

Curtain Up!

ACT NEWSLETTER

Summer 2013

ACTFest 2013



We had 135 people register for the weekend of April 26 - 28. Some of those registered brought their spouses/children along as well. We had lots of walk-ins by the public all weekend to watch the plays, which was wonderful to see. We estimate about 50 people from the community came out to see the plays and take in the adjudications.

The groups in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. Eight groups performed some very wonderful plays. The 3 adjudicators did an excellent job with their critiques and workshops. Those who had never been to the William Glesby Centre before were very pleased and impressed with the facility.

All in all, it was a successful ACT Festival 2013. Next year, the Festival moves to Pinawa. Prairie Players is very grateful to everyone who came out and had a wonderful time!

Rosa Rawlings,
FESTIVAL CO-CHAIR,
REGISTRATION & PUBLICITY CHAIR

ABOVE: Photos from ACTFest 2013 at Portage la Prairie

Mentorship Programme

Since the inception of two new ACT educational initiatives close to five years ago, member-groups and individuals have been taking advantage of The Theatre Development Fund and the Scholarship Fund. It is most gratifying that these two initiatives are proving to be so successful. (see testimonials elsewhere in this publication).

An additional incentive is being explored: Mentorship.

By the beginning of September (our new year), it is hoped that the logistics pertaining to a mentorship programme will have been ironed out. This one is a bit more complicated, insofar as terms and conditions from the perspectives of two parties, Mentors and Mentees, have to be put in place before proceeding.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Briefly, Similar to the T.D.F. and the S.F., Honoraria/Financial Recognition will be available through A.C.T. which will enable an A.C.T. member to

“beard” a professional director during the rehearsal process. Approaches will be made to Professional Theatres and Accredited Colleges in the Province. This would ensure that benefits would be available in Rural and Urban areas, similar to the two existing initiatives.

Please check the ACT website and future newsletters for further details.

Maureen Taggart,
PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

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President's Message

The board is pleased to announce that ACTFest 2014 will be held in Pinawa on the week-end of May 2, 3 & 4th, 2014. Dauphin had to withdraw, with much regret, because of a conflict in their community. It was very gracious on their part to accomodate this other event. Pinawa picked up the gauntlet and a huge "Thank-you" to them for agreeing to host. The board is very proud of both of these communities and their ongoing committment to theatre.

Spring usually is a wind down of many group's productions. The odd one is slated for Gimli or the Fringe festival, but the majority of us are taking a summer break. It is a time to rejuvenate our creative juices and search for that "perfect play". We all have hurdles and barriers as we flip through reviews or download scenes from the internet. Some of us have limited numbers of performers to deal with, while others aren't willing to venture outside their comfort zone. Whatever obstacles we face, it is always the same chore, to find a really good play! Wouldn't it be fantastic if your group could have two or three amazing plays waiting in the wings? If we start looking as soon as we are finished our last production, would our chances be better? Not likely!! So, whether you are looking for a play, sunbathing, haying, gardening, or even rehearsing for Gimli or Fringe, take some time and have a great summer! Break a leg and we look forward to seeing everyone in the fall.

Cathy T., PRESIDENT

Update on ACT Insurance

As part of the ACT Board's ongoing commitment to enhancing our programs and services, we are currently pursuing our options as they relate to insurance premium costs, carrier and coverage. We approached various Manitoba insurance brokers and are now in the process of comparing their proposals with our current insurance package.

Our goal is to offer our member groups an insurance package that will best meet their overall needs while keeping a watchful eye on premium costs. Our overview will be complete in the near future and any changes to ACT's insurance coverage will be implemented when we renew our insurance in July. The Board will update all members in the next newsletter regarding any changes that may be in place.

David Johnson

ACT BOARD MEMBER FOR INSURANCE AND GRANTS



ABOVE: Member of Portage's Prairie Players

Theatre Development Fund

More groups are making use or the Theatre Development Fund this year. Until the release of this newsletter three groups have applied for funding. Shoestrings Players of Winnipeg and Candlewick Productions of La Riviere have already had their final reports approved and funds paid out. An application from A-Spire Players of Gimli has been approved and the Board is awaiting the completion of their workshops and final report before making payment.

If any member group wants help with any aspect of theatre production they should visit our website and check out the information on our Theatre Development Fund under Education Programs. Funds are limited each year. Applications are dealt with in a first-come-first served basis.

