

Curtain Up!

ACT NEWSLETTER

Fall 2011

Flatlands ACTFest 2011



Snow, sleet and rain encountered on the journey to ACTFest on May 13 did not dampen the enthusiasm for this annual event. ACTFest was again the success that has come to be expected of the annual showcase of what is going on in community theatre in Manitoba. Flatlands theatre company of Winkler hosted the festival this year. The P. W. Enns Centennial Hall was a great venue for 9 plays performed during the week-end.

This year there was a new venture at ACTFest. A collaboration between ACT and MAP (Manitoba Association of Playwrights) allowed ACT groups to access play scripts which could be performed, royalty fees waved, at ACTFest. Of the nine productions showcased six were written by Manitoba playwrights. Of the six Manitoba plays four were written by MAP members. This is obviously a great place for original Manitoba scripts to be performed. ACT is proud to encourage the development of Manitoba talents.

The adjudicators for the week-end were Jim Forsythe of Brandon University's Theatre Program, Phillip Duncan of Morden Collegiate Institute and Scott Plett, artistic director of the Crosswalk Players based in Landmark. These gentlemen certainly gave so much towards the success of the week-end. The 15 minutes of public adjudication after each play sent everyone home with stimulating ideas. Each group performing received a one hour workshop. The whole festival is a learning experience. It is to be hoped that groups performing for the first time will come again next year.

The Honourable Flor Marcellino, Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, brought greetings from the provincial government on the Friday evening opening. Over the years ACT has always extended an invitation to the minister as the head of our government funding body. We thank her for the interest shown in ACT.

Flatlands are to be congratulated for hosting the week-end this year. This was their first attempt at putting the festival together. It is to be hoped that they will remain active members of ACT and accept the challenge again a few years down the road. There are now nine locations in the Province that have the capacity for theatre and hotel accommodations.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Festival Adjudicators Scott Plett, Phillip Duncan and Jim Forsythe

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, October 23, 2011 at 1.30pm

Arthur Meighen School, Portage La Prairie will most likely be the venue. Watch the website for further information. Members of affiliated groups are all welcome. Mileage for one vehicle from each group will be paid.

The Board is looking for persons to join them. Anyone who feels that they can give some time, help make decisions and keep in touch with ACT group members are welcome to stand for election. Basically we are looking for persons willing to take an interest in the background of vibrant community theatre in Manitoba. If you are willing to stand for the ACT Board please get in touch with Maureen Taggart at 204 478 0936.

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President's Message

Do people think theatre in the summer? The answer has to be a definite yes. Although it may not be the regular idea that our groups have of producing a play for the community, there is still much to find in Manitoba related to theatre in the summer months.

My own group rehearsed hard and often after our appearance at ACTFest in order to take a new play to the Gimli Summer Theatre Festival in August on the long week-end. I cannot stress strongly enough how much fun and sense of achievement that we get from the experience of performing away from "home". How often do groups put together a play which is performed once or twice and then left behind. From our point of view we will raise funds in four other communities in western Manitoba to make our work worthwhile.

Fringe Festival and FemFest in Winnipeg, the Passion Play in La Riviere offer other venues for summer theatre. We only need to search out theatre activity in the summer.

No-one likes to see membership fees raised. It is, however, an inevitable part of keeping ACT vibrant and offering programs for our groups. What commodity do you enjoy to-day for the same price as 2004?

This will be the first newsletter that you will not be receiving in the mail as hard copy. The Board has debated long and hard about the practicality of offering a hard copy to our member groups. For some time now John Tait, our webmaster, has been sending out a blanket email to all those on his list to say that the newsletter is now available on the website. This is one reason that it is so important that you give John your email address if you want to stay current with ACT news. If you know of members who depend on that hard copy please print off a copy for them to read. This action has been taken to save paper and the cost of mailing. We have to embrace the computer age!

I hope all the groups are looking forward to getting back into Fall mode. That usually means getting on with a new play, meeting our theatre friends again for rehearsals, meeting new people in our groups and above all enjoying the work that we put in enthusiastically.

