

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Overview	
A. Background and Synopsis 2008-2009	2
B. Direction for 2009-2010	3
II. 2008/09 Programs and Recommendations	
A. Festival 2009	3
B. Regional Reports	4
C. Scholarship Fund Report	6
D. Theatre Development Fund Report	6
E. Fundraising Report	7
F. Newsletter Report	7
G. Website Report	7
H. Insurance Report	8
III. Administration Report	
A. Board of Directors	9
B. Staffing	9
C. Facilities, Equipment, Materials and Insurance	9
IV. Finance and Financial Statements for 2008-2009	
A. 2009 ACT Provincial Drama Festival Statement	11
B. 2008-2009 Financial Statement	12
C. 2009/2010 Proposed Budget	13

I. Overview

A. Background and Synopsis of 2008-2009

Maureen Taggart: President

Background: ACT continues to provide an organization for community theatre companies in Manitoba. There were 25 member-groups in the province, from five regions: Southwest Man; Southeast Man; Northwest Man; Northeast Man and Winnipeg.

New Programs: ACT continues to provide incentives and funding for the ACT Provincial Drama Festival, as well as two new incentives: A Scholarship Fund and Theatre Development Fund. It is hoped that these latter will take the place of the Workshops (Winter Weekend and Regional). The Website and the Newsletter are also funded, and Insurance coverage is provided to all our member-groups. ACT continues to be a resource for all members.

Reciprocal Memberships: ACT maintained reciprocal memberships with other provincial bodies and organizations.

Meetings of ACT Board: The Board met regularly throughout the year; on four occasions face-to-face, and two teleconferences. The latter continue to be cost-effective and efficient. E-mail is the primary method of communication between meetings. The duties of the Board were reviewed and updated.

The ACT Website: www.actmanitoba.ca is being visited on an increasingly frequent basis. The history and background of ACT, as presented by the website, as well as information provided on Festivals and educational opportunities is extremely beneficial to Community Theatre in the province. The Website is kept current and is of untold value to the membership.

ACT Newsletter: The Newsletter has been expanded to include more comprehensive information to our members. In the past year it was produced three times. We are hoping there will be three next year. The Newsletter is available on the Website, in hard copy and e-mail. It keeps the groups abreast of one-another's activities and informs them of events throughout the Province.

ACTFEST 2009: The Festival was hosted by Theatre Amisk, Dauphin, in Dauphin the first weekend in May. An adjunct of the Festival was a workshop "The Director talks to the Actors". The workshop was under the direction of John Bluethner.

The Resource List: Constantly updated and available to all members.

Fundraising: Walk-in revenue, designated a fundraiser by Dauphin, was returned to the ACT Organization to help offset the cost of the Festival.

Strategic Planning: The Board worked very hard to reach five new goals aspired to at the Strategic Planning Meeting:

- i. Increasing awareness of the value of theatre in the Province.
- ii. Increasing membership.
- iii. Facilitating skill-development.
- iv. Facilitating exchange with and among ACT member-groups.
- v. Developing new initiatives.

On review, all goals have been attained.

B. Direction for 2009-2010

Maureen Taggart: President

ACT Festival 2010: While there are a number of groups interested; to date, no formal application has been received.

Workshops: Workshop opportunities were not being availed of. Surveys indicated that the process had become unduly cumbersome. Two new initiatives, a Scholarship Fund and a Theatre Development Fund, have been implemented to take the place of the workshops. Both funds are being availed of. It is hoped this will continue, and that this method of funding will prove beneficial and popular.

Fundraising: The Board will spend some time being "creative" in this pursuit.

Newsletter: Continued expansion of the Newsletter will be considered. Three editions are planned.

Website: www.actmanitoba.mb.ca will continue to be updated regularly, for use by members and non-members. It is a very valuable resource.

Reciprocal Memberships: ACT will continue to maintain and pursue reciprocal memberships with other provincial bodies and organizations.

New Programmes:

1. ACT plans to continue to pursue liaisons with theatre, business and tourism groups to create more opportunities for groups to showcase their talents and expertise.
2. ACT will continue to explore the possibility of another ACT-sponsored festival.
3. Groups will be strongly encouraged to take advantage of the Scholarship Fund and the Theatre Development Fund.

II. 2008/09 Programs and Recommendations

A. ACT Festival 2009

Donna Cuddy

When, Where & What

- The 2009 ACT Festival took place in its usual time frame of the first weekend in May beginning Friday, May 1 and continuing throughout the weekend until Sunday, May 3.
- The host group was Theatre Amisk of Dauphin. Registration, all the plays, the individual workshops, the Sunday group workshop, the Friday evening reception, daytime hospitality and Sunday lunch were conveniently located at the provincially-designated heritage Watson Arts Centre. Participants stayed in the local hotels for the weekend.
- The theme of the festival was Stars. Registrants were invited to attend the Saturday evening banquet and dance dressed as their favourite celebrities. They walked the red carpet into the Watson Arts Centre which had been transformed from a theatre into a reception hall in a matter of a few short hours.

