4 COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTS

STEINBECK'S *OF MICE AND MEN*

FEBRUARY 2012

Our nation's economic struggles in recent years find many parallels in the historical period known as the Great Depression. Relevant literature can be a refuge in such times by helping us identify common aspects of the human condition. John Steinbeck's poignant, yet challenging drama, Of Mice and Men, is one such timeless piece of classic American literature.

4 Community Theatre, a local amateur organization, has performed plays and musicals in the western suburbs for over 14 years and will present Of Mice and Men on the following dates:

Orono Middle School on February 9-10, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
Delano Middle School on February 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
Rockford High School on Februray 16-17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Please take this opportunity to enjoy our production and share its relevance with friends, family, neighbors and students. A more detailed study guide is available to educators on our website: www.4communitytheatre.org

For more information, please contact:

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Long Lake, Minnesota 55356
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tickets@4communitytheatre.org

Of Mice and Men is set in the Salinas Valley region of California which was hit particularly hard by the Great Depression. Thousands of jobless men, many with their families, were driven westward to escape a lingering drought in the Great Plains. 350,000 of these "bindle-stiffs" left their homes in Dust Bowl states of Oklahoma and Arkansas over a period of 5 years and journeyed to California to find work.

George and Lennie's desire to have a piece of property that is all their own and to "live off the fatta the lan'" is a recurring motif. Today, with millions of foreclosures and high unemployment, many Americans are having to rethink their dreams.

4 Community Theatre is a proud member of the Discovery Arts Council and sponsored by the Community Education Departments of the Orono, Delano and Rockford School Districts. Visit at www.4communitytheatre.org or on Facebook.

"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men Gang aft agley"
(The best-laid plans of mice and men/ Go often awry.) - Robert Burns

FOR FULL ENJOYMENT AS WELL AS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEMES IN *OF MICE AND MEN*, HERE IS A PARTIAL LIST OF TOPICS TO CONSIDER:

- Loss of the American Dream
- Race Relations
- Social Standing of the Aged & Disabled
- The Need for Human Companionship
- The Pain of Loneliness
- Stereotyping of Women
- Economic and Class Distinctions
- Euthanasia

After you see the play, can you think of others? Are these or other topics you think of pertinent now as well as the time when the play took place?

The rate of unemployment during the Great Depression reached 25%.

THE STORY

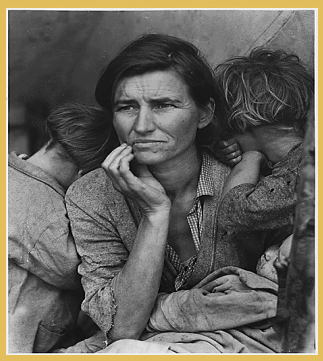
Salinas Valley, California, 1930's Great Depression

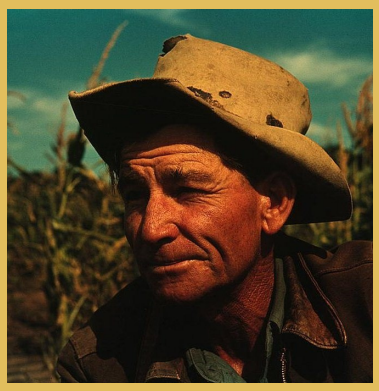
Called the "Poet of the Dispossessed", John Steinbeck's passionate social realism mirrors current concerns about unemployment, homelessness and poverty.

California migrant workers George and Lennie arrive for work on a ranch, haunted by past misadventures. Bound by a promise George once made to care for mentally compromised Lennie, they are sustained by their dream of one day buying their own place. Circumstances arise, however, that tragically challenge their "best-laid plans".

Interwoven into the action are the relationships between the other characters and their stories, in the context of the Great Depression and its effect on Americans, especially working class Americans. Steinbeck demonstrates how unattainable the American Dream had become during the Great Depression, when once it had seemed that anyone could come to America, work hard, and see a tangible gain. This failing, which he often linked to the rise of industry and the spread of capitalism, appears in several of Steinbeck's works.

Despite living in such close proximity to one another, the ranch hands talk often about unrelenting loneliness. In desperate times such as then existed, people were estranged even to those with whom they worked.





There are multiple characters in the story who are ostracized because of their position as minorities.