

HOPATCONG BOROUGH SCHOOLS

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Title: **The Hopatcong High School Drama Club Will Perform *Arsenic and Old Lace***

Art DiBenedetto, Hopatcong Superintendent of Schools, Announces-

In a triumphant return to the stage, the Hopatcong High School Drama Club will perform *Arsenic and Old Lace* December 6-9<sup>th</sup> at the Hopatcong High School auditorium. The director is Kerri Batche who is in the role for the first time on the HHS stage. Mrs. Batche, however, has had a long and illustrious career in theater. After her successful run with *Cinderella and the Substitute Fairy Godmother* on the Hopatcong Middle School stage, she was pegged to take over in the high school director's chair for Joe Ross who retired after 15 years last June.

The HHS production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* will open on Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> and run through Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights' performances will start at 7 pm. The Sunday matinee will commence at 2 pm. Tickets are \$10 for Adults and \$7 for Students and Senior Citizens.

*Arsenic and Old Lace* is a dark comedy written in 1939 by American playwright Joseph Kesselring. The plot centers on the Brewster Family, at one time a part of the American elite that has descended into homicidal insanity. The Brewster sisters – Abby & Martha - are elderly and spinster aunts who live together. They are played wickedly and expertly by Abigail Dekker and Kelly Nee respectively, both seniors. The ladies serve a concoction of homemade elderberry wine, laced with arsenic, strychnine, and "just a pinch" of cyanide. Their nephew Mortimer, played by the hilarious and handsome Matthew Smith, a junior, is torn between his loyalty to his aunts and his love for the neighbor, Elaine, played beautifully by Isabel Campos, a senior.

Senior Kelly Nee has lit up the stage since she was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade when she played in *The Wizard of Oz*. This year she plays Martha Brewster, "a feisty and hilarious old lady." *Arsenic and Old Lace* is especially poignant for Nee because, "I feel so thankful for the people I get to work with, especially Abby. This play was the perfect show for our senior year."

Senior Abigail Dekker who plays Abby Brewster echoes Nee's sentiment. "I have been a part of the HHS Drama Club since 8th grade and these past five years of being in Drama have been

better than I could have ever imagined. I am so thankful and lucky for all the people I get to work with, especially my drama sister, Kelly (Nee).”

Junior Matthew Smith is in his fourth production on the HHS stage. This is his first time on stage for the fall production having worked Sound his freshmen year for *Little Women*. He’s dynamic in the musicals, but has found his voice as Mortimer Brewster. “I can identify with Mortimer because he’s frantic. That is my normal state of mind! I enjoy the physical comedy and know y’all will enjoy the show!”

Isabel Campos, a senior, plays Elaine Harper. Campos has been involved with the HHS Drama Club for four years and acting on stage for two. “Drama is so much fun for me, it’s like a family and I love being a part of it! My character Elaine is not the funniest, but definitely my favorite role I’ve played yet. She is very headstrong, but also very happy and in love.”

Junior Fernando Leyva has done four shows on the HHS stage in the last three years. Leyva shares, “I play a deranged lunatic named ‘Teddy’ who completely believes he is President Theodore Roosevelt and in response, acts like him consistently. I do hope you come see HHS Drama Club’s production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. It is quite BULLY!”

In addition to the tight-knit group of talented actors on stage, the HHS Drama Club consists of an incredible gaggle of backstage crew who make the magic happen. Senior Luisa Kazanfer is the chief of publicity. “I’ve had so much fun acting, changing sets, and especially bonding during and after the shows with these amazing people. I couldn’t have asked for a better four years with this club.”

Senior Kaitlyn Donnelly is stage manager of the production. She’s been in the Drama Department since her freshmen year. “I love being behind the scenes and seeing everything slowly come together for us to put on an amazing show for the people. I love being there after school and helping wherever we need the help,” Donnelly states.

Charlotte Whritenour, a junior, is the head of props. And junior Brittney Lengkong expertly took over the role of executive student producer working under faculty producer Mike Batche.

Other backstage chiefs include senior Anthony Marinaro who heads Tech, senior Noah Fouda who is in charge of Sound, and sophomore Shannon O’Sullivan who heads up Lights.









HOPATCONG HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA  
PROUDLY PRESENTS:



By JOSEPH KESSELRING

## HHS AUDITORIUM

Thursday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM  
Friday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM  
Saturday Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM  
Sunday Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00 PM

Tickets:

Adults: \$10.00

Students and Seniors: \$7.00

