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by Shelley Graham and
Mia Johnson, Dramaturgs





Ask Amanda

Your favorite pet care consultant shares advice for people, too! Whether they want it or not, Amanda's got advice for all the gals (and the new Guy!) in the trailer park.

DEAR AMANDA,

Terrible tippers are the worst. I mean, I've been a waitress since high school. And even though I work at the diner downtown, I feel like people should respect the fact that I'm a grown woman trying to make a living and provide for me and my sister. I bust my butt taking care of people all day, and just once I'd like someone to show a little appreciation. So my question is, what do I do about all my customers squeezin' quarters so tight the eagle's screamin'?

Sincerely,
Waitress Still Waiting

DEAR WAITRESS STILL WAITING,

I agree. Terrible tippers ARE the worst. And you deserve kudos for rolling up your sleeves, tying up that apron, and getting down to work. Now, I don't know what your uniform looks like, but I can tell you that anything you can do to personalize your look will help create a connection between you and your customers. When all else fails, don't forget to pray! Good luck, dear!

Sincerely,
Amanda

Got a question that needs answering from someone you can trust?
Just send your questions to Ask Amanda at Living Single Wide.

DEAR AMANDA,

Where are all the nice guys? I swear, every time I think I've finally met a decent man, he turns out to be a loser . . . too good for my microwave cooking or too broke to pay for a burger. I would love to meet just one decent guy, but how am I supposed to do that when I live in a town smaller than a tick's behind?

Sincerely,
Frustrated Flossie

DEAR FRUSTRATED FLOSSIE,

The nice guys are out there, I promise! My best advice is this: if you always end up dating the same kind of guy over and over again (sometimes referred to as the "beau du jour") try looking somewhere else? Go to a library, volunteer at a soup kitchen, or take up a new hobby. And don't forget: church is always a great place to meet decent guys!

Sincerely,
Amanda

DRESS FOR SUCCESS!

For a costume and makeup designer, sometimes designing the "look" for a character involves more styling and shopping than conceiving and rendering. The new production of *Single Wide* at BYU is one of those times. Our designers share with us all the challenges—and rewards—of styling the women of this Texas trailer park.



"One thing I did when I was designing costumes for these women was make sure that I wasn't looking for gimmicky clothing items, like a patent-leather pump in an obnoxious color, or something that they wouldn't actually wear in the daytime. Every piece of clothing needed to be something that she could have pulled out of her closet and felt comfortable in. I wanted the clothes to feel authentic to her, without relying on stereotypes of people who live in Texas or in trailers."

Heather Everett,
Costume Designer

"I like makeup and hair to create bonds between characters, and one subtle way I was able to do that was in the hairstyles of Guy and Sam. Sam starts the show with a typical, slightly messy, hairstyle for an eleven-year-old boy. However, as he and Guy become friends, Sam starts styling his hair just like Guy, the new man in the strong female world he lives in, and someone he really respects. The change is subtle, but I think there will be audience members who notice it, and see that Sam has a new buddy on stage."

Arianna Krenk,
Makeup Designer

AUTHENTIC DETAILS

THE ANTIDOTE TO STEREOTYPES

Both our costume and makeup designers mention their use of subtle detail in their design, to strengthen the character and to avoid a cliché in the look. Heather says, "Katy has a small necklace with an 'S' monogram, for her son Sam. It's a tiny detail that not many in the audience will notice, but when Alyssa [who plays Katy in this production] puts on that necklace, I know she feels more like Sam's mother."