Adjudicators

- Raye Anderson, Drama Specialist and Arts Learning Consultant, now resides in the Interlake, and is currently writing a book on drama for teachers.
- John Bluethner is a professional actor/director who works in both official languages.
- John Forsythe is currently Professor and Program Head of Drama at Brandon University.

Attendance

- There were 144 pre-registrants, representing 13 theatre groups.
- There was also a good number of walk-ups, who paid a flat rate of \$10 for a single play, or part of a day of plays, or \$15 for a full day.

Performances/Workshops

- Nine theatre groups offered productions, many of them by Canadian playwrights. Each play was adjudicated publicly and then workshopped privately.
- On Sunday morning, John Bluethner offered a workshop to all the registrants. The workshop was called "Directing, Staging, and Talking to Actors."

B. Regional Reports

Regional Report

Lynn Mitchell

The Gimli Theatre Association (GTA): broke box office records at its fifth annual summer theatre festival at the 80-seat A-Spire Theatre. Pierre Parent, the GTA president, reported that a total of 1,236 theatre-goers paid \$12,360 to see 18 performances of seven plays on six weekends between June and mid-August. This year's line-up included five ACT member groups: Shoestring Players and New Stage Productions of Winnipeg; Seven Ages Productions of Brandon; Tumbleweed of Virden and the host GTA.

Besides being a tourist attraction, the GTA festival provides another venue for the province's community theatre groups to perform and earn revenue outside their home towns. Taking home 80 per cent of the revenue from their weekends, the visiting groups pocketed \$7,200 this summer. The Gimli hosts, meanwhile, had a net profit of \$4,118.28 from administration fees and six performances of the GTA's own production of *Self Help*, a Norm Foster comedy.

Haystack Productions: Another great year!!! This year Haystack embarked on two very large undertakings. Both shows performed were huge Broadway hits. The youth troupe opened their 15th season mounting *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. With over 30 actors in the cast they presented a highly creative and very spirited version of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's blockbuster. In the spring, they decided to mount *Steel Magnolias* and sold out five shows.

Pinawa Players: In December, the Pinawa Players presented *Cinderella* in pantomime style with music, singing, and audience participation. Over a hundred community members were involved in one way or another. The spring production was *Here on the Flight Path*, with one act from this play being performed at ACT Fest in Dauphin.

Prairie Players: Prairie Players performed *Play On* in the fall. Thursday was regular theatre and Friday and Saturday were dinner theatre. The group took the spring off and did not perform a play.

Selkirk Holy Hams: Selkirk Holy Hams had a successful four-day run of *Gone to Glory* for their annual dessert theatre.

Shoestring Players: In 2009, Shoestring performed 2 major productions. In January, Shoestring contributed Arthur Miller's *Enemy of the People* to the annual master playwright festival featuring some dozen of Arthur Miller's plays. The play was performed at the Forrest Nickerson Theatre in the Manitoba Deaf Centre for 10 performances.

Shoestring's second production was Carol Shields' *Departures and Arrivals*, once again directed by Maureen Taggart and with the assistance of Katherine McLennan's. This delightful series of vignettes set in Winnipeg Airport displays a fleeting glimpse of the lives of ordinary people as they pass through this public space. One hour's worth of vignettes were chosen and presented at ACTFest in May. Subsequently, a few scenes were presented at a Carol Shields Memorial evening at the University of Winnipeg, with a repeat, attended by various dignitaries including the Lieutenant Governor. at the opening of the Carol Shields Labyrinth the following day, Then with substantial cast changes - mostly additions - the Forrest Nickerson Theatre was again used for a four-play run during four days in mid-June. Two of these were fundraisers: one for Churchill Park United Church which had provided us with rehearsal space; the other for the Canadian Women's Council for their Northern Community Book Drive. Finally, and with due thanks to the Gimli Theatre Association, Shoestring did three performances in the last weekend of June at the A-Spire Theatre in Gimli. A cast of 19 challenged the venue's facilities, in what was otherwise, as always, a dramatic and social highlight of their year.

Stage Right: no report

Regional Report Darren Klassen

flatlands of Winkler: Flatlands Theatre Company has just completed their 3rd season of productions. In November they performed the literature classic, *Little Women*. In April the theatre students wrote and performed a piece based on Hans Christian Anderson's story, *The Snow Queen* with a Canadian twist. They added an extra show in May from Canadian playwright Stewart Lemoines', *Pith!* They were unable to have anyone out to represent them at this year's ACT Festival.

