

President's Message

Nick Jupp, President

Not wishing to ruin my reputation for getting most things related to dates and times wrong, I announced in the last newsletter that my message would be the last. Not so; here I am again, but with the AGM coming up on the 15th of September and a new slate of officers to be elected, I promise this will definitely be my last president's message.



Photo by Rozanne Smith

It's been a privilege sitting in the president's chair for the last two years. I have done the job once before in the early 1990s, which, if you recall, was back in the days when we still had a mud parking lot, and any house over fifty percent full called for much celebration. Common to both of these terms, however, is my amazement at how much there is to learn about theatre and just how much the people involved know.

Everybody at TAG is a volunteer, mostly without formal training, so the learning process is based on the passing of skills from one person to another. Through mutual help and the free giving of knowledge, somehow TAG manages to sustain a group of people capable of producing drama, comedy, mystery, musicals, and other events such as technical workshops. All of this takes place without a single paycheque being written, without any debt incurred, and without any large scale corporate or government support.

Back in the dark ages of the 1960s, it was fashionable to live in a commune, or at least to say you would like to. The dictionary defines communal activity as "participated in, shared, or used in common by members of a group or community." And what better way to describe the spirit of everybody involved with TAG? Founded in 1931, the TAG commune has continued year after year passing on the skills and responsibilities from generation to generation, enabling thousands of Halifax/Dartmouth/Bedford/Sackville¹ residents to enjoy one aspect or another of theatre.

Not infrequently, I have been asked which of the various jobs in theatre is the most important. The answer

is, "every single job is equally important." Imagine taking away any one job, say telephone reservations, for example. The result: no audiences. Take away the front of house volunteers at the bar and ticket desk. The result: confusion, no revenue, and—worse—no drinks! Take away building maintenance, and watch the roof leak, doors squeak, and squirrels move in (they *have* tried). So it's important to remember that at the TAG commune, every single contribution is equally important and, in fact, vital.

My wish, as a new president and board take over, is to thank all those who have participated at TAG in every single capacity, including all audience members. Whether watching a show, pushing a vacuum cleaner, acting, directing, or designing lights, everybody is important at the commune, and I hope you will continue to support TAG in the years to come. *

¹ *Editor's Note:* The president originally used a three-letter acronym to refer to this metropolitan area in which we all live. Despite common usage, and with all due respect to the president, I simply cannot allow my home city to be referred to in such a manner in this publication. I was born in Halifax, and I once again live in Halifax, and that's all there is to it. Not on my watch!

Get Ready for Some Romance!

Eric Rountree, co-producer

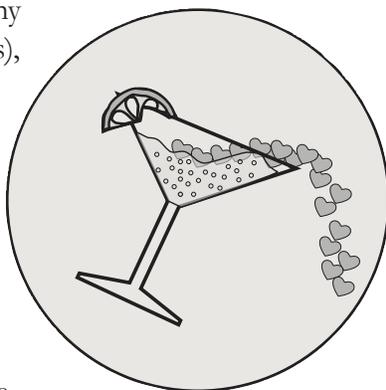
Just when I thought it was safe to go back in the theatre, a friendly, affable fellow by the name of John Gratwick invited me to co-produce the fall musical with him. And, of course, I agreed. Producing *The Dining Room* and doing double duty as a front-of-house manager and on-stage constable for *Angel Street* wasn't enough for me, I guess.

So here I am again, sitting in the producer's chair (or co-producer's chair in this case). But the running around, e-mailing, phone-calling, meeting, and nagging will all be worth it in the end, because *Romance with a Twist* is going to be a knock-em-dead show.

Pam Lutz is directing a cast of diverse and talented individuals. Some familiar faces and some fresh faces will be gracing our stage this time around. Vanessa Buhr-Rountree and Lowell Shore are both well known to TAG audiences, and they will be bringing their considerable vocal talents and stage presence to this production. New to the TAG

(continued on next page)

family are Alicia Malcolm, who recently arrived in Halifax from Kingston, Ontario (my home of six-and-half years), Scott Murphy, fresh off a run of *Three-Penny Opera* in Chester, Lizon Richard, who also lived in Kingston and has taken Neptune Theatre's Pre-Professional Training Program, and Jeremy Watkins, a Yarmouth native who also went through Neptune's PPTP.



For this production, we have two alternates, or backups (we don't like the term "understudy"). Shawna Peverill, who made her stage debut in *The Dining Room*, and Chris Morse, a veteran of many TAG productions, will each be appearing in two of the show's performances and will fill in if any of the cast is taken ill during this uncertain time of year.

Accompanying the cast on piano will be Carolyn Boyer (formerly MacDonald), who is putting in a tremendous amount of work learning twenty-seven songs. Our choreographer, Susie Tyner-Keating, is putting the cast through its paces to ensure that you have more to look at than a bunch of people standing on the stage singing.

