

# BLUE SPRINGS JOURNAL

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## BLUE SPRINGS MAN PENS SECOND PLAY

By Julie Scheidegger  
The Journal Staff

Blue Springs resident Bill Rogers wrote *Breaking the Trust*, his second full length play, which will be performed at 8 p.m. April 15-17 and 22-24 at the Westport Coffee House, 4010 Pennsylvania Ave., Kansas City, MO 64111, at 8 p.m. April 15-17, 22-24



BILL ROGERS

**Q** Where does your story-

telling inspiration come from generally? When do you get your best ideas?

**A** Inspiration comes from diverse sources: snippets of conversations overheard in coffee shops; the impending death of my father; a news report or a piece of music.

I have only a general idea of the subject and setting of a play when I begin writing. Distinct characters emerge fairly quickly with their own unique voices, histories, and personalities. As the characters develop, their interactions direct the plots and define the ideas and issues

the plays explore.

So, I suppose its fair to say that character development inspires story telling more than anything else. Unfortunately, once they start talking, it's hard to get them to shut up. They often blurt out their best lines at three in the morning. They have no respect for a playwright's need to sleep.

**Q** Where did the idea for *Breaking the Trust* come from?

**A** A situation vaguely similar to the one portrayed in *Breaking The Trust* occurred in my wife's family

a few years ago. The concept of inheritance has always interested me because how family members deal with the stress of inheritance reveals a lot about their values and their life-long relationships.

**Q** What is the story and themes found in *Breaking the Trust*?

**A** When four sisters arrive at their childhood home for their shiftless brother's funeral, they are amazed to find that he left an-estate of more than

\$2 million. Problems erupt when they learn that he created a trust making two of them rich while leaving the other two virtually nothing. Family secrets, an eccentric professor and a devious art thief generate laughs and complications as the sisters try to salvage their relationships.

The play poses questions that touch upon several themes. What is the meaning of "inheritance?" Is trust compatible with gold? Is truth more stable than the deceptions upon which we base our lives? As usually happens, the sisters find the road to enlightenment clouded by uncertainty.

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# PLAY: *Breaking the Trust* to be performed at Westport Coffee House

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**Q** This isn't your first play produced in the area - does it get easier with each play you do?

**A** Writing is hard, frustrating work, but it does get easier with experience. When I began my first play, *Broken Strings*, I thought I needed to have the whole journey mapped out in advance. I quickly learned that I have a rotten sense of direction and very nearly gave up in despair. That's when my characters convinced me to follow them to where they needed to go. I've let them do the hard work ever since.

**Q** How involved are you with the direction of the play? What is the experience of watching someone direct your story?

**A** Directors and I usually have conversations about the plays before they go into production. There can be only one director, so as hard as it may be to let go, I need to trust the baby to their care. I've been fortunate to have excellent directors and I learn a lot about stagecraft when I

sit in on rehearsals. I'll take a crack at directing when we do my play, *Death and the Publican*, at the KC Fringe Festival this summer.

**Q** Why is the medium of play writing special to you? Why not write a short story or novel?

**A** I love the music of the spoken word and the challenge of telling a story in dialogue. I always expected to write novels, and I'm working on one now, but the immediacy of watching actors on a stage and the chance to collaborate with directors, actors, set-designers and other artists is compelling.

**Q** When did you first begin writing plays? How did you learn how to write in that form?

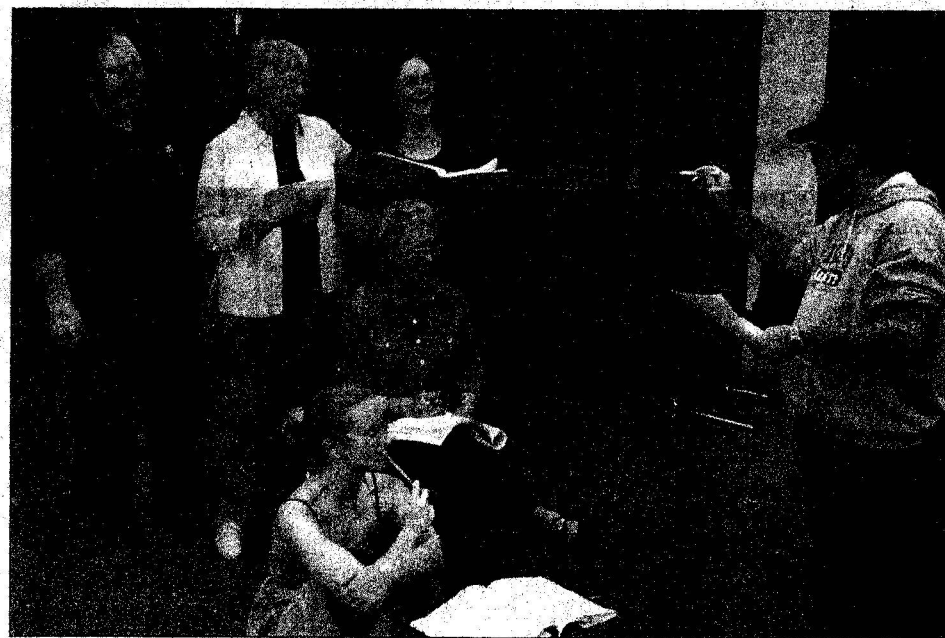
**A** I began my first play in 2001. I've seen lots of plays and studied them in school. I've taught the works of playwrights like Shakespeare, Sophocles and Ibsen in high school and college courses, but I've never studied play writing formally. I learned to write plays by writing them.

**Q** When developing a character do you begin to visualize him or her in your head? Does a certain actor's image come to you?

**A** I don't usually plan my characters before I sit down to write, nor do I model them on specific actors. Characters just pop up on the page when I begin writing. They have their own accents, ideas, contradictions and physical attributes when they arrive. If I try to rearrange them to fit some preconceived plan, they refuse to cooperate.

**Q** How did living in seven states and attending 20 schools throughout childhood affect whom you grew up to be? Is it reflected in your writing?

**A** Before Janet and I settled in Blue Springs, I lived a pretty nomadic life. Besides living in several states growing up, I've lived in Australia and traveled all over the world. I think change concentrates the mind and makes us notice things we might ordinarily overlook. I'm sure my nomadic history provided me with



Courtesy photo

*Breaking the Trust* director Jack McCord works with the cast during a rehearsal. Cast includes (back row) Bill Pelletier, Linda Levin and Patricia McLaughlin; seated in chair, Mary Ruth Gunter and on the floor, Marcie Ramirez.

more voices, personalities and situations than I might have known otherwise. Diversity splashes more colors on the palette.

**Q** What do you feel is your greatest success with this play?

**A** *Breaking The Trust* is a funny, but brutally honest examination of a family's

identity crisis. I tried to give my characters very human strengths, vulnerabilities, and contradictions. If the play entertains, amuses and causes audience members to reflect upon their own values and family relationships, I will

have accomplished my goals.

*Breaking the Trust* is showing at 8 p.m., April 15-17, 22-24 and at 2 p.m. April 25 at the Westport Coffee House.

**ENJOYING THE DAY**