



Submitted photo

“Bad Jews” opened Nov. 3 and closes Sunday at the Studio Theatre. The comedy, which focuses on a Jewish family in Manhattan, asks questions about what you choose to believe.

‘Bad Jews’ Is Intimate, Funny And Thought-Provoking

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Staff Writer

With the blackbox set up at the Studio Theatre at Tierra Del Sol, audience members become unseen spectators to the comical and absurd family drama that is Joshua Harmon’s “Bad Jews.”

When the patriarch of a Jewish family passes away, his three grandchildren stay in a cramped studio apartment in Manhattan together after his funeral, leaving plenty of time for different personalities to clash.

Jonah, played by David Paul Rowan, is quiet and tries to keep the peace among everybody, a difficult task when his brother, Liam, played by Adam Lubitz and his cousin, Daphna, played by Rachel Comeau, are constantly butting heads.

Also present is Liam’s ditzy but well-meaning shiksa girlfriend, Melody, played by Lily E. Garnett.

Daphna, who prefers to go by her Hebrew name, is extremely religious and proud of her Jewish heritage, while Liam is an atheist who wants nothing to do with his own Hebrew name, Shlomo.

Daphna plans to move to Israel and join the army there while Liam is studying culture in graduate school, which Daphna finds ironic because she doesn’t think he appreciates his own culture.

To Daphna, Liam is a “Bad Jew,” eating cookies during Passover, and undermining the traditions and history of Jewish people.

To Liam, Daphna is

self-centered, self-righteous and generally a bad person.

The two characters are similar in the fact that they both are slightly hypocritical and have trouble communicating emotions in regards to their grandfather’s death, even though they are both visibly upset.

Throughout the play, Daphna picks fights with whichever character is present about anything, from money and privilege to tattoos and family origins. She also finds a way to turn every conversation back to her Jewish heritage.

The main conflict is essentially over their grandfather’s Chai necklace and who deserves to have it, but perhaps the main point of the play is the questions and themes that come to the surface as the characters argue.

Daphna thinks she deserves her grandfather’s Chai necklace because she’s the most religious of his grandchildren, where, as Liam sees its importance for the story behind it, and wants to use it to propose to Melody, unbeknownst to Daphna.

“Bad Jews” explores themes about identity, belief, love and humanity.

Each character identifies a different way with their heritage, and each character has different beliefs about religion.

The questions of how love changes the way one thinks and what it takes to be a good person continuously surface as well.

The play takes many turns — at one moment, the cousins are erupting in laughter over a funny family memory, but at the next the room is stony and silent.

The audience also experiences conflicting feelings about each character, rooting for them one instant and becoming almost disappointed by them the next.

“Bad Jews” is a very dialogue-heavy play, and it takes a lot of energy to follow along, but it is well-worth it.

Rowan and Comeau should both be commended for their ability to memorize the amount of dialogue that they did, but all of the actors played the characters very well, transforming them into real people and a real family.

For Leslie Baer, of the Village of Springdale, the show was touching on a personal level.

“Being Jewish, this really hit home as far as the issues with family sometimes, and the extremes and different levels of belief,” Baer said. “I thought it was phenomenal. I loved it. The amount of dialogue was exhausting, but how it was written and how they remembered it was phenomenal.”

Baer said that when the play ended, she wished there was a part two.

Conflicts are not resolved, but rather heightened, at the end of the play, making the story even more realistic.

The open-ended finale of the show is perhaps one of the best things about it, because of the words, arguments and questions that still hang in the air after the lights dim.

Sumter Reassigns Land Use From Agricultural To Residential

The former designation caused difficulty for landowners to develop or redevelop property.

By MACKENZIE RAETZ
Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Board of Sumter County Commissioners approved a change in property designations for 1,486 small lots in the county at the regular meeting Tuesday.

Those properties were changed from agricultural use to rural residential on the future land-use map.

The change was made because the agricultural designation made it problematic for landowners seeking to develop or redevelop their property, according to the commissioners’ executive summary of the item.

Commissioners also shared an article written by Fire Chief Leland Greek, of Sumter County Fire & EMS, for Florida Fire Service Magazine.

The article detailed the importance of vision and organizational structure for various organizations.

A public hearing will be held at the next meeting at 5 p.m. on Dec. 12 at the

Sumter County Courthouse, 215 E. McCollum Ave., Bushnell, to establish a trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate and return program for the county. The program will perform those services on cats that come into the facility without identification.

Reports for Tuesday’s meeting included the Interlocal Agreement between Citrus County and Sumter County for the operation and maintenance of the County Road 48 bridge over the Withlacoochee River.

The agreement ensures the bridge is maintained properly.

During public forum, animal advocates spoke about concerns over Sumter County Animal Services’ euthanasia rate, and whether improvements have come

from SCAS’s partnership with the Humane Society/SPCA of Sumter County.

Prior to public comments, Second Vice Chairman Steve Printz said the HS/SPCA of Sumter County’s efforts should be applauded, and he looks forward to continuing to work with the organization.

Officials with the HS/SPCA of Sumter County published a statement on its website, and on the record, with the commissioners addressing “misstatements being made about (the) no-kill organization.”

The statement, made by Celine Petrie, chairman of the board for HS/SPCA of Sumter County, listed changes that have been made to SCAS since the partnership, and the improvements that still need addressing.

Mackenzie Raetz is a senior writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5354, or mackenzie.raetz@thevillagesmedia.com.

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