Life is better with a little drama in it. - Scott Nilsson

Hazel Lamont, P R E S I D E N T

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: a fun loving member of Out on a Limb from Carberry, MIDDLE: sound booth worker, BOTTOM: a very pretty David Johnson of Spotlight on Shilo Theatre Co.



ACT Annual Membership Fees Raised

As most of you will have realized from your yearly membership invoice ACT has raised the membership fee. For the first time in several years a general meeting was held on the Sunday of ACTFest. The Board met with the membership to discuss several aspects of the running of ACT. In particular the increase in annual fees was discussed.

The annual fee has been set at \$100 since 2004. The Board was finding it more difficult to make the budget balance. Expenses were increasing where income was not. It was also

the Board's intention to raise the 3rd party liability insurance from \$1 million to \$2 million. It was felt that \$1 million was not enough coverage in these times. This will create an increase in the insurance premium of \$250 from \$3900 to \$4150. A motion was therefore made at the general meeting that "the ACT Membership fee be increased to \$150."

The Board feels that each group still gets excellent value for that fee. The right to perform and be adjudicated at ACTFest, access to monetary funds for theatre development and personal scholarships and 3rd party insurance coverage make the annual fee very much worthwhile.

The MT Space
as part of the activities of its
International, Intercultural Theatre
Festival IMPACT 11 in partnership with
PCC, CCI, and CPAMO

P R E S E N T S

Staging Displacement: Producing & Presenting Difference

September 22nd – 25th, 2011

Opening Reception September 21st

The First People were displaced first,
but we are all negotiating footing in
a new place. How do we claim
territory on stage?

This conference will look at displacement
as a common ground for Aboriginal
and immigrant theatre practitioners
in Canada, and for art presenters who
are seeking work that speaks to their
communities. Displacement as a concept
and living experience shapes the way we
create, produce, and present theatre, and
inspires the stories we want to tell. In
collaboration with Performance Creation
Canada (PCC), Cultural Pluralism in
the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO),
and Community Cultural Impresarios
(CCI), IMPACT 11 will feature four days
of panel presentations, discussions, and
networking events with artists, producers
and presenters from across Canada.

Facilitators are Guillermo Verdecchia,
Inga Petri, Ahdri Zhina Mandiela, and
Yvette Nolan.

You can register for the conference now
by purchasing the \$150 Conference
Pass through the Conrad Centre for
the Performing Arts Box Office Online
or by calling 888-475-4717 / 519-745-
4711. The conference pass includes
participation in the conference, as well
as access to all ticketed productions and
events at the festival!

For more information about
IMPACT 11, please visit
www.mtspace.ca/impact11/impact11.

Fund raising

In an effort to keep our books
balanced the Board sent out letters
looking for sponsorship for ACT
to approximately 20 Manitoba
businesses this summer. So far we
have received funding from:

WESTMAN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP
ROYAL BANK FOUNDATION

We thank these groups for their interest
in keeping community theatre active
in Manitoba and hope that you our
members will thank them personally
when dealing with them in the future.

ACT also applied to the MANITOBA
COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL INC. for
a grant. This organisation supports
non-profit community service
organizations with funding provided
by the Province of Manitoba. We
were successful in our bid and thank
MCSC for their financial assistance.



ABOVE: Shoestring Members in *Mary & Martha*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

*Whitemud Comedy Company of Neepawa will host
ACTFest 2012 on May 4, 5 and 6 at The Roxy Theatre.
Preparations are already under way!*

Education

A reminder: ACT provides funding for member groups who make a very informal
application to the Board. No cumbersome rules. All you need is a *need*. If you need a
professional to have a look at a difficult scene If you are encountering a technical difficulty.
If something is just not “coming off the page”, call or e-mail Donna Cuddy, or any ACT
Board member (list on last page of Newsletter) and request funding from *The Theatre
Development Fund*.

If you need to hone your skills more finely (and who doesn't!?) Give us a buzz and
we'll arrange funding from *The Scholarship Fund* for you to take a course. Funding will
be forwarded on successful completion. In some cases, individual instruction with a
professional will be given serious consideration.

