

# CONTACT

Canada's oldest continually operating community theatre. 76 years and growing.

January, 2007

The Official Newsletter of  
**THE THEATRE ARTS GUILD**  
www.tagtheatre.com info@tagtheatre.com

The Theatre Arts Guild  
The Pond Playhouse 6 Parkhill Rd. Halifax, NS

## The President's Message

Deb Post

Happy New Year, members and friends of TAG! I hope you saw our Christmas Pantomime, Ali Baba and the Seven Thieves, by Ron Nicol. Cheryl Theriault, Rebecca Humphreys and Eric Rountree directed and Michele Moore produced this lively and lovely show. We had a very young cast, ranging from twelve up, with most of the actors providing fresh new faces and talent to accompany popular Pantomime stalwarts Lowell and Bunny Shore on the stage. Our performers were not only strong actors, but skilled and impressive singers with abundant energy and good cheer.

If your New Year's resolution was to attend every event at TAG, then you're on track for an entertaining year. Our first TAG evening is the New Year's Tournament on January 6. It's a hilarious romp through an eclectic assortment of challenging puzzles, conundrums and feats of dexterity. When you go, you are paired with someone NOT your significant other, and you try to problem- solve swiftly with your partner. Some of us (me!) succumb to hysterical laughter immediately while others get out their calculators and slide rules and scare their partners when their pupils contract and they start snapping their fingers and muttering about the square root on the hypotenuse.



John Gratwick and his wife Lyn orchestrate this magical event and have already begun collecting challenges for the 2008 Tournament. The Gratwick Partnership, as they are known, also ran the Summer Readings at TAG for many years and this refreshing cultural evening also required a year of their time to prepare. We are so fortunate to have the Gratwicks at the heart of our organization.

Currently, our first play of 2007, Scotland Road, a thriller by Jeffrey Hatcher, is in rehearsal. Directed by TAG veteran Nick Jupp and produced by Hugh Vincent, the play takes place in the present and concerns a young woman in 19th century clothing found floating on an iceberg. When rescued, she has one word to say- TITANIC. It's mysterious and unusual and with our local connection to the Titanic, one which should pique your interest.

Our building committee continues to handle the business of completing our lobby extension, using a phased sequence of tasks to keep on track. Essentially, the committee performs the function of a contractor and as such, keeps very busy with all of the details that go into each part of the project. Current projects include preparation for electrical hook-up, preparation for electrical installation, strapping and insulation, and completion of plumbing rough-in. The building committee's commitment of time and energy is truly remarkable.

Yesterday, Christmas Day, my first without children at home, I turned on the television out of curiosity and behold- it was a marathon run of the series Slings and Arrows, the excellent Canadian television series (originally aired on the Movie Network) about - of all things- theatre. It's funny, gripping, thoughtful and just plain well-done and anyone who loves theatre will love the show. Isn't it ironic that this program, which raked in numerous awards and fulsome audience tributes, is virtually unknown and was never given more than a jot of advertising?

It's ironic because much of our very best entertainment can fall by the wayside even though skilled publicists work their behinds off to get the word out. We at TAG run completely on volunteer steam and we rely on local print media, radio and TV to provide us with an outlet for our publicity. We are fortunate in having some fine and generous contacts in the industry who make a point of writing, speaking or telecasting about community theatre and may I thank them wholeheartedly one and all, while the spirit moves me. Publicists change constantly in the media and our TAG publicity people steadfastly forge and re-forge the connections that get the word out. If you ever wondered why we don't have 'big spreads' about our plays, it is a matter of not having the big bucks! When our plays are reviewed and accompanied by photos, the response at the box office is immediate.

So, please keep the brochure, Your Community Theatre (mailed out with your newsletter) on your bulletin board. Mark the dates of our plays in your calendar. Life is short. Don't miss anything at the Pond Playhouse- live theatre is good for your heart.

Debora Post, President

Ecology in action: Switch to an electronic version of our newsletter and do your part to save a tree.  
Contact us at [info@tagtheatre.com](mailto:info@tagtheatre.com) to have your newsletter sent by email.

