

Curtain Up!

ACT NEWSLETTER
Fall 2010

Flatlands Theatre Company Hosts 2011 ACTFest in Winkler



The Flatlands Theatre Company has been named the host of the 33rd Annual ACT Provincial Drama Festival to be held May 13th, 14th & 15th, 2011 at the PW Enns Centennial Concert Hall in Winkler.

Every May, ACT sponsors a non-competitive Drama Festival that is hosted by one of the regional members. Darren Klassen is a member of the FTC Executive and sits on the ACT Board of Directors. He says the local theatre company is excited to host an event of this stature. Typically the event attracts 12 different community theatre groups to the festival. They bring with them their cast, crew, costumes, sets and their wonderfully unique shows that represent their communities. Most groups also bring with them their dedicated audience who support their local drama group. Both FTC and ACT are very excited to be bringing the festival and a full weekend of quality theatrical performances from all over the province.

Flatlands is looking forward to the weekend and hope to live up to the high standards set by previous host groups. The weekends theme is "The Mother of All ACT Fests!" which was decided upon

during one of our planning sessions when there was a possible conflict – holding it on Mothers day. The weekend's schedule will be similar to past years. The weekend will open with FTC's spring production followed by a dessert and wine social. The next day continues with back-to-back performances all day. We also have some great entertainment lined up for our Saturday night banquet and dance and hope that everyone can make it out. We want to honor anyone who is a mother or has a mother. We encourage everyone attending to go through their closet and find those old or new clothing items your mom bought you but are ashamed to wear on any other night. As usual we plan to close the festival around noon on Sunday, pending on how many ACT groups register performances.

We look forward to many ACT groups registering their performances and many others simply coming out to enjoy the weekend. For registration information please follow the ACT website or go to www.flatlandstheatre.com. If you have any questions please contact the Festival Director, Darren Klassen via email at darren.klassen@gmail.com or call (204) 770-6060.

TAKE YOUR PLAY ON THE ROAD

Manitoba Agricultural Museum at Austin is looking for drama groups to perform at the museum during the summer months. They are trying to give tourists and local people more options at the museum. They have an outdoor stage and if the weather is inclement they have indoor facilities which can be used.

We encourage groups to consider this offer as an opportunity to take community theatre out to the Province. If you are interested in this venture you should get in touch with Manitoba Agricultural Museum, telephone: 204 637 2354, in order to work out details. Michaela is the contact person at the museum.

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PHOTO ABOVE: ActFest 2010;
Shoestring Players: *Whose Life is it Anyway?*



President's Message

Here in my Rural Municipality of Wallace in the far west of the province we had, for a change, a fairly contentious local election on October 27th. Both the number of persons standing for election and voters were much increased over other years. Our elections for Board members were quite different 3 days earlier. From our entire membership only one person allowed her name to stand for a place

on the Board. Can we assume that members of ACT are quite happy with the decisions that we make and the direction that we, as the Board, lead you?

In spite of the lack of willingness of members to stand for election I was pleased to see that half of our groups were represented at the AGM. The Board only has two opportunities in the year to have face-to-face communication with members, namely the AGM and ACTFest. Since our membership is so far scattered throughout the province we thank those who took the time to attend the AGM in Portage. We had the chance to let the members know what we are thinking about for the future.

Standing still with no new initiatives is not an option for ACT. We need to go forward with what fits the vision of our members. Our Theatre Development Fund seems to be working. The total \$1,000 budget for last year was used up. Two groups have already taken advantage of this opportunity to learn more about theatre within this new fiscal year. There are still funds available for this year but you will have to be quick! The Scholarship Fund, so far, has only been used by persons from Winnipeg and Winkler. We have changed the rules on this Fund to include mileage expenses of up to \$100. All rural members, please think about this offer to help you pick up on educational opportunities.

We are now looking into a co-operation with Manitoba Association of Playwrights (MAP) to get a communication between Manitoba playwrights and ACT member groups as a means of getting Manitoba plays performed. There is further news on this initiative in this issue of the newsletter.

