

# PRESS RELEASE

**PALLADIAN Interactive Theatre, L.L.C.**

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122 West Ash Lane

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## **For Immediate Release**

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**PALLADIAN Interactive Theatre**

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## **Reality Theatre™ in Galena, Illinois**

*The World of Charles Dickens Comes to Life*

**GALENA, ILLINOIS** — Have you ever wanted to live the life of a character in an adventure or mystery book or motion picture? Have you ever watched PBS's *Frontier House*, *The 1900 House*, or *Manor House* and wondered what it would be like to participate in such a historical re-creation? Well, here's your chance. Now you can escape into another time and place, into the fantasy world of Charles Dickens' Victorian London. You will be caught up in a whirlwind of melodrama — missing documents, escaped lunatics, long-lost relatives, unspeakable crimes, ghosts in the attic, and star-crossed lovers.

Bed-and-Breakfast Innkeepers in the historic Victorian community of Galena, Illinois now offer “Reality Theatre™” productions of *The Mystery of James Edwyn Wakefield* in which participants re-create the London of Charles Dickens in the year 1862. It is a world of Victorian ladies and gentlemen, costermongers, Scotland Yard detectives, curmudgeons, sailors, servants, villains, thieves, rascals, and a murderer or two.

*Bed and Breakfast Innkeepers of Galena* (BBIG), the area innkeepers association, is teaming with PALLADIAN Interactive Theatre to extend the traditional dinner theatre concept to include an opportunity for the audience to participate as performers.

It's more like stepping through a time machine than attending a conventional theatre.

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The events take place throughout the town of Galena, with participants lodging in one of the BBIG bed-and-breakfast inns. The DeSoto House Hotel will become ... for the duration ... the Red Goose Inn — which, in the words of Charles Dickens, “is found on one of those quaint streets one stumbles onto by accident when looking for a shortcut; it is one of those delightfully irregular inns where you go up and down steps out of one room into another and come on more rooms when you think you've seen them all; where there is a bountiful provision of halls and little passages where you find still older cottage rooms in unexpected places, with lattice windows covered with lacy frost.”

Galena is a popular tourist destination because of the delightful 19<sup>th</sup> Century architecture of its homes and business buildings. The area boasts 43 bed-and-breakfast inns; fifteen of which are BBIG members: Admiral's Park Avenue, Aldrich Guest House, Ann's Snoop Sisters Inn, Annie Wiggins Guest House, Avery Guest House, Belle Aire Mansion and Guest House, Brierwreath Manor Bed and Breakfast, Cloran Mansion, Farmers Guest House, Goldmoor Inn, Hawk Valley Retreat, Hellman Guest House, The Home Place, Queen Anne Guest House, and The Steamboat House. It is the perfect location for a community-wide Reality Theatre™ event, with up to 100 participants playing the characters in the drama.

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Participants each receive a production package with a Playbook detailing their characters' background, goals, and resources. There is also a "penny dreadful" booklet: *The Mystery of James Edwyn Wakefield*, which relates the story up to the time where the drama begins. The *Dickens Miscellany* booklet includes historical background, an explanation of the British "pounds and shillings" monetary system, and a "Glossary of Proper Vocabulary for Refined Ladies, Gentlemen, and the University Educated." — Or if you aren't so hoity-toity, there is the "Dictionary of Thieves' Cant, Scoundrel's Wit, and Pickpocket Eloquence" with all the slang of the London underworld.

Participants also receive Victorian British "stage money" — including real shillings, sixpence, and pennies — as well as a facsimile reproduction of the *London Illustrated News* from December 1862 with clues to the mystery interwoven amid the original material.

There are up to ten plots unfolding simultaneously, and participants may be involved in more than one plot. The characters are rated by difficulty, with the easiest parts requiring little talent or experience, and major roles being much more involved.

There is no predetermined ending. Participants are given guidelines and goals, and after that whatever happens ... *happens!* Playwright Robert Cook sums it up. "We've gotten to know the characters so well, and yet they always surprise us. Every group of guests plays it completely different."

*The Mystery of James Edwyn Wakefield* is currently available for corporate incentive travel and private group bookings this fall and winter, and a general admission production of the event is scheduled for Saturday, March 11, 2006.

According to BBIG committee member Mike Reese, "Few areas in the United States can capture the essence of Dicken's Victorian London the way Galena, Illinois can. So we, the Bed and Breakfast Innkeepers of Galena, are thrilled to be working in conjunction with PALLADIAN Interactive Theatre to bring you *The Mystery of James Edwyn Wakefield*. Come and join us for a murderously great time!"

Explore the actor within you.  
Who knows? *you might knock 'em dead ...*

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***For more information — or to book private productions of *Mystery of James Edwyn Wakefield*, please contact Kathie Farlow, Bed and Breakfast Inns of Galena (BBIG), 334 Spring Street, Galena, Illinois 61036 at (815) 777-3456 — or — Alan Lance Andersen, PALLADIAN Interactive Theatre at (515) 388-5573.***

## TESTIMONIALS

"A terrific personal experience, giving participants a truly stimulating involvement in theatre." *Martin Limbird, Iowa State University*

"A delightful and stimulating intellectual exercise." *Raymond A. Cornell, Licensed Private Investigator*

"This is not the stuff of the couch potato ..." *Finn Bullers, The Ames Daily Tribune*

"I anticipated a lot of fun but think I got much more than I bargained for... I'll be laughing about some of the happenings for a little while to come!" *Wendi Taylor, John Deere Credit Union*

"The plot's more twisted than the cobwebs in an old lady's attic ..." *Lori Nilles, The Daily Freeman-Journal*

"Oh, the pageantry of it all!" *Cindy Gabbert, SCCLP*