

# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS ISSUE of the 2006-2007 Annual General Meeting of TAG, September 2007.

# CONTACT

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

September, 2007

The Official Newsletter of



info@tagtheatre.com

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

Angela Butler

## Belles By Mark Dunn

Welcome to TAG's season opener, a wry comedy of six sisters. All of the sisters are away from their hometown, scattered across the country except Peggy who lives with Mom. When Peggy takes their mother to the hospital, the drama unfolds in one weekend, two acts and forty-five phone calls. Each sister is dealing with problems of her own. Dunn's dialogue and intriguing story line captures the audience through compelling conflicts, sibling rivalry and some bad tuna.

To bring this production to the stage we are pleased to have in the cast, veterans of TAG, Deb Post and Helen Goodwin along with Kirstin Howell and Heather Gaskill. We also welcome new to TAG, Deanna Turner and Christine Daniels. Our one male voice in the show is the lucky Jonathan MacDonald.

Being the first show to open the new expanded lobby is an honor and we hope everyone old and new members alike join us to celebrate this remarkable milestone for TAG.

### YOU CAN RECEIVE THE TAG EMAIL UPDATES

You can receive regular updates on Theatre Art Guild activities by subscribing to our email updates. These messages are sent out to our members and friends to keep you up to date on auditions, plays, special events and other community theatre news. To add your address to the TAG Email Updates list, send a request to the email update editor, Bill VanGorder at [Bill@MRCassociates.ca](mailto:Bill@MRCassociates.ca) or go to our website, [www.tagtheatre.com](http://www.tagtheatre.com) and sign up there.

**TAG Parking Tips:** Parking for our TAG audience is available in our parking lot as well as in the lot behind the Sikh Temple, two driveways past the theatre. As well, cars may park (carefully) along the SOUTH side of Parkhill Road (the opposite side of the street from the Pond Playhouse). Cars are not allowed to park on both sides of Parkhill, so the north side (close to the Pond Playhouse) does not have parking. If cars park on both side of the street, it provides significant obstruction to through-traffic and may block emergency vehicles altogether. Thank you for observing the parking rules.

The Theatre Arts Guild proudly presents

# BELLES

By MARK DUNN  
Directed by ANGELA BUTLER  
Produced by Scott Murphy

September 27th to October 13th 2007  
Thursday, Friday and Saturday Evenings at 8:00pm  
with a matinee Sunday October 7th at 2:00pm

For Reservations, call 477-2663  
or visit [www.tagtheatre.com](http://www.tagtheatre.com)  
produced with kind permission of Samuel French Inc.

### TAG CONSTRUCTION ZONE

TAG has been a busy place this summer. Many volunteers have given up their summer to ensure the new lobby extension is ready for our first show of the season. We hope you enjoy the few candid moments included in the newsletter taken in the construction zone.

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

Nick Jupp

## Belles Is A Terrific Play

We have an exciting season coming up starting with *Belles* directed by Angela Butler. Angela cast the production early in the summer and rehearsals got under way mid August. The cast and crew are bravely rehearsing with construction going on around them as the final stages of our new lobby and rehearsal hall are completed.

*Belles* is a terrific play by Mark Dunn that's been produced across North America to great acclaim. With six sisters keeping in touch from their chosen homes across Canada; in a very humorous way *Belles* brings to life the unique characters that share certain common bonds. You will very much enjoy meeting the sisters and sharing their trials, loves and tribulations.

For the balance of the new season we have world premiere Pantomime for you at Christmas, followed by a wonderful comedy/drama basically all about lust and treachery. Next is a hilarious Victorian comedy based on an Oscar Wilde short story - this play was a total sell-out in Calgary for its professional Canadian premiere and we believe our production may be the amateur Canadian premiere as well. To close the season, next summer we have a murder mystery to confound you and keep you guessing as the complex plot unfolds.

We look forward to seeing you in the new lobby for the wonderful season opening play *Belles* by Mark Dunn.



