

# PALITTLE theatre

a source for entertainment, family and friendships

By Darragh Doiron

Summer break doesn't mean vacation for Port Arthur Little Theatre volunteers. It's time to set the new season, there's the summer musical that seems to involve half the town and, for Ann Holland, it could be a chance to take inventory of the vast costume collection.

It's not all song and dance and acting if you want to work with the theater. Someone has to make you look good. PALT has families who work together building sets, lighting, makeup and the rest of the business that makes a show flow. Holland's husband, John, is president of the board, and she is mistress of the overflowing racks of costumes suspended in a loft over the stage.

Need to look vampy? Headed out to war? Need sparkle? Holland knows where to get it.

"I spend most of my time maintaining the costume room. There are thousands ... I have no idea," Holland said.

It all started when Anthony, Holland's son, wanted to be in "The King and I," years ago.

"I went with him and we both got parts in the chorus. The next summer we went to audition again. Because we had so much fun, I literally took my husband by the hand and made him audition," Holland said.

Now younger son Carter joins the rest of the family in PALT fun.

"I love everything I've done with theater," she said, listing duties that have included



Rose Moon, left, and Ann Holland check out the wardrobe in the Port Arthur Little Theater's closet.

helping direct.

"I like working the lobby, I like working back stage, I like being on stage, and probably my favorite thing about theater is that every single show I've been involved with, I meet somebody new. I just love that I've met so many good friends ... just wonderful people. It's like a family to me," she said.

John Holland said his is one of several extended families who support PALT. He said he expects they'll all come together to support the big joint summer musical with PALT and Lamar State College- Port Arthur. There hasn't been an official announcement, but Holland is humming tunes from "The Music Man."

#### PALT GOALS

This past season has included "Cheaper by the Dozen" and "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."

Holland hopes fans will see building improvements.

"We are looking at making improvements to the facili-

ties through grants and fund raisers. We're also working very hard to set another season. We're looking at expanding the auditorium. "We encourage everyone to come out and see that we are putting on very quality productions, and to be involved. If they don't want to be on stage, there are other ways they can volunteer through set building, working the parking lot... there's just a whole variety of things," he said.

#### HISTORY

While the Port Arthur Little Theatre has roots all the way back to the Great Depression, enthusiasts united after World War II, when returning men were ready to fill roles. Meetings and rehearsals have been in church buildings, YMCA rooms, a fire station, homes and a barn.

PALT finally broke ground on its current Playhouse on Jimmy Johnson Blvd., in a former church, in the summer of 1996. The budget was about \$115,000.



#### PA LITTLE THEATRE

The PALT Playhouse is at 4701 Jimmy Johnson Blvd. in Port Arthur with dinner theater productions often staged at The Courtyard Cafe in Groves. The phone number is 727-PALT. The remainder of this season includes:

#### "OF MICE AND MEN"

April 25-27, May 2-4, 9-11

Curtain: 7:30 p.m.; 2:30 p.m. Sunday matinees

Roxane Gray will direct this John Steinbeck story about two drifters, George and Lennie, who have delusions of living off the "fat of the land." They have just arrived at a ranch to work for enough money to buy their own place. Lennie is a man-child, a little boy in the body of a powerful man. It's Lennie's obsessions with things soft and cuddly, that have made George cautious about who the gentle giant, with his brute strength, associates with. When a ranch boss' wife is found dead in the barn with a broken neck, it's obvious that Lennie, albeit accidentally, killed her.