

# CURTAIN UP!

The Newsletter of the Association of Community Theatres of Manitoba

Winter 2014-15

## STAGE MOVEMENT WORKSHOP

NEEPAWA, NOVEMBER 2

ACT Manitoba presented the Stage Movement Workshop on November 2nd in Neepawa and what a great workshop it was! Brenda McLean, an instructor with Prairie Theatre Exchange School and Co-Artistic Director and Production Designer of Theatre Incarnate in Winnipeg, facilitated the workshop.

Brenda took the participants on a journey beginning with stage terms and organizing space on stage to games that got everyone energized and ready to “play”. We discovered which gestures work in scenes and which ones don’t, and worked on a couple of short scenes using some furniture pieces where we had to navigate our way around them making sure that our best side was seen. All in all, it was a very rewarding day. Everyone left knowing they had

worked hard and played hard and had some new “tools of the trade” that they could apply at their next rehearsal or performance!

A hearty lunch catered by Lynne Ranger and Cathy McGrath kept everyone hydrated and full of energy for the afternoon activities.

Judy Arnason



## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Another Annual General Meeting has come and gone, and as expected there are a few changes to the board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous board for their dedication and time commitment. I would also like to welcome two new members to the team and let you know who now sits on the 2015-2016 board.

Dave Johnson remains as vice-president, Caren Dundas has accepted another term as treasurer and Karen Martin is our new secretary for a two-year term. Karen stepped into the secretary position seamlessly with Cathy’s assistance. Our board area reps have changed slightly: Genny Carrier, Ron Blicq, and Judy Arnason remain covering their zones and we have two new area reps, Cathy McGrath (who is no stranger to this position) and Linda Thompson who is new to the board. Finally we have a new newsletter editor, Rrain Prior—welcome Rrain, we look forward to the next issue.

I want to thank Fiona Lamont for the years she put in as editor of our Newsletter. She was first brought into the fold by her mother, Hazel, who informed Fiona one day that she had volunteered her services as the ACT Newsletter Editor. Fiona took it in stride and proceeded to produce an ever-

improving newsletter over the years. She will be a hard “act” to follow. Thank you Fiona!

It was officially announced at the AGM that Theatre Amisk will be hosting the 2015 ACT Fest in Dauphin. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

The ACT fall movement workshop was a success. I would like to thank Judy Arnason and the rest of the board members who assisted Judy in making this a successful event. Judy reports that the workshop was a hit with people enjoying themselves so much that they wanted to stay past 4pm. Brenda McLean, the facilitator, was well received and provided an engaging workshop.

Finally, I would like to leave on a note of reflection with the following quote.

“Choosing to be in the theatre was a way to put my roots down somewhere with other people. It was a way to choose a new family.” —Juliette Binoche

Thank you to my family at Theatre Amisk and thank you to my family at ACT Manitoba. I have learned a great deal participating in plays, and by being a part of this board. Hope to see you all at Act Fest 2015!

Tammy Barre

# REGIONAL REPORTS

## NORTHWEST

*Rep: Genny Carriere*

### **Minnedosa Drama Club**

Following the success (beginners luck, perhaps?) of our very first production at the end of 2013 of "Sin, Sex and the CIA", a few of the actors and directors met at our local Chipperfields coffee shop and could not stop themselves from brainstorming another production. The production side were not too impressed, still worn out from the last one! But planning continued, resulting in two hugely entertaining June evenings of sketch comedy revolving around everyday conversations taking place in a coffee shop. The actors did double duty as dessert/coffee waiters, stopping to appear onstage in six short sketches. Half the sketches were written by local club members with cameos from well known local personalities and local references.

The club seems to have settled on this pattern of a big fall production and a smaller sketch comedy in early summer. Community support continues to be great—amateur adult theatre is now firmly established in Minnedosa. The club has a Facebook and an Instagram presence.

We are currently in the final preparations for the British comedy "Charley's Aunt" which will take place November 27, 28 & 29. The first night is a no frills night and the next two include a full dinner. After being 'homeless' for awhile, the club has been given a decent-sized rehearsal space in the second floor of the town hall.

### **Rapid City Drama Club**

The Rapid City Drama Club is in its 21st year and is performing a play by Norm Foster titled "The Great Kooshog

Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby". Play dates are November 21 and 22, 2014 and these are for dinner theatre.

