and more. He produced three national tours of FORBIDDEN BROADWAY with Big League Theatricals of New York, three tours of Dylan Thomas' A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES, six tours of Victor Herbert's classic, BABES IN TOYLAND, and the world premier tours of MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET - The Musical and SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE! based on ABC's Emmy Award winning cartoon series.

Since 1979, Curt's work has been seen most frequently at the Plymouth Playhouse where he produced and directed such long-running hits as PUMP BOYS AND DINETTES, DIAMOND STUDS, A CLOSER WALK WITH PATSY CLINE, COTTON PATCH GOSPEL, the regional premier of NUNSENSE, and Plymouth's popular musical HOW TO TALK MINNESOTAN - The Musical; as well as the area premiers of CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES and its sequels, A SECOND HELPING, AWAY IN THE BASEMENT, A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR BASEMENT, and THE LAST POTLUCK SUPPER.

Mr. Wollan makes a yearly summer pilgrimage to the Dakota Badlands where he produces and directs the Medora Musical. The 50 year old summer long musical is an outdoor wild-west country music extravaganza complete with cowboys, horses, and a cast of 30 set at the gates of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

A "pet" project of his is as co-author and director for a series of musicals

recounting the fictitious careers of The Lovely Liebowitz Sisters from 1945 to their "come back" engagement in 1963.



The first production entitled LIVE FROM THE KRAKATOA LOUNGE 1945 opened in the fall of 1988 at the Hennepin Center for the Arts in Minneapolis, and continues to play nationally. The second production entitled A KRAKATOA HOMECOMING opened in January of 1992 along with the annual holiday show, A KRAKATOA HOLIDAY. The Liebowitz Sisters have been seen across the country from San Diego to Rochester, New York, with lengthy runs in Kansas City at Tiffany's Attic Dinner Theatre, St. Louis at the Sheldon Auditorium, Detroit at the Gem Theater, Columbus at the Capitol Theater, and in Minneapolis at various venues.

Curt is the recipient of the Twin Cities Drama Critics Circle "Kudos" Award in Directing, Luther College's Distinguished Service Award, the American Legion's "Patriot" Award, and is listed in Who's Who in America and American Entertainment. He is a former board member of the Northern Sign Theater for the Deaf as well as a former board member and secretary of the Twin Cities Tourism Attractions Association. We look forward to giving him a warm Fireside welcome!

Inside the Kitchen

with Chef Mike



Hi everyone! We're getting a new dessert ready for this summer's production of CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES that sounds like something a church basement lady would be famous for making!

The Hummingbird Cake is quite unique. For a start, it's made with oil rather than butter, and contains more fruit than flour. It's fabulous with cream cheese frosting, and usually includes spices and nuts. Ours will contain two flavorful layers of Pineapple, Bananas, Cinnamon, and Pecans.

While the origin is a bit mysterious, the clues lie in the key ingredients of bananas and pineapple. It is thought to have come from Jamaica, probably in the late 1960's. Originally, it was called the "Doctor bird cake," a nickname for a Jamaican variety of hummingbird called the Red-billed Streamertail. The name came from the way the bird's long beak probes flowers, like a doctor inspecting a patient. Some say the cake was named after the bird because it was sweet enough to attract hummingbirds (who eat only nectar), while others say the yellow streaks of banana was reminiscent of the bird's plumage. Either way, the Doctor bird cake took flight and was used by the Jamaican tourist board to attract visitors who eventually brought it back to the United States, where it became a traditional Southern favorite. You're going to love it! YUMM!! YUMM!!

Michael Scott
Executive Chef

SEE WHAT'S COOKING



CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES

Featured Menu July 27 - September 10, 2017

Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday Matinees, Saturday Evenings, and Sunday Midday

Broccoli and Cauliflower Salad

Fresh Cauliflower and Broccoli Buds, Red Onion, Dried Cranberries, Grated Cheddar Cheese, Jones Cherry Wood Smoked Bacon Chips, and Pine Nuts folded into Creamy Mayo Vinaigrette and presented on Flowering Kale.

Freshly Baked Breads from our Artisan Bakery

Roast Boneless Pork Chop

Herbed Crouton Dressing with Sauerkraut and Jones Original Recipe Sausage. Served with Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes glazed with rich Pork Stock Gravy, Creamed Sweet Corn, and our specially crafted Cinnamon Apple Sauce.

