

For Greenport's Amie Sponza, it's never too late to pursue your dreams

By Katharine Schroeder - Jul 17, 2017, 5:58 pm



Amie Sponza in a 2015 Northeast Stage production of 'Twelfth Night.' Photo: amiesponza.com

Amie Sponza of Greenport was in eighth grade, she auditioned for a part in a school musical and was thrilled when she was chosen. But it was the moment rehearsals began that she knew she'd found her passion.

"I was in love," she remembers. "That was it. I knew in eighth grade that what I wanted to do was perform."

She went on to earn a BA in theater at SUNY Albany, then moved to New York City, where she spent five years mostly doing children's theater before she moved back to Greenport.

Sponza married and raised two children, all the while keeping her interest in theater alive. She directed 16 student musicals at Greenport School and co-founded Northeast Stage, which holds an annual Shakespeare in the Park play in Greenport.

About five years ago, Sponza realized that with her children grown and independent, she was in a position to pick up where she left off with her dream of being a working actor. She left her job at her family's marina and began to pursue acting full time, frequently heading into New York City for training workshops and classes at The Actor's Green Room. She took a two-week course at the Manhattan Film Institute in Greenport and even did some online training. She also wrote and starred in a short play which was showcased in Manhattan.

After signing up for a class called "How to Make Money With Your Voice" at the Southold Town Recreation Center a few years ago, Sponza became interested in doing voice overs and has since made demo reels and narrated an audio book.

This past October, Sponza acted in and co-produced a short film called "The Cartographer," which recently won three awards at the Long Island International Film Expo for best actress, best actor and best original song. Filmed entirely in Southold over the course of two days, the film deals with mental illness and was inspired by a true story.



Amie Sponza in a scene from "The Cartographer."

"The Cartographer" is one of three short films Sponza made last year in which she acted and/or directed. All were made on a shoestring and all sprung from a challenge put forth by an actors' Facebook group she belongs to.

"People in the group got tired of waiting to be hired and decided that we should make our own films," she said. "So little teams of people would produce these films and we'd get together once a month and screen them."

Originally the challenge was to make a film in 72 hours, she says, but that's been changed to monthly, a more realistic goal.

This month Sponza is producing Northeast Stage's "The Comedy of Errors" for the Shakespeare in the Park series. She will be making another short film in October and plans to film it on the North Fork.

While continuing to act, direct, write and produce, Sponza is back working part time at her family's marina but has not given up her studies. She continues to train, taking workshops, lessons and classes.

Sponza acknowledges the difficulties of someone — particularly a woman — launching an acting career later in life, but remains optimistic.

"It's a challenge, but it's not impossible," she says. "I believe I have stories to tell that are worth telling and I plan on making that happen. I also think it's important to show my children that it doesn't matter where, when or how old, you should always follow what it is that makes you happy."

"The Cartographer" screens on Wednesday, July 19 at 1 p.m. at The Showplace at Bellmore Movies, 222 Pettit Avenue, Bellmore.



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Katharine is a writer and photographer who has lived on the North Fork for nearly 40 years, except for three-plus years in Hong Kong a decade ago, working for the actor Jackie Chan. She lives in Cutchogue. [Email Katharine](#)