(Above Left) Dust control during the old lobby demolition  
(Above right) Real concrete weighs more than Styrofoam!

Cheryl Theriault

## Volunteer Coordinator Report

This was my first year as Volunteer Coordinator. It was also the first year TAG had a Volunteer Coordinator! With many great ideas, a few have come to fruition. It was my goal to get new people involved and this was achieved in part through the summer show which paired up new TAG members with veterans and set up an apprenticeship situation for the Pinter productions.

As well, I found the best way to get folks involved is to ask! A few cold calls to a few who mentioned they'd like to get involved yielded wonderful results, for example, David and Marjorie Swingler, and Jeanne Thomas who ably manned the reservations line for the last two shows. David and Marjorie will return and Jeanne is keen to continue on as part of our newly created Newsletter Folding Group.

Currently, we are organizing a team of "to be trained" Front of House Managers led by TAG veteran Louise Renault. If you are interested in hearing more about this opportunity to get involved with TAG call me (Cheryl) at 492-0838.

As well, with the opening of the new lobby, I look forward to organizing a "Welcome to TAG" evening which will allow anybody interested in getting involved at TAG to learn more about all of the exciting opportunities in our wonderful little theatre!

This year will be a busy one! Come join the fun!

(Left) Wherever you can find a seat...



**GET YOUR NEWSLETTER IN COLOUR!** Members, you can receive your newsletter in COLOUR, electronically -- and it will save TAG the printing and postage costs. Just send the request along with your email address to: [info@tagtheatre.com](mailto:info@tagtheatre.com)



(Above) One works, three observe...  
(Left) The demolition crew in the old TAG lobby





**Belles** by Mark Dunn *Directed by Angela Butler*

**Dates: Sept 27th to Oct 13th**

**Jack and the Beans Talk: A Genetically Modified Pantomime**  
by Brenda Tyedmers and Cheryl Theriault. *Directed by Cheryl Theriault*

Times are desperate and Jack's mother has ordered him off to market to sell the family cow. But when Jack awakens to find that Lotty (the cow) has run off to seek fame and fortune he follows and discovers the secret behind the mysterious drought, a solid reason to not expect your apples to be TOO shiny and...oh yes...talking beans!?! **Dates: Dec 6th to Dec 22nd**

**A Night in the Theatre** by Lawrence Casler *Directed by Nick Jupp*

Margaret and Stanley Locker and their friends, Donna and Walter Pace, are at the theatre for their weekly dose of culture. This week's ordeal is Hamlet. As the evening progresses, secrets emerge and friendships unravel amid the audience's laughter. You may even recognize these rude playgoers as the obnoxious people who sometimes sit behind you.

**Dates: Feb 21st to March 8th**

**Lord Arthur Savile's Crime** by Constance Cox, based on a short Oscar Wilde story. *Directed by Phil Reid*

The rather gullible and incompetent Lord Arthur Savile finds out from a palm reader on the eve of his marriage that he is destined to commit a murder. He decides to commit the murder before getting married in order to save his fiancée from embarrassment. With the help of a loony anarchist and his sensible butler, Lord Arthur embarks on what turns out to be a madcap comedic adventure. **Dates: Apr 24th to May 10th**

**A Perfect Crime** written by Warren Manzi *Directed by Frank MacLean*

A traditional mystery thriller with a sexy, probably guilty psychiatrist wife accused of bumping off her wealthy, sickly husband. A detective, assigned to the case, seeks to discover who murdered the husband, if he was murdered at all, while fending off the wife's advances. **Dates: June 26th to July 17th**

Judy Reade

## TAG a Community Resource

Highlights from my report to the Annual General Meeting  
Donations - Lots of them! And mostly from anonymous donors. Thank you for thinking of Theatre Arts Guild!

A Community Resource - Again, lots of activity, with many groups requesting loans and assistance. This season it has been a pleasure to work with several school groups - Grade 6 at Armbrae Academy, the Drama Club at Sacred Heart Boys School and the students of King's View Academy.

