

# CURTAIN UP!

The Newsletter of the Association of Community Theatres of Manitoba

Winter 2016-17

## STAGE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

BY JUDY ARNASON

The Stage Management Workshop held on September 24<sup>th</sup> at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (RMTTC) was a huge success. There were 12 eager participants – 10 ACT members, 2 non-members who took in everything our facilitator, seasoned Stage Manager Sylvia Fisher had to offer. Sylvia covered all aspects of the theatre: theatre etiquette, stage management duties ie pre-production, rehearsal, tech week, run, post show, the prompt script, assistant stage manager, headset etiquette and more. All participants received a take home package of notes and sample forms from the workshop so that they could refer to them at home or at the theatre. There was a brief Q & A at the end of the workshop before everyone went on a tour of RMTTC with Artistic Co-ordinator Melinda Tallin. The tour was all encompassing - we visited various areas of the theatre – the office area for artistic and production, the wardrobe department where costumes are made, the production shop – where sets and set pieces are built, the backstage area - dressing rooms and green room, the main stage which looked enormous with the wings up and last but not least, the bowels of the theatre – the storage area which housed props and set pieces from past productions. All in all, it was a successful day!

A big thank you to Sylvia Fisher for facilitating the workshop and to the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre for graciously providing the rehearsal hall for the workshop and Melinda Tallin for being at the theatre on her day off to give a “behind the scenes tour”.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By the time you read this, Winter will be a month old (but only because it did not arrive till the beginning of December), fall season productions (as well as those during the Holiday Season) will be complete and many of us will be gearing up with the warm-up laps of spring major productions.

But 2017 is also bringing us more than just the last two thirds of winter. It is bringing us the possibility of no ACT-Fest 2017, the possibility of no ACT Treasurer to take on the crucial function of financial helmsman for the organization, and an ACT insurance scenario that has some mem-



bers of the ACT Board feeling like they were rode hard and put away wet.

After (or in some cases, in the middle of) spring productions, we all look forward to ACTFest. But ACTFest 2017 may not happen if a Host Group does not happen. Friends, thespians, countrymen: This is serious. The Board will do what it can but... Late breaking news will be gratefully accepted.

Late breaking news will also be great news when it comes to the ACT Treasurer situation. There is more information on this position elsewhere in the newsletter but suffice it to say that this position is both crucial and integral to the smooth and proper running of the ACT organization.

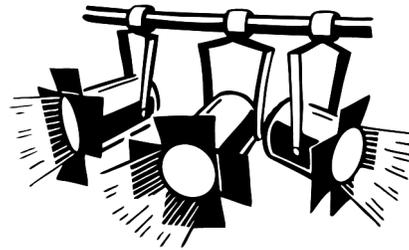
Then there is Act Insurance or, to be more specific, the lack thereof. As I am sure most of you are aware, we currently do not offer insurance of any kind to our member groups. However, to be honest, we do not actually know how many, if any, ACT groups are actually in need of accessible insurance coverage; we have found it often easier to pull teeth than to get a group's information. That being said, if even one member group is in need of transferrable liability coverage, it is within both the prevue and the mandate of ACT, if at all feasible, to offer such coverage. At time of this writing, nothing has been finalized but, as the Board member responsible for Insurance Proposals, I am confident that, sometime during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017, ACT MB will be in a position to offer members groups that have no liability coverage a basic liability policy.

No, life has not been boring around the ACT Board table. And did I mention that we still have room for one more Area Rep at said table?

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or any member of the ACT Board if you have any questions regarding ACT. Or maybe you want to volunteer your services... Either way, we always look forward to hearing from you.

Happy Theatre!

David Johnson  
ACT President



## To ACT OR TO DIRECT...

BY KAREN MARTIN

For some of us that is the question and one that I've asked myself many times over the years. For some it is one or the other. I've talked to directors who couldn't imagine standing on stage in front of an audience (that's just not their comfort level) and actors who couldn't imagine plotting out an entire play (and making actors listen to them).

I started my community theatre life as an actor and loved it. What could possible be better than becoming someone else for a few hours; someone that could be nothing like you. It was fantastic! My first role was in a melodrama as a sexy villainess. I had so much fun strutting my stuff on stage and being bad. Hearing the audience boo at me when I came on stage and laugh at us all during the play. It was addicting and I remember hoping that the director would want me back next year. Oh, to act!

Then a few years ago I took on the role of directing a play mid-stride as no one else was volunteering and as we all know...the show must go on! I was surprised at how much I loved directing too. Seeing your version of the script come to life on stage was amazing. Reading a script become an entirely different matter; seeing set pieces and how they will work here or there throughout the play, deciding where best to put an entrance or an actor on stage to get the best effect. It was like a giant puzzle and I like puzzles. Oh, to direct!