How many of our groups join ACT initially for the insurance coverage which we offer with membership? I would imagine quite a few. At the moment our third party coverage only covers a liability of \$1,000,000. We think that this figure should be increased to \$2,000,000. The increase in premium would come from an increase in membership fees. This increase in fees would be voted on at a general meeting at the next ACTFest in May of 2011. You are therefore warned to be ready to vote on this as members.

If you have good or bad things to say about ACT please let us know. We are not mind readers. The method of communication is the "Contact Us" page on the website or any Board member as printed on the back page.

By the time you read this newsletter you have probably already finished your Fall productions. May you all have had success and the sense of a job well done.

Hazel Lamont, PRESIDENT

It was Election Time Again

Representatives from 12 ACT affiliated member groups attended the ACT Annual General Meeting in Portage la Prairie on Sunday, October 24. There were no stand up contests for open positions on the Board, which remains for the most part the same as before.

The position of treasurer was up for election but with no persons coming forward for nominations Caren Dundas let her name stand for a second term of two years. Cathy McGrath of Whitemud Comedy Co. of Neepawa also allowed her name to be put forward for the position of Winnipeg representative. The gathered company therefore voted for a slate of officers to make up the Board.

The Board looks forward to having Cathy McGrath working with them again. She has already done many of the roles on the Board in the past and has returned as Winnipeg representative.

A useful discussion was held after the conclusion of the AGM. The topic of a possible co-operation between ACT and Manitoba Association of Playwrights to bring about a Made and Played in Manitoba festival was discussed. Also the possibility of an increase in the membership fee was debated.

- PRESIDENT: Hazel Lamont
- VICE-PRESIDENT: David Johnson
- PAST PRESIDENT: Maureen Taggart
- SECRETARY: Donna Cuddy
- TREASURER: Caren Dundas
- NW REP: Jerry Joss
- NE REP: Liz Driedger
- SW REP: Cathy Tough
- SE REP: Darren Klassen
- WINNIPEG REP: Cathy McGrath

This Issue's Quote of the Day

Acting is happy agony.
Sir Alec Guinness



SOUTHWEST

7 Ages Productions of Brandon will be performing Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* on December 10th, 11th & 12th, at the Westman Centennial Auditorium. On January 21st and 22nd they will present Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story* will hit the stage on April 7-10, 2011. Please check their website for ticket information. There are rumors that 7 Ages will be attending ACTFest in Winkler in May.

Mecca Productions, also of Brandon, will present Monthy Python's *Spamalot* on November 18-21, 2010. Their spring productions in April and May, 2011 include *The Wiz* and *Steel Magnolias*. Again, check their website for additional ticket information.

Phoenix Players of Virden have just completed their fall production called *Medium Rare*. This farcical comedy was performed November 5th, 6th & 7th, and their proceeds will be donated toward the general fund of Virden's new recreational complex.

Tumbleweed productions of Virden attended Gimli's summer festival on August 6th, 7th & 8th with the play *Squabbles*. They performed *Lafferty's Wake* as a dinner theatre fundraiser in September for the Curling Club of Virden. They returned to *Squabbles* in October with performances in Virden, Neepawa, Miniota and Carberry, all fundraisers for local organizations. They plan to attend ACTFest in May in Winkler.

I apologize to Spotlight on Shilo, AdLib of Boissevain and The Outcasts from Brandon for not being able to get your news in time for this deadline.

Until next time...

Cathy Tough, ACT SW REP.

NORTHWEST

Mosey River Drama Club

This past February, the drama club performed *Hillbilly Wedding* by Le Roma Greth. In 2011, we hope to perform another comedy on February 23rd, 25th, and 26th in the Fork River Hall.

Theatre 53

Theatre 53 is doing two shows this season. We are hoping to put on *Moms the Word 2* (the teenage years) and a play by children called *The Girl Who Fell Through A Hole In Her Sweater*. This is being done with the public library. We also host drop in Improv once a month and recently partnered with the library to do *A Twilight Theatre* readings from popular horror stories.