S O U T H W E S T

7 Ages Productions

7 Ages Productions will be performing *Forbidden Broadway* at the A-Spire theatre in Gimli, August 9-11, 2013. We are also holding auditions for *Les Miserables* on May 29, 30, and 31, 2013. Call 204-727-3156 for more information

Tumbleweed Productions spring 2013 play was called *A Month of Sundays* by British playwright Bob Larbey. Our first performance was in Kenton on April 6th to a sold out audience. All the proceeds of this event were for the R.M. of Woodworth Fire Department for some much needed equipment. The evening's dinner theatre raised over \$17,000.00 and donations are still coming in. The following Saturday we performed in the beautiful Aud Theatre in Virden. The proceeds from this April 13th evening went to Habitat for Humanity - Virden Branch. The very appreciative audience helped to raise just over \$3000.00. Our next stop was to ACTFest in Portage April 26-28th. We were very nervous to perform in front of our peers, but the audience seemed to appreciate the topic and how relevant this topic was in everyone's own lives. Our final production was in Brandon on May 11th for the Learning Disabilities - Brandon branch. This is the 5th consecutive year we have contributed to this organization. We will take the summer off and start into rehearsals in early fall. We have 4 bookings for next year so far, so we had better find something!

S O U T H - E A S T

Prairie Players of Portage La Prairie

After a very successful ACTFest (and a few days off) Prairie Players is swinging right back into things with their plans for a Fall Dinner Theatre. This year they will be putting on Neil Simon's *Rumors* directed by long-standing member, Terry Tully. Their Fall Production is always a

huge success and a massive fundraiser for their group. They really look forward to putting together this show.

Prairie Players' thanks also go out to everyone who participated in ACTFest. They hope you had a great time while visiting their little "town". They enjoyed hosting the event and catching up with old friends. They're already looking forward to next year!

Tiger Hills Amateur Theatre

THAT is still planning a fall production. They are having readings to fill all the parts and are looking forward to fall.

flatlands theatre company - Winkler

flatlands theatre company students had a great time sharing two performances of their original script *The Princess and the Pea...and the Prince who had to Pee* to very supportive audiences at the beginning of April. Following the busy schedule of classes and rehearsals with the 45 students, they prepared to join everyone at ACTFest in Portage and are so glad they were able to come and celebrate community theatre together. They have decided to perform the two ACfest pieces *Not My Cup of Tea* and *A Human Write* along with another one act as their fall production. During the summer they'll continue to plan and organize everything for their 8th season.

Candlewick Players

This Spring Season was a busy one for the Candlewick Players. February saw professional artist, Daniel Julien of Quebec, join us to do a number of workshops in our area. Daniel also was invited to rehearsals of our Valentine's Dinner Theatre where he gave some side direction to the players in *Arsenic and Old Lace* which went on to some terrific performances both at the Manitou Opera House and the Kenmor Theatre in Morden.

Candlewick Players then went on to present two Good Friday presentations of *Jesus: Messiah* at the Access Event

Centre in Morden, as well as some Carol Burnett style comedy sketches for some fundraisers in Carman and La Riviere in April.

March saw Candlewick team up with the Prairie Spirit School Division to mount the musical *Footloose* with divisional High School students at the Manitou Opera House. After that they headed into their spring youth season with children's performances including *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *A Bunsch of Munsch*, *Jolly Roger: Deserted*, and *The Silver Chair*. Their spring season will come to a close on May 31 as their Sr. High Youth will perform the World War II drama, *A Thousand May Fall*, based on the true story of Jan & Nellie Kervel and their experiences with the Dutch Underground during the war.

Summer looks to be a GREAT season as they are in the throes of auditions for Disney's musical, *TARZAN* to be presented at the Manitou Opera House (July 26-28 and Aug 2-3). They are also planning a Low German presentation for the Winkler Harvest Festival and some children's events at the Corn and Apple. For more information on their upcoming events, visit www.candlewick.ca.

N O R T H - W E S T

Theatre 53 – The Pas

This year's spring production held May 3-5, 2013 was both a comedy & a touching drama, entitled *The Attic, The Pearls and Three Fine Girls*.

Theatre 53 was asked to present the *Crossroads in History* for the Rotary Conference to be held in The Pas May 30/31, 2013.