Patti Morse is our stage manager, and assisting her is Julie Kennedy, another TAG newcomer. Austin Reade is designing the lighting, Lyn Gratwick is in charge of costumes, and Jamie Boyer is collecting the props and keeping the bar stocked.

The show will be presenting a wide range of songs, from old standards to the latest Broadway show-stoppers. There's truly something in this show for everyone. You'll find it hard to keep your feet still, and you're guaranteed to leave the theatre humming a familiar tune.

And, of course, as the title suggests, romance will be in the air all evening long.

Don't miss this exciting and entertaining show. Call our reservation line at 477-2663 to book your seats. *

Ticket Price Increase for 2003/04

TAG will be increasing its ticket prices this season. Beginning with the October production, *Romance With a Twist*, admission to TAG performances will cost \$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.

Audition Notice

TAG's 2003 Christmas Pantomime, entitled *Smut's Saga* or *Santa and the Vikings*, runs from December 5th to 21st, 2003. Auditions for this fun-filled extravaganza will be held on Sunday, September 21st, 2003 from 6:00 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. and on Monday, September 22nd, 2003 from 7:00 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. The auditions will take place at the Pond Playhouse, 6 Parkhill Road, off Purcell's Cove Road at William's Lake Road.

Here's a breakdown of what director Jeff Pocock is looking for:

1 Male	20 to 30	Tall & attractive	Good singing voice
1 Female	16 to 24	Attractive	Good singing voice
9 Males	20 to 70	Any size or shape	Fun Loving guys only
1 Female	16 to 20	Any type	Ideal for first timer
2 Females	40 to 70	Any size or shape	Willing to throw themselves into weird characters.(Witches)
1 Male	30 to 70	Any size or shape	Not averse to cross dressing and must have a great sense of humour.

For further information or to reserve an audition time, please call (902) 477-2663 and leave a message, or call Lynn Bungay at (902) 827-4295. *

Building Momentum

An Update on Building Renovation/Enlargement and Fund-Raising Activities

Bill VanGorder, Capital Campaign Committee Chairman

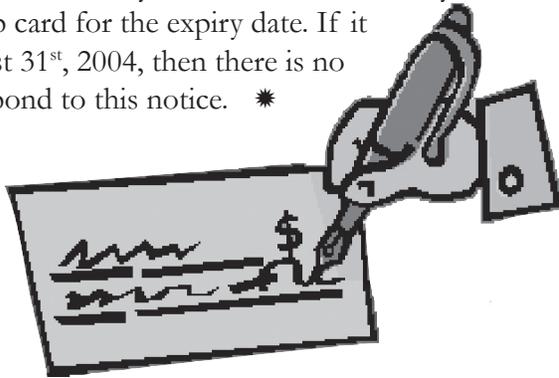
The Capital Campaign Committee has been meeting throughout the summer to plan the fund-raising and building activities for 2003/2004. The formal public campaign will be launched this fall, and renovations projects will be undertaken as time and dollars raised allow.

For more information on the Capital Campaign, contact Committee Chairman Bill VanGorder at bill.van.gorder@ns.sympatico.ca or 453-4077. *

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Time to Renew!

This is the last newsletter you will receive as a member of the TAG 2002/03 season. It's time to renew your membership for the 2003/04 season. Our membership fee remains at \$10.00 per season and continues to entitle you to receive *Contact* five times per year and gives you a \$2.00 discount off regular ticket prices for all productions. Also, the first week the box office is open for any production, it is available to members only, allowing you your pick of performance dates. Enclosed with this mailing is a renewal form for you to complete and mail back to us with your fee. Some people may have joined within the last two months of last season or already renewed. Please check your membership card for the expiry date. If it reads August 31st, 2004, then there is no need to respond to this notice. *



Board of Directors, 2002-2003

Say goodbye to the outgoing TAG board. At the 2003 Annual General Meeting on September 15th, a new board will be elected. Some members will no doubt be back for another term, but there will also be changes. For those of you unable to attend the AGM, you'll find the new board members listed in the next issue of *Contact*. Take a last look at the current roster:

President	Nick Jupp
Vice-President/Building Manager	Hugh Vincent
Second Vice President	John Gratwick
Secretary	Patti Morse
Treasurer	Carolyn McDonald
Past President	Bill VanGorder
Technical Director	Peter Strain
Executive Producer	Cheryl Theriault
Artistic Director	Elaine Casey
Membership Manager.....	Esther VanGorder
Publicity Manager.....	Michele Moore
Props & Costume Manager	Judy Reade
Reservations Manager	Lynn Bungay
Special Projects Manager.....	Rich Knowles
Newsletter Editor	Eric Rountree

The New Season is Here!

Here's a quick overview of what TAG has in store for you this season:

October 2003: *Romance with a Twist*

Directed by Pam Lutz

Produced by John Gratwick and Eric Rountree

This musical is a lighthearted exploration of that all-consuming state—often sweet, sometimes with a dash of bitters, but never, ever, dull.

