

Curtain Up!

ACT NEWSLETTER
Spring 2010

ActFest 2010



Everything is coming along beautifully for ACTFest, 2010 here in Virden. It looks like we may have full blown spring by then as well. We have nine groups performing and representation from a total of nineteen groups. We are thrilled to welcome all to our pretty little prairie town and our beautiful Aud theatre. Plans have been made to keep everyone laughing and having as much fun as possible. The first performance will be Friday night at 7pm, then a full day Saturday, banquet Saturday night, and concluding with Sunday morning performances and lunch. Our adjudicators this year are Jill Radwansky from Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, a former Virden resident, Jon Ted Wynne from Winnipeg, and returning this year is Jim Forsyth from Brandon. We are hoping to work a time into the schedule when you could be able to visit our Costume Closet and art gallery in the renovated CP Station. We are still open to day visitors and session passes are available at the door for anyone who would like to take in just a part of the festival. Our committee is excited to welcome everyone. Remember; 'HATS OFF TO THEATRE'.

Greg Tough, Committee Chairperson

6th Summer of Theatre in Gimli

14 - 16 MAY

Gimli Theater Association presents
The Lost Weekend by Norm Foster

23 MAY

Der Geist Theatre presents
The Sound of you eyes closing
sponsored by NunaNow Festival.
One show only at 3pm

25 - 27 JUNE

Shoestring Theatre comes to town again
with their play *Who's Life is it Anyway*
by Brian Clark

16 - 18 JULY

The weekend is reserved for another
member of our group who has plans.

6 - 8 AUGUST

We welcome Tumbleweed from Virden who
will present *Squabbles* by Marshall Karp

13 - 15 AUGUST

7 ages Productions from Brandon will
offer *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mich Albom

20 - 22 AUGUST

NewStage Manitoba offers two shows
on the same program *More Sudoku Fever*
Written by Ron Blicq and four, short, one-
act comedies under the umbrella title of
Four On The Floor Written by Dale Watts.

27 - 29 AUGUST

Gimli Theatre Association's own
resident playwright Mary Kapitan will
offer *Slices of Life* to close out the season.

All shows run at 8pm.
Saturday and Sunday
and 2:30 pm on Sunday.

Tickets are available by reservations or
at Tergesen's store in Gimli.

More information will follow through
the ACT website on our reservation
process.

Welcome one and all...



This Issue's Quote of the Day



*I love acting.
It's so much more
real than life.*

Oscar Wilde

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SOUTHWEST



President's Message

The days are lengthening. As I sit at my computer at 7.30pm it is still daylight outside. Spring is here and summer is approaching. For many of our member groups the spring performances are currently taking place and when the curtain falls our theatre talents will be put away for a period. We can pursue the more energetic, outdoor pleasures of summer.

Hold on! We still have ACT's premier showcase, ACTFest, to attend.

Did you know that this tradition started in 1979 as the Community Theatre Festival? Many groups have joined ACT for the insurance that we provide for their group. Others enjoy the education that is provided in workshops. Some just like to know what other groups around the province are doing. Whatever our reasons for joining ACT many of us look to ACTFest as the real "proof of the pudding". It epitomizes what ACT is all about. We perform. We learn. We network with other community theatre people. We soak up the atmosphere of theatre. We love it! Hopefully we will all enjoy the 32nd ACTFest in Virden.

Some of us will not even abandon our beloved theatre during the summer. My own theatre group, Tumbleweed Productions, along with a few other groups, are off to Gimli Summer Theatre in August to get the true feeling of performing for a totally unknown audience. If you are in the Gimli area over the summer on a weekend check to see if there is a production at the Aspire Theatre. It will be well worth your while.

Getting back to Board matters we welcome David Johnston back to the fold. At the AGM we were unable to elect a Vice-President as we had no-one prepared to stand for the position. David kindly agreed to accept our invitation to rejoin the Board until we fill the vacancy. The Board encourages you to search for educational opportunities for the future. Remember ACT will help you with some financial assistance under the Scholarship Fund. Perhaps we can help your group overcome some problems of production. Use our Theatre Development Fund to ease the expense of work-shopping problem areas. Check this all out on the website at www.actmanitoba.mb.ca

Whatever you do please let us know what we can do for your group. We really want to help you all make the best community theatre in Manitoba. So have a good summer and come back to theatre refreshed and ready to go in the Fall.