Valley Stage Players

Valley Stage Players' fall production took place at the Veterans Community Hall on November 19th, 20th, and 21st. Their production was *Drinking Alone* by Norm Foster. The Veterans Community Hall was a new venue for the group; it was an experiment they were hoping would pay off. The rent is much higher, but the location is more convenient for many theatre goers and the hall is substantially bigger. Also new – on the Friday evening they partnered with the Swan Valley Community Foundation in a dinner theatre fundraiser for that group. They followed it up with the play only on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. Cast members for this play were Gord Watkins as Joe, Kim Warkentin as Carrie, Charlene Rodgers as Renee, Kathleen Freed as Phyllis and Lloyd Gilchrist as Ivan. Caren Dundas directed.

Rapid City Drama Club

On Tuesday, October 5th, 2010 I travelled to Rapid City and had the privilege of attending a board meeting and watching a play rehearsal. Through conversation with the group, I heard about their money making projects and how they creatively utilize existing facilities around their town. Thank you for your warm hospitality Rapid City Drama Club. Good luck on the November production.

Jerry Joss, ACT NW REP.

SOUTHEAST

It's been a busy fall for Candlewick different drama groups. As a special event, Candlewick's Senior High Xplor Drama students presented *Pride and Prejudice* at the Manitou Opera House at the close of October. With many of the students graduating from high school this year, this may have been one of the last opportunities for the group to perform. Students came from Snowflake, La Riviere, Manitou, Darlingford and Winkler.

Subsequent to *Pride and Prejudice* was the young children's presentation of *A Seuss Christmas Carol* which was a creative night of drama and dance (with students from the DanceWorks Studio) as over 65 children performed *A Christmas Carol* in Seuss characters.

Early December sees the Candlewick Players back to their antics with a new script *The Mask of Torro*. Presented as dinner theatre performances at Timber's in Morden (December 2 - 4), at the Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler (December 9th & 10th), and for a few private corporate functions, the production hosts a full 3-course meal interspersed with the 3-act drama. Interactive comedy and drama continues around the tables during the meal.

For more information on Candlewick please take the time to check out our website: www.candlewick.ca for information on these, as well as upcoming, dramas for Valentine's and spring.

NORTHEAST

The Holy Hams of Sellkirk United Church are reading plays for their Spring Dessert Theatre April 7th, 8th, 9th & 10th. We are also looking for a co-director if anyone is interested in the experience. Please spread the word. Contact Melanie Shumilak at 785-2876 if interested.

On November 17th, 18th, 19th and 29th Pinawa Players' Fall production of *Moon Over Buffalo* by Ken Ludwig did not dissappoint. Following their incredibly successful presentation of *Leading Ladies* last fall they wowed their audience with another hilarious Ludwig spectacle. While enjoying the performance the audience enjoyed another special "Dinner by Diane". Our favourite caterer provided another tasty dinner and the whole evening was a feast of excellent dining and over-the-top drama! Please visit our new web site at www.pinawaplayers.ca.

WINNIPEG

NewStage Manitoba;

RUN RAGGED COMPANY

Will be presenting *Days of Their Lives* by Dale M. Watts (Unpublished) at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival – July 2011; Summer Theatre in Gimli – August 2011

A formerly successful, but mentally-exhausted, businessman continually henpecked by his prematurely-menopausal wife, his exploitive stepmother and his manipulative daughter, begins to think he might find happiness when a sultry young woman enters his life.

For information please contact Dale Watts; 204-284-4455; dalewatts@shaw.ca

R-G PRODUCTIONS

Will be presenting *Choosing Home*, by Ron Blicq at The Fringe Festival, in Winnipeg (if the ballot permits), July 2011, and Gimli summer theatre, August 2011.

