

# CURTAIN UP!

The Newsletter of the Association of Community Theatres of Manitoba

Summer 2017

## GEARING UP FOR ACTFEST 2017

This year's ACTFest is being held in the Fall rather than the Spring, which is one of three changes integrated into ACT Manitoba's 2017 Festival of Plays. The other two changes are that this year's ACTFest is being hosted by the ACT Board instead of a particular ACT Group, and the new theme is **Back to the Basics** (which means we will be focusing attention on the performers by having only minimal sets and limited props).



So mark the dates in your calendar: Friday September 29<sup>th</sup> to Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>. The location will be the Ukrainian Reading Association Hall in Brandon, Manitoba, and the Festival will start Friday evening and continue through to noon on Sunday.

Here are two **essential** deadlines to remember: for registering your play it's **August 15<sup>th</sup>**; and for registering attendance it's **September 1<sup>st</sup>** (other than your cast and crew who have already been registered with your play registration).

**We particularly recommend registering your play early**, because this year we are limiting the Festival to a minimum of six plays and a maximum of nine (more *Back to the Basics!*). To access the registration forms, and for specific details about the Festival, go to the ACTFest website: <http://actmanfestival.weebly.com/>

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: STAYING RELEVANT IN 2017

Staying relevant to the community it serves is, for a non-profit organization, a never ending process of discovery and renewal. In some ways, ACT MB is fortunate that we have programs that members can access that so strongly reinforce our mandate of promoting the theatre arts through both education and programming. The sad thing, of course, is that most of our members don't bother to access what is available to them. **Warning:** Pet Peeve coming. Please don't give me the "I didn't know that was available" line. We have made every opportunity on the website, newsletter, and now on social media, to make information on our programs accessible.



Coincidentally, that also ties in with my theme: If member

groups don't utilize the programs available to them, the programs will go away, and with them there is also the possibility that the ACT organisation goes away, too. After all, if most of the programs that ACT MB offers are not used, where is ACT's relevance in 2017? Why is it even in existence?

ACT MB's relevance has historically broken down into three primary areas:

(Quick test: How many of you actually know how everything listed below can benefit your group?)

1. Educational programs and financial assistance for same:

- a. Theatre Development Fund
- b. Scholarship Fund
- c. Playwriting Workshop Program

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Visit ACT's Facebook page and contribute your groups's activities! [facebook.com/actmanitoba/](https://facebook.com/actmanitoba/)

# MAKEUP WORKSHOP

BY STEPHANIE KAUFFMAN

Prairie Players was happy to host a first time "Makeup Workshop" on May 20th. We had a full class composed of

both local people as well as some representatives from various other theatre groups. Chris Hadley, our instructor, came from Winnipeg. As well as founding his own company, he has worked with the Opera in makeup and done tech with MTC regional tours. He held 2 major topics. In the morning we talked about sanitizing and various 'tools' of the trade. After the lunch break, we went into a hands-on



session. He demonstrated on one person while all the others copied it on their own faces. The focus was on aging an actor, although it was briefly touched on making a younger or a couple special effect possibilities.

Everyone seemed to be happy with the results and felt that the workshop had definitely benefited them. This was funded by the ACT group, and we have been very pleased to be able to have done this. Hopefully all theatre groups represented will be able to contribute to their fall/spring plays after

attending this workshop, and we thank ACT for allowing us this opportunity.

# GROUP INSURANCE UPDATE

BY SCOTT CAMERON, TREASURER

A subcommittee of board of directors of ACT MB is well underway to replacing ACT MB's group insurance policy and expects to have something in place by September 1st, 2017.

It is our expectation is that ACT MB should provide all of its member groups with at least a basic level of liability coverage, in order to permit all of our groups to be able to utilize space in halls and other facilities for rehearsals, performances and storage where proof of insurance coverage is required. Today it seems like every church, community hall and even local festival requires participating groups to have their own coverage should something they do go wrong.

Unfortunately since July of last summer, ACT MB has been without a group insurance policy. Prior to its annual renewal last year, the board was informed by its insurance broker that the policy formerly held was no longer available to properly cover our member groups as it was intended. At the 2016 AGM, President David Johnson promised a number of group representatives that the matter was being looked into and would be resolved within the year. In the interim, the board has agreed to assist any member group with funding short term event insurance where necessary.

The subcommittee, consisting of David Johnson and myself, has approached dozens of specialized insurance brokers and currently has proposals from several underwriters. In researching, we even contacted the insurance brokers for Theatre BC and Theatre Ontario, the only two of our sister provincial organizations that also provide similar insurance coverage.

Looking for insurance for a provincial association of independent groups is complicated; you have to seek out the right person with the right companies. You just can't run down to your local broker and expect them to understand; they just don't normally deal with this type of coverage.

