



## They Call Him Broadway Bill: Meet Bill Leavengood

Discover another Tampa Bay treasure: playwright Bill Leavengood. A St. Petersburg native and a theater teacher at Shorecrest Preparatory School for the last 10 years, Leavengood has over time unveiled a series of intriguing plays, many of them centered on

Florida life. He most recently wrapped up *Crossing the Bay*, a musical inspired by Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* with a twist in the form of Henry B. Plant history.

Leavengood previously spent nine years producing plays in New York City and writing for *Broadway Magazine*. More recent works, *Florida Crackers* and *Preservation Society*, were received well by critics, and Pulitzer Prize and Emmy Award-winning playwright Lanford Wilson calls Leavengood "the best young playwright to come down the pike in a long, long time."

A project very dear to Leavengood's heart is the LiveArts Peninsula Foundation, a local non-profit theater production group he and his wife started in 2000. Its focus is to commission six playwrights and six composers to create a series of original one-acts and songs about Florida people, events and themes. LiveArts was born out of the success of *Webb City's* first run, a play based on a St. Petersburg drugstore magnate. Says Leavengood, "People seem to love plays that are about someplace else and I was tired of seeing plays that were based in New York City." Ironically, Leavengood leaves for New York soon to cast and rehearse his next play, *Little Mary*.

In addition to writing and teaching at Shorecrest, Leavengood is father to two daughters, Alice, nine and Charlotte, five (who are extras in his local plays). His wife, Diana, is a photographer. To learn more about Leavengood's current projects or for information regarding LiveArts, visit [www.liveartspen.com](http://www.liveartspen.com).

—Nancy Kipnis