



VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

**1003 East Main Street
Richmond, Indiana 47374
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WELCOME

It is a privilege to welcome you as a volunteer to Richmond Civic Theatre!

Please, consider yourself a special addition to our volunteer program.

This booklet will provide you with helpful information

- About your service**
- About safety issues**
- About Richmond Civic Theatre**

RCT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Richmond civic theatre is to produce high quality theatrical productions that will engage, entertain, educate, and inspire the people of Richmond and the surrounding area, participants and audiences alike.

Belief statement – We believe:

The arts are essential to the lifelong development of individuals and to the creation and nourishment of thriving communities.

In providing the opportunity for individuals to function as a group of caring workers that have as their aim a simple and sincere interest in providing good quality theatrical productions.

All people are entitled to a theatre arts experience, to engage their imaginative powers, to learn, to challenge, to communicate; and to celebrate their unique and shared voices.

In assuring equal access to and equity in the distribution of theater resources and in so doing we will be able to assure that all people have the opportunity to engage in the theatre from earliest childhood and throughout life.

In providing patrons, staff, and volunteers with a welcoming, efficient, fiscally responsible and growing organization with a strong membership and volunteer base that supports a variety of theatre productions and volunteer opportunities.

In initiating strategic planning processes that promote results.

**An Act of Mercy Secured a Legacy!
Join RCT's Stage Parade – and Break A Leg![\[1\]](#)**

By - Steve Martin, RCT Volunteer

Theatre satisfies a deep need in culture; it tells us what it is to be human and how to have fun! *It is* play with crafted wisdom and practice; it is teamwork and craft and looseness and spontaneity... and split second razor-sharp precision that takes a lifetime to develop!

Its genesis comes from religious ritual... *and is the result of one actor who dared!*

As early as 800 B.C. feasts were held in honor of Dionysus, God of revelry and wine. Debaucheries each year were held at the foot of sloping vineyards where a chorus would sing. In such a *theatron* setting the poet Thespis dared to separate himself from the chorus in 534 B.C. to become the first actor in history to speak solo lines. *He stepped forward and showed his humanity!* Never before had anyone pretended to be a character in a story, masquerading as someone other than whom they were and voiced lines alone.

Thespis was a smash hit and soon Greek theatre took on new style, and the onstage troupe came to occupy amphitheatres with stone seats. This structure has come down to us as the theatre we know. It survived and thrived; it changed the course of human history and how we understand ourselves and relate to the world. *One actor did that!*

Today an amalgamation of talent gathers at RCT to sing, to speak, to dance and to develop the notion of opposition and conflict, fellowship and mirth, presenting drama and humor and music and mystery and magic of the highest form, and showing what it is to be human. *The few give to the many!*

Thespis was the first, and local *thespians* carry the tradition forward, in varied endeavors that contribute to the whole rich pattern of RCT fabric.

It began here in Richmond January of 1942 when a Quaker act of mercy secured the release of a Viennese man from a Nazi concentration camp. Norbert Silbiger came to this country with \$2.50 in his pocket and unsure of his future, but when he decided to stay in Richmond an institution was born and a legacy secured.

He founded Richmond Civic Theatre.

As a result thousands upon thousands of residents have contributed time and talents to *'play.'*

The years have passed and their children and their children's children have donated time, touching lives in that great equalizer, RCT!

Step forward and show us your humanity! Join the parade! *Add to the legacy!*

Key dates and events in the history of the Murray Theatre/Richmond Civic Theatre^[2]:

- 1908-09 -- The Murray Theatre building is built for \$40,000 by Omar G. Murray on the southeast corner of 10th and Main streets to house vaudeville and road shows. Eddie Adair and his Yankee Octet are the headliners on opening night, Oct. 11, 1909.
- 1916 -- On Sept. 4, 1916, the Marx Brothers appear onstage at Murray Theatre.
- 1930 -- The Murray closes because of the Depression and changing tastes.
- 1931 -- The theater reopens as the Indiana Theater, a movie house.
- 1941 -- Discussions and committee meetings, inspired by conversations among Hazel Emry, Norbert Silbiger, Ed Nusbaum and others, lead the formation of a civic theater, with Silbiger as director and drama coach. A schedule of six plays is set for the 1941-1942 season, and by the end of the season there are 800 members. "Our Town" is the first production on Oct. 19, 1941, in Earlham College's Goddard Auditorium. Soon, productions are moved to the 500-seat McGuire Hall at Richmond High School for more room.
- 1945 -- Richmond Civic Theatre has 2,100 members and tickets are in high demand.
- 1952 -- The troupe leases the former Murray Theatre building, called the Indiana Theater.
- 1959 -- Membership exceeds 2,900.
- 1962 -- Norbert Silbiger retires.
- 1965 -- The organization's silver anniversary is celebrated lavishly with the Richmond High School band playing Austrian music at the arrival of Norbert Silbiger, ushers and a three-tier birthday cake.
- 1966 -- Richmond Civic Theatre buys the Murray Theatre for \$42,000.
- 1970 -- Single-show tickets offered for the first time in addition to season memberships.
- 1971 -- Norbert Silbiger comes out of retirement to direct several plays.
- 1977 -- Financial hardships and a brief closing of the building by the fire marshal face the theater troupe, but it recovers.
- 1979 -- Norbert Silbiger dies on Jan. 21 at age 83.
- 1980s -- The theater adds modern lighting, sound and fly system, does structural repairs and names the auditorium in Norbert Silbiger's memory.
- 1984 -- Theater name returns to Murray Theatre in order to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1990 -- 50th season opens with "Our Town."
- 2000 -- The box office is computerized and the company offers its 60th season.
- 2007 -- August 14 electrical fire closes theatre for two weeks. Season open as scheduled on September 7.

^[1] Theatre term used as a substitute for "Good Luck" that is considered to be bad luck if used by production members.

^[2] Information provided by Palladium Item