Some of the proposals provided are also quite elaborate and different. Some of the more 'deluxe' policies include coverage for theft by members; cancellation of performances; and dismemberment of members. Unfortunately they run about \$850-\$1,000 a year per member group; while we are trying to remain within our current funding levels. Others, such as Theatre BC's policy is actually offered independently to each member group as an option, but at Theatre BC's discounted rates.

To clarify; the basic coverage we're looking into is Group - Third Party Liability of \$1M-\$5M to cover claims by audience members, facility owners etc should something happen for which the member group is responsible.

Stuff like: your sound board catches fire and burns down the building, or you drop a light standard on audience members. Unfortunately, this type of insurance doesn't normally cover injury to members, cast or crew nor damage to or loss of their property.

Where the cost levels permit, we are looking into adding non-owned auto insurance to cover vehicle rented or borrowed to move members and/or equipment to rehearsals and performances; limited property insurance to cover loss of member group equipment, props and costumes; and a number of rider policies to cover additional items including serving of alcohol at performances.

As always, ACT MB continues to recommend to member groups that own their own facility or rent on a permanent basis that they look into getting their own property or tenant insurance. The price per coverage for property/tenant insurance is usually quite a bit lower.

Stay tuned for more.

2. ACTFest:

- a. This is, for many, the face of ACT and yet both play enrolment and individual registrations have been in a steady decline for the last 10 years.
- b. ACT MB did not even have a Host for the Festival in 2017.
- c. After 38 years, ACT was running the risk of cancelling ACT-Fest's 39'th Annual.
- d. Luckily, the ACT Board was able to organize a Fall 2017 event. But don't get too comfortable: With Board members hailing from across the Province, this will not be feasible often.

3. Insurance:

- a. Did you know that we have not had coverage for membership since last July?
- b. How many of you know if you even need additional umbrella insurance coverage?
- c. Does ACT even need to offer it?

Now we will talk about **ACT MB's Relevance in 2017:**

1. Educational programs and financial assistance for same:

- Apparently our programs are not that relevant because no-one is using them.

2. ACTFest:

- How can one say that it is still relevant when numbers drop every year?

3. Insurance:

- Okay, this one is relevant in 2017. With more and more venues and community storage facilities requiring 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Liability coverage, ACT's ability to provide umbrella insurance coverage is, for some groups, a game changer.

**Is ACT still Relevant?**

1. Educational programs and financial assistance for same:

- What can I say? **USE them or LOSE them**. Educate yourselves as to what is available. We can lead a horse to water but we can't...

2. ACTFest:

- We were close this year, but we dodged a bullet. We will have an ACTFest 2017 this year but, with ever dwindling numbers, for **how much longer?**
- We still have **NO** host for 2018 although 2019 is already locked in and we have interest for 2020.

3. Insurance: The lone bright spot.

- It has taken a lot of time and effort, but the ACT Board is close to locking in an umbrella insurance package that will be accessible to all our members. Based on underwriter feedback, this policy will cover 3<sup>rd</sup> Party liability, a to-be-

ascertained dollar amount coverage for props, sets, etc., as well as some other potential riders that, based on cost, may also be included.

- **Insurance is one thing that is relevant in 2017.**

**Conclusion:**

At current member program use levels, is ACT MB a viable organization? Is it still relevant to its member base? Or are we just kidding ourselves?

The ACT Board cannot make that decision on its own. But no communication from our members also tells us something. Apathy speaks louder than words. Do you want the ACT organization, or not? You have a say, both by action and inaction. Make sure the message you want said is the message sent.

Food for thought.

May the Theatre Be with You!

David Johnson  
President, ACT MB

**A Belated Welcome Aboard to the ACT Board!!**

The ACT Board would like to both welcome Scott Cameron of Aspire Theatre to the ACT Board Executive and say thank you to Caren Dundas for her years of service on the Executive.

Caren retired from the position of ACT Treasurer at the 2016 AGM, although we are pleased to still have her experience and insights on the Board through her new role as Area Rep.

Scott allowed his name to stand for ACT Treasurer and has been in his new position since our January Board meeting. Scott's talents and energy are very much appreciated by the Board and we are both glad and fortunate to have him on the team.

**Guess what?** We still have room on the ACT Board for 2 more Area Reps. Wanna have some fun? It is never boring around the ACT Board table.

# REGIONAL MEMBER REPORTS



## NORTHWEST

### Rapid City Drama Club

Rapid City Drama Club performed the Norm Foster play *Here On the Flight Path* as a fundraiser for the Rivers Jets Senior Hockey team on April 15. Four cast members were involved, and they garnered lots of laughs. The group will be attending ACTFest 2017 and hope to enter a play as well.

### Theatre Amisk

No report submitted.

### Whitemud Comedy Company

This spring Whitemud Comedy Company performed a jazz age murder mystery for a Ladies Night fundraiser. They currently are looking at options for ACTFest in September as well as a production for this winter.



