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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP PROVIDES \$6,000 BAILOUT FOR HIGH-SCHOOL NEWSPAPER
Audiences at world premiere of *Yellowjackets* save Berkeley High's student paper

WHO: Cast members of *Yellowjackets* and teenage staff from the Berkeley High *Jacket*
WHAT: Berkeley Rep presents \$6,000 in audience donations to Save The *Jacket*
WHERE: Berkeley Rep's Thrust Stage / 2025 Addison St @ Shattuck / Downtown Berkeley
WHEN: Sunday 10/19 @ 10:00 PM (after the final performance at 7:30 PM)

OCTOBER 16, 2008 – American reporters know all too well that the newspaper industry is in crisis, as the rise of the Internet and a precipitous drop in advertising threatens jobs and journalism nationwide. But who knew that the problem extended to the world of student newspapers? Recently local teenagers who run the *Jacket*, an award-winning independent paper with a 50-year history of covering Berkeley High School, admitted that it was in danger of folding next year due to mounting financial challenges. But today Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced that its audience has stepped in to provide a \$6,000 bailout to ensure the paper survives.

"We're so proud of our patrons and so glad that we could be of help to local teens," said **Susan Medak**, managing director of Berkeley Rep. "After each performance of our current show, the audience has been encouraged to help **Save The Jacket** through old-fashioned civic engagement: by putting donations in a coffee can on their way out of the theatre. People have responded with tremendous generosity. They've already contributed \$6,150 – **enough to keep the paper alive for at least another year** – and there are still five shows left in the show's run!"

Berkeley Rep is presenting the world premiere of *Yellowjackets*, a provocative new play that was written by a graduate of Berkeley High and focuses on students who volunteer for the school paper. With this script, renowned playwright **Itamar Moses** returns to the halls of his *alma mater*, and 11 young actors create a compelling collision of race and class that forces us to examine familiar surroundings with fresh eyes. When the school paper in the play publishes an insensitive story, students suddenly find themselves embroiled in a volatile controversy – and even their teachers seem unprepared to deal with the repercussions. Director **Tony Taccone** generates the same mix of intense emotion and timely politics that electrified shows like *Continental Divide*, *Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell*, and *Taking Over*.

Yellowjackets has been so successful that it extended its original run by seven days, but **this weekend is the last chance to see it**. On Sunday, the cast will present a check to the newspaper staff at a special ceremony on Berkeley Rep's stage after the final performance.

This is only the first sting in a potent season at Berkeley Rep, which continues with an alluring adaptation of *The Arabian Nights* from Tony Award-winner Mary Zimmerman and Delroy Lindo's powerful staging of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. **Tickets** to Berkeley Rep start at \$27 – or only \$13.50 for anyone under 30 years of age. The Theatre is located at 2025 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots, and only half a block from BART. To purchase seats, call 510.647.2949 or 888-4-BRT-Tix (toll-free) – or just click berkeleyrep.org.

(MORE)

ABOUT THE JACKET

According to Wikipedia, “The *Jacket* is the student newspaper serving the roughly 3,000 students of Berkeley High School, California. The paper is published every other Friday and is usually 16 pages long. There are five sections in the paper: news, opinion, features, entertainment, and sports. The staff of the *Jacket* includes over 50 student editors, reporters, photographers, and business staff members as well as one faculty advisor. The name is taken from the mascot of Berkeley High School, the Yellowjacket... In the late 1990s, the paper gained widespread prominence after reporters Megan Greenwell and Iliana Montauk broke a story in Berkeley that resulted in criminal prosecution. The *Jacket* first reported that local business-owner Lakireddy Bali Reddy and his family were importing young women from India to work as sex slaves after one such woman died of carbon monoxide poisoning in a Berkeley apartment complex. In 2000, *The Jacket* staff was named Journalist of the Year by the Northern California Society of Professional Journalists, becoming the first-ever non-professional winner of the SPJ’s highest honor.”

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Born in a storefront on College Avenue, Berkeley Rep has moved to the forefront of American theatre – and is still telling unforgettable stories. Founded in 1968 by Michael Leibert, the Theatre quickly earned respect for presenting the finest plays with top-flight actors. In 1980, with the support of the local community, Berkeley Rep built the 400-seat Thrust Stage where its reputation steadily grew over the next two decades. It gained renown for an adventurous combination of work, presenting important new dramatic voices alongside refreshing adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. The company celebrated by unveiling a new 600-seat proscenium stage in 2001, the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. It also opened the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, a permanent home for its long tradition of outreach and education programs. The addition of these two buildings transformed a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex, the linchpin of a bustling Downtown Arts District which has helped revitalize Berkeley. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 50 world premieres. The Theatre now welcomes an annual audience of 180,000, serves 20,000 students, and hosts dozens of community groups, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 400 artists, artisans, and administrators. In the last three years, Berkeley Rep has helped send five hit shows to New York: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice*, *Passing Strange*, and *Taking Over*.

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berkeley rep

YELLOWJACKETS
FACT SHEET

WHO: Written by Itamar Moses
Directed by Tony Taccone
Designed by Annie Smart (sets), Meg Neville (costumes), Alexander V. Nichols (lights), Obadiah Eaves (sound), and Steve Rankin (fight choreography)
Starring Shores Alaudini, Jahmela Biggs, Alex Curtis, Ben Freeman, Lance Gardner, Amaya Alonso Hallifax, Kevin Hsieh, Adrienne Papp, Craig Piaget, Brian Rivera, and Erika Salazar

WHAT: *Yellowjackets* – the world premiere of a provocative new play written by a Berkeley native and set at Berkeley High School

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s Thrust Stage
2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Downtown Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: **Must close Sunday, October 19!**

- Thursday 10/16 @ 8:00 PM
- Friday 10/17 @ 8:00 PM
- Saturday 10/18 @ 8:00 PM
- Sunday 10/19 @ 3:00 PM & 7:30 PM

HOW MUCH: \$18.50 - \$71

	Section B	Section A	Premium
Thursday @ 8:00 PM	\$37	\$51	\$57
Friday @ 8:00 PM	\$45	\$57	\$63
Saturday @ 8:00 PM.....	\$51	\$63	\$71
Sunday @ 3:00 PM & 7:30 PM	\$37	\$51	\$57

Discounts: • Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
• \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
• Groups of 10 or more, contact 510.647.2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

TIX & INFO: 510.647.2949 – toll-free 888-4-BRT-Tix – berkeleyrep.org

PHOTOS: <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-08yj.asp>

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