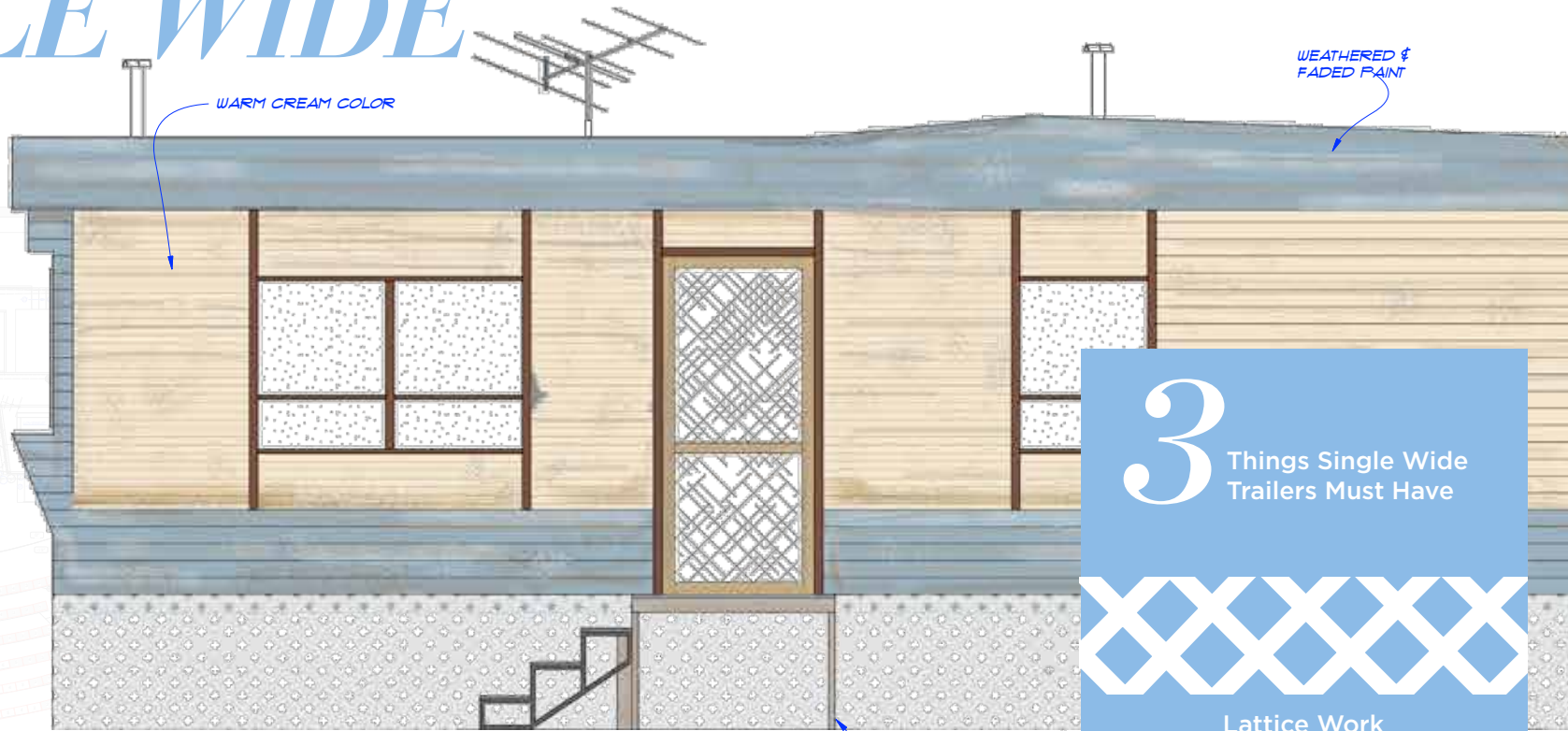
And Arianna feels the same way. "I love that Megan [the show's director] wanted to explore tattoos in the makeup design. Knowing that tattoos are an important and common part of these characters' sense of identity, we found ways to subtly incorporate that into their tattoos. For example, the character of Jaz has an abuse survivor tattoo. This won't always even be visible to the audience, but it's an important part of who Jaz is—not just that she has a tattoo, but that it represents her character's past."

In simple and subtle ways, our designers encourage the actors to step beyond stereotypes as they develop their character. What are some small details in your own "look" that declare your personal identity?

SPRUCE UP YOUR

SINGLE WIDE

Designing a trailer home isn't an easy task. But designing four trailer homes, and putting them all in one theatrical stage-sized trailer park is pretty tricky!



3 Things Single Wide Trailers Must Have



Lattice Work



Christmas Lights



Wood Paneling

Interested in updating your mobile home? Talk to the experts at living single wide.

Our dramaturgs caught up with scenic designer Travis Coyne to talk about his design process. "It was challenging to try and fit four trailers on stage," says Coyne. "I had to adjust the size and shape to make them fit and function."

