

# The Wednesday Crew is thrilled to tirelessly assist the Pond Playhouse

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The Wednesday Crew takes care of Pond Playhouse and helps construct the sets for each of the five new plays that Theatre Arts Guild puts up each year, including this set from the play, *Rope*. Photo shot in rehearsal, staged in 2019. Bruce Goodick photo

The first thing the Wednesday Crew volunteers do at Pond Playhouse, according to longtime crew member Bill VanGorder, is put the kettle on for tea.

VanGorder is a regular member of the Wednesday Crew, a team dedicated to the upkeep and improvement of the Pond Playhouse, located at 6 Parkhill Road in Jollimore, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The core group of seven meets mid-week to plan their workday.

The Pond Playhouse is owned by Theatre Arts Guild (TAG), a community theatre group established in 1931 and comprised entirely of volunteers.

"In 1962, TAG was able to acquire a former Church Hall," says VanGorder. They named it Pond Playhouse.

"Until fifteen years ago," he recalls, "very few upgrades were done."

The first big project included additions to make space for a lobby and rehearsal hall. A Thursday group evolved to assess the project, create a to-do list and begin checking off items. While the day of the week changed, the “Wednesday” Crew never lost momentum and certainly, the to-do list continues to build by the day.

VanGorder notes the crew undertook several more additions over the years, and recently finished a kitchen renovation requiring the installation of a new exhaust system.

The work is not all drywall, doors and studs. The crew takes care of Pond Playhouse.

“We do all the maintenance and upkeep,” says VanGorder. “There is no paid staff at TAG. No janitor, no one is taking out the garbage or changing the light bulbs.” It is all volunteers.

The Wednesday Crew also responds to emergencies, or when something breaks or goes wrong.

“Last spring ... ice built up and water started to leak in, onto the stage. Some Wednesday Crew guys came in and cleaned it up ... to get it ready for a performance later that day.”

With five plays staged every year, the crew is always busy building and altering the unique sets they’ve created for each production.

Asked why volunteers choose to volunteer at the theatre over other opportunities, VanGorder suggests several reasons. First, there is a variety of work.

“No two weeks are the same,” says VanGorder, “there are major and minor projects.”

Currently, the crew is preparing for the next show opening in March. It’s a comedy called ‘Dracula – the Bloody Truth.’

“The play is amazing,” says VanGorder, “and very different ... the props, lighting and scenery are characters in themselves.”

Secondly, VanGorder describes a sense of pride that comes with helping to stage a show.

“The joy is in seeing the joy the audience gets and knowing our work was behind it; knowing they are happy, comfortable and warm because of what we do. When each new show goes up, and we can see our handiwork, we know we’ve contributed to making it easier for the artistic people to do what they have to.”

VanGorder says everyone in the crew looks forward to Wednesday.

“The truth is, [the theatre] is a big toy for us to play with every week. It’s our hobby.”

VanGorder adds members of the crew also volunteer for other non-profits but can always be counted on to show up at Pond Playhouse each Wednesday, for tea.

The Wednesday Crew is looking for volunteers. All are welcome. Visit [tagtheatre.com](http://tagtheatre.com) or call 902-477-2663.

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