## NORTHEAST

### A-Spire Players

A-Spire Players of Gimli is hosting its 12th Annual Summer Theatre Season with performances including:

May 26-28 & June 2-3

A-Spire Players - *Blithe Spirit* by Noel Coward. (This play only Friday & Saturday shows starting at 7:30pm.)

July 21-23

A-Spire Players - *The Anniversary* by Stephen Scheurer-Smith & *Snowed Under* by Anne-Marie Latter.

August 18-20

R-G Productions - *The Savannah Sipping Society* by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten.

Showtimes are 8pm Fridays and Saturdays, 2:30pm Sundays with doors opening 30 minutes prior to showtimes. Tickets are \$15, available at Tergesen's General Store in Gimli, starting 1 week before the show or by reservation at (204)642-8079. For more information and our full schedule, visit [www.aspireplayers.ca](http://www.aspireplayers.ca).

### Haystack Productions

Mounted *Christmas Belles*, a hilarious dinner theatre show about a small town in the south of Texas and their mounting a Christmas pageant... Bethlehem-a-l-Palooza, complete with an Elvis impersonator, a convict and a whole bunch of crazy characters. It ran from May 9-13.

The company is settling into our new storage space and working on the plans for a build, and meeting with the recreation foundation to formulate Canada 150 plans.

### Pinawa Players

Pinawa Players is active as always. Their dessert theatre was very successful, despite other happenings in the community. They performed Harold Pinter's one-act play, *The Betrayal*. Going forward, they have their AGM in June and the Pinawa Parade, which they always take part in. They are already in the planning stages for their fall dinner theatre, which I'm told, "will be a Great!!!! Play".

### Thompson Playhouse

Currently looking for a play for fall.



## SOUTHWEST

### 7 Ages

7 Ages Productions of Brandon had a successful run of *Fiddler on the Roof* in April. They are planning *Twelve Angry Jurors* for the fall of 2017. They will also welcome the Royal MTC Touring Production of *A Christmas Carol* in December, and offer bus trips into Winnipeg to see major productions, as well as the plays performed at the Royal MTC over their winter season.

### Assiniboine Theatre Company

Assiniboine Theatre Company of Brandon was not able to launch a spring production as planned, but are hoping to confirm dates for that in an upcoming meeting. The group will be attending ACTFest as participants, perhaps as performers. Assiniboine Theatre Company has also offered its assistance to the ACT Board in hosting ACTFest 2017.

### Phoenix Players

Phoenix Players of Virden performed *Don't Tell Mother* by Monk Ferris at The Aud theatre in Virden. The play had two evening performances and one matinee. All performances were a success, and rehearsals were a fun time for the cast and crew. Phoenix Players will be attending ACTFest 2017 and plan to enter a play as well.



## SOUTHEAST

### flatlands theatre company

The company just finished their student production *The Bizarre Case of the Missing Blinky* with our student classes that run in September and January. They presented *Mission Possible* the first weekend in May (4-7). This summer (most Mondays) they are presenting radio plays in Bethel park in Winkler.

Their play for the fall is *Anne of Avonlea* and their Spring production will be *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

### Prairie Players

This past fall was a new branching out for Prairie Players as they tackled the massive project of *The Sound of Music*. They learned a lot along the way of things to do or not to do! But the community was extremely supportive and they sold out all 4 shows, which is not something that often happens, so that

was exciting.

As a celebration Canada 150, on April 27-29 they performed two short plays depicting the progress Canada has made in the past 150 years. The first one, *Let Them Howl*, showed the efforts of women in the 1920s to get the right to vote. This was followed by *Flashback to You*, focusing on Services for Seniors and the need for safety for the elderly.

They also hosted a one-day makeup workshop on May 20 (see page 2 of this newsletter for a report).

*Miracle on 34th St* is scheduled to be on the agenda for this fall, followed by a Shakespearian play next spring.

Last, but not least, they are looking at hosting ACTFest in the spring of 2019, so they definitely will be busy in the foreseeable future!



## WINNIPEG

### Broken Record Productions

The company is planning to take part in ACTFest, but has yet to select a play.

### Piper Pride Productions Inc.

No report submitted.

### R-G Productions

The company presented Agatha Christie's *Spider's Web* at the Forrest Nickerson Theatre, February 16-19, 2017, as part of RMTTC's ChristieFest. Although the company was not originally selected in the Winnipeg Fringe draw (it was listed as Standby No. 16) they were informed on March 29 that they had now been selected; a choice of play will be made shortly. The company is currently enthusiastically evaluating whether it can also gear up in time to take part in ACTFest at the end of September.

### Shoestring Players

The company presented John Druken's play *I Remember Mama* at St John's Cathedral in Winnipeg on May 16-20 and concurrently is developing plans for future months.

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