Whitemud Comedy Co. – Neepawa

This group will entertain many at the "Seniors for Seniors" conference to be held in Neepawa in June 2013. Work is beginning for a fall dinner theatre production; there are no set plans for the play to be presented.

Rapid City Drama Club – Rapid City

They presented two one act plays, *Café Murder* and *The Mouse & the Raven*, as a fundraiser for “Seniors for Seniors” in Brandon in April 2013. They held an appreciation evening May 4/13 for everyone that was involved with the 2012 fall production.

2013 is the 20th Anniversary for the Rapid City Drama Club. Member, Gladys Simpson wrote a play, compiled of male roles, from plays from years past. This will be presented in November 2013.

Vagabond Theatre Co. – Russell

May 23-25 Vagabond will be presenting *Beauty & the Beast Junior*. This is a musical with a youth cast of approx. 30 plus crew will equal about 45. It will be presented at the Binscarth, 3rd Ave. Theatre. The 9th Annual Musical Theatre Day Camp will be held August 19-23, 2013, for children & youth ages 5-16. For more details on events check the website at www.vagabondtheatreco.com

Valley Stage Players – Swan River

They recently held an open house in order to acquaint our community with the opportunities available for our theatre group. We had memorabilia available for viewing, videos playing, members present to answer questions, and coffee and goodies to make it a relaxing and welcoming atmosphere. We backed up a fair amount of community publicity with personal invitations and were rewarded with a good attendance of people interested not only in acting, but costuming, lighting and sound, set construction, and directing. We are optimistic now that an influx of new people will ensure a successful production for us in the fall.

We also held our AGM recently and were able to fill our executive positions. Now we should be ready to get moving on our fall production. Again, our tentative plans are to partner with the Foundation of Swan Valley for a dinner theatre

format for Friday, November 15, 2013 and then present two shows of our own on Saturday & Sunday.

Theatre Amisk of Dauphin

We presented *Christmas Pudding*, a program of seasonal music and readings on December 7 & 8, 2012. Although it was a busy time, attendance was very good and it was an excellent beginning to the Christmas season.

On January 26, 2013, a number of our members acted in a play, *The Perogy Supper Miracle* by Danny Shur, which was fundraising perogy dinner theatre for Selo Ukraina in Dauphin.

Our spring production on April 3-6, 2013 was the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, and our cast of 49 members was directed by Yvonne Lillie. We last performed this musical in 1985, but were very pleased with the amount of community support we received.

Theatre Amisk continues to work with the Dauphin and District Allied Arts Council with various refurbishment projects at the Watson Arts Centre, which is designated a Heritage Building.

We have not yet held our AGM, so Theatre Amisk officers for 2013/2014 have yet to be selected.

NORTH - EAST

A-Spire Players

A-Spire Theatre of Gimli have organised workshops for members and those wishing to join the group. An article appears elsewhere in the newsletter

Holy Hams

Holy Hams of Selkirk United Church presented *Steel Magnolias* by Robert Harling on May 8, 10, 11 and 12. The May 10 performance was sold out. *Steel Magnolias* was very well received in the community and the evaluations included nothing but positive comments. The success of the play is in no small part due to the keen eye of first time director,

Scott Hanson, only 21 years old. Laughter through tears is the underlying theme of this heart warming comedy about 6 good ol’ southern gals who discover an unbreakable bond of friendship as they share their lives with grace, determination and perfectly coiffed hair! Decadent desserts were served following the May 10 -12 performances in the beautifully decorated cafeteria adjacent to the venue.

Pinawa Players

Pinawa Players performed part of *Half Life* by John Mighton at ACTFest. They had already performed this play in their own community.

Some members of Thompson Players attended ACTFest in Portage

WINNIPEG

Two of the Winnipeg ACT member companies presented plays at the ACT Festival in late April, four companies will be performing at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in July, and four companies will be presenting plays as part of the Gimli Festival, June to August. Here are the details:

Shoestring Players

Shoestring Players is currently rehearsing the musical play *Quilters*, which features seven pioneer women in the American West telling stories that reveal the hardships faced by frontier women and the depths of their courage, fortitude, strength and humour. The play debuted in the US in 1982 and won a Fringe First at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1985. Shoestring Players presented an abridged version at the ACT Festival and will be presenting it at the Gimli Summer Festival June 21-23 and the Winnipeg Fringe in July.