In production meetings and in one-on-one meetings with the director, Travis made adjustments in the floorplans of the trailers and the stage itself.

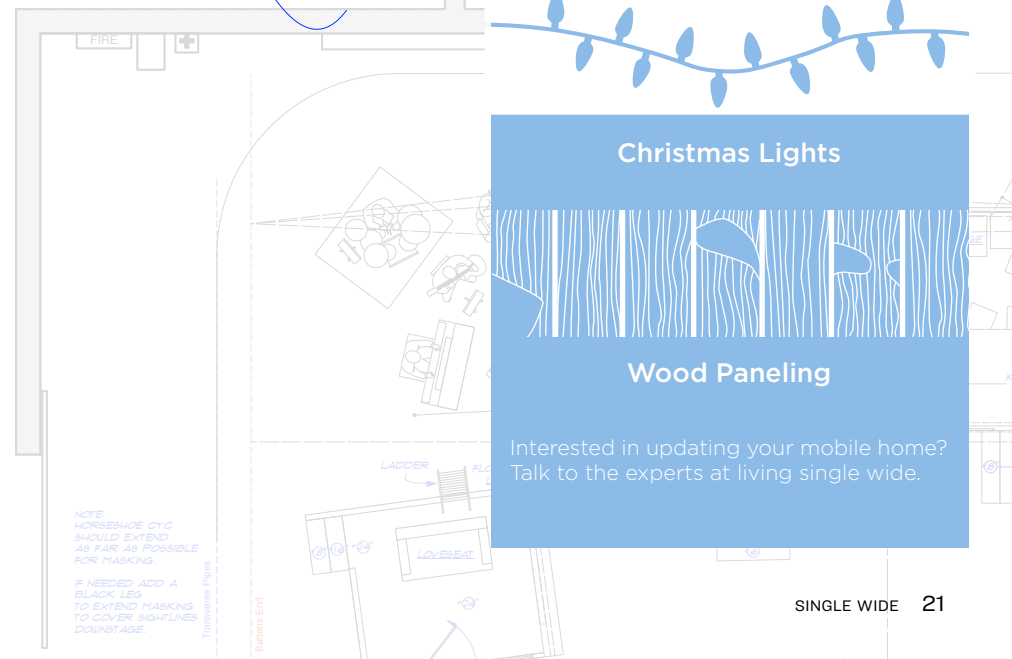
Eventually, those designs were presented on what

is known as a painter's elevation, which is a color rendering of the facade of a design. The painter's elevation is meant to illustrate both the colors and the paint techniques that should be applied to the set.

In the scene shop, student builders and painters used a variety of set design documents to help them create the world of the play on stage. Sketches, floor plans, renderings, and elevation drawings brought these four trailers to life in the shop. And later, these

trailers were assembled on the stage to create the look and feel of a trailer park full of single-wide glory.

Looking at the set, Travis says that though he had to adjust the size and shape of the trailers slightly for the purposes of the stage, he wanted to "keep the proportions correct, so [the trailers] looked natural and realistic." And watching the actors as they move easily in and out of the trailer-park world on stage, he says that they seem to be comfortably "at home."



Celebrity INTERVIEW



Jordan Kamalu, *Single Wide* Composer

LIVING SINGLE WIDE:

Thanks for taking the time to chat with us, Jordan. We're so excited to learn a bit more about this musical! Our readers love country music, and so we have to ask, have you written music in a country style before?

JORDAN KAMALU: I have, though I found it difficult at times to stay in the genre. Despite country music's rich lyrical heritage, and its wide range of styles, country is a very underrepresented genre in the theatre space ...

LSW: Was it difficult, finding a mix for the Broadway/country sound?

JK: From the beginning we wanted to shoot for a very contemporary country sound, which today sounds a lot like the rest of Top 40 pop music. In doing so, we expect that all fans of musical theatre will really enjoy the music, regardless of their affinity for country music as a whole.

LSW: I know several of these songs have been through many versions. How do you know when you have a finished song?

JK: Yes, some of the songs are on their fifth (or more!) version by now, and there are probably just as many songs that have been cut from the show as are in it. I'm never afraid to rewrite a song, and I am adamant about never doing less than my absolute best work. We know a song is finished when all parties involved (usually meaning myself, George [the playwright], our director, and musical director) are as happy as possible with the song.