"Life is better with a little drama in it." Scott Nilsson said it but I certainly agree with him. It is now 8.30pm and almost dark. It is time to quit my musings.

Hazel Lamont, PRESIDENT

NORTHWEST

Mosey River Drama Club

On Saturday, February 20, 2010, my wife and I had the honour of attending a sold out performance of Mossey River Drama Club's production *Hillbilly Weddin'*. We were given the royal treatment; complimentary tickets, assigned seats, after production refreshments, and a personal meeting and conversation with the cast and crew. With treatment like this, who wouldn't love being on the ACT board. Jerry Joss

SOUTHEAST

THAT

Unfortunately, THAT had to cancel its spring production. We have, however, enlisted a new director for the fall and we will likely be doing *Waiting For the Parade* to coincide with Remembrance Day.

HERE: Flatlands Theatre Company, *The Pink Panther Strikes Again*;
OPPOSITE: Flatlands Theatre Company, *Pith*

A big "HELLO" from the Southwest Region, who at the time of this report, are enjoying beautiful above normal temperatures! I am a member of Tumbleweed Productions of Virden and we are busy with the final preparations for ACTFest 2010. The entries are slowly trickling in, but early response has led us to believe that we will have 10 plus groups performing. We, as a group, are also busy preparing for an April 10th and 17th dinner theatre with our new play *Squabbles* by Marshall Karp. These are fund-raisers, April 10th for Learning Disabilities, Brandon branch at Knox United Church, and the 17th is in Virden for the Elks Royal Purple Ladies. The first act of this play will also be performed at ACTFest. We are also booked to perform at the Gimli summer festival, August 6th - 8th with the same play.

The Outcasts from Brandon have confirmed their participation at ACTFest with the self written play, *I Was Just Thinking...* They are always very entertaining!!!

Phoenix Players of Virden also plan to attend with two short plays written by local George Baker. They are entitled *The Martin Skweebish Show* and *The Johnson Funeral*.

Ad Lib from Boissevain recently performed *Dry Streak* by LeAnn Minogue as a fund-raiser for their community theatre. Unfortunately, this theatre has been closed due to structural concerns. We wish them luck in finding another venue for their performances. A few of them hope to attend ACTFest as spectators.

7Ages Productions from Brandon recently completed three days of the familiar Broadway hit *West Side Story*. Their next production slated for May, 2010 is the ever popular Mitch Albom story, *Tuesday's With Morrie*.



NORTHEAST

Gimli

Our group has been concerned for the welfare of our senior member (Pierre Brandelius) who for months now has been on a waiting list for a heart operation. He got the call last week and came out with flying colors. After a five day stay in the hospital he is now back home recuperating and was told to take it easy for a least six months. For those who know this ex-biker, you can expect that this is not going to happen. He's quite stubborn you know.

On another front, our members shook the tree and a whole bunch of initiatives cropped out.

Our resident playwright Mary Kapitan was encouraged by Ron Blicq to combine her three recently written plays into one with the catchy title of *Slices of Life*.

She recruited her cast and they have targeted ACTFest for the first presentation. Mary is very apprehensive about the whole deal and hopes that all goes well with the performance.

Meanwhile Pat Thulner revived her interest in directing and chose Norm Foster's *The Lost Weekend* for our group's next major play.

They chose the May 14 - 16 weekend to open our summer season in Gimli.

Thompson Playhouse

Thompson Playhouse hosted their annual Beer 'n Skits on February 20th to a sold-out audience at the Juniper Centre. In addition to the skits performed by Thompson Playhouse members, there were skits performed by several groups from the community including Thompson City

Council, The Burntwood Regional Health Authority, and a fund-raising group for *A Port In The Storm*. The chili was delicious and so was the wine and beer; it was a fun time for all.

Early in March auditions were held for Thompson Playhouse's next production, Peter Gordon's *Murdered to Death*. Rehearsals for this play will begin early in April and the performances will take place at the Letkeman Theatre in Thompson on November 26th and 27th. This will be Thompson Playhouse's first major production since the resignation of their previous, long-time director, Maria Hughes.



