

CONTACT

September, 2004

www.tagtheatre.com
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The Official Newsletter of



Canada's oldest continually operating
community theatre. 74 years and growing!

(New) President's Message

—*Esther VanGorder, president*



Although the calendar tells us that the new year starts on January 1st, I always feel that September is really the beginning—a new school year, the start of extra-curricular activities, and, most importantly, the beginning of a new season at TAG.

At the AGM on September 13th, the membership acclaimed the new slate of officers (detailed later in this newsletter) including myself as president. It's a huge responsibility that could be quite daunting if not for the incredibly talented and dedicated group of directors, managers and committees that work so hard to keep the Theatre Arts Guild the vibrant and self-sustaining organization it is.

I'm taking this opportunity to say a big "Thank you!" to outgoing President Frank MacLean for all his efforts last season—a year which included not one, but two natural disasters: Juan and White Juan. You "done good," pal; be proud of what you accomplished in 2003/04.

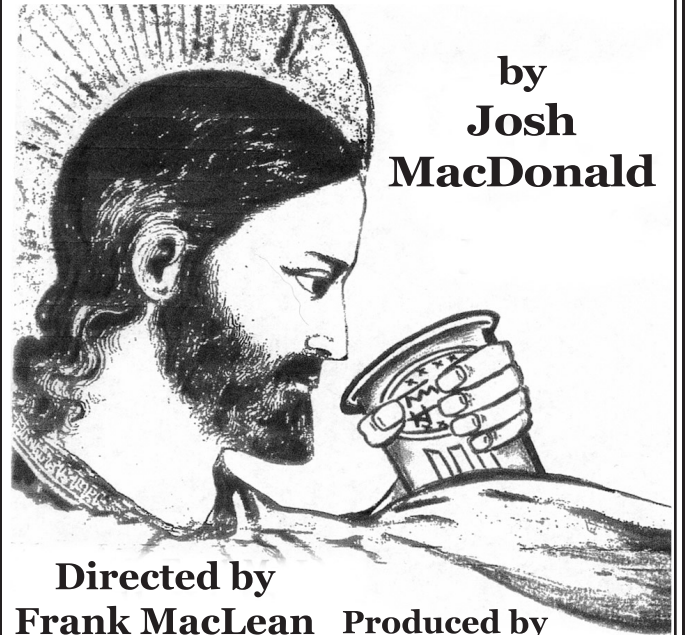
Over the summer, Technical Director Austin Reade and his incredible crew of Joe O'Brien, Nick Jupp, Patricia Martinson, Bill VanGorder and others (forgive me if I don't mention everyone) have been working feverishly to complete the huge project of enlarging the tech booth and updating the electrical system in preparation for the arrival of our new, state-of-the-art lighting system. The amount of time and effort that is going into this project is truly mind-boggling. (Rumour has it that the cats don't recognize Austin anymore because he spends so much time at the theatre.) So, when you're sitting in the audience before the performance of *Halo*, take a look behind you at the booth window, and you'll be able to see a tiny bit of the evidence of the tremendous work that has been done.

It's going to be an exciting year, both on stage and behind the scenes. I encourage anyone and everyone to get involved in some aspect of the theatre, whether it be acting, props & costumes, working with the backstage crew, working front-of-house, or painting the back wall of the building. Without people, the Pond Playhouse would be just another old building. It's *you* who make it our home away from home, where the trials and tribulations of everyday life melt away when you walk in the door. That's the real magic of TAG. *

Our Next Production...

HALO

by
**Josh
MacDonald**



**Directed by
Frank MacLean** Produced by
Helen Goodwin

September 30th - October 16th, 2004

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8:00 P.M.

Sunday Matinee October 10th

at 2:00 P.M.

Starring...

KRISTEN LANGILLE	as	CASEY
JODY MACARTHUR	as	LIZ
IAN WHALEN	as	JANSEN
DAVE CHAMBERS	as	DONALD
DAVID CONNELLAN	as	FATHER J.J.
ANGELA BUTLER		FEMALE SWING ACTOR
ROB MCINTYRE		MALE SWING ACTOR

For reservations, call

477-2663

or book online at

www.tagtheatre.com

Upcoming TAG Productions

September 30th to October 16th, 2004

Halo, a dramatic comedy by Josh McDonald
Directed by Frank MacLean

December 2nd to 18th, 2004

*Red Riding's in the Hood: A Not-So-Traditional
Pantomime*, a classic tale adapted and directed by
Lorne Abramson & Cheryl Theriault

February 24th to March 12th, 2005

To Be Announced (but it will be a comedy to
brighten the February "blahs")

April 28th to May 14th

Dancing at Lughnasa, A Drama by Brian Friel
Directed by Louise Renault

July 7th to 23rd, 2005

The Hollow, a mystery by Agatha Christie
Directed by Iris Paterson

Saraguay Club—Dinner & Theatre

The Saraguay Club and The Theatre Arts Guild offer a dinner and theatre package (\$37.00 plus tax and gratuities) on Thursday and Friday evenings during TAG's productions.

