2014-2015 Theatre Season: A Year of Transformations
Blinn College Division of Visual and Performing Arts
Theatre Arts Program-Brenham

Greater Tuna
by Jaston Williams, Ed Howard, and Joe Sears

Resource Guide

This resource guide serves as an educational starting point to understanding and enjoying Jaston Williams’, Ed Howard’s, and Joe Sear’s Greater Tuna. With this in mind, please note that the interpretations of the theatrical work may differ from the original source content.
Directed by Jennifer Patrick
Technical Theatre Direction by Kevin Patrick
Costume, Makeup, and Hair Design by Jennifer Patrick

2014 Theatre Faculty Showcase
Featuring Theatre Arts Director, Bradley A. Nies
&
Technical Theatre Arts Director, Kevin Patrick
Directed by Theatre Arts Costume Designer, Jennifer Patrick
Produced by Special Arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Performances

September 4, 5, 6 7 p.m.
September 7 2 p.m.

Dr. W.W. O’Donnell
Performing Arts Center Auditorium
Brenham, Texas

Tickets can be purchased in advance online at www.blinn.edu/BoxOffice, by calling 979-830-4024, or by emailing BoxOffice@blinn.edu

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Synopsis

What do Arles Struvie, Thurston Wheelis, Pearl Burras, Petey Fisk, Rev. Spikes, Vera Carp, and Bertha Bumiller have in common? They are all among the upstanding citizens of Tuna, Texas. See two Blinn College-Brenham theatre faculty members transform into twenty citizens of the third smallest town in Texas!

The History of Tuna

Jaston Williams and Joe Sears met in San Antonio, Texas at an audition for Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The two developed a strong friendship and, after being asked to write a comedy sketch for a friend’s party, realized their ability to collaborate as playwrights. They convinced their friend and fellow actor Ed Howard to join them in producing and directing an original work that dramatized their experiences of being raised in small southern towns. This artistic venture led to the creation of four successful plays set in Tuna, Texas: Greater Tuna (1981), A Tuna Christmas (1989), Red, White, and Tuna (1997), and Tuna Does Vegas (2008).
All the roles in *Greater Tuna* are played by two actors, adding to the humor of the show, as well as necessitating quick costume changes.

**Thurston Wheelis**: A disc jockey for OKKK Radio in Tuna, Texas.

**Arles Struvie**: Another disc jockey for OKKK Radio.

**Leonard Childers**: The station manager for Radio OKKK.

**Harold Dean Lattimer**: The OKKK Radio weatherman.

**Hank Bumiller**: An ex-convict who was imprisoned for robbing a filling station.

**Bertha Bumiller**: His wife, and a member of the Smut Snatchers of the New Order.

**Charlene Bumiller**: Daughter of the Bumillers who wants to be a cheerleader.

**Stanley Bumiller**: Charlene’s brother who has returned home from reform school.

**Jody Bumiller**: Youngest child of the Bumillers who is addicted to dogs.

**Vera Carp**: The town snob, and Vice President of the Smut-Snatchers of the New Order.

**Petey Fisk**: An employee of the Greater Tuna Humane Society.

**R.R. Snavely**: The town drunk, and Tuna’s amateur UFO-logist.

**Didi Snavely**: R.R.’s wife, and owner of Didi’s Used Weapons.

**Pearl Burras**: Aunt to Bertha, and Tuna’s resident dog-killer.

**Reverend Spikes**: President of the Smut Snatchers of the New Order.

**Phinas Blye**: A perpetual candidate who is running for Tuna City Council.

**Elmer Watkins**: Head of the local chapter of the KKK.

**Sheriff Givens**: Sheriff of the Greater Tuna Area.

**Chad Hartford**: A reporter from *Intellect* Magazine in Houston.

**Yippy**: A dog.
*The Texas State Historical Association lists Tuna, Texas as a community that was founded sometime after 1880. The town was located about 95 miles southwest of San Antonio and was shown on some maps of La Salle County as late as the 1960s.

*In Texas, it is illegal to milk another person’s cow, sell someone’s eye, or take more than three sips of beer while standing.