Hummingbird Cake

This classic Southern Cake has two flavorful layers of Pineapple, Bananas, Cinnamon, and Pecans topped with a tangy and delicious Cream Cheese Frosting.

Coffee, Tea and Milk

The Thursday Evening Signature Buffet begins with our Signature Salad topped with Papaya Chutney Dressing and served with Freshly Baked Breads. Enjoy two special entree selections in addition to Beef Tenderloin and Roast Turkey from the Carving Station, Barbecued Pork Back Ribs, Chicken Tenderloin Tempura with Brandied Apricot Sauce, Beer Batter Fried Cod, Shrimp and Scallops Fusilli with Tomato Butter Sauce, Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Sweet Potato Soufflé, Whipped Idaho Potatoes and Roasted Farm Fresh Vegetables. Hummingbird Cake for dessert plus coffee, tea and milk are included.

The Sunday Matinee Brunch begins with an assortment of Quick Breads and Pastries from our Bakery to enjoy with a Honey Glazed Fresh Fruit Medley with Yogurt and Natural Granola. We'll be carving Jones Cherry Wood Smoked Premium Ham and Roast Turkey Breast along with the buffet of Eggs Benedict on Jones Canadian Bacon, Miniature Individual Quiche, Crisp Bacon, Maple Sausage Links, Chicken Tenderloin Tempura with Brandied Apricot Sauce, Biscuits and Sausage Gravy, Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Buttermilk Pancakes, Breakfast Potatoes, a featured Beef Tenderloin Entree, and Roasted Farm Fresh Vegetables. Hummingbird Cake for dessert plus coffee, tea and milk are included.

Jean's Corner of the World



For personal help with any of your bookings, call me at 800-477-9505 or email jean@firesidetheatre.com.

MEET THE CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES!

In CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES, we meet the people that care for a small town congregation by preparing and serving food. We see the pastor and four wonderful women handle a Lutefisk Dinner, a funeral, an Easter fund raiser, and, of course, a wedding. What a colorful cast of characters they are! Remember - only \$1.00 per person saves your seats for a rollicking laugh fest this summer!

Vivian (Mrs. Snustad) is the most conservative of the group and the matriarch of the kitchen. Her word is not to be tested and her decisions are final!

Karin (Mrs. Engelson) is second in line to take over the kitchen. She is neat and tidy in a Jackie Kennedy style.

Mavis (Mrs. Gilmerson) is a farmer's wife and a grandmother with a real "jump in and work" attitude that sometimes leaves her a bit disheveled.

Signe Engelson is Karin's daughter, a young college student who is not afraid to speak her mind in a Midwest, Lutheran, respectful sort of way.

Pastor Gunderson knows that the church runs best when the kitchen is happy. He comes from a family of pastors and has a friendly and intimate relationship with God.

GREAT SEATS JUST WAITING FOR YOU

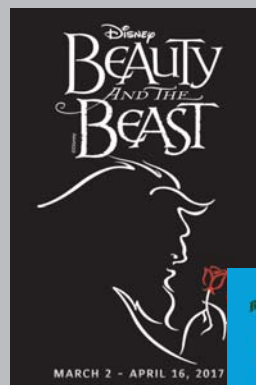
We still have some weekday matinees with great seats just waiting for you to book them. Take a look at May 31 or June 1 for SOUTH PACIFIC; July 5 or 19 for BACK TO THE 50'S; **August 30 and 31 plus September 6 for CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES**; August 30 and 31 and September 6 and 7 for ELVIS LIVES; and December 19 - 23 for MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET. Remember, we also have Friday matinees in December.

Group Leader Appreciation Day!