Broken Records Productions

Broken Records Productions presented excerpts from Neil Simon’s play *The Good Doctor* at the ACT Festival, and will

be presenting *Wrong For Each Other* at the Gimli Summer Festival July 5-7.

Merlyn Productions

Merlyn Productions is presenting *Ming Lee and the Magic Tree*, a tale about the Far East, at the KIDsFringe part of the Winnipeg Fringe Festival. A prince who wishes to marry the Princess of the Stars, and a poor stone cutter who believes wealth and power will bring him joy, together discover the true meaning of happiness—and that “a fine hat does not make a fine head.” The company is embarking on its fifth season of plays, where it recently presented *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

NewStage Manitoba

NewStage Manitoba is currently rehearsing a new Dale Watts’ play *Room at Both Ends*, both during the Winnipeg Fringe (under the banner of Run Ragged Company) and at the Gimli Summer Festival August 16-18, where it will be part of a double-bill with an R-G Productions’ presentation (see below). The play features a cynical workaholic businessman, estranged from his family, who has a heart attack. He is hospitalized, and while there meets an older man who helps him see life more positively.

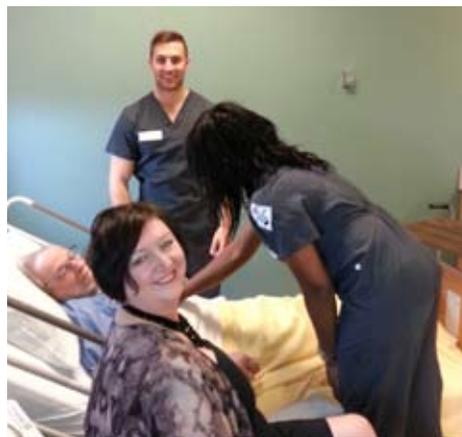
R-G Productions

R-G Productions is working on a new script written by Heather Forgie: a unique adaptation of *A Midsummer Nights’ Dream*, which she will direct. The play will be presented at two venues: at the Forrest Nickerson Theatre in the Deaf Centre, 285 Pembina Highway, August 7-9, and at the Gimli Summer Festival August 16-18. (The company tried to be part of the Winnipeg Fringe, but at 16th position on the waiting list eventually chose to withdraw.)

Six members of R-G Productions have recently taken part in the Client Actor Program at Red River College, specifically on February 8 and May 14. “Client Actors” portray either a patient or

a family caregiver, in a realistic hospital setting at RRC, where they provide a unique learning experience for nursing students. The actors are given scripts describing who they are and the medical problems they are facing, which they enact (in improv form) when nursing students come in to tend to them, as they will eventually do in real life. (The actors never step out of character, no matter what happens.) As this is an on-going program at RRC, other members of other ACT member companies are invited to take part in future productions. To register, contact RRC Nursing Instructor Karlene Cifuentes, at kcifentes@rrc.ca or by phoning 204-632-3012.

Ron Blicq, WINNIPEG AREA REPRESENTATIVE
rgroupprod@gmail.com
 204 488 7060



ABOVE: Members of R-G Productions participate in Client Actor Program at RRC.

Acting workshop:

Gimli Theatre Association
 April/May 2013

COURSE OUTLINE:

Acting for Real: a 20 hour course for community theatre actors

A foundation course in acting, focused on developing confidence and believable and convincing acting, for beginner and intermediate community actors.

Objective: Participants will be able to deliver a monologue, a two-hand scene and an improvisation in a convincing manner.

Methods used:

- Acting exercises
- Movement and physical expression
- Basic voice
- Relaxation and concentration
- Improvisation
- Script analysis
- Character development
- Scene study
- Communication with a small audience

Course to be delivered in 10 sessions, of 2 hours each. A final presentation for family, friends and other members of the Association is anticipated.

Raye Anderson, INSTRUCTOR

This Issue’s Quote of the Day



*I love acting.
 It’s so much more
 real than life.*
 Oscar Wilde

Theatre Development Fund Final Report

February 7, 2013: Candlewick Players

To: ACT Board

This last week has been a SUPER week with Daniel Julien in the area.

Over the course of the week we had 3 workshops in the area and opened it up for youth and actors involved with Candlewick Players. As a result we had an average of 28 people attend each of the classes throughout the week.