Mariapolis Drama Club: MDC performed *It's All in the Cards* by Vern Harden in April.

Tiger Hills Amateur Theatre had a very interesting year. Two of the three performances of *Play On* by Rick Abbott fell on evenings where the streets of Holland and the surrounding highways were virtual skating rinks of ice. The show went on, however, and those who attended appeared to have a good time. A couple of members attended the ACT Festival in Dauphin. The biggest change this year occurred when, due to the aging population in the area, the group decided to open up its membership to teenagers.

Regional Report Hazel Lamont

Mossey River Drama Club presented *The Lebonte Sisters*, a comedy/mystery play February 18-20.

Rapid City Drama Club performed *Murder Can Be Habit Forming*, a dinner theatre play, in the Fall.

Theatre 53 (The Pas) had a very busy season this year producing three shows. The youth group performed *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl in February. *Having Hope at Home* by David Craig, was aptly played out on Mother's Day weekend; and *Some Assembly Required*, a night of improv, took place at the Casino on May 27.

Theatre Amisk (Dauphin) undertook the huge task of putting on ACTFest this year. An abundance of work was done by the group. They also performed *Tracks* by T.J. Dawe (based on material by Jack London).

Vagabond Theatre Company (Binscarth) produced *Tom Sawyer*, music by Don Schitz and book by Ken Ludwig, November 4-8. The group also sponsored the WSO on Dec 8 in Russell and the MTC touring production of *Bad Dates* January 23. *Home Is Where Your Clothes Are* by Anthony Marriott and Bob Grant was the Spring production on March 27 & 28. Junior members performed *Alice in Wonderland* on May 28 & 29. For ACTFest two members of the group presented *Two Across* by Jerry Mayer.

Valley Stage Players (Swan River) presented *The Dining Room* by A.R. Gurney in the Fall, and *The Death of Me* by Norm Foster in the Spring. This play was also presented at ACTFest.

Whitemud Comedy Company (Neepawa) presented *Arsenic and Old Lace* April 16-19

Regional Report Cathy Tough

We have five very active theatre groups, and they keep the arts alive in this area.

7Ages of Brandon had three productions this year: *A Chorus Line* in January, *Beauty and the Beast* in May, and *On Golden Pond* in April. The latter was also brought to the Gimli Summer Festival in August.

Mecca Productions also from Brandon, performed *Rembrandt* in October, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* in November. They finished 2008 with a family Christmas Concert in December. Then in March they presented *Footloose* and *On Broadway*. In April Mecca provided a Theatre for Young People. These two companies keep a steady stream of entertainment for Brandon and surrounding areas.

Spotlight on Shilo made a return visit to ACTFest with three well-performed skits: *Wake* by David Whiddicomb, *The Chocolate Affair* by S.A. Walker, and *Wedding Story* by Julianne Honokay.

The Outcasts, also from Brandon, write and perform specifically for ACTFest, and we were treated to *No Weddings and a Funeral*.

The Phoenix Players from Virden performed *Faith County* in November. They also performed *Lafferty's Wake*, an Irish dinner theatre, done as a fundraiser for local charities in March and *Catch of the Day* written by local artist, George Baker, at ACTFest.

C. Scholarship Fund

Hazel Lamont

This year the ACT Board initiated a Scholarship Fund for individuals who are members of affiliated ACT groups. Our Mission Statement talks about "advancing skills development". To this end, we are offering scholarship money to any member of an ACT group who wishes to attend a course or in any way further their theatre-related education. This means acting, directing, sound, lighting, make-up, set-making or stage managing – anything that will enhance the production of community theatre. There is \$1000 set aside annually for this purpose. Applications will be dealt with on a first-come-first-served basis. The application form and criteria have been posted on the ACT website.

D. Theatre Development Fund

Maureen Taggart

As a result of membership surveys, it was concluded that, although the Regional and Winter Weekend Workshops served the membership very well in the past, an alternative approach to educational incentives should be considered.

Because groups are now more confident in their pursuits, the current most pressing need may be for assistance at the most basic level i.e. the rehearsal process.

ACT has now made funding available, on a more arbitrary basis, to hire professional help to assist with production challenges.

It will no longer be necessary to register participants outside of the host-group. Collection of fees will be optional. Funds will be advanced by ACT on completion of the project or, in exceptional circumstances, may be advanced.

No costs will be incurred by the host-group.
Approval will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis, following receipt of applications.