So, this is where it gets tricky and for good or bad, I've been getting the best of both worlds. My theatre group is relatively small so I've been doing double duty for some time; directing and acting during the same productions. Directing yourself is not an easy task but this

has worked out well because I belong to an amazingly supportive group who will take on the directing of me when I'm on stage. So, it's a collaborative effort really, and from audience response we have been successful. To act and direct!?

Still, I ask myself, is this the best for our theatre group? As much as I enjoy doing both it's a lot of work and takes up a lot of time; choose a play that speaks to you, cast it, decide on stage set up, get pops and fit everything onto the stage, learn your lines, learn your cues, learn your stage movements...and then learn everyone else's plus make sure everyone knows what's going on from costumes to caterers. It's exhausting and I sometimes feel that I could do better if I could focus on one job; but to act or to direct?

There have been opportunities over the years for me to have one job...to direct. It took me a while to be okay with not being on stage but then I started to look forward to sitting down, enjoying the supper (we do a dinner theatre) and watching the show. But for some reason or another I always end up with a part. As soon as the decision is made, I have an OMG moment, then the adrenaline rush and the production takes on a whole new life for me because I get to be on stage.

This year, I had another member of our group express interest in directing. We co-directed our last production just to get her feet wet. Like me, she has no idea what she's doing; and like me, she will learn as she goes. Plus, I will hopefully not be far; just on stage; and will help her however I can.

I'm very excited for next year now as I think she will do great on her own and this would mean I could have one job and that's when it hit me...my first love of theatre will always be my greatest...to act!

I will still direct but if push comes to shove, it's acting that pulls at my heart strings.

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## NORTHWEST

*Rep: Vacant*

### Rapid City Drama Club

Rapid City Drama Club performed two evenings, November 4 and 5, at its 23rd Annual Dinner Theatre. Both evenings were very successful. There is no spring production planned at this time, but are looking forward to ACT-Fest 2017.

### Theatre Amisk

No report submitted.

### Whitemud Comedy Company

Whitemud Comedy Company performed their annual dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" in November, in partnership with the Dickens Community Singers, with all proceeds going to the local Christmas hamper program. In the new year they'll be busy preparing a jazz age murder mystery for April and a production of "Death By Golf" for early fall.



## NORTHEAST

*Rep: Donna Wilson*

### A-Spire Players

In August, A-Spire Players concluded its 11th successful summer theatre pro-

gram. In Early September, the Players did an encore performance of Robert Scott's "12 Hr Life" as part of the Winnipeg Beachscape Harvest Fest.

On September 24th, we once again hosted the start point of Gimli's third annual Nuit Blanche evening arts festival with three hourly showings of "The Pepperonis" by Eric Coble, a one-act comedy/radio play loosely based on the popular television show "The Sopranos".

On October 8th, we held our own AGM and in November hosted performances by two groups; the first being Interlake Players Travelling Musical Theatre Company with their production of "The Musical of Musicals - The Musical!" by Joanne Bogart and Eric Rockwell and then the NexGen Connexions, a local youth group that performs and hosts a variety of local and regional musical performing individuals and groups.

Now for the Coming Year. On February 24th and 25th, A-Spire Players will present our own third annual "A-Spire Follies", two evenings of song and skits which become the "graduation" performance for many of our new members. On the May long weekend, we will be kicking off our 12th Summer Theatre Program, with two weekends of our own production of "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward.

A-Spire Players will also be presenting two one-act comedy plays, "Anniversary" by Stephen Scheurer-Smith; and "Snowed Under" by Anne-Marie Latter, to complement the summer. We still have three weekends open in our summer schedule, so if your group is interested in presenting on our small stage, please contact us as (204) 642-8079.

### Haystack Productions

We have had an exciting and stressful

Fall. Our local Town Council has declined to renew our lease and essentially kicked us out of the space that we have been using for close to 10 years to store and create production materials. For a while it looked like we would have to close the curtain permanently. Just when it was looking dire a local business came to our rescue. Libby Seibold, from Sobering Funeral Chapel as offered us 1200 square feet of storage and production space, with no cost...and running water. We are very grateful!

Thanks so much for that amazing letter of support from ACT. It really helped us in our Town presentation. We are seriously considering hosting the ACT festival if it could be a weekend of "shorts" ...let's talk more!

We are currently in production of Zink; the myth, the legend the Zebra and it is a wonderful show. 30+ young people from the area are putting their hearts, souls and amazing talent into this heart-warming story of a young girl, her fight with leukemia and the herd of zebras who help her through it. It's running Dec. 7-10 in Beausejour.

We will be starting auditions for Dinner Theatre after Christmas, and after last year's successful run of "Everything I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten", we are looking for a lighthearted comedy. Any suggestions from other ACT members?

### Pinawa Players

Pinawa Players of Pinawa were not able to cast a play for their fall dinner theatre. They have been busy, however, putting a float in the Pinawa Santa Parade and they will be hosting their annual Christmas Carol sing at the Pina-

wa Mall. In the new year they will have an evening of reading new plays and winter socializing. They have a play selected for the spring production: Harold Pinter's one-act play "The Betrayal". It will be directed by Roger Dutton and performed April 27 - 29.