As Daniel Julien is a professional mime, musician, stage performer, and director, he focussed his attention with our workshop students particularly on mime, stage movement, and a little on how to be a better performer (in terms of rehearsal etiquette, and how to focus as an artist).

Daniel is definitely an accomplished performer with over 4000 performances behind his back. His training in mime and stage management is truly evident and he is willing to share his wealth of knowledge without constraint. In his efforts to teach the concepts, he utilized video aids, got the students actively involved with exercises and routines, directed people in actual routines/sketches, and also spent some additional time working with some of our local actors in their upcoming performances. He has also had 30 years of experience working with actors and leading workshops which was readily seen as he worked very efficiently with the groups. As we opened up the workshops to local performers, we were very excited to see the numbers of students who did come out to the workshops

The students were also very receptive to the workshops giving us very positive feedback and as Daniel was also performing in the region during this time, a good portion of them were able to also attend his performances on top of the workshops (they enjoyed him very much).

As mentioned previously, Daniel also attended two of our local Candlewick Players rehearsals to provide side coaching and directing assistance offering helpful hints (free of charge) to the group as they were preparing for our Valentine's Dinner Theatre production of "Arsenic and Old Lace". His personality was such that during his stay in the area, he dropped by the theatre to help us on a renovation project – he was excited to be in the area and wanted to do something to help us on the side. Daniel also included some of the local actors from the workshops in his performance – a highlight which also helped to garner more interest in his teaching.

We were very fortunate to have Daniel join us for the time he did and we've talked about future opportunities for him to join us to do other workshops.

Thanks again for your support of the workshops – the lessons on professionalism, on preciseness of movement, the general principles of mime, and the encouragement for students to study movement and expression was invaluable.

Sincerely, Richard J. Klassen

Acting workshops offer entry to live theatre

By Roger Newman

A golden opportunity awaits Gimli area residents who dream of acting or being involved in other aspects of live theatre.

The A-Spire Players have begun a series of 10 workshops under the direction of Raye Anderson, former head of the theatre school at Winnipeg's Prairie Theatre Exchange (PTE). While two workshops have already taken place, there is room for more would-be thespians to attend the remaining eight sessions running from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Thursdays at the Gimli Unitarian Church on Second Ave.

"We'll be going weekly until the end of May," says Tony Ducharme, president of the A-Spire group. "So far, we have a class of 10 people, a few of whom are new to our group. But we can add to that and the only



cost is a \$15 membership in the A-Spire Players."

Anderson, a resident of Winnipeg Beach, is more than qualified to impart theatrical wisdom. Raised and trained in acting and directing in Scotland, she immigrated to Canada in the 1970s and began a theatre teaching career that has included Calgary and Ottawa as well as PTE

in Winnipeg. She and actor-musician-artist Heidi Hunter have also led a theatre-art program at Winnipeg Beach School since Anderson moved to the beach a few years ago.

She warms up the actors with theatre exercises and games at the start of her workshops. As the weeks progress, class members will learn how to be believable actors and test their

abilities by doing scenes.

"My goal is to give them confidence and the basic acting tools," Anderson said.

She is not going to do it alone. Arne MacPherson, a prominent member of Winnipeg's theatre community, is scheduled to teach a session on directing. Another guest will be Winnipeg actor Chris Sigurdson who will share his expertise toward the end of April.

"We want class members to grow and stretch as actors," Anderson said. "We hope they will go on to perform with the A-Spire Players and elsewhere."

The first step on the road to Broadway is simply to show up when the next workshop curtain rises Thursday at 7.30 p.m. at the Unitarian church.

Get in on the next issue!
Deadline: November 15th, 2013

Summer 2013

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

REGIONS

NORTH-EAST

A-Spire Players	Gimli
Haystack Productions	Beausejour
Holy Hams of Selkirk United Church	Selkirk
Pinawa Players	Pinawa
Thompson Playhouse Inc.	Thompson

WINNIPEG

Broken Record Productions	Winnipeg
Merlyn Productions	Winnipeg
New Stage Productions	Winnipeg
R-G Productions	Winnipeg
Shoestring Players	Winnipeg
Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre	Winnipeg

NORTH-WEST

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
Prairie Players	Portage La Prairie
Tiger Hills Amateur Theatre (THAT)	Holland

SOUTH-WEST

7 Ages Productions	Brandon
Phoenix Players	Virden
Tumbleweed	Virden

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