E. Fundraising Report

David Johnson

The ACT Board did not initiate any fundraising projects during the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

F. Newsletter Report

Donna Cuddy

The newsletter editors put out two issues this year, but there was a lot of discussion of the format that the newsletter should take in the future. Fiona Lamont agreed to put out the third and final issue of the ACT Newsletter in its present format. The majority of the membership feels the newsletter is an important source of information for them and would like it to continue.

G. Website Report

John Tait (member-at-large)

ACT established its website www.actmanitoba.mb.ca in 1996, with a mandate to provide timely information to our members about ACT Board/Group activities and to provide resources for the membership.

The website is kept current through frequent updates from September to June including the Newsletter, ACT Festival, Group production dates, group/board contact names and links to member groups who have their own website. We also provide information on ACT Group Insurance, our history and membership. Our "Resources" page contains links to Theatre Resources, such as Winnipeg/Manitoba Professional Theatres, Grants/Funding sources, Theatre Links/Resources, Play Catalogues, On-Line Scripts, Playwright Resources, Stage Resources, and Theatre Associations as well as how to get Professional Resources for group workshops. We encourage groups/members to submit new links to web resources they have found that may be of interest to the general membership.

The original Script List of plays available within our member groups has been removed from the website since this information had become outdated. We have replaced this resource with a page providing links to University and Public Library search engines to help the membership find plays that can be borrowed through their local library using inter-Library Loan services. Members are encouraged to submit copies of plays they have produced to their local library, where they can be catalogued and become available for loan through inter-Library loans

We also continue to try to make navigation of the website easier. The website home page includes a photo gallery of group performances which are updated throughout the season. On our Home page, we now provide links to information about Manitoba Theatre/Association Resources such as Volunteer Manitoba Training, Manitoba Arts Council, and ACI Manitoba, who have monthly newsletters containing information that

may be of interest to groups. We also have a new section in our Resources page to provide information on the new programs introduced by the Board – ACT Scholarships and Theatre Development Funds.

From our feedback, members are using the Website to get information primarily about the Festival. Through communication between the Website, Newsletter and the Festival Host Group we will continue to ensure that information is available on a timely basis. We welcome any suggestions from our members on how to better improve the website appearance and content.

We have a “**Newsletter Notification**” service, where members of ACT groups can ask to be put on our newsletter/ACT E-mail distribution list and receive important information on ACT events such as workshops, meetings, festival etc. and the availability of the newsletter. Members can join the distribution list by sending an E-mail to actman@mts.net and asking to be put on the list. We hope many more members will take advantage of this service over the coming year.

Our Board is accessible by direct email to the current ACT Secretary using the Email Address:
ActSecretary@mts.net.

We encourage members to visit the website often as information changes frequently, and particularly to visit our “Resources” page when there is a wealth of information waiting to be discovered. The success of our site is measured by how useful you and your group find it, and we encourage your feedback. You can contact us by E-mail at actman@mts.net

H. Insurance:

David Johnson

ACT’s 2008-2009 insurance policy remained the same as the previous year’s program. As per the previous year, the policy was underwritten by Premiere Insurance Underwriting Services Inc. through the insurance offices of Multimedia Risk Consultants & Insurance Brokers of Winnipeg.

The policy was initiated primarily for its liability protection re: potential injury to the audience, liable damages to the venue and protection against potential loss re: expensive rental equipment or props.

III. Administration Report

A. Board of Directors:

President	Maureen Taggart
Vice-President	Hazel Lamont
Treasurer	Caren Dundas
Secretary	Donna Cuddy
Past President.....	David Johnson
Regional Representative.....	Darren Klassen
Regional Representative.....	Lynn Mitchell
Regional Representative.....	Cathy Tough

Committees:

Elections	David Johnson
Newsletter	Roger Newman/Pierre Parent/Fiona Lamont
Scholarship Fund	Hazel Lamont and Cathy Tough
Theatre Development Fund	Lynn Mitchell/Maureen Taggart
Website.....	John Tait

Due to personal reasons, two of the regional reps, Evelyn Baudin and Michael Cavers, resigned from the Board in the middle of their terms. Their regions were divided among remaining Board Members.

B. Staffing

Donna Cuddy

ACT had no paid staff support during the 2008-2009 year. All administrative and committee work was done by Board and member volunteers.

C. Facilities, Equipment, Materials and Insurance:

David Johnson

The Association, as in previous years, operated no office space, with all work being conducted from the Board members' homes. Board meetings were held in Portage in space provided by Arthur Meighen School. No new equipment has been added to ACT's existing complement over the past fiscal year.

The Association has obtained Liability Insurance through Multimedia Risk Consultants & Insurance Brokers. Although the cost of insurance has risen dramatically in recent years, ACT has obtained the best coverage and rate possible. Highlights of our policy can be found on our website.