### Thompson Playhouse

No report submitted.



### SOUTHWEST

Rep: Caren Dundas

### 7 Ages

7 Ages Productions of Brandon has been very busy this fall, performing a musical called "Godspell" at the Brandon Centennial Auditorium, and the other, a world premiere, a comedy called "MacBeth: the After Party" at the Lorne Watson Recital Hall. Planned for the spring is another well-known musical, "Fiddler on the Roof".

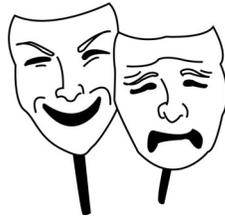
### Assiniboine Theatre Company

Assiniboine Theatre Company of Brandon is working diligently to organize the group and to launch a spring production. They did not have a fall production but did have an improv night at their last meeting night. They are hoping for a spring production.

### Phoenix Players

Phoenix Players of Virden will be performing two evenings and a matinee next March. The play is a comedy

called "Don't Tell Mother" by Monk Ferris with eight cast members. It will be performed in the lovely historical venue, the Auditorium Theatre in Virden.



### SOUTHEAST

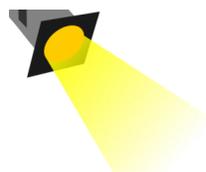
Rep: Cathy McGrath

### Prairie Players

We just finished our "Sound of Music" Production. It was one of the biggest things we've ever tried. Had a cast of 41, plus all the backstage/tech people. We sold out for the 4 shows, which also was a first for us, so that was really exciting! We also have been getting great reviews from all the people who saw it.

### flatlands theatre company

No report submitted.



### WINNIPEG

Rep: Ron Blicq

### Broken Record Productions

Broken Record Productions is looking forward to participating at ACTFest 2017 in May and the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in July (if successful in the lottery).

### Piper Pride Productions Inc.

No report submitted.

### R-G Productions

The Group is currently rehearsing "The Spider's Web" for presentation at the Forest Nickerson Theatre, February 16 to 19, 2017, as part of the RMTCC ChristieFest.

### Shoestring Players

On Thursday, Dec. 15, Shoestring performed at the Women's Canadian Club of Winnipeg's Holiday Celebrations luncheon as part of a charity project, where the WCCW generously provided us with a Fall Supper. The one-hour presentation was performed by Shoestring members Lyle Smordin, Marilyn Slobogian, Pete Hudson, Angela Rajfur, Linda Meckling and Joan Wilton, directed by Kathy McLennan. The program included the play "A Little Something for the Ducks" by Jean Lennox Toddie and three scenes from "Departures and Arrivals" by Carol Shields.

A different group of Shoestring members is in rehearsal for the ChristieFest organised by RMTCC between February 8 and 26. Our offering is "Verdict" - an Agatha Christie original. Yes there is a murder, but the play is not so much a classic whodunnit as it is a drama. Performances will be at the very accessible and comfortable Forrest Nickerson Theatre.



## NEEDED URGENTLY

At newsletter deadline, ACT MB is still in urgent need of a person to take on the role of Treasurer. The organization cannot properly function without someone in this Executive position.

The Treasurer is a crucial member of the Executive of ACT and, as such, will have the full support of both Executive and the ACT Board, in general, which includes Board members with previous treasurer experience.

### Position Job Description:

- Receive funds and invoices
- Issue receipts and disbursements as authorized by the Executive Committee
- Keep complete and accurate bookkeeping records on backed up electronic copy
- Be a signatory on all ACT MB bank accounts
- Prepare financial statements (all required statements come with statement templates for easy plug and go preparation).
- Attend ACT Board meetings (teleconference or face-to-face) averaging once every two months.

A complete Job description is available from any Board member.

### Position Perks:

- Paid mileage to all ACT meetings and functions (some meetings are teleconferences)
- Paid two nights hotel accommodation at ACT Festival regardless of where the event is held
- The pleasure of getting to know and working with a great bunch of people from across the Province on the ACT Board!

## ACT BOARD 2016-2017

President  
David Johnson  
2108 Rosser Ave, Brandon R7B OC9  
204-728-9269

Vice President  
Judy Arnason  
24 River Ridge Road, La Salle ROG oA2  
204-736-4655

Treasurer  
*Vacant*

Secretary  
Karen Martin  
1532 Patricia Ave., Brandon R7A 7K7  
204-573-0334

Past President  
*Vacant*

### Regional Representatives

Winnipeg  
Ron Blicq  
569 Oxford Street, Winnipeg R3M 3J2  
204-488-7060

Northwest  
*Vacant*

Northeast  
Donna Wilson  
204 Riverside Drive, Thompson R8N oX2  
204-677-5036

Southwest  
Caren Dundas  
321-2006 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg R2N oK8  
204-275-3825

Southeast  
Cathy McGrath  
Box 813, Neepawa ROJ 1H0  
204-476-5181