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Entertainment

Good acting resonates in GLT play

By **TED BROWN**
 Staff Writer

Everyone holds some nostalgic thoughts and memories of time spent at the cottage, and with the opening of Georgetown Little Theatre's *On Golden Pond*, those memories become that much more precious.

The story is well known—Norman and Ethel Thayer are spending their 48th summer at the family cottage on Golden Pond, but Norman isn't quite himself this year. He's celebrating his 80th birthday, and seems preoccupied with dying. Even the daily arrival of the mail and newspaper from local postman Charlie Martin lack the appeal they once did.

His wife Ethel makes a valiant effort to keep him cheered up, but finally resorts to inviting their daughter Chelsea to spend some time. Chelsea and Norman have had a lifelong feud. It's apparent from the moment Chelsea arrives (with newest boyfriend Bill and his son Billy in tow) that Golden Pond is the last place she wants to be.

The play deals with Norman's coming to terms with Chelsea and her newest boyfriend, not to mention dealing with the somewhat precocious young Billy she brought along. Billy ends up spending a month with the Thayers as Chelsea and Bill tour Europe, and in doing so, both Norman and Billy undergo some remarkable changes.

Mark Tiller shines as the cynical, cantankerous Norman Thayer. His mannerisms, doddering style and delivery of the excellent dialogue create a character the audience can't help but love. The play is built on quick wit, with some outstanding lines to which Tiller plies his magic.

Equally entertaining is Pat Ball as she tackles

the part of Ethel, Norman's wife. Ball manages to display Ethel's love and adoration for her somewhat cynical husband, enjoying in his eccentricity rather than taking exception to it.

Taking the part of Chelsea is Elizabeth Barfoot. Chelsea is a somewhat complex character, outwardly very sure of herself, yet crumbles in the presence of her father. Barfoot captures that weakness and hesitant uncertainty as she and Tiller interact on stage.

The somewhat bumbling Charlie Martin is ably handled by Don Colucci. Charlie is a simple, almost naive person, and Colucci allows his adoration and longtime infatuation for Chelsea show through loud and clear.

GLT newcomer Andrew Kerr handles the part of Billy Ray, as he displays a typical young boy caught up in a generation gap, full of curiosity and pride, yet afraid to let either show. This marks Kerr's first time on stage, and he handles his part well.

Doug MacDougall carries the part of Billy's father Bill. Although MacDougall is no stranger to John Elliott stage, having been active in other local groups, this is his first GLT part. He adds comic relief as he and Norman discuss the presence of black bears in the woods around Golden Pond.

The set is simple yet effective, and lighting is seamless as the play spans early morning through to late evening.

This is the second time GLT has tackled *On Golden Pond*, the first time being in 1984, when the 1981 movie version was still fresh in the audience's mind.

Even after 16 years, the strength of the dialogue makes this play a winner. Although the story is well known, it still works, and in doing so, demonstrates the power of a simple yet effective script.

It continues this week.

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