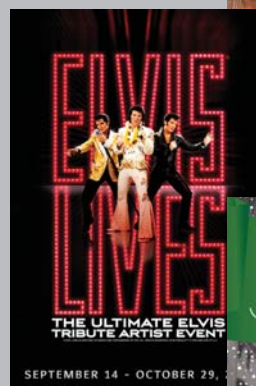
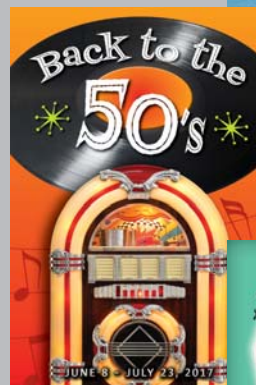
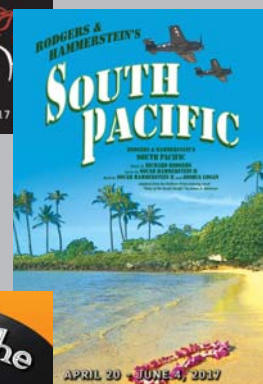
We hope you've returned your RSVP for this year's Group Leader Appreciation Gala on Saturday, April 22nd. If you're new to The Fireside, it just takes successful bookings of 41 or more for two shows in a calendar year to receive an invitation to this special annual event. If you've only got one show planned for this season, there's still time to put together another one so you can get in on next year's party!

Jean Engelson

Box Office and Sales Manager



You can still order 2017 promotional material from the "Groups" page of our web site, or just give us a call.





Coffee, Kitchens, Friendships & More

WHETHER YOU'RE ENJOYING A CUP OF COFFEE WITH THE LADIES IN THE CHURCH BASEMENT KITCHEN OR IN YOUR OWN HOME, THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO MAKE IT A SPECIAL TIME. ALL OF THESE NEW KITCHEN IDEAS MAKE GREAT GIFTS FOR YOURSELF OR SOMEONE ELSE. LET'S CELEBRATE ALL THE FRIENDSHIPS IN OUR LIVES!



The innovative new **Kitchen Boa** is a wearable towel no hostess should be without. They're a chic revival of the classic tea towel, but with your towel tucked neatly around your neck instead of precariously tossed over your shoulder. The pleated waffle towel ends offer extra absorbency and the fashion fabrics feature contemporary designs and graphics. They're available in several different styles.



Regular tea towels have been making a comeback of their own. Not the plain

ones, or hand embroidered ones like your mother may have had, but these **Primitives by Kathy** towels with fun and inspirational messages that let your personality show!

We're also pleased to carry Brownlow Gifts' line of **Sentiment Spoons** and Bamboo Cutting Boards. They're laser etched with messages like "Grandma's Kitchen - Where Memories Are Made!" and "Serve One Another in Love."

Coffee cups have always come in many shapes, sizes, and colors, but we're especially excited about a new Brightest Wishes line that has mugs, magnets, and towels packaged with a greeting card. The cheerful and upbeat, artful designs are great gifts for family, friends, coworkers, teachers, and more. Finally, for the tea lovers, we've got beautiful new stoneware "tea for ones" just for you!





SAVE NOW! CALL 800-477-9505
WWW.FIRESIDETHEATRE.COM

Groups are our specialty - visit early to get the best discount!

What is a group?

At The Fireside, there are many benefits for any group of 18 or more people attending a performance. You can hold seating with a small deposit while you finalize your exact count, due a few weeks before your visit. You'll also qualify for a discounted ticket price and your meal gratuity is included.

For weekday matinees, every 18th ticket is complimentary, for all other shows it's every 21st ticket. There is plenty of safe, free parking on-site for coaches. The Fireside is accessible to guests with disabilities; just let us know what special arrangements you need when placing the reservation.

- You can save over 20% with a group booking over individual ticket prices.
- **PREMIER GROUP RATE** offers a discount of \$3.00 per person when your group attends any performance of **CHURCH BASEMENT LADIES** from July 27 - August 20, 2017.
- The three-course dinner and show for groups of 18 or more is \$71.69 (\$67.95 tax exempt) per person.
- **Premier Group Rate is \$68.52 (\$64.95 Tax Exempt) per person.**
- The five-course Saturday Night Group rate is \$75.91 (\$71.95 tax exempt) per person. For rates on optional entree selections call Group Sales.
- **Premier Saturday Night Group Rate is \$72.74 (\$68.95 tax exempt) per person.**
- **INCENTIVE** rates are offered for groups of 13 to 17 attending Wednesday and Thursday matinees.
- **Youth Group Rates** for ages 14 and under are offered at \$50.59 (\$47.95 tax exempt) per youth.
- **School Group Rates** are available for Mid-Week matinees as low as \$62.95 tax exempt rate per student. Chaperones qualify for the Group Rate.