The music of many composers, from the 1930s to the century's end, provides the inspiration for this show.

December 2003: *Smut's Saga* or *Santa and the Vikings*

Directed by Jeff Pocock

Produced by Catherine Coutts

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."

February 2004: *The Wisdom of Eve*

Directed by Rebecca Humphries

This drama is the story of an aging actress who allows a young, adoring fan to enter her theatre world. It soon becomes clear that young Eve has another motive for her adoration.

April 2004: *I Hate Hamlet*

Directed by Bill VanGorder

A young actor has been reluctantly chosen to perform Hamlet—not his favourite role. Barrymore, the ultimate Hamlet in his own eyes, comes back from the dead to assist. Full of clever comedy—a must see.

July 2004: *Dead Guilty*

Directed by Frank MacLean

This drama/thriller elements deals with the subject of guilt. *Two women... Two secrets...A truth that kills!*

The play was written by Richard Harris and first appeared at the Apollo Theatre in London in 1995, starring Jenny Seagrove and Hayley Mills. It will have audiences on the edges of their seats. *

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

Judy Reade, *Props Mistress/Wardrobe Mistress*

I had intended to use this third article to take a closer look at those items we find on a typical set. However, I'm going to veer off at a tangent, and instead concentrate not on things which are *visible* to audience members, but things which are deliberately *kept hidden* from them. Behind any set are a number of areas set aside for different functions, all of which are necessary for the successful running of a production, and we'll look at a few of these.

First come the *wings*, i.e., those spaces behind the curtains or flats where actors wait before making an entrance. It just so happens that most entrances are made from *stage left* (and you should be able to point in this direction by now!), but if someone has to make an entrance from *stage right*, he/she uses the *crossover*, a passage created behind the curtains or pieces of scenery which delineate the back of the stage. Some older theatres have a *crossover* which actually goes *under* the stage. Carpet is laid down in the *crossover*, so that the audience does not hear the footsteps of those passing to and fro.

The most important area backstage is the *stage manager's station* or *corner*. This is the spot (and again, it's usually on the *stage left* side) from which the stage manager (abbreviated to S.M.) monitors the entire performance and maintains communication with the actors, the technical personnel, and the front-of-house staff. In this *corner* the stage manager follows the script (the term is *being on book*) and uses various sets of annotations (added to the text during rehearsals) to co-ordinate all aspects of the performance. Through the use of communication headsets, the S.M. can determine, for example, when to begin the performance and when to recommence after the intermission. The headset system also puts the S.M. in touch with those responsible for the lighting and sound cues, and certain of the script's annotations will serve as an alerting system for the execution of lighting and sound effects. This whole co-ordination process, from the moment the audience first enters the theatre to the moment the lights go up after the actors have taken their bows, goes by the term *calling the show*. Over the years, we have modified the standard practice at TAG, and now the stage manager normally sits in the lighting booth to *call the show* (since this provides a better view of the stage), whilst the assistant stage manager occupies the *S.M.'s corner* and provides the backstage co-ordination. *

Ten Tips For Hassle-Free Reservations

1. Book early!
2. Dial 477-2663. Press "1" when prompted, and speak clearly—take your time.
3. Leave your name (it may help to spell it), the number of seats required (and the number of adults, members, seniors, and students in your party), phone number(s) where we can reach you or leave a message (including evenings and weekends), and the date of the performance you wish to attend.
4. If you must cancel, please give us as much notice as possible—those on the waiting list are eagerly awaiting a call. A day or two's notice is appreciated. With anything less than six hours notice before show time, it is almost impossible to rebook, but we do try.
5. The outer doors of the Pond Playhouse open approximately forty-five minutes prior to the performance. Come early—we suggest at least thirty minutes prior to the start of the show, but *no later than fifteen minutes before show time*. If you have not arrived fifteen minutes prior to curtain, we reserve the right to sell your ticket to someone on the waiting list. We don't want to disappoint anyone by turning them away needlessly, so please arrive in time to claim your seat.
6. Reservations are held in your last name and by confirmation number. When you make your reservation, you will receive a return call advising you of your number. Without it, your reservation is not guaranteed.
7. The person returning your call is not at 477-2663, but please dial that number if you wish to respond to a message left on your phone concerning a performance.
8. There is limited parking at the playhouse, but additional space is available two doors down, behind the Sikh Temple. They kindly permit us to use their parking lot during our performances.
9. Method of payment is cash or cheque (no credit or debit cards) at the door, just prior to the performance you are attending—another reason to come early and avoid the rush. Our front-of-house people will be thankful.
10. Spread the word—invite others to become a member and attend the oldest continuously-operating community theatre in Canada!

In Memoriam

TAG has received a donation of \$100.00 in memory of Dr. John Filbee, who died last month. John and Shirley have been members and generous supporters of TAG for many years; he will also be remembered for his coaching, a few years ago, of the cast of *Thirteen Hands* to make their on-stage game of bridge appear authentic. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to Shirley and the family. *