Two families have to decide whether Rosalind should return to live with her birth parents or continue to live with the temporary parents with whom she has been lodged for five of her formative years, as an evacuee during World War 2. Based on a true event that affected a significant number of children in 1945. For further information please contact Ron Blicq at 204.488.7060; newstagewpg@gmail.com

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre will be taking part in Manitoba Theatre Centre's playwright festival - Strindberg Fest. We will be presenting *Miss Julie* at the Park Theatre January 20 - 23. Call 786-7806 for further information. There will also be further information closer to the event on the MTC StrindbergFest website.

Merlyn Productions

Merlyn Productions Theatre Company resumed regular productions in October, following a unique Spring hiatus. The double-feature run of *Woman's Honor* and *Suppressed Desires* by American Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Susan Glaspell wrapped successfully, with a cast of eleven community talents portraying thirteen roles in Winnipeg's West End.

Merlyn Productions will next present an evening of works by A. A. Milne featuring *The Boy Comes Home*, November 25th to 27th at the Ellice Theatre. This special programme by the renowned author and World War I veteran best-known as the creator of Winnie the Pooh features the one-act dark comedy of a young man's return from battle, plus a delightfully-witty series of scenes and monologues adapted from Milne's short writings for the stage.

Offstage, the company has recently expanded its Albert Street studios to offer periodic courses in the performing arts. This Autumn, an eight-week Improvisational Theatre course geared toward performers of all kinds will be taught by local professional Ryan McMahon, commencing November 17th.

For more information about upcoming productions, course information, tickets reservations, and student registrations, visit merlyn.biz or call (204) 415-2714.

Shoestring Players:

Will be presenting *The Burned House* by August Strindberg, at the StrindbergFest 2011; January 30th at 2 pm, January 31st, February 1st, 2nd & 4th at 7:30 pm, February 5th at 2 pm and 7:30 pm and February 6th at 2 pm.

Directed by Katherine McLennan and starring Pete Hudson, with Bernard Boland, Lyle Smordin, Carol Stephens,

Mike Seccombe, Bruce Dyck, Andrea Marantz, Jean-Marc Blanc, Karl Eckstrand, Jennifer Gottwald, Paul Warkentin, Angela Rajfur, Ian Scott, Jessie Nobess, Linda Meckling, Company

What secrets come to light when the dyer's house is a smoking pile of rubble? Who's guilty, and of what? Welcome to the Swamp; meet its motley citizenry. It's not exactly a love-in in Strindberg's strangely comedic *The Burned House* - especially after a mysterious visitor drops in.

Eesha Peeshka

Sherry and Rick started Eeshka Peeshka in late 2009 as a vehicle for producing Rick's play *Recycled* at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in July, this past summer. After a wonderful six months of production meetings, rehearsals, set design and construction, and of course, seven performances in ten days, we were both hooked.

During *Recycled* rehearsals, they also presented an evening of Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre with their co-written play *The House of Gaztromanov* at Winnipeg's Park Theatre.

Now, they're contacting friends (actors, technicians and playwrights) with their focus clearly fixed on future productions. Sherry and Rick will be heading down to Winkler in April, possibly with a production... if not, then as audience and as "a company in waiting".

CHANGE IN SCHOLARSHIP FUND REGULATIONS

Until now mileage expenses have not been allowable when members apply for the Scholarship Fund. Is this stopping people from rural groups coming to, say, Winnipeg to take part in courses?

The Board has decided to allow a maximum of \$100 to be claimed for travel expenses when an application is made for The Scholarship Fund. This means that anyone within 250 kilometres of a course would have full mileage paid. For anyone further away from the venue it would at least cover some of the expense.

Gimli Summer Theatre

Last year, was our sixth year of presenting Summer theatre in Gimli. We presented 8 shows during the season and saw 1284 people come through our doors. In our small 80 seat theatre, this resulted in 80.25% of seats filled.

This coming year, we hope to present another season and already, we have reservations in place for the schedule.