*The King Ranch in South Texas is larger than the state of Rhode Island.

*In Clarendon, Texas, it is illegal to dust any public building with a feather duster.

*The city of Slaughter, Texas, has never had a homicide.

*It is illegal in Galveston, Texas to let your camel run loose on the beach.

*The director of the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was a student at the University of Texas who originally wanted to call the movie *Headcheese*.

*There is no period after the Dr in Dr Pepper, a drink that was invented in Waco, Texas in 1885.

*Amarillo, Texas has the world’s largest helium well.

*Oscar, the Academy Award statuette, was named for Texan Oscar Pierce.

*The Off-Broadway production of *Greater Tuna* ran for over a year at the Circle in the Square Theatre (Downtown). It had 501 performances.
Some Famous People Born in Texas

Carol Burnett
Actress and Writer
April 26, 1933
San Antonio, Texas

Cecil Cooper
Baseball Player and Manager
December 20, 1949
Brenham, Texas

Joan Crawford
Actress and Dancer
March 23, 1904
San Antonio, Texas

Dwight D. Eisenhower
34th US President
October 14, 1890
Denison, Texas

Alberto Gonzales
80th US Attorney General
August 4, 1955
San Antonio, Texas

“Mean Joe” Greene
Football Player and Coach
September 24, 1946
Elgin, Texas

Buddy Holly
Singer and Songwriter
September 7, 1936
Lubbock, Texas

Howard Hughes
Business Magnate and Aviator
December 24, 1905
Humble, Texas
Willie Nelson
Singer and Songwriter
April 29, 1933
Abbott, Texas

Kay Bailey Hutchinson
US Senator from Texas
July 22, 1943
Galveston, Texas

Lyndon B. Johnson
36th US President
August 27, 1908
Stonewall, Texas

Steve Martin
Actor and Playwright
August 14, 1945
Waco, Texas

Janis Joplin
Singer and Songwriter
January 19, 1943
Port Arthur, Texas

Barbara Jordan
US House of Representatives
February 21, 1936
Houston, Texas

Matthew McConaughey
Award Winning Actor
November 4, 1969
Uvalde, Texas

Willie Nelson
Singer and Songwriter
April 29, 1933
Abbott, Texas

Jim Parsons
Award Winning Actor
March 24, 1973
Houston, Texas,
Tex Ritter  
Singer and Actor  
January 12, 1905  
Murvaul, Texas

Nolan Ryan  
Baseball Player and CEO  
January 31, 1947  
Refugio, Texas

Salena  
Singer and Songwriter  
April 16, 1971  
Lake Jackson, Texas

Sissy Spacek  
Actress and Singer  
December 25, 1949  
Quitman, Texas

Tommy Tune  
Actor and Dancer  
February 28, 1939  
Wichita Falls, Texas

Vanilla Ice  
Rapper and Actor  
October 31, 1967  
Dallas, Texas

Clay Walker  
Country Music Artist  
August 19, 1969  
Vidor, Texas

Ron White  
Comedian and Actor  
December 18, 1956  
Fritch, Texas
Howdy, Teachers!

We encourage you and your students to explore Texas further by checking out the following sources:

- Internet Source, www.academic.utep.edu, UTEP Law School Preparation Institute-Lesson plans, resources, and recommended readings!
- Internet Source, www.education.texashistory.unt.edu, UNT Libraries Digital Projects Department-Texas history notebook lessons, activities, and group-oriented projects!
- Internet Source, www.tashaonline.org, Texas State Historical Association-Education lesson plans for teaching Texas History!
- Internet Source, www.walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu, TAMU Family Development & Resource Management-Teacher lesson plans?

Brunswick Records, Inc. (1957). Buddy Holly [Publicity Photograph].


Holloway, E. (1958). Carol Burnett [NBC Publicity Photograph].


Internet Source, www.lortel.org, Lortel Archives: The Internet Off Broadway Database.


University of North Texas Archives. (1967). Joe Greene [Photograph].


Wide World Photos, Inc. (1937). Howard Hughes [Press Photograph].