

ACTION NEWS

A publication of ACT-CO, The Association of Community Theatres – Central Ontario
Volume 18, Issue 3 January – February 2005

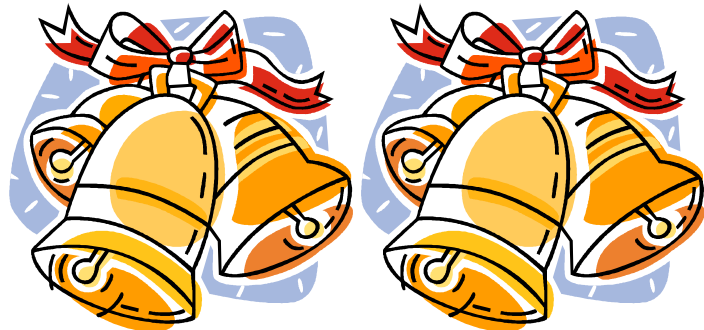
Member Groups 2004/2005

Althea Production
Amicus Productions
Backwoods Players
Blackhorse Village Players
Bloor West Village Players
The Borelians
Burl-Oak Theatre Group
Caledon Town Hall Players
The Curtain Club
Durham Shoestring Performers
East Side Players
Etobicoke Musical Productions
Georgetown Globe Productions
Huronian Players
Mariposa Arts Theatre
Foundation
Markham Little Theatre
Marquee Productions
Mississauga Players
Music Theatre Etobicoke
Newmarket Stage Company
Nomads Acting Group
The Oakville Players
The Oshawa Little Theatre
Peel Panto Players
The Queensville Players
Scarborough Choral Society
Scarborough Music Theatre
Scarborough Players
Scarborough Theatre Guild
Scugog Choral Society
The South