

President's Message

Frank MacLean, President

I am both honored and excited to be at the helm of the TAG board of directors, and I look forward to a great season. If you look at the line-up, you will see we have a plethora of entertaining shows this season. I feel that the artistic committee has done an excellent job of selecting a wide variety of shows to appeal to the eclectic tastes of our wonderful audiences.



We have already had a very successful run of our first show, *Romance with a Twist*, and I would like to thank the audiences for their support and congratulate the cast and crew for their perseverance throughout the never-ending problems that Juan blew at us. Juan huffed and puffed, but our little theater stayed up, and our cast and crew pressed on. After all . . . "the show must go on," right?

As I write this, planning and rehearsals for our next show are well underway, and we look forward to entertaining you and your little ones over the crisp winter evenings with the pantomime, a very popular item with our audiences. Please, I implore you, book early to avoid disappointment as these shows prove to be extremely popular, and seats fill up quickly.

Before the next show ends, we will be getting underway to produce another entertaining adventure for you to enjoy in the new year. I invite anyone who wants to get involved in our wonderful group to audition for roles or just drop by and let us know you want to play at the playhouse. There is so much more to a production than what you see happening on the stage. We need people to perform, of course, but these wonderful shows do not take place without an incredibly hard-working group of individuals who volunteer their time to help out back stage.

Please don't worry if you've never done this before, as many of our volunteers who are now "institutions" at the Pond Playhouse started out exactly the same way. We are a "community" theater, and I want to make it my mission to get as many fresh new faces as possible on or behind the stage this year.

Come on out and "play" at our playhouse!!! *

Our Next Production...

The Christmas Pantomime **Smut's Saga** or **Santa and the Vikings**

Directed by Jeff Pocock
Produced by Catherine Coutts

December 4th to 20th, 2003
Matinees Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14, & 20
Two performances on Dec. 20th

Pantomime encourages the audience to hiss and boo the bad guys and cheer for the good guys. It's the best stocking stuffer you'll find for your children... a lifetime of memories.

*"Our pantomime's about Smut the Viking.
We do hope it is to your liking.
With songs and laughter, thrills and a tear,
It will warm your hearts at this time of the year."*



Book Early!!!

We really can't stress this enough!
Tickets for the pantomime always
sell out fast. It's our most popular
production of the year.

Our box office opens November
3rd for members and November 10th
for non-members. So call...

477-2663

So, What the Heck is a Pantomime, Anyway?

“Pantomime”, was originally a dramatic performance of action without speech. By the 20th century, however, the old form had changed, and it is a traditional feature of the Christmas season. Based on the dramatization of a fairy tale or nursery story, the “panto” also includes songs and topical jokes, buffoonery, and slapstick. This lighthearted entertainment is enjoyed by children 5 to 100 and the audience is strongly encouraged to boo the villains loudly and cheer on the good guys.

TAG’s Christmas pantomime, after many successful sold-out years, continues this tradition. Book early! *

Annual Building Fund Raffle

TAG’s annual raffle is underway. Help us with our ongoing improvements to the Pond Playhouse and receive a 1 in 30 chance to win. Compare those odds with 6/49! Tickets are \$3.00 each, 2 for \$5.00, or 5 for \$10.00. They will be available from board members and at each performance of the annual pantomime.

This year’s prizes are:

- A handmade embroidered vest created and donated by Lyn Gratwick
- A one-of-a-kind sculpture created and donated by Lyn Gratwick
- An original hand painted flower pot
- Two “play-for-one-price” 2003 Golf Privilege Books donated by The Lung Association
- A beautiful leather desk set donated by Louise Ardenne *

Saraguay Club—Dinner & Theatre

The Saraguay Club, in conjunction with the Theatre Arts Guild, offers a dinner and theatre package. On Thursday and Friday evenings during TAG’s productions, you can have dinner at the Saraguay followed by an evening of entertainment at the Pond Playhouse.

During the run of the Christmas Pantomime, this package will be offered on December 4th, 5th, 11th, 12th, 18th, and 19th. Arrive at the Saraguay at 5:30, enjoy a three-course dinner, and then travel to the Pond Playhouse by 7:45 for the play.

To reserve this package, call the Saraguay Club at 477-2581 or 477-95749

Audition Notice *The Wisdom of Eve*

It might seem odd to think about the New Year in November, but it’s time to prepare. TAG will begin 2004 with the acclaimed drama *The Wisdom of Eve* by Mary Orr, and the call is going out for performers to fill the roles. This production will be directed by Rebecca Humphries, assistant directed by Cheryl Theriault, and produced by Eric Rountree.