The ACT Board is also considering a *Mentorship Programme*. Discussions are underway.

If you have any ideas as to how we can help *your* group, please let us know. We're here
to look after our members, but we sometimes need our members to look after us!

Maureen Taggart, PAST PRESIDENT

SOUTHWEST

We were well represented at ACTFest 2011 in Winkler with two Virden groups and one from Brandon. The Saturday morning began with a beautiful play by Jean Lennox Toddie. *A Little Something For The Ducks* was performed by Greg and Cathy Tough of Tumbleweed Productions of Virden. The adjudication and workshop were very positive and it was recommended that they keep this one in their in their “back pocket” for future performances.

Phoenix Players from Virden continued as in past years with a George Baker play. George writes, directs and acts in these productions, this years being titled *The Emperors’s New Art*. The performances by Kel Smith, Diane Burke and Jane Van den Hoek were well done and memorable.

The third performance that morning was presented to us by 7 Ages Productions of Brandon. George and Trish Buri (another husband and wife team) gave an emotional performance based on characters written by Bruce Sarbit. *Don’t Touch* was one of many plays presented by Manitoba playwrights.

Mecca Productions from Brandon started the year with *Spamalot* followed by *The Wiz* in late April and *Steel Magnolias* in early June. Their summer is usually busy with children’s programs.

Members of the Outcasts and Spotlight on Shilo attended ACTFest, but without a performance (other than on the dance floor)!!! Winkler did a wonderful job of hosting and are willing to repeat the experience a few years down the road. We all are looking forward to Neepawa hosting ACTFest in 2012.

Until next time...

Cathy Tough, ACT SW REP.

WINNIPEG

Following the successful *The Burned House* in the Royal MTC. Master Playwrights’ Festival in February (4-star review Winnipeg Free Press) Shoestring embarked on rehearsals for *Mary & Martha*, by local playwright Veralyn Warkentin. This was an ACT/ MAP collaboration proposed by Ron Blicq (MAP) for the ACT Festival in Winkler “Made and Played in Manitoba”. The play has also just emerged from a very successful 3 day run at the Gimli Summer Festival.

Shoestring are planning a double bill for the Royal MTC Playwrights’ (Shaw) Festival in February (dates to be announced). *Great Catherine* and *Anna Janska: The Bolshevik Princess* are the two plays. These will be directed by Katherine Mclennan and Maureen Taggart, respectively. The Colin Jackson Studio (PTE) has been tentatively booked. Watch out for announcements.

Shoestring are tremendously proud of Shoestring Sandor Demeter who is had a very successful run at the Fringe of F. Durrenmatt’s *The Physicists*. Sandor has just formed a new company Relativity Theatre. Kudos!

NORTH - WEST

The executive of the Valley Stage Players in Swan River are in the preliminary planning stages for their major fall production. Play selection and cast availability are the major areas of emphasis currently. Again this year the VSP hope, with this production, to partner with the Community Foundation of Swan Valley to support their important contributions to the local community. This year’s production will be held November 25-27.



ABOVE: members of Theatre 53 from The Pas in *The Good Old Days*. All photos by Tammy Barre.

ACT Needs You

Yes, YOU! If you have attended a festival. If you belong to a theatre group. If you have ever served on a board of directors (or even if you haven’t), wouldn’t you just love to have a say in the running of ACT? The Board meets about four times per annum. The discussions are lively and productive. Many new ideas emerge, and sometimes become practical solutions for our groups. We would welcome new people. Please think about it and get in touch with me: m_taggart@live.com. You’ll be welcomed with open arms.

Have your say in the next issue!
Deadline: November 15th, 2011

Fall 2011

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Visit us on the world wide web at: www.actmanitoba.mb.ca

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 |
| Lun Libre Theatre | Winnipeg |
| Merlyn Productions | Winnipeg |
| New Stage Productions | Winnipeg |
| Relativity Theatre | Winnipeg |
| R-G 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 |