

THE Fourth Wall

To say Armand LeSage is a character doesn't describe him accurately. To say LeSage plays characters isn't quite accurate either. LeSage is best described as a gift to the frenetic and demanding world of golf course management. The irony is you can find him on the stage preparing for his next big role instead of on the course.

LeSage spent 43 years working seven days a week in the golf industry, and while the word "retire" may not exist in his vocabulary, he's spending his retirement years making up for lost time under the spotlight.

In 2010, LeSage was discovered by actor and director Chuck Marra. At the time, LeSage was working on a landscape project in Lake Arrowhead, Calif., which is in the San Bernadino Mountains, as part of LeSage Consulting.

Marra proposed LeSage be part of a play called "Light Up The Sky" by playwright Moss Hart. The role was a very drunken Shriner.

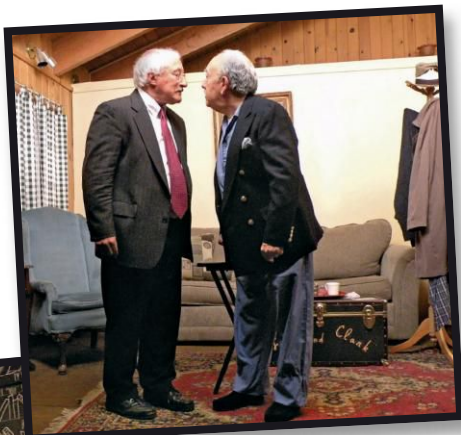
Armand LeSage trades in years as a golf course superintendent for a passion on the stage.

BY KATY IBSEN



LeSage recently caught up with some friends, but they didn't want to hear, speak or see the current state of his golf game.

LeSage in action in (from left to right) "Dracula," "The Sunshine Boys" and "The Hollow."



"I did that part, and I've been on stage ever since," LeSage says.

The rest was history. Acting was natural for LeSage. He dabbled in a few roles while living in New Jersey, where he was

the golf course superintendent for White Beeches Golf and Country Club in Haworth. But he credits the course as the place where he picked up much of his stage presence.

"You're on a stage all the time when you're a golf course superintendent," LeSage says. "You have to play the role a little bit. Every time you attend a board meeting, you're on stage giving your report."

The sentiment is spot on for a man who spent his career acting through an allergy to grass. Now LeSage revels in his acting as he checks casting sites and takes trips to Los Angeles for auditions. He couldn't be happier.

"My inspiration was, 'Wow I can do this,'" he says. "I can make people believe what I'm telling them. I can make them laugh or cry or just change the way they think. What a wonderful thing to do."

LeSage has 16 parts in theater, film, voiceover and radio within a two-year span. His favorite roles are Al Lewis in "The Sunshine Boys" and the quirky Mr. Fezziwig,

which he plays every year as part of the "Christmas Carol." Both roles are played with the Lake Arrowhead Repertory. However, based on the range of parts he's played, his breakout role might have been Dr. Scott in "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

"Your voice changes dramatically when you wear pantyhose," LeSage says of the role of Dr. Scott.

The fan club of little old ladies could have been the hole-in-one, however; LeSage says he has a following of good-looking females.

"That role led me to more auditions," he says. "I've been auditioning for many parts in which I have to use a wheelchair and dance sometimes," LeSage says. "When people see that, it's a calling card because everyone relates to Rocky Horror."

In a roundabout way, LeSage's years on the course have added to his success as an actor.

"You go into an audition, and they might say we want you to play an 85-year-old crotchety man who's grumpy and nasty," he says. "You have a grumpy character, and you have to get your whole body into it. It's amazing what people who I've met over the years think about that. I've met many of them at the golf course."

But at the end of the day, LeSage hasn't forgotten his roots or what brought him to the stage. It's this reflection that helps him understand what has changed in the industry and what advice he has for the next class of superintendents.

"Other superintendents should do things such as acting," LeSage quips. "Get involved in your community. Don't just isolate yourself at the golf course. Give yourself a bit of a break and meet people of different walks of life. It'll make you a better superintendent, individual, dad or mom and give you a well-rounded life."

You'll still see LeSage on the course and at industry events, but with the current state of his handicap, you'll enjoy his performance on stage more. ■

Magazine journalist Katy Ibsen is based in Lawrence, Kan.



LeSage

INSIGHTS

What are words you live by? I put my troubles in a pocket with a hole in it.

What's your greatest achievement? Being a good husband and dad.

What's your biggest regret? I haven't played Augusta National Golf Club — yet.

Why is acting therapeutic? I can escape to another character.

Why is golfing therapeutic? You're playing in some of the most beautiful settings in the world.

Who are your favorite golfers? Arnold Palmer and Annika Sorenstam.

What's your handicap? 14 clubs. I've been down to single digits, but now I just have so much fun.

What's your vocal range? So low I can't hear it. I couldn't carry a tune.

How old are you? 66

How old do you feel? 36