Location, Location, Location - While the costume stock stayed firmly in place, the props stock began a wandering process, due to the renovations to the Pond Playhouse! However, with the new season, props will be moved to what was formerly the workshop/electrical equipment storage room, meaning that, for the first time, our props and costume accessories can be accessed together. My thanks to Cheryl Theriault and all those who helped move props 'from pillar to post,' and a special thanks to those who gutted/restored/painted the new area - Austin Reade, Joe O'Brien and Bill VanGorder.

Michele Moore

## Publicity Report

On presenting this report I would like to acknowledge and thank the President and fellow Board Members and Managers for their help with publicizing our season to friends, colleagues and family members - publicity is a team effort, and we make quite a team. Furthermore, I would like to especially recognize Bill VanGorder for his untiring efforts with electronic publicity for TAG, TAG's alumni and community theatre in general.

Once again we have been blessed by good choices of plays and by those who walk through our doors at auditions. TAG received many "bravo" comments about bringing David Hare and Harold Pinter to our stage. Hats off to the two One-Acts that closed our season - Eric Rountree in his directorial debut with "The Lover", and Rebecca Humphreys "Night School" were wonderful mentors for stage management and production, as well as introducing us to new actors.

We lost a fellow actor David Chambers this season who will be sorely missed by everyone in the theatre and arts community. He left behind an impressive body of work to remember him by. He really was one of a kind.

The traditional family show for the Christmas season remains highly popular and continues to fill the seats. This season, a late change in director lead to a triumvirate of directors, and our deep thanks go out to Eric Rountree, Rebecca Humphreys and Cheryl Theriault who co-directed as well as stage managed. "Skylight" showcased Angela Butler in her directorial debut, and was finely cast with the very talented Beth VanGorder, Frank MacLean and newcomer to TAG stage Dylan Aucoin.

"Ali Baba and the Seven Thieves" cast included our largest number of Grade 11-12 students, three of whom: Hilary Lanyon, John Han and Andy Watt have been accepted in arts programs in Ontario and the United States. "Office Hours" introduced several new faces to TAG stage and delighted the audiences.

"Scotland Road" was taken to Neptune Studio stage in June - the experience for our cast and crew in an alternative setting to the Pond Playhouse is very beneficial to all of us. Neptune welcomes the opportunity to mentor.

"The Lover" has been entered into The Fringe Festival, 2007. The cast of Vanessa Walton-Bone and Phil Reid received rave reviews from audiences and theatre critics for their virtuoso performances.

I'd like to acknowledge the enormous amount of work being carried out at the Pond Playhouse by TAG dedicated volunteers. Thanks to their commitment, we now have a rehearsal hall; we can offer our patrons more comfortable lobby space, and there has been an increase in the number of toilets, wheelchair accessible included. All this is available for an amazingly affordable price - \$15 for general admission, with a \$3 discount for members, seniors and students at \$12. Membership is still the best deal in town at \$10 per annum.

We encourage all of you to get involved with Theatre Arts Guild by volunteering your spare time to help in any capacity. Try it, you will enjoy - the best and "least hazardous to your health" addiction there is.

In closing, I would like to thank the Board of Directors and Theatre Arts Guild for the opportunity of tackling the Publicity Manager position over the last few years. After 10 years on the Board, as Secretary and then Publicity Manager, I have decided to take a break. I love revitalization and change is always good. I am happy to offer any help to the new Publicity Manager to keep our flag flying high in the community.



September 2007 **Contact**

## The President's Message

This report is longer than usual because it covers my role as President as well as, the tremendous achievement of the Building Committee at TAG this past year with our lobby extension project. The hard core volunteers at the Theatre Arts Guild have, as a group, amassed many decades of dedicated service to community theatre and the Pond Playhouse but this year wins the nomination as the busiest one in memory. It was my honour to be President during a year that saw the most concentrated, sustained, well-organized and productive volunteer output most of us will ever experience.

