

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2015

"Life shouldn't be all work and no plays."

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## September 24: Footlights to Discuss Jennifer

### Hoppe-House's *Bad Dog*

Reserve now for Footlight's dinner-discussion on **Thursday, September 24** at Alfio's when we host Olney Theatre Center's Artistic Director, **Jason Loewith**. Jason joins us again – previously he talked to us about *Rancho Mirage* by Steven Dietz – to speak about Olney's entry in the Women's Voices Theater Festival, *Bad Dog*. We are most hopeful that director **Jeremy Cohen** will be able to join us, too. Stephanie Olshan will moderate our discussion.

Playwright **Jennifer Hoppe-House** describes herself on Twitter as a TV and film writer, playwright, ex-drunk and Texas Jew, devoted to her wife, her dog, good food and progressive causes. In fact she's an award-winning TV (*Nurse Jackie*, *Damages*, *Grace and Frankie*) and film writer who only recently tried her hand at writing a stage play. *Bad Dog* is the result and Olney Theatre is the second stop on its rolling world premiere. It debuted earlier this year in Florida at The Orlando Shakespeare Theater.

When speaking about herself, Hoppe-House says, "I revere playwrights more than any other writers. I love great plays. It's always been my goal to write one. I never considered myself to be a great writer; I wanted to be a good writer." And now, *Bad Dog*.

The setting for *Bad Dog* is a typical middle-class Southern California home: neat, colorful and pretty ordinary – except for the car which has crashed through the living room wall and still sits there. Molly had been sober for ten years but she fell off the wagon with a thud, lost control of her Prius, and now her two sisters, her mother and father, and the wicked stepmother are all coming to visit and try an intervention which will get Molly back on track and in control of her life.

Since this is a comedy, of course nothing works out as planned.

This synopsis doesn't touch on the skill of the playwright in carrying us along with her as we witness family dynamics unfolding and we seek to uncover the origins of dysfunction that arise from the exchanges, verbal and non-verbal.

Alfio's Trattoria is located at 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments – a short walk from the north entrance of the Friendship Heights metro stop on the red line. Street parking is limited if you drive, but valet parking is free at Alfio's. Dinner is at 6:30, the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends at 9. (Note: if you know you must leave before 9, please try to sit near the door so you can exit quietly.)

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and discussion is \$20. Dinner is a green salad, choice among six entrees, and spaghetti, green beans, bread and butter, ice cream, and tea or coffee. Alfio's salad bar may be substituted for the entrée if you wish. Cash or check, please – no credit cards. Wine, beer, cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only for just \$5.

**Make reservations** with Phyllis Bodin, at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768. Reservations and/or cancellations will be accepted until noon on September 24. If you must cancel, please let Phyllis know as soon as possible since the restaurant needs a complete count. This is a seated, table-service dinner, not a buffet. We may be charged for no-shows and expect you to cover our cost.

**Read *Bad Dog*.** We have a draft e-copy of *Bad Dog* available for those who are attending the September 24 dinner-discussion. As always, we request that you honor the playwright's copyright restrictions. Please do not distribute to others. After you sign up to come to the September 24 dinner-discussion, you may request an e-copy of the *Bad Dog* script from Robin Larkin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net).

**See *Bad Dog*.** *Bad Dog* will play at the Olney Theatre Center, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, Olney, MD, September 30 - October 25. The stellar cast includes Holly Twyford, Naomi Jacobson, Allyssa Wilmoth Keegan, Amy McWilliams, and Emily Townley. See <http://olneytheatre.org/> for more information.

Footlights will see *Bad Dog* on **Saturday, October 10**, at **1:45 p.m.** Our tickets are \$27.50 – available until September 24 or earlier if we run out. Don't delay. Reserve with Robin Larkin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) or 240-669-6300. Send your check, payable to Footlights,

to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

### ***In October: An August Wilson Retrospective***

Tentatively we will meet at Alfio's on Tuesday, October 20, to discuss August Wilson's work, his influence on theatre and his universality to all audiences.

Footlights planned to discuss Wilson's *King Hedley II* last February, but for only the first time in our 20 year history of dinner-discussions, we had to cancel due to bad weather. **Dr. Sandra Shannon**, professor of African-American Studies at Howard University, has agreed to be our guest, once again. We expect to have actors who

have played many roles in Wilson's plays, too. Debbie Jackson will moderate.

To revisit our February 2015 newsletter, see [http://www.footlightsdc.org/news2015/15\\_02.pdf](http://www.footlightsdc.org/news2015/15_02.pdf).

### ***About Footlights***

To subscribe to our e-list, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>, or e-mail [footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). To learn more about Footlights, visit our website at <http://www.footlightsdc.org>.

### ***Calendar – Discussions:***

- **Thursday, September 24**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of **Jennifer Hoppe-House's *Bad Dog*** – a rolling world premiere and Olney Theatre's entry in the Women's Voices Theater Festival. With guest **Jason Loewith**, Olney's Artistic Director; and possibly director **Jeremy Cohen**. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Dinner including discussion is \$20; discussion only is \$5. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768.
- **Tuesday, October 20** (unconfirmed), 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion: August Wilson retrospective. With guest Dr. **Sandra Shannon** and others. At Alfio's.

### ***Calendar – Performances:***

- **Saturday, October 10**, 1:45 p.m. performance of **Jennifer Hoppe-House's *Bad Dog*** at Olney Theater 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, Olney, MD. Our tickets are \$27.50. Deadline is September 24. Don't delay. Reserve with Robin Larkin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) or 240-669-6300. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

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