### **Theatre Amisk**

This fall, we continued our theatre skills classes taught by Yvonne Lillie. Many class members are part of our fall 2014 production, which is two evenings of Improv on November 14 and 15. Theatre Amisk continues to assist the Dauphin and District Allied Arts Council with their various fundraising activities. Our members assisted at events and decorated the WAC for the Christmas season in preparation for the annual craft fair and various scheduled seasonal parties and events. Our Theatre Room cleanup project had to be halted because of a building reno but problems with our Large Props and Sets storage area required two major cleanups and our member participation was terrific. We are busy planning for our spring production and look forward to seeing all our theatre friends here in Dauphin for ACTFest 2015.

### **The Valley Stage Players**

The Valley Stage Players in Swan River are entering their final phase of rehearsal for their major fall production of "Hilda's Yard", by Norm Foster. This is quite a recent play by Foster and has been released for amateur production only in the last few months. The play is set in the mid nineteen-fifties and concerns a middle-aged couple who have finally got their thirty-something offspring to move out of the family home and are planning a fabulous life for just the two of them. Unfortunately, their plans are unceremoniously interrupted by the unexpected events of one day. What follows is the usual Norm Foster comedy of circumstance and character that we have come to love.

Our production begins on Friday, November 28 when we are presenting the play as a dinner theatre fund raiser for the Foundation of Swan Valley. Our own presentations are on Saturday, November 29 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, November 30, at 2:00 p.m. All shows will be held at the Veterans' Community Hall in Swan River.

We are also in the preliminary stages of organizing a production that would be suitable for a school-age audience and offering the shows to schools in the area this coming spring.

### **Whitemud Comedy Company**

The Whitemud Comedy Company of Neepawa presented a reading of "A Christmas Carol" on November 23, an annual tradition in collaboration with the Viscount Cultural Centre and the Dickens Singers (an ever-changing group of local musicians).

They will be planning the remaining half of the season in the new year, including dinner theatre in May and a new theatre project in collaboration with Home Assistance Neepawa & District (HAND) thanks to a grant from the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety.

## NORTHEAST

*Rep: Judy Arnason*

*Bio:* A member of Broken Record Productions of Winnipeg, Judy has been involved in local theatre over the years performing in the Winnipeg Fringe Festival, Master Playwrights Festival and ActFest. In film and television, Judy has worked on many productions, some of which include "Pinkerton's", "Heaven is For Real", "Jack, The Jack Layton Story", "Don Cherry", and "A Bear Named Winnie".

She has also appeared in commercials. Judy's other interests include dance, yoga, curling and travel.

### **A-Spire Players**

The A-Spire Players participated in Gimli's first Nuit Blanche cultural night which drew hundreds of people to see music, theatre and art at six venues in the downtown district. Our contribution at the A-Spire Theatre was Norm Foster's short comedy "Louis and Dave" performed by Anika Dowsett and Bailey Kaye with direction by Tina Leath. We had a packed house in our 80-seat theatre, some people coming by themselves and others arriving with a popular walking tour that visited all the venues. Due to the more-than-expected success of the night, Gimli will undoubtedly take part in this national festival every year.

"Louis and Dave" was then incorporated into the "A-Spire Follies" which our group rehearsed this fall for presentation on the first weekend in December. A cast of more than a dozen performed in this cabaret consisting of comedy sketches, improv, singing and dancing. If all goes well, the cabaret will likely be repeated during our 2015 summer season.

Pierre Parent, the summer season organizer, would like to hear from ACT groups interested in performing in Gimli from June to August. So far, there is room for the regular roster of groups and newcomers.

### **Thompson Playhouse**

Thompson Playhouse will be performing "The Red Velvet Cake War" by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten, at the Letkemann Theatre in Thompson November 21-22nd. For more info contact Director Donna Wilson 204-939-1576.

Thompson Playhouse Players held their AGM on November 13 and have the following board members for a two year term:

President Donna Wilson  
Vice President Coral Bennett  
Secretary Shannon Ethier  
Treasurer Wally Itson  
Board members: Kevin Hopton, Brian Wilson, Robyn Foley.

### **Pinawa Players**

Dinner Theatre with the Pinawa Players is Back!