The director will be casting ten roles—five women and five men—and is seeking actors who fit the following descriptions:

Two Women	age 20 to 30
Three Women	age 40 to 50
Two Men	age 25 to 35
Three Men	age 40 to 50

Auditions will take place at the Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Road, off Purcell’s Cove Road at William’s Lake Road, on Sunday, November 16th, 2003 from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. and on Monday, November 17th, 2003 from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

For further information or to reserve an audition time, please call (902) 477-2663 and leave a message. *

All About *The Wisdom of Eve*

TAG’s winter production, *The Wisdom of Eve*, will run from February 19th to March 6th, 2004. The production team is already being assembled, and auditions have been scheduled (see above).

Adapted from the story by Mary Orr on which the film *All About Eve* and the hit musical *Applause* were based, this stage version is an engrossing and revealing inside story of life in New York’s theatre world, related in terms of an unscrupulous and manipulative ingenue’s rise to Broadway stardom. We follow the development of Eve Harrington’s career, initially regarding her as a shy, sincere, and conscientious individual whose dream is realised when she is taken on as a personal secretary by her actress idol, Margo Crane. Gradually, we become aware of the real “dream,” and the true nature of Eve’s character and motives is revealed as she becomes Margo’s understudy and eventually cheats and blackmails her way to Broadway success. *

Romance with a Twister?

TAG's Season opener, *Romance with a Twist*, was a memorable production for a number of reasons, the most notable of which was the arrival of an old windbag named Juan, who made an unholy mess of everything. Not only did he ravage our trees and shut down most of our municipal power grid; he also took away *Romance's* final dress rehearsal and first two performances!

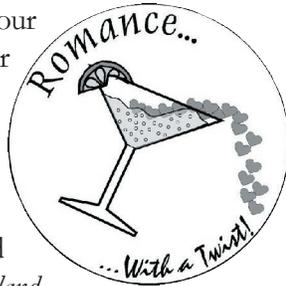
Despite the hardships and uncertainty, the valiant cast and crew (can you hear the *Gilligan's Island* theme in the background?) soldiered on and presented a lively, fun, touching, and entertaining evening of song, dance, laughter, and romance.

Audience response to this showcase of TAG talent was enthusiastic to say the least. Some patrons even called the reservations line after they'd seen the show to say how much they'd enjoyed it!

The cast (Vanessa Buhr-Rountree, Alicia Malcolm, Chris Morse, Scott Murphy, Shawna Peverill, Lizon Richard, Lowell Shore, and Jeremy Watkins) absolutely shone onstage, and director Pam Lutz provided the polish that brought out that shine. Stage manager Patti Morse and her assistant Julie Kennedy kept things running smoothly, while Austin Reade shed some much-needed light on the proceedings once the power came back on.

Suzie Tyner-Keating choreographed the show, Carolyn Boyer accompanied the performers on piano, and her husband Jamie Boyer procured the props and stocked the bar. Lyn Gratwick, Judy Reade, and a veritable pit-crew oversaw the costumes and made the cast look as good as they sounded.

John Gratwick and Eric Rountree co-produced and sighed with relief once the show went on! Many, many thanks to all involved and to all who attended. *



Board of Directors, 2002-2003

At TAG's 2003 Annual General Meeting on September 15th, a new board was elected. Some members of last year's board have returned for another term, but there are a number of new faces. Say hello to the folks who'll be guiding this great community theatre for the upcoming year:

President	Frank MacLean
Vice President	Tom Patillo
Secretary	Esther VanGorder
Treasurer	Carolyn McDonald
Past President	Nick Jupp
Technical Director	Austin Reade
Artistic Director	Brenda Tydemers
Executive Producer	Louise Renault
Membership Manager.....	Helen Goodwin
Publicity Manager	Michele Moore
Props & Costume Manager	Judy Reade
Reservations Manager	Lynn Bungay
Building Manager.....	J Carruth
Special Projects Manager.....	Rich Knowles
Community Relations/Capital Campaign.....	Bill VanGorder
Newsletter Editor	Eric Rountree

Capital Campaign Update

As the year end approaches, we are urging members and supporters to consider, as a part of their year-end donations, making a gift towards the renovations of The Pond Playhouse. Plans for the near future include improvements to the comfort of patron seating, additional lighting for productions, upgrading in the backstage area, and insulation.