We had a major construction project (conceived long before we broke ground in 2006, before my term) that was run by theatre volunteers because our budget did not permit us to hire a contractor to oversee the job. This meant that TAG people had to put together the know-how to plan out the phases of construction, price out the skilled labour, schedule and oversee the trades and in many cases, do the work ourselves. We had several active pods including fundraising, task-list organizer, interior design, electrical, carpentry. It wasn't unusual to find trades people working on their specialty while skilled TAG volunteers worked away at other jobs on the site. The summer of 2007 saw our building volunteers work at least five days a week so that we can have the new lobby get its occupancy permit for the first show of the 2007/2008 season, Belles.

Many of these same folk found themselves as key players on one or more of our five shows during the 2006/2007 season- working on the lighting design for a show as well as the lighting design for the lobby extension or directing a show as well as helping to tear apart the old lobby. As well, many of our core volunteers mentored new people.

We thank each and every person who contributed financially and otherwise to the building project. We are grateful to HRM for their grant of \$25,000 as well as John and Lyn Gratwick for their 'matching donation' offer (more than once) in which they matched other people's donations dollar for dollar, until they had donated \$5000 in matching contributions. The upstairs rehearsal room of the new lobby is "Gratwick Hall" and the downstairs lobby is "Reade Hall" in appreciation of the tremendous contributions of both couples. Austin Reade has been involved with the Lobby Extension project from the beginning and became the 'go-to' person during Phase Two of the project.

Our Building Committee's work has only just begun. Once the new lobby is up and running, it will turn its attention to the rest of the Pond Playhouse and the many necessary capital improvements that await our efforts.

This season's Board was organized into a group of Directors (board members who attended the monthly meetings) as well as a group of Managers (not voting Board members, but people who perform important tasks such as newsletter editor, Membership and webmaster. I did create a new Board position of Volunteer Coordinator which has proven to be a real asset during such a demanding year.

Our Board and Managers met these and other challenges with good grace, creative thinking and most of all, a cooperative approach. Several of our important positions were filled by new people, all

of whom worked very hard to make a seamless transition. For the record, I thank each board member and manager warmly for your talent, your passion, your unique contributions and your unflagging support.

On the creative front, our season presented that special mix that defines and differentiates TAG. We gave our audiences a wide range of theatre experience including edgy explorations of relationships, family entertainment with the Pantomime, non-traditional mystery, sophisticated comedy and a two-in-one combo (two one-act plays). Several productions mentored new cast and crew members and we are never more satisfied than when a 'new face' shows up again and becomes a familiar one. On many evenings I sat in our (old) lobby and listened to the magic taking place inside the house. There's that hush that falls over the audience just before the lights go up- or the collective intake of breath during a tense moment- shouts of laughter and sometimes, tears. TAG holds a lot of memories for a small building, including many remembrances of David Chambers, who died this year before he could take part in one of our plays, Office Hours. Fortunately, a theatre is a great place for preserving good memories. I congratulate and thank not only David, but each production - cast and crew- who put their heart and soul into every play we present and who create layer by layer, the moments, memories and experience that inform the Pond Playhouse and make TAG what it is, a top-notch community theatre.

**FUNDS STILL REQUIRED: WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH. BUT ONCE WE GET OUR OCCUPANCY PERMIT THERE IS STILL A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE, PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE NEW EXTENSION AND TACKLING LONG-AWAITED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE OLD BUILDING. YOUR DONATIONS, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, WILL MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.**

Lori Scott

## Membership Report

The table below presents the demographics of the membership for TAG during the 2006-2007 year.

Status	Renewing	New	Total
Adult	154	82	236
Senior	80	17	97
Students	2	7	9
Honorary	10		10
Totals	246	106	352

There are presently 37 members receiving newsletters by email.

Changes have been made to the membership letters as requested by the Board and relayed by Esther VanGorder concerning mailing address and booking reservations.

During August a renewal form will be sent out to members with their personal information. Members than can make any corrections and mail the form with the membership fee for the up coming season. Sending the membership form separate from the newsletter may help draw the member's attention to act upon.

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Submissions for **CONTACT** can be emailed

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