Plans are well underway for our fall production of "Lend Me a Tenor", a hilarious comedy by Ken Ludwig. The play will be performed as dinner theatre November 20, 21 & 22 with a play only performance on Nov 19. Director Wanda Woodbeck is already planning and creating for this award-winning Broadway play and casting meetings are set for the last week in August. Set in 1934, "Lend Me a Tenor" is the story of a local opera company preparing for a box office hit with the arrival of world-renowned tenor Tito Merelli. Mishaps and misunderstandings unfold, resulting in non-stop chaos and comedy.

Friday and Saturday dinner theatre sold out!

### **Haystack Productions**

Haystack Productions is excited to announce that they will be mounting Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland". There are 30 very talented young actors who are working hard to make this a magical and fun ride down the rabbit hole. However, this isn't your grandma's Alice, the costumes are done with a steampunk flair, the sets are a little topsy turvey and the characters have an edge to them.

The show opens on December 10 and runs for 5 shows until Saturday the 13th. For more information call Alice at 204-268-1280, or email [swilgosh@hotmail.com](mailto:swilgosh@hotmail.com)

### **Holy Hams**

No update at this time.

## SOUTHWEST

*Rep: Linda Thomson*

### **Tumbleweed Productions**

No report.

### **Phoenix Players**

Phoenix Players are working on Rumor's by Neil Simon for February 20 & 21, 2015.

### **7 Ages**

7 Ages is currently working on Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein for January 15, 16 & 17, 2015 at Brandon's Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium .

They are also looking into a production for the spring of 2015 with details to be announced on their website, [seven-ages-productions.com](http://seven-ages-productions.com).

*Note from Karen Martin:* I have been the Regional Representative for ACT for the Southwest Region for one year and have enjoyed getting to know more about other members of ACT. I will now be moving into the role of ACT Secretary for this upcoming year and will hand over my region to the capable hands of Linda Thomson. Linda has been a valuable member of and current Secretary/Treasurer for the Rapid City Drama Club. She is excited to start her new role with ACT as Regional Rep.

## SOUTHEAST

*Rep—Cathy McGrath*

*Bio:* My name is Cathy McGrath and I am once again the SE Regional Rep. I am a member of the Whitemud Comedy Company from Neepawa and have been active with them for over 20 years. I have also been on and off the ACT Board for just about as many years. I have served in every position

on the board except Treasurer and Webmaster, and many of you will be happy to hear that I know the extent of my abilities and have no intention of taking on either position.

### **Prairie Players**

Prairie Players in Portage has been rehearsing since September for their fall production of "It's a Wonderful Life, A Radio Play" coming up November 12-15 at the William Glesby Centre. November 12 & 13 is the play only and Nov 14 & 15 is the dinner theatre.

### **Candlewick Players**

Candlewick Players from La Riviere has had a busy summer with a number of presentations:

Candlewick Players presented "Joseph: Man of Dreams" at the Manitou Opera House at the end of July.

Candlewick Plautdietsch Players presented "Plautdietsch Live" at the P.W. Enns Concert Hall for the Winkler Harvest Festival.

Candlewick and DanceWorks held a summer arts camp with culminated in performances of "Chicken Little" (a drama and dance event for children) at the Corn & Apple Festival this fall/winter.

Candlewick continues to present with a number of youth and adult shows:

Candlewick Players presented "Freud's Last Session" for a mini-tour to Steinbach, La Salle, and Morden

Candlewick's Sr. Xplor Drama in Manitou (high school drama group) presented "Mission Possible" at the Manitou Opera House in October.

Candlewick and DanceWorks teamed up to present a new adaptation of "The Nutcracker" in early November featuring their young dance and drama students from across south-central Manitoba and even North Dakota for sell-out performances at the Kenmor Theatre in Morden (early November).

Candlewick and Steinbach Bible College join forces to present "A Christmas Carol" at the College from Nov 20-23.

Candlewick Players presented "King Arthur and the Kinigots of the Rotunda" Nov 28-30 and Dec 4-7 in the Morden/Winkler area as their Christmas Dinner Theatre Season.

Candlewick Players will present "The Miser" for their Valentines Theatre (Kenmor Theatre) and Dinner Theatre (Manitou Opera House) in early February.

Candlewick and Prairie Spirit School Division present "Once upon a Mattress" at the Manitou Opera House (Mar 19-22).