LSW: Describe your composing process for us just a little bit. What is the hardest part about composing for you?

JK: I've always been naturally good at melodies, but lyrics come hard for me. I'm a ten-times better lyricist now than I was when I

started working on this show. I used to start with melodies and fit lyrics to them, but now I almost always start with some kind of lyrical idea or refrain. Starting out that way helps give direction to the song from the beginning.

LSW: What is most exciting for you about this production in particular?

JK: With this production, I'm most excited to see all the changes we've made. . . . There are new songs, including (among others) a new act closer and finale, and many of the existing songs [have been] expanded.

LSW: Jordan, it's been a pleasure to chat with you. Thanks so much for taking the time to share such great information with our readers, and with your audience as well. Best of luck on the show! Or should we say, "Break a leg!"?

JK: Thanks!

Reader Recipes

Serena's Gingersnaps



Often in this play food is used to help ease tensions and distill conflict. Serena's Gingersnaps show up at just the right moment, to show thanks in a stressful situation and to bring a little family together. What other moments in the play do you see characters show love through food?

Ingredients

½ c. (1 stick) butter
¼ c. lard (or shortening)
1 c. white sugar
1 egg
¼ c. blackstrap molasses
2 c. flour
1 T. ginger
1 t. cinnamon
2 t. baking soda
½ t. salt
Sugar, for rolling

Directions

1. Cream butter, lard, and sugar. Beat in egg and molasses.
2. In separate bowl, mix dry ingredients.
3. Gently mix wet and dry ingredients until it forms a sticky dough.
4. Shape dough into 1-inch balls and roll them in sugar. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes.

Flossie's MICROWAVE MEAL SECRETS

SECRET #15

Remember that you eat with your eyes before you taste a single bite! Prepackaged microwave meals like Salisbury steak can look super fancy if you add a sprig of flat-leaf parsley, fresh thyme, or rosemary. And the best part is, you can grow all three of those in your own home garden! Fresh herbs make any flower garden functional and beautiful, and they look great scattered among garden flowers like begonias.





Just SAY It

Photo: iStockphoto.com/Robert By Michael A. Sandoz, CC BY-SA 3.0

Our opinion feature this month comes from dramaturg Mia Johnson, who regularly writes for *LSW*. With our focus on the new *Single Wide* musical, Mia shares some thoughts with us about why trailer parks don't always deserve such a bad rap.

Don't Trash Trailer Life

Nearly 18 million people in America are currently living in manufactured homes. While it's true that trailer life can be difficult for some of that number, it is also important to understand how beneficial manufactured homes can be to the environment, to the economy, and especially to the resident.

Because manufactured homes are mass produced, factories know the exact amount of materials needed to build each one. This results in a more efficient use of materials and little to no waste that could harm the environment. This also means that once workers learn how to assemble one house, they can then build many houses of the same style, resulting in lower labor costs and safer work environments.

Manufactured homes also provide a more affordable

way of life. As home prices rise, salaries often remain stagnant. This can force families with lower incomes into apartments, creating a demand for rented spaces and thus driving up the rent.

However, because manufactured homes cost less than traditional homes, buyers are more likely to be pre-approved for a mortgage so they can purchase their own homes—and avoid renting. Buyers spend less on their homes and can invest their money in other important areas of life, such as education, entertainment, and home improvement. As we see in the *Single Wide* character of Katy, the lower costs of trailer home life have made it possible for her to afford to take online college classes.

The homes are also more private and personal, as the buyer has their own space, yard, and neighborhood, and can even own a pet with-

out having to worry about sharing walls or dealing with angry landlords. This can also result in a more beautiful neighborhood because the residents have their own land to embellish as they please. Just take a look at *Single Wide's* Flossie, who uses cuttings from her grandmother's begonias to create her own beautiful garden.

Manufactured homes can prevent the trap of paying rent month after month with no property to one's name because the home payments and utilities tend to cost less than rent for the average apartment—and at the end of the day the buyer will own more. The home is theirs! They may rent the land the house sits on, but the walls that surround them are their own. So don't trash trailer life... (and if you're currently a renter, you may even want to try it)!

Flossie (Meg Flinders)
Photo by Jaren Wilkey/BYU