**TAG Box Office**  
**477-2663**

Nick Jupp

# Our Next Production *Scotland Road*



Our next production, *Scotland Road* is in rehearsal, the set is built and the sound and lighting designs have begun. Opening on February 15th, *Scotland Road* is a mystery that will keep you guessing to the very end. A young woman has been rescued from an iceberg off the coast of Iceland. Under the care of an American doctor working in Iceland, she has been brought to a location in Maine for interrogation by a man known as John. The doctor has only granted John a few days before the woman is to be admitted to hospital in Boston.

The problem is, the woman has only spoken one word since her rescue, the word was Titanic. Her clothing matches the Titanic era, but she has not aged and the notion she has been on an iceberg since the famous sinking is clearly absurd.

The scene is set for a battle of wits, John the inquisitor, Halbrecht the doctor and the silent young woman. Who will break first, who's lying, what is the real truth, what really is happening? Come and watch *Scotland Road* and see if you can figure out what's going on before the unbelievable and tumultuous ending.

Don't miss *Scotland Road*, if you love a mystery, if you like suspense, book early and hold onto your seat. We may even meet the last Titanic survivor!

*Nick Jupp*

*Director, Scotland Road*

**SCOTLAND ROAD**  
by Jeffrey Hatcher  
Directed by Nick Jupp

In the last decade of the twentieth century,  
a beautiful young woman in nineteenth-century clothing  
is found floating on an  
iceberg in the middle of the North Atlantic.  
When rescued, she says only one word - Titanic.  
Is she a fake?

**February 15th to March 3rd, 2007**  
Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Evenings at 8:00 PM.  
At the Pond Playhouse 6 Parkhill Road  
(off Purcell's Cove Road, just past the Frog Pond.)  
\$12 for members, students and seniors \$15 for non members

**For Reservations, call 477-2663  
or visit [www.tagtheatre.com](http://www.tagtheatre.com)**

Michele Moore

# Making a New Year's Resolution? Want to make new friends?

Why not Volunteer at TAG - There are so many ways ! We encourage apprenticeship with every position involved in a production:

Director, Producer, Stage Manager, Set Design, Lighting Design, Sound Design, Costumes, Props, Publicity.

We love adding new faces to our stage, so maybe try auditioning, nothing ventured, nothing gained. You'd be amazed at how easy learning lines can be when you love the play..... Caution - acting can be addictive!!

If that is not going to work for you, then why not a Front of House Volunteer? Collecting tickets or serving at the Bar? (must be over 19).

Here are your advantages:

You will get a call from the Producer of the show to find out when you are available to work either bar or tickets. If you want to see the show the same night or afternoon that you will be working, the Producer will book your seats.

Your only "free" gift is pre-selection of seats - simply arrive 55 minutes before show time (for tickets) and 40 minutes before show time (for bar) and you will be allowed to slip into the theatre to place your jacket on a seat before you start working. You must pay the admission fee as you arrive to receive an entry ticket, which the Front of House Manager will collect from you at three bells.

If you are taking tickets, your work is done at three bells. If you are working the bar, your work is done after intermission - so if you choose to see the show at another time, you are able to go home after the work is done. The Front of House Manager totals the ticket sales and bar take.

This is your community theatre, so please join us!!

Remember... learning new things should be what a New Year is all about!!

Don't delay... call 477-2663 and let us know what you are interested in. Cheryl Theriault will be calling you right back !

# APPRENTICES WANTED!

TAG is looking for people who would be interested in learning about the technical side of theater, in all its facets. You would be volunteering to work on TAG's summer productions of "The Lover" and "Night School", two one act plays by Harold Pinter which will run from June 21 to July 7. You would be learning about the area of your choice from TAG members who have honed their craft working on many shows over the years. The position that we are looking to have apprentices in are as follows:

Producer, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, Publicity, Lighting designer, Lighting board operator, sound designer, sound board operator, costumes, set designer, set construction, set dresser and props.

