

From the Editor...

Warm Thoughts

Eric Rountree, editor

This is the time of year when escaping the real world becomes most attractive. Many vanish from the frozen wastes to bask in the sunny skies of southern climes. Others, more hardy, perhaps, or maybe just leaner of pocketbook, hole themselves up in their abodes and sink into great books or lighter fare such as daytime television. Then there are those of us who tromp through the ice to partake of a different escape from reality: involvement in a community theatre production.

I've been insane enough—ahem, fortunate enough—to have partaken of four TAG productions over the last twelve months, three as producer (including the current production, *The Wisdom of Eve*) and one as general helper and walk-on London bobby. These experiences have proven to me two things: firstly, that community theatre is one helluva lot of fun, and secondly, that the folks at TAG are among the most welcoming, hard working, and pleasantly crazy individuals one might ever want to meet.

Little did I know when I attended that stage management workshop on that snowy Saturday last January—almost a year ago to the day, in fact—that I would become so heavily involved in this organization. I was almost immediately recruited by the board secretary to serve as newsletter editor, and it was only a matter of weeks before I was approached to try my hand at producing a show.

Now, a year later, I've learned a lot, made a lot of friends, and had a lot of fun. If it ain't fun, I says, it ain't worth doin'. And TAG productions are definitely worth doing.

And TAG is a warm place to be on a frosty winter day. *

Latecomers Beware

Please note that the TAG board has officially adopted the following policy regarding late arrivals: Patrons who arrive at the theatre after the show has started will be asked to wait for a suitable break in the performance before being allowed into the house to take their seats. *

Our Next Production...

The Wisdom of Eve

by Mary Orr

Directed by Rebecca Humphreys

Produced by Eric Rountree

February 19th to March 6th, 2004

Sunday Matinee February 29th

Adapted from the story by Mary Orr, on which the film *All About Eve* and the hit musical *Applause* were based. An engrossing and revealing “inside” story of life in New York's theatre world, told in terms of an unscrupulous ingenue's rise to Broadway stardom.



She had not yet decided whether to use her powers for good... or for evil.

Starring

Kate McConnell	as	Eve Harrington
Tara Whalen	as	Karen Roberts
Sandy Lund	as	Margo Crane
Frank MacLean	as	Lloyd Roberts
Calvin Pollard	as	Clement Howell
Darrell Yates	as	Harvey
Keith Rogers	as	Tally-Ho Thompson
Terry Dolan	as	Bert Hinkle
Kristie Welsh	as	Leila
Jody McArthur	as	Vera Franklin

Box office opens January 22nd for members
and January 29th for non-members.

For reservations, call
477-2663

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 Pattillo
Secretary	Esther VanGorder
Treasurer	Carolyn Boyer
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

Auditions for Front-of-House Volunteers

- Everyone is guaranteed a part.
- Watch the play and play a role.
- Qualifications – a smile.
- TAG members, friends of TAG are all welcome.
- Training on the spot – everyone's a natural.
- Phone 477-2663, leave your name and number; Lynn will call.

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 Wisdom of Eve*, this package will be offered on February 19th, 20th, 26th, and 27th, and March 4th and 5th. 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 477-9574.

Audition Notices

I Hate Hamlet by Paul Rudnick

Auditions for *I Hate Hamlet* will be held at the Pond Playhouse on Sunday, February 22nd from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. and on Monday, February 23rd from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. For more information, contact the director, Bill VanGorder, or the stage manager, Esther VanGorder, at 453-4077. The producer is Louise Renault.

The cast consists of three women and three men. Deirdre is age 25-35; Felicia is 60-65; and Lillian is a spry 70. Andrew and Gary are ages 25-35, and John Barrymore is age 60. Swordplay and Shakespeare required.

About the Play...

Successful TV actor Andrew Rally has the opportunity to play Hamlet. The young star's real estate agent is John Barrymore's former lover. This prompts a séance, during which the ghost of Barrymore appears to tutor Rally as Hamlet. The plot is complicated by Rally's ditzy girl friend, his agent, and his fast talking west coast friend.

Later Life by A. R. Gurney

Auditions for *Later Life* will be held at the Pond Playhouse on January 23rd from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and on January 24th from 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Two male and two female actors, comfortable playing in the 39 plus age range, are required.

Rehearsals will begin in March; production dates are June 7th to 13th, 2004 at Neptune Theatre's Second Stage. Some daytime hours will be necessary during the production week.

Script extracts will be available for the audition. No appointments are required. For additional information contact Director Nick Jupp at 477-8697.

About the Play...

Ruth and Austin meet as strangers at a Boston cocktail party and soon realize that they were briefly acquainted in their youth many years ago. As they trip down memory lane, they are repeatedly interrupted by a variety of boisterous partygoers who are all quick to offer up advice and disclose their own life experiences. The burning question amidst all the intrusions, is, of course: Will Ruth and Austin have a second chance at romance and sail off into the Boston Harbour sunset together? *

Capital Campaign Update

The Capital Campaign Committee consists of John Gratwick, Austin Reade, Nick Jupp, Hugh Vincent, J Carruth, Frank MacLean, and chairman Bill VanGorder.

The TAG board has endorsed a list of component projects and researched the cost of each. The first project to be undertaken is the reorganization and re-spacing of the seating in the theatre. We have more than sufficient funds in the Capital Campaign account to cover the cost of this project. The responsibility for the actual seating construction has been turned over to building manager J Carruth, who has assembled and is chairing a building committee that includes Rich Knowles, Austin Reade, and Hugh Vincent.

The Capital Campaign Committee has broken the entire wish list into projects that can be completed when money, time, and other resources are available. The components of the Renovation and Building (not in any particular order) are:

Lobby expansion	\$145,000.00
Lighting & sound	65,000.00
Ceiling, insulation, & air conditioning	60,000.00
Roof	20,000.00
Exterior upgrade	65,000.00
New stage floor	3,000.00
Seating realignment	5,000.00
Dressing room improvements	<u>112,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$475,000.00

Next Steps

The Capital Campaign Committee launched the next step in December, when we began the “Every Member” phase of the campaign. TAG members are being asked to support the campaign so that when we approach corporate, business, foundation, or government prospects, we will be able to tell them that the members are already supporting the project to the best of their abilities.

As a TAG Member, you can be of great help by identifying past members and supporters who will want to support TAG. We are looking for the name, current contact information, nature of involvement in TAG, and other pertinent details about former active TAGers. These may be successful actors who once worked at TAG or successful businesspersons or professionals who were once active with us. Please call or email Bill VanGorder with any information you have in this regard. 453-4077 or bill.vangorder@ns.sympatico.ca *

Annual Building Fund Raffle

Please support the Annual TAG Raffle. The tickets will be sold at all performances of *The Wisdom of Eve*. Prizes include an original hand-painted flowerpot donated by Lynn Buguay, a one-of-a-kind sculpture created and donated by Lyn Gratwick, a handmade embroidered vest also created and donated by Lyn Gratwick, and a \$50 Golf Privilege 2-for-1 book donated by The Lung Association of Nova Scotia.

Tickets are \$3.00 each, two for \$5.00, or five for \$10.00. Tickets may be purchased from TAG board members or at the bar on performance nights. Only 500 will be printed.

The draw will take place at the final performance of *The Wisdom of Eve*. *

Donations of Costumes & Props

Judy Reade, Props Mistress/Wardrobe Mistress

A big ‘thank-you’ to those who have donated costumes and/or props to TAG recently—I only wish I knew your names so that I could thank you personally!

If anyone reading this is clearing out cupboards and closets and thinking of donating items, then I would appreciate hearing from you in advance. I do now have an excellent stock of contemporary items and accessories such as hats, gloves, and scarves. I am, however, always on the lookout for men’s and women’s 18th and 19th century clothing (or items which can pass as such), including shoes and jewellery. *

Upcoming TAG Productions

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

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.

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

Judy Reade, Props Mistress/Wardrobe Mistress

Pantomime—A Little of the Background

Many of you will recently have enjoyed our annual Christmas pantomime, *Smut's Saga* or *Santa and the Vikings*. Although pantomime as a theatrical form is still new to many, pantomime has a long history of development, and it is not English in origin, but Italian.

In 16th century Italy, a form of street theatre evolved called *commedia dell'arte*, which had groups of actors traveling from place to place to present a standard repertoire of stories. The format of the presentations was a boisterous one, and included music, dance, and acrobatics as well as acting. By the middle of the 17th century, the form was established in England, together with its panoply of stock characters—a lover and his lady, the woman's servant girl (*columbine*) and the impish *arlechino* (anglicized as "harlequin"). The term "pantomime" was coined by the English actor John Rich at this time. Pantomime means literally "all mime," an indication that much of the action was determined through the bodily or facial movements of the performers. By this century, the form had been expanded to commence with a serious (but short!) introduction followed by the depiction of a well-known story or tale, which itself was followed by the *harlequinade*. In this third section, the actors transformed themselves into the characters of the *commedia*, whilst elaborate scene changes took place.

Gradually, the *harlequinade* section fell out of favour and, by the 19th century, had mostly been dropped, with the story section (based on children's fairy tales or nursery rhymes) predominating. And if you're wondering why the principal female role in our pantomime was played by a man (Dame Dustpan, as portrayed by Stuart Martin), the reason can be traced back to the *commedia* too. One of the stock figures from the *commedia* is a clown, and it was a very famous interpreter of the clown role in London in the 1820s—Joseph Grimaldi—who decided to play the baron's wife in a production of *Cinderella*. Grimaldi had such a success that other male comic actors soon followed suit, and another pantomime tradition was born! *

Errata Data

Apologies are due to Rebecca Humphreys, whose surname was spelled incorrectly in the last issue of *Contact*. Three times.

Sorry about that, Rebecca!

The Theatre Arts Guild's Fifth Annual VARIETY NIGHT

Saturday, March 20th, 2004, AT 8 P.M.
Bar opens at 7:30 p.m.

Here's Your Chance To Show Us Your Stuff!

The Pond Playhouse is more than a venue for five fabulous plays per season. For a number of years, we've presented annual Summer Readings, gathered and produced by members, as well as our lively, zany bit of March madness, the Annual Variety Night—a talent show by and for TAG members.

Any member of TAG is invited to prepare a skit, sing a song, recite a poem, perform a mini-play, dance. Find a friend or go solo...

This is a two hour show, so here are the rules of the game:

The number of acts accepted is limited by the length of the show. We like to give as many performers as possible an opportunity, So please, limit your act to *five* minutes. Part of the creative process is to find your own costumes/props/music (TAG can help if you ask nicely of Judy Reade, Props/Costumes Mistress)

For more information please call Michele Moore at 477-4943 and Book Your Act! Book early to avoid disappointment.

In Memoriam

TAG lost one of its staunchest supporters on November 21st, 2003, with the death of Mrs. Bernice Ross. Mrs. Ross was an honorary member of the Guild, and though she was no longer able to attend performances, maintained an interest and provided financial support until recently. She is best remembered for her work on the Board in the 1960s, after the loss through fire of the Guild's homebase at the former College Street School. Bernice Ross played a major role in helping TAG acquire the premises at 6 Parkhill Road (then a church hall) in 1966, using some of her own funds for the purchase. *

Contact is produced five times annually.

Please send comments or contributions to
Eric Rountree, newsletter editor, at
eric@routree.com