What we don't know at this point is if we will have a venue to operate in. As some of you may be aware, our A-Spire Theatre is in need of repairs and a local committee has addressed the situation and will hopefully follow through with the much needed restoration. So at this point, we are in limbo.

We began this Summer Theatre venture to highlight the presence of Community Theatre in the province. As such we hoped that the Association of Community Theatre (ACT) would see the potential of following through with their published mandate:

ACT Manitoba is a provincially funded volunteer organization with a mandate to support amateur theatre and amateur performing arts in Manitoba.

With 28 amateur groups in the province, we hoped that more groups would take advantage of this excellent opportunity to showcase their talents in front of an ever increasing audience in Gimli. To date, our audience has come to expect Theatre during the Summer and the groups who do present always come away with a rewarding experience along with a bit of cash for their efforts. Last year's averaged take for the weekend was over \$1400 per group.

We again welcome any of the ACT members to schedule one of their plays for the Summer season and let us know of your interest. Your play would be anywhere from 1.5 to 2 hours long with one 15 minute intermission.

We hope to have a firm decision on the status of the potential repairs by early February, after which I will try to develop a season schedule.

Meanwhile, Break a leg...

Pierre Parent, Gimli: 204.642.9447

Made and Played in Manitoba

AN INVITATION TO ACT MEMBER GROUPS

To take part in a new endeavour at ACTFEST 2011. It's called *Made and Played in Manitoba*.

A collaboration between ACT and MAP (the Manitoba Association of Playwrights), it will feature new plays written by Manitoba writers. MAP's playwrights have listed 18 plays, ranging from 5 to 40 minutes, they are offering to ACT member groups (see the synopses and play details at the ACT Manitoba website: www.actmanitoba.mb.ca/festival.htm). The writers have also waived royalty fees for this event.

Take a look at the list. If you see a play that interests you and feel it would "fit" your

group, contact the playwright directly and ask for a copy of the script. But do it soon, because rights to perform the plays will be assigned on a first come-first served basis.

This is a great opportunity to tread the boards with a brand-new play!

The Synopses: It is acceptable to take more than one of the very short plays and present them back-to-back as part of one production. However, no play (or group of plays) can exceed 40 minutes.

If you have a question, contact Ron Blicq at newstagewpg@gmail.com.

HAS YOUR GROUP NEVER BEEN REPRESENTED AT ACTFEST?

The ACT Board would like to encourage members groups who have never before attended ACTFest to witness and experience the thrill that is ACTFest. This does not mean that you have to take a play to perform on stage and be adjudicated. We want you to sit and take in the performances, listen to the adjudications, agree that, yes, it might have been better that way and above all learn one thing to take home. This is what many of our regular members do every year. Of course, our wanting you to do this is purely selfish. We are certain that you will get hooked on this process. You may not come dashing back with a play the next year but we would hope that you would want to repeat the experience. Eventually we hope you would like to bring a play. After all what would ACTFest be without plays?

Historically we get members from approximately 16 -17 groups registered for ACTFest each year. To date we have 28 groups on our membership list. Wouldn't it be great to see people there whose groups have never attended? To this end we are offering to pay the \$20 registration fee at ACTFest for any member of an affiliated group from which we have never had a person register. I know that there are 3 or 4 groups out there who have never had representation at ACTFest. You will still have to pay for meals and accommodation, but we can assure you that it will be well worth the small expense for a wonderful weekend. And hey, we also pay for mileage for one car load from each group.

We only ask that you mark your registration with the fact that your group has never been represented at ACTFest before. Who is going to be the first to take us up on the deal?

Say it Loud!
Get in on the next issue!
Deadline: March 12th, 2011

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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
Thompson Playhouse Inc.	Thompson

WINNIPEG

Eeshka Peeshka	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
The Outcasts	Brandon
Phoenix Players	Virden
Spotlight on Shilo Theatre Co.	Shilo
Tumbleweed	Virden
Mecca Productions	Brandon

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www.actmanitoba.mb.ca