For information on how you can help—either as a member of the Capital Campaign Committee or as a donor—contact Bill VanGorder by phone at 453-4077 or via e-mail at bill.vangorder@ns.sympatico.ca *

Ticket Price Increase for 2003/04

TAG has increased its ticket prices this season. Beginning with the October production, *Romance With a Twist*, admission to TAG performances now costs \$12.00. TAG members, seniors, and students will still receive a \$2.00 discount on admission, making their admission price \$10.00.

The extra funds from this ticket price increase will go to the TAG Building Fund.

TAG Members Sell Their Wares

Look for TAG Members Rebecca Humphries and Charlotte McCuish at "Christmas at the Forum" from November 6th to 9th. Rebecca and Charlotte, proprietors of Fabric Fusion Design, will be selling their quilted and fabric art crafts. Great Christmas gift ideas!

The craft fair runs: Thurs. Nov. 6th 3 P.M. to 9 P.M., Fri. Nov. 7th 10 A.M. to 10 P.M., Sat. Nov 8th 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., and Sun. Nov. 10th 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. at the Halifax Forum. *

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary (The fourth in a continuing series)

Judy Reade, Props Mistress/Wardrobe Mistress

Recently, I was looking back over the previous articles I'd written for this series, and I realized that there was a glaring omission! I've done plenty of explaining about the building, about the stage, and about the things seen on stage (or hidden behind the stage), but have said precious little about the actors! So, let's close this particular gap right now...



The performances you see at TAG are the culmination of a six to eight week rehearsal process for the actors. Prior to the start of rehearsals, actors have auditioned and been selected for their roles (the phrase used here is "the play has been cast"). The first rehearsal (called a *read-through*, and often held in someone's home) serves to acquaint everyone with the script (also called the *text*) and allows the actors to meet and mingle. The real work commences when rehearsals begin in the Pond Playhouse, and the actors then learn their *blocking*, i.e., the setting of positions and the movements to be made whilst speaking the text. A blocking instruction, for example, might have the actor "cross R to DSR door," meaning that the person moves to their right, advancing towards the audience, and stopping in the bottom right-hand corner of the stage.

Let's pretend that our actor, whilst *crossing*, has forgotten his/her lines. This person might be tempted to improvise or *ad-lib*, a practice which is not recommended! Much better to request the text by calling out "line," and whoever is filling the position of the *prompter* that evening (usually the stage manager or assistant stage manager) will supply the correct version. As rehearsals progress, more and more of the text is memorized, until the point is reached when all the actors must be *off-book*, meaning that scripts must be hidden away!

A final point: not only must our actors memorize the lines and the blocking; they must learn to *stay in character*. That is, whatever speaking or moving is done must be consistent with the character being portrayed. For example, if an actor is meant to be an elderly gentleman, he will move slowly about the stage, slowly lower himself into a chair, slowly climb a set of stairs. Only when our actor moves into the wings and out of sight of the audience will he *break character*. We aim to make our acting seem effortless at TAG, but in actual fact, as I hope I've shown you, it requires a good deal of effort!

TAG's 2003/2004 Season

October 2nd – 18th: *Romance with a Twist*, a musical directed by Pam Lutz.

December 5th– 21st: *Smut's Saga* or *Santa and the Vikings*, a pantomime by Richard Lloyd, directed by Jeff Pocock.

January 31st, 2004: Workshop.

February 19th– March 6th: *The Wisdom Eve*, by Mary Orr, directed by Rebecca Humphries.

March 20th: Variety Night.

April 22nd– May 8th: *I Hate Hamlet*, by Paul Rudnick, directed by Bill VanGorder.

July 7th– 24th: *Dead Guilty*, by Richard Harris, directed by Frank MacLean.

August 7th: The Annual Gratwick Partnership Readings.

Postal Problems

Due to recent vandalism at the Pond Playhouse, which all but destroyed the theatre's mailbox, it is possible that some incoming mail was removed by the vandals and not picked up by TAG board members. This probably means that some new memberships and renewals have disappeared.

If you have recently renewed and have not yet received your membership card, or if you know someone in this situation, please get in touch with us as soon as possible, and we will verify if we have received your cheque.

As a result of this incident, the board has decided to rent a postal box. Effective immediately, TAG's mailing address is:

**Theatre Arts Guild
287 Lacewood Drive, Unit 103
Suite 412
Halifax, NS B3M 3Y7**

We thank our members for their patience and indulgence and hope this does not cause any undue inconvenience. ✱