

CURTAIN UP!

The Newsletter of the Association of Community Theatres of Manitoba

Summer 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another May, another ACTFest. As is usually the case after our annual Festival, I have not talked to anyone who did not have a great time.

We watched, once again, great plays.

However, no performing group knew what the other groups were performing. Weird. Yet all had the same central theme. Weirder. And the main theme was Death. Weirdest. By the way, everyone thoroughly enjoyed them. Not weird at all. We are, after all, talking about ACTFest.

We had, once again, great adjudicators.

It was great to welcome back Jon Ted Wynne. He is a joy to listen to and it is always fun when he is around. Valerie Wynne, a newcomer to ACTFest, showed that she can fit right in. Everyone that I talked to from her workshops spoke very highly of her. And what can I say about Jim Forsythe? He stepped in at the 11th hour and saved the day when a previously booked adjudicator was suddenly unable to attend. He has done so many ACTFests that I am now calling him ACT's "Adjudicator in Residence".

We had, once again, a great banquet, banquet entertainment and silent auction.

Saturday night was a blast. Three cheers to those in charge of Saturday evening's events. A great time was had by all.

We had, once again, great food.

Each venue seems to have its own culinary traits. Vagabond has now put its own individual stamp on the event. From the Friday evening reception to the home cooked muffins and goodies, to the banquet feast, each meal and break were well worth waiting for.

We had, once again, a great Host Committee and Host Group.



Without each and every one of you contributing, the Festival could not, and would not, have been the success that it was. Most of us in attendance know the amount of time, commitment and hard work that goes into hosting a successful ACTFest. Our hats go off to you for a job very well done. Vagabond Theatre Company, we thank you.

Talk to you soon.

David Johnson
ACT President

REPORT ON ACTFEST 2016

BY BETTY SENGER

PRESIDENT, VAGABOND THEATRE COMPANY



Vagabond Theatre in Binscarth hosted ACTFest on May 6, 7, and 8. We had 113 people registered. Seven theatre groups performed—Shoestring Players and Broken Record Productions from Winnipeg, Rapid City Drama Club, Valley Stage Players from Swan River, Phoenix Players from Virden, Pinawa Players, and Vagabond Theatre Company from Binscarth.

ACTFest began Friday night with the opening ceremonies and Vagabond's production of *Incident at the Poseidon*. This was followed by a scrumptious reception catered by Arbuckle's restaurant in Binscarth.

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SCENE 2

ACTFEST 2016 – BINSICARTH, MANITOBA

BY KAREN MARTIN

It was a slightly hazy and relatively warm weekend in May when the ACT member groups invaded Binscarth, Manitoba for the 38 th Annual ACTFest. Boy what a weekend! Great acting, excellent adjudicators and the Improv at the banquet was second to none...who knew we were all so talented at improv! Throw out the scripts – we're winging it! Go Vagabond go!

This was my third ACTFest but only my second time performing with my group, the Rapid City Drama Club (RCDC). Not sure if you will remember my article after Theatre Amisks' ACTFest, The First Time. What a harrowing experience that was! Great time but scared out of my mind to perform for the first time in front of my peers. Was curious how this time would go.

As you can tell I did recover from last year and was in fine form (Barbie form!) for the weekend. Had a nice drive up to Russell with two of my RCDC cast to find the Russell Inn most inviting and supper there as delicious. A little rest then on to the reception at the 3 rd Avenue Vagabond Theatre in Binscarth where we were warmly welcomed, entertained by their theatre group and fed yummy food while we mingled. There was a big weekend ahead so home to the Russell Inn for a night cap and off to bed.

Saturday morning brought breakfast at Tim's and then off to Binscarth to be entertained by the groups and educated by the adjudicators. Everyone was great! We learned so much watching everyone that in my mind I re-did our entire play that was to be performed on Sunday! Alas, it was much too late for that nonsense so we wrapped up the last performance on Saturday afternoon and headed back to the hotel for a last minute rehearsal, a couple of beverages and to get prettied-up for the banquet.

What can I say about the banquet? Great food, new friends, lots of laughs...Table 3...Yooooouuuu pretty much rock!!! A great time! RCDC couldn't have too much fun though as we still have to be up and ready to perform Sunday morning.

Bright and early Sunday morning...well not too bright and early but you get my drift, we're up and off to Tim's for breakfast again. Pack our stuff, check-out of the hotel and get organized. We have everything and we're ready to go. Nervousness check – doing okay.

Arrive at the theatre and there's a slight delay. No worries, it's all good...we got this. We set up shop for a few minutes

in the hall and move into the green room as soon as we can. Nervousness check – don't want to identify a level but I have so much energy right now I could run a 10k!

We're dressed and ready to go...just waiting for the okay from the tech crew to come out and check the set. I'm apparently making some of my RCDC crew nervous with my antsiness so am trying very hard to not fidget, jump around or do squats. There are two of us who are veterans here and should be setting a calm example. I am not! Nervousness check – okay I'm nervous, butterflies are present.

We have the all clear, it's time! Set is checked and 'Jennifer Newport' is on stage and ready for curtains up. The rest of us are back stage anxiously waiting for our cues. It's time – we're all on...nervousness check – nervous-smervous – I am Mrs. Minerva Bradbury!



There's laughter...there's applause...it's done...we've made it through another year! My RCDC cast did great and I'm reminded again how much I love acting, directing and my RCDC family. We all feel better now and hungry...off to grab lunch and get ready for our workshop. Valerie did a wonderful workshop, got us thinking more about character development with use of back stories and showed us a whole new way to look at our characters. Thanks Valerie, we will use what you taught us!

On my way home now and my thoughts turn toward our fall production the first weekend of November. We actually have a head start this year...script has been picked and cast confirmed...a few months earlier than usual...look at us being all organized.

So on to the next adventure but thoughts of ACTFest 2017 are not far from my mind...where will we be...what will we do, because we will do something...we're old hands at this now...oh, was that a butterfly...I feel the need to do a squat!

See you all next year and till then break a leg!

REGIONAL REPORTS

NORTHWEST

Rep: Genny Carriere

Minnedosa Drama Club

No report submitted.

Rapid City Drama Club

Performed *The Mouse and the Raven* at ACTFest.

Theatre 53

No report submitted.

Theatre Amisk

Theatre Amisk presented the 3-act comedy *Play On*, on November 19, 20 and 21, 2015. This is the play we presented as our ACTFest 2015 production and we were pleased with its success. Many of the actors involved participated in our series of acting classes, so our Director, Yvonne Lillie, and Assistant Director, Richard Purdey, were very pleased with the progress of the production. We continued with our series of acting/improv classes this winter and our spring production was a successful evening of Improv on April 15, 2016.

Theatre Amisk's AGM is scheduled for late June as usual.

Theatre Amisk continues to work with the Dauphin and District Allied Arts Council with various projects at the Watson Arts Centre, which is designated a Heritage Building. Our members are very active on the WAC board. We are presently working to improve and organize our Theatre Room and Costume Room, which are on-going endeavors.

Five of our members attended ACTFest 2016 in Binscarth and enjoyed the weekend.

Vagabond Theatre Company

Held a very successful ACTFest in May, including two pieces from Vagabond itself: *Incident at the Poseidon* and *Grace*.



See the report on ACTFest for more details.

The Valley Stage Players

Four of our members performed *The Death of Me* by Norm Foster at the ACTFest held in Binscarth on the weekend of May 6–8. They report a very enjoyable weekend of performing, watching some outstanding performances, meeting and sharing with other ACT members, and being inspired with new and alternate ideas for our own company. Thanks to Paul and Kathleen Freed, Jeremy and Jessica Bergen, and Terra Pohl for their dedication and commitment to promoting theatre in our community by going out of the community to develop an important tie with the outside world of theatre.



Currently, the Valley Stage Players have a committee searching for a situa-

ble play for our major fall production which is tentatively slated for the last weekend in November. We hope to have another successful production and continue to develop theatre in the Swan Valley area and continue to interest more people to become involved. We were very fortunate to have quite a number of new members last year and we hope that trend continues.

Whitemud Comedy Company

Whitemud Comedy Company has had a quiet spring, but is beginning work on a dinner theatre for this fall, as well as writing and performing a historical "cemetery walk" for the community.

NORTHEAST

Rep: Dustin DeSchutter

A-Spire Players

A-Spire Players of Gimli has put together its 11th Summer Theatre Season of plays and musical performances. The full schedule is available on their website at aspireplayers.ca.

Haystack Productions

In conjunction with St. Paul's United Church, Haystack Productions mounted an incredibly successful run of *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. This adaptation of Robert Fulghum's book takes the audience from kindergarten through childhood, marriage and children and ends with the contemplation of the "Meaning of Life". The ten talented actors played multiple characters and ages. They had fun playing:

- Kindergarten students
- Peewee hockey players and their moms

- Young brides
- New fathers
- The ladies of the Bingo Hall
- Looking for love “online”
- Dealing with growing old
- Contemplating the Universe and the existence of a higher power

The show brought on giggles and laughter, tears and knowing smiles from the sold out audiences who attended the five night run.

They are now taking a bit of the summer off...looking for storage and production space and gearing up for their fall youth production.

Pinawa Players

Pinawa Players performed Harold Pinter’s *The Dumb Waiter* for a rehearsal audience in Pinawa on May 4. The Players also performed their play at the ACT Festival on May 7 and it was very well received at both venues.



They will be looking at plays for the fall dinner theatre season this summer.

Thompson Playhouse

Thompson Playhouse was invited to perform at a dinner theatre fundraiser for the Juniper Centre. They performed Polter-Heist for 150 people on April 30th.

SOUTHWEST

Rep: Linda Thomson

7 Ages

No report submitted.

Phoenix Players

Performed *Circling the Bowl* at ACT-Fest in Binscarth.



SOUTHEAST

Rep: Cathy McGrath

Candlewick Players

No report submitted.

flatlands theatre company

No report submitted.

Pine Creek Players

No report submitted.

Prairie Players

No report submitted.

WINNIPEG

Rep: Ron Blicq.

Broken Record Productions

Broken Record Productions had a successful run (8 shows) with *Table Manners* as part of RMTC’s Ayckbourn Festival in February and had a similarly successful performance of the three-hander *Do-Overs* at ACTFest.



The group will present a new play by Kevin Longfield, titled *Blizzard*, at the Gimli Summer Festival in June and at the Winnipeg Fringe in July.

Piper Pride Productions Inc.

Piper Pride is concentrating on musicals and has three productions in preparation for presentation over the coming months.

R-G Productions

R-G Productions presented *Relatively Speaking* (5 performances) at the Ayckbourn Festival and is rehearsing *Desdemona* for the Gimli Summer Festival.

Shoestring Players

Shoestring Players had a very successful presentation of *Confusions* at the Ayckbourn Festival, and is intending to take part in the 2017 Christie Festival. They have already submitted their choices to RMTC and are awaiting confirmation.



They brought a shortened version of *Confusions* to ACTFest, which generated an immense amount of laughter from the audience. *(I personally added the piece about laughter, because I was one of the “highly tickled” audience members! – RB)*

Next newsletter deadline:

November 15, 2016

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

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Saturday morning we watched Broken Record's production of *Do-Overs*, Phoenix Players' production of *Circling the Bowl*, and Pinawa Players' production of *The Dumb Waiter*.

In the afternoon session we were treated to *Confusions* by the Shoestring Players and *The Death of Me* by the Valley Stage Players.

Saturday night's banquet and dance were enjoyed by all. Our improv theme seemed to go over well. We enjoyed several hilarious improv activities; "Barbie Girl" was a big hit. Thanks to Keneen who hosted these antics. The dancing went on until the wee hours.

Sunday morning's presentations included *Grace* by Vagabond, as well as Rapid City's production of *The Mouse and the Raven*.

Thanks to our adjudicators, Jon Ted Wynne, Valerie Wynne, and Jim Forsythe. Your experience and knowledge of theatre were very evident during our adjudication and workshop times. I think I can speak for everyone when I say that we came out of these sessions with usable and helpful strategies that will keep us stretching ourselves as actors in our dramatic endeavours.

SAVE THE DATE!

What: Stage Management Workshop

When: Saturday, Sept 24

Time: 10:00 am - 2:30 pm with a 1/2 hour for lunch

Where: Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, 174 Market Ave, Winnipeg

Who: Sylvia Fisher, Facilitator

More information to follow in August!



See you at next year's ACTFest!

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