More information is available on our website – [www.candlewick.ca](http://www.candlewick.ca)

We are also open to auditions for our upcoming summer musical for July 2015.

### **Tiger Hills Amateur Theatre**

THAT'S For Seniors is a new community theatre group in Holland. Well, actually, it's under the umbrella of Tiger Hills Amateur Theatre (THAT) with additional support from MILES for Seniors. The group, co-directed by Donna Cuddy and Frank Foidart, meets every Tuesday at 3:30 in the afternoon for an hour or so. At this point, we have eight members - six females and two males - working on six sketches. The sketches range from three to fifteen minutes in length. The original plan (at least according to Donna and Frank) was merely to meet for an afternoon activity and have some fun, but apparently, word on the street and in the Friendship Club is that we will be having a dessert theatre in the future. Right now, though, we're just trying to learn our lines!

### **flatlands theatre company**

flatlands theatre company from Winkler is in its ninth season this year and we have been working on many things.

In the summer we were involved in advertising our fall performance "The Secret Garden" in three local parades.

We were also asked to create an interactive program for the library summer reading program. This fall we had our six-week student classes for ages 3 to grade 12 students, where they were learning about theatre history. On November 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th "The Secret Garden" was performed. The cast and crew did a fabulous job bringing this story to life. In January our student classes begin again and end April 10th and 11th with the students performing the script that they wrote in their classes. This year's play is "The Amazing Race to the Golden Goose". We will also be performing at Act Fest. We are looking forward to our 10th season.

## WINNIPEG

*Rep: Ron Blicq*

*Bio:* Ron is currently is "up to his ears" in work, preparing two books of plays: Five Plays for Young Actors (which is already in print) and Seven Plays with a Light Touch (due Spring 2015).

### **Shoestring Players**

Shoestring Players have withdrawn from their original plan to present Noel Coward's play "Cowardly Custard" as part of the MTC Master Playwright's Festival. Instead, the Group is currently in rehearsal for a production of "Skin of Our Teeth" by Thornton Wilder, which will be performed from December 3rd to 7th at the Forrest Nickerson Theatre in the Deaf Centre, 285 Pembina Highway.

### **R-G Productions**

For the 2015 season, R-G Productions are preparing Noel Collaborates for Coward-fest and an original adaptation of Hansel and Gretel for the Fringe

Festival in Winnipeg. Also under consideration is a production of Catherine Hayes' Skirmishes for the Gimli Summer Festival. Internally, Heather Forgie has taken over as the group's Artistic Director and previous Artistic Director Ron Blicq has stepped back to become Treasurer of the Group.

### **Broken Record Productions**

They plan a busy upcoming season, presenting plays at ACTFest, the Winnipeg Fringe, and the Gimli Summer Theatre.

### **Piper Pride Productions Inc.**

Joined ACT in August, signing up for the 2014-2015 Year. No report yet.

## **ActFest 2015!**

**Host:** Theatre Amisk

**Location:** Dauphin

If you haven't started making production plans yet, now's the time!

## **ADDITIONAL BIOGRAPHIES**

### **John Tait**—*ACT Website Administrator*

John is a member of the Pinawa Players where he has been involved as an actor, director and lighting technician since 1979 and has participated in just about every ACT Festival since. John fondly remembers the first Community Theatre Festivals in the old Prairie Theatre Exchange on Princess Street before ACT was formed in 1982. He was a representative for the Players at the first meeting to incorporate ACT. John has served as a Regional Rep., Vice-President and President on the ACT Board, and he is the ACT Website Administrator and has been looking after the website since its development in 1996.

### **Rrain Prior**—*ACT Newsletter Editor*

Rrain is a member of Whitemud Comedy Company in Neepawa where she serves as stage manager, playwright and occasionally Treasurer of the board. She is a former member of Shoestring Players in Winnipeg and has previously served on the ACT Board as Secretary.

### **Caren Dundas**—*Treasurer*

Hi to the membership. My name is Caren Dundas and I am the ACT treasurer for another term. Although I now live in Winnipeg, I am still a member of the Valley Stage Players of Swan River. I enjoy my involvement with the ACT Board very much, and encourage everyone to consider taking a position on the Board in the future.

### **Next newsletter deadline:**

**March 15, 2015**

In addition to event reports and regional updates, *Curtain Up* welcomes topical submissions from any ACT members.

## **ACT BOARD 2014-2015**

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