WINNIPEG

Shoestring Players

Shoestring once again was a partner with MTC in staging a festival of Caryl Churchill's plays January 21 - February 7, 2010. Shoestring's contribution was *The After Dinner Joke*; a brilliant satire on the charity "business". Churchill's belief in the flaws in philanthropy, in recent decades touted as an alternative to state sponsored social programs, is depicted through a series of short vignettes featuring some bizarre characters, and situations. An example is a child being pressured by his mother into doing a fund-raising run which would have raised an estimated 10 quid for the charity. Apart from a lot of stress on the parent-child relationship, and the consuming of the child's afternoon perhaps better spent on other activities (like watching TV according to the child - "why can't people sponsor me to watch TV? I'd raise a lot more money."), the parent is persuaded by the child to buy him a new pair of runners costing exactly what the child's run would raise for the charity. Despite a lukewarm review in Winnipeg's major daily, audience reception was enthusiastic. Word of mouth as well as perhaps a couple of kinder (and of course more accurate) reviews in other media kept the fans coming. Success was not just in the box office however. In

order to cast this play which required the services of 18 actors apart from a competent crew and other off-stage help, Shoestring welcomed several new members, who along with some of our veterans, and Maureen Taggart's always inspiring direction, rose to the challenges of their various and sometimes multiple roles.

We are just about to begin rehearsals for *Whose Life is it Anyway*, by Brian Clark, co-directed by Kathy McLennan and Carol Stephens. This is a two act play concerning a quadriplegic who wishes to die, but his doctors won't let him. This tension is present throughout the play which ends in a way which has brought audiences spontaneously to their feet. The play is more than a drama. It is tender and even funny in places, but above all forcing everyone in the audience to identify with the different viewpoints depicted, and confront them for themselves. The plan is to present a segment at ActFest, stage the full play at the Gimli Summer Festival at the end of June and hopefully show it in the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in July for which we are currently on the wait list. Finally, another very large cast will begin preparing in late summer for a November 3 - 7 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Peter Spencer at the Forrest Nickerson Theatre.

NewStage Manitoba

NewStage Manitoba comprises two companies, both of which have productions coming up this summer: Run Ragged Company will be staging four, one-act, short comedies at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival from July 14 - 25. The plays are entitled *Herschel's Big Sale*, *Julio and Ronabette*, *Sibling Ribaldry* and *The Good Old Days*. This production will also be at Summer Theatre in Gimli from August 20 - 22.

- Run Ragged Productions will be staging two productions at four events:
1. A new two-act play, *Shades of Gray*, June 2 - 6 at Manitoba Centre for the Deaf, 285 Pembina Highway.
 2. The play we took to the Festival in the UK last May, *Sudoku Fever*, at the ACT Festival in Viriden, at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival July 14 - 25, and at the Gimli Summer Theatre August 20 - 22 (the latter is a co-production with Run Ragged Company).



Be Proud!
Get in on the next issue!
Deadline: July 9

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REGIONS

NORTH-EAST

Gimli Theatre Association	Gimli
Haystack Productions	Beausejour
Holy Hams (Selkirk United Church)	Selkirk
Pinawa Players	Pinawa
Prairie Players	Portage la Prairie
Stage Right Portage Alliance Church	Portage la Prairie
Thompson Playhouse Inc.	Thompson

WINNIPEG

Merlyn Productions	Winnipeg
New Stage Productions	Winnipeg
Shoestring Players	Winnipeg
Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre	Winnipeg

NORTH-WEST

Mossey River Drama Club	Fork River
Rapid City Drama Club	Rapid City
Theatre 53	The Pas
Theatre Amisk	Dauphin
Vagabond Theatre Co.	Russell
Valley Stage Players	Swan River
Whitemud Comedy Co.	Neepawa

SOUTH-EAST

Candlewick Players	La Riviere
flatlands Theatre Co.	Winkler
Mariapolis Drama Club	Mariapolis
Tiger Hills Amateur Theatre (THAT)	Holland

SOUTH-WEST

7 Ages Productions	Brandon
Ad Lib	Boissevain
The Outcasts	Brandon
Phoenix Players	Virден
Spotlight on Shilo Theatre Co.	Shilo
Tumbleweed	Virден

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www.actmanitoba.mb.ca