

SPOTLIGHT ON: STEVE SULLIVAN

By Lori Robak



When you see Steve Sullivan perform on stage, it is hard to believe that years ago he wouldn't have been caught dead in a theater – as an actor or audience member. “I thought it just wasn't for me,” he explained.

How wrong he was. Now Steve is a cornerstone at Enter Stage Left, and according to co-founder Kelly Grill, has “incredible comic timing and true natural acting ability.”

Steve may have never entered the spotlight if it hadn't been for the prodding of his wife, Eileen. “She knew I was a ham from my family ‘performances’ as Santa Claus,” Steve said. “When she saw ESL was having auditions for *Anne of Green Gables*, she talked me into trying out.”

Even then Steve had trepidation. “I was scared to death during the auditions, and hoped they would forget to call on me.”

Fortunately, director Roberta Weiner DID call on him with a little help from fellow auditioner Laura Steele, and he ended up getting the lead as Matthew. “It was hard to believe that he had never been on stage before, because he was born for it,” Kelly stated.

And acting agreed with Steve. “I had a ball – absolutely loved it!” he exclaimed. “It was a lot of fun immersing myself into a character, and I met a lot of people I never would've met otherwise.”

Since then Steve has performed in numerous ESL productions, including *ESL Live!*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Hooray for Hollywood*, and *Lullaby of Broadway*. This past winter Steve took on his first serious dramatic role as Joe Keller in *All My Sons*. “That was the most challenging role I've ever played,” Steve explained. “It was especially difficult because it was a reading, so the actors had to convey a lot of emotion without a lot of movement.”

According to Kelly, Steve gave a memorable performance. “This was new territory for Steve but he impressed us and the audiences with both the strength and vulnerability he brought to his complex character,” she said.



Steve's favorite role, however, was that of studio head Oscar Mayer in *Hooray for Hollywood*. “Oscar was a schemer leading a gang of schemers, and was a really fun character to play,” he said.

Steve plans to continue to play a pivotal role in ESL for the foreseeable future. “I continue to learn something every day, and the folks at ESL are very receptive to input from the cast,” he said. “Plus, it's a lot of fun and you meet a lot of great people.”

The appreciation goes both ways. As Kelly stated, “We don't know what we did to make us lucky enough to bring Steve Sullivan to our door, but we sure are grateful that he's here.”