If you would be interested in exploring this opportunity, please contact Cheryl Theriault at 492-0838 with your name, contact information and the area that most interests you.

Bill VanGorder

# Auditions for Office Hours

## A Comedy by Norm Foster

Auditions will be held at Theatre Arts Guild's Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Rd.

Sunday, Feb 18th 1 - 4 p.m. and

Monday Feb 19th 7 - 9 p.m.

No preparation necessary. Readings will be provided when you arrive. No appointments necessary. Come early and be prepared to stay and read with various others as your time and ours permits.

Rehearsals will be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons until the final two tech weekends, when Saturday rehearsals will be held.

Roles: 4 males age 30 - 60 3 females ages 30 - 55

Backstage and Production Crew volunteers also needed.

For information re auditions or crew positions call Bill or Esther at 453-4077

Or email [bill.vangorder@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:bill.vangorder@ns.sympatico.ca)

Office Hours is a marvelous comedy by Norm Foster which will be directed by Bill VanGorder, produced by Ann Miller and stage managed by Esther VanGorder.

The production will run from Thursday Apr 26 to Saturday May 12, 2007.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. with a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday May 6th

The play: Ah, the office! Politics, romance, intrigue. This brisk comedy skewers them all, revealing six stories in six offices, all somehow connected. After you have seen Office Hours, your Friday afternoons will never look the same again! Foster is one of Canada's most popular playwrights and Office Hours is one of his funniest plays filled with snappy dialogue, witty repartee, hilarious predicaments, and lots and lots of laughs.

*Bill VanGorder*

*Director Office Hours*

**Michele Moore**

## Pantomime at TAG

### A Tradition to Hold On To

For those of you who "can't wait for the next one" - I would just like to say a big thank you. "Ali Baba and the Seven Thieves" has closed. The set demolished, the costumes dry cleaned and stored away, the props carefully replaced to the props room. The energetic kids have gone home.

For the first time, TAG audiences were entertained by a majority of teenagers (12), anchored by Lowell Shore and Sara Scarfe and fed by Bunny Shore! It took three directors, one of whom ended up as Stage Manager. This show was put together in 8 weeks - normal (ideal) time for a pantomime should be 10. It was a lot of work readily done by willing hands.

The highly talented (unseen) crew was scrambled together - we had two sound board and two lighting board operators dividing up the work between them. Two of whom had previously done lighting and sound, two of whom with theatre experience, learned on the job magnificently.

### Auditions Continued

Our costume ladies measured and dressed and we ended up with great creations, mostly from stock. The props were searched for and found and/or disguised to meet the needs of the panto. The "Strumomatic" was discussed very briefly with Patricia Martinson and "voila" created!!

The entertainment began and the audiences booed and cheered and raved. The children met the cast and got their programs signed and received gold covered chocolate coins from the "cave" "the loot" to eat on the way home. "Ah Ha" and "Open Sesame" no doubt added to their repertoire!! Proud teary eyed parents and proud teary eyed Stage Manager. Many new friendships begun.....happiness was as infectious as the colds that swirled around the theatre.

Watch out for these talented kids - 2007 sees a lot of them in their school productions and Sara Scarfe in our February production of "Scotland Road" in a very different role.

The Pantomime at TAG has become a very special tradition started by Jeff Pocock and aided and abetted by John and Lyn Gratwick, Lorne Abramson, Cheryl Theriault and Brenda Tyedmers. I personally hope it continues.

Thank you for the Music.....the Songs we are (all still) Singing..... the Love.

*Michele Moore,*

*Producer, Ali Baba and the Seven Thieves*



President	Deb Post
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Artistic Director	Nick Jupp
Publicity	Michele Moore
Volunteer Coordinator	Cheryl Theriault

**BOARD 2006 -2007**

### Membership Dues

TAG membership dues run from September 1st to August 31st every year so don't forget to add us to your new year check list. Call 477-2663 for more information about your membership status.

# Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary

## As to Holding the Audience's Attention

(The seventeenth in a continuing series)

From the frenzied activity of the fourteen characters of our pantomime, we move to the steadier and much sparser environment of "Scotland Road." Jeffrey Hatcher's piece has only four players (in theatrical terms, a 'four-hander'). Think for a moment of what held your attention during the pantomime – the constant comings and goings on stage, the interaction between the very varied cast of characters (some of them villains, some heroes, but all giving 110% every night!), the frequent changes of venue, and, just when things might have flagged, the songs which made sure you kept awake!

With few cast members (and, in "Scotland Road", the same location throughout), a playwright has a number of avenues which can be pursued to make sure the audience is paying attention. He/she can focus on the overwhelming presence of the actor(s), and that person's ability to create various scenes and situations in the minds of audience members – "Shirley Valentine", by Willy Russell is a good example of this. Or, interest can be maintained by the dynamic interaction of the characters, building highs and lows into their lives so that those watching want to see 'what happens next.' This is a concentration on relationships and how the author's creations cope with the various emotional/social/spiritual threads which make up their lives – the first play presented at TAG this season – "Skylight" by David Hare – falls into this category, and Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" presented recently at Neptune.

Jeffrey Hatcher's tactic is somewhat different – and it borrows from long-established precepts of mystery writing. Hatcher succeeds through the withholding of information – information which he then filters out to the audience, snippet by snippet, until we are able to build up a complete picture of the characters and their unique situation. This isn't an exact parallel, but think of when you discovered who the murderer was in "The Hollow" in last summer's production – just before the end of the play! But be prepared for some surprises – Agatha Christie is not the great deceiver that Jeffrey Hatcher is!

One last word about the size of casts. You may have heard the term 'ensemble cast,' which is not the same thing as our pantomime, which had simply a 'large cast.' Ensemble pieces do have large casts, but the action is usually all in the same location, and, more importantly, everyone remains on stage the whole time. "The Rimers of Eldritch," presented at TAG in 1970 is really the only true ensemble piece which has been done since the Pond Playhouse came into use, although other works performed contain elements of ensemble playing – "Uncommon Women and Others," by Wendy Wasserstein (presented at TAG in 1987) and the recent "Dining Room," by A.R. Gurney.

Judy Reade

Props/Wardrobe Mistress

## COMMUNITY THEATRE NEWS

### Dartmouth Players

#### AUDITION NOTICE

The Dartmouth Players will be holding auditions for its Spring production of *Bus Stop* a comedy by William Inge, directed by Ian MacDermid.

Audition Dates:

Sunday, January 14th from 2-5 p.m.

Monday, January 15th from 7-10 p.m.

at the theatre.

Those wishing to audition may have a prepared piece or read from the material provided. Rehearsal will commence immediately running from January until the performance dates of April 11-21, 2007.

### All Saints Bedford Players

#### AUDITION NOTICE

Auditions for Spring Production of 'I Take This Man' by Jack Sharkey. Directed by Karen Waterfield.

This comedy is set in Boston during the running of the Boston Marathon.

There are 3 men and 2 women in the cast. The age of the characters will be determined by the casting, so auditions are open to all.

Audition Dates:

Sunday, January 14th 6:30 pm

Monday, January 15th 7:30 pm

at the All Saints Anglican Church Hall, 1408 The Bedford Highway (across from Cascades Spa).

### Dartmouth Players

#### Presents TRIBUTE

by Bernard Slade Directed by John Brown

Wednesday, January 24th to

Saturday, February 10th. 2007.

With a Sunday matinee performance on Sunday February 4th.

"Very funny, and at the same time a touching work." WABC TV.

"Slade can blend comedy and pathos skilfully.... He can also slice cleanly into truth." - Wall Street Journal

#### THE THEATRE ARTS GUILD

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Ecology in action: Switch to an electronic version of our newsletter and do your part to save a tree.  
Contact us at [info@tagtheatre.com](mailto:info@tagtheatre.com) to have your newsletter sent by email.

Submissions for **CONTACT** can be emailed to **TERRY COOLEN** at [trcool@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:trcool@ns.sympatico.ca)

**Contact** January 2007