During the run of *Halo*, this package will be offered on September 30th and October 1st, 7th, 8th, 14th, and 15th. Arrive at the Saraguay at 5:30, enjoy a three-course dinner, and then travel to the Pond playhouse by 7:30 for an evening of entertainment.

To reserve this package, call TAG at 477-2663.

The Theatre Arts Guild

Location:

The Pond Playhouse
6 Parkhill Road
Halifax, NS

Mailing Address:

287 Lacewood Drive
Unit 103, Suite 412
Halifax, NS B3M 3Y7

Telephone: (902) 477-2663

Internet:

www.tagtheatre.com
info@tagtheatre.com

Welcome the New Board

Each year, before the snow flies, but well after the Sears Wish Book arrives on our doorsteps, a special, time-honoured ritual takes place in a not-so-secret location in Jollimore. Thespians of all shapes, sizes, and wardrobes gather together to choose their leaders for the upcoming season.

So it was on Monday, September 13th, when TAG held its 2004 Annual General Meeting. The incantations, invocations, and tribal dances are not open for publication, but here are the results of this year's TAG Board nominations process:

President	Esther VanGorder
Vice President	Nick Jupp
Secretary	Michele Moore
Past President	Frank MacLean
Treasurer	Carolyn Boyer
Artistic Director	Brenda Tyedmers
Executive Producer	Louise Renault
Technical Director	Austin Reade
Publicity Manager	Bill VanGorder
Building Manager	J Carruth
Props/Costume Manager	Judy Reade
Reservations Manager	Lynn Bungay
Membership Records	Helen Goodwin
Newsletter Editor	Eric Rountree
Special Projects Manager	Rich Knowles
Member at Large	Hugh Vincent
FOH Manager	open
Fund Raising Manager	open

Please give a warm welcome to the 2004/2005 TAG Board, and for heaven's sake, wish them good weather! ✨

Ruffles and Recitations

The annual Gratwick Partnership Readings were held on Saturday evening, August 7th. This event, always highly anticipated, was this year combined with a costume retrospective hosted by Judy Reade, TAG's costume mistress, and Val Tyner from Dartmouth Players. The costumes were presented in the first half of the show, with the readings coming after a brief intermission.

The readings themselves, which focused this time on "Insects and Other Creepy Crawlies," were presented by John and Lyn Gratwick, Judy Reade, Nick Jupp, Vanessa Buhr-Rountree, and Eric Rountree. The material was lively, interesting, and only occasionally disquieting.

Both halves of the show were well-received, and both featured moments of hilarity that will long be remembered. This TAG tradition, now in its eleventh year, continues to entertain our members in a novel and interesting way. ✨

Order of the Grey Squirrel

The Order of the Grey Squirrel, named for the stuffed grey squirrel that has graced many sets in the past few years and who President Esther VanGorder insists brings good luck to any show she stage manages by his presence in the booth, was created in 2001 to honour any TAG member who performs above and beyond the call of duty. It is extremely hard to single out one person to receive this award, because so many people do so much for TAG, but, at the AGM on September 13th, the award was presented to Lynn Bungay for 2003 (we missed it at last year's AGM) for her dedicated work as our reservations manager, and to Louise Renault for 2004 to recognize her incredible efforts as executive producer on the board and as producer of two shows last season. Louise had agreed to produce *I Hate Hamlet*, but jumped into the breach and took over as producer of last year's pantomime as well. *



More About *Halo*

The small Nova Scotia town of Nately has just hit the big time, and life is forever changed when the image of Jesus appears on the side of a Tim Horton's restaurant. The town's inhabitants are challenged to ask difficult questions about faith, life, and love with sometimes moving, sometimes hilarious results.

Complicating the matter, of course, are the more mundane questions of whether this appearance is a miracle, an accident, or a quite possibly even a hoax. At the centre of this wickedly entertaining play resides the more existential and personal question of what has happened to our notion of meaning and ethics in the strip-mall culture of concrete and crass competition which has replaced a more pastoral and rural life of care for the earth, the cycle of the seasons and its festivals, and the blessings of renewal in the family. Has religion lost the ability to mediate these two conditions, or did it ever really have that power?

Written by Nova Scotian Josh MacDonald and originally produced by Nova Scotia's renowned Two Planks and a Passion Theatre Company, *Halo* is a superb examination of the power of forgiveness and the need to believe. Featuring a cast of seven, it is theatre at its very best—a high-wire act of comedy and tragedy with beautifully written, believable characters who never lose their balance.

Halo will run from September 30th to October 16th, 2004. The box office is now open, and tickets can be reserved by calling 477-2663 or on TAG's website www.tagtheatre.com. Prices are \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, students and members. *

Please Renew Your Membership!

TAG memberships for the upcoming season are due on September 1st. Renew today to continue your membership benefits. TAG members receive a discount off all shows, can book seats earlier than the general public, can attend special member-only events, and receive six informative newsletters each year.

Honorary Member Elected

Patricia Martinson, who has been a devoted TAG member for many years now and who works on the construction of many sets, was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Theatre Arts Guild at the Annual General Meeting on September 13th. Patricia was an integral part of the construction team on the booth enlargement project and has provided good, sound advice on many occasions. Members who have enjoyed our annual Variety Nights will know Patricia for her wonderful poetry and readings. Congratulations, Patricia! *

Producers Needed!

TAG is looking for folks who are interested in producing. No experience necessary, but some special qualities are needed:

A desire to work with a bunch of good folks on a creative project, great organizational skills, a good sense of humour, a natural ability to lead without seeming to, (the secret is all about delegating), and, also, a desire to learn the secret workings that make TAG the wonderful place it is!!!

Interested? Contact, Louise Renault, Executive Producer, at 477-0530.



**Hey! That
squirrel is
NOT grey!**

Expanding Your Theatre Vocabulary

(The eighth in a continuing series)

“Stage Costumes - The Inside Story”

—Judy Reade, *Props Mistress/Wardrobe Mistress*

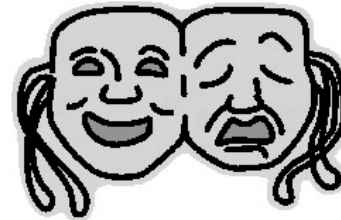
I hope that a number of you were able to attend our evening of readings last month, and consequently enjoyed the first half of the programme, which highlighted some of the costumes made for productions both at TAG and at Dartmouth Players in the last ten years. One of the things which struck me when I was preparing for this programme was the amount of detail that designers and sewers had given to certain pieces in an effort to truly express the personality of the character through the costume—and we’re not just talking about a dress or a suit here, but all of the elements which help an actor “feel” the part and which give the audience clues as to his/her expression and attitudes. If any of you saw our production of *Later Life* at Neptune’s Studio Theatre in June, this point was well illustrated by the costume changes made by Angela Butler and Terry Coolen, who played five characters each. As well as changing the basic costume, Angela and Terry changed shoes, hose, jewellery, watches, and wigs in the effort to fully depict their characters.

Fitting the costume to the character may seem somewhat elemental to us today, but in the history of theatre, this is a fairly recent development. For the dramas and comedies of Ancient Greece and Rome, actors wore everyday dress, making for considerable conformity among the cast. There were, therefore, other clues which helped the audience to determine what type of character was being portrayed: a certain decoration on the hem of the robe, a pattern or series of patterns, or the use of a particular colour (yellow, red, or purple were favoured). Both Greeks and Romans



also used stylized masks that covered the whole face as another convenient aid to character identification. The withered face of an old man, a drunkard, and a new young wife were some of the most popular forms used.

The tradition of the cast wearing everyday dress for theatrical performances (no matter what the time period of the piece) continued up to the eighteenth century. Costumes worn for plays were often little different from what could be seen in any street, or any drawing room, with some fanciful touches. A late eighteenth-century design for a costume for Boadicea, the Bronze Age English warrior queen, for example, could serve equally well for a ball gown, except for the fake leopard skin draped around the shoulders! It took another hundred years for theatrical thinking to come around to the notion that accuracy and completeness in costume should be the norm—which is perhaps not a bad thing, since, if we were still following the Greek model, we might have to print a “costume pattern checklist” in every programme! *



Project Looking for Volunteers

Brigitte Neumann, ED of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, has asked TAG about a project of the advisory council. They are holding a campaign workshop in November for women interested in running for public office. This is to help and encourage more women to offer to run for public office. They need 3 to 5 actors (male and female) to role play the public answering the door during a campaign. The workshop would take place at Mount Saint Vincent on Saturday, November 20th for about one-and-half hours. If you are interested, contact Elaine Casey at blueiris66@hotmail.com *

Support Our Friends!

Dartmouth Players

presents

Nurse Jane Goes to Hawaii

November 10th to 27th

Call 465-7592 for reservations.

CentreStage Theatre

presents

Three to Get Married

September 11th to October 23rd

Call (902)678-8040 for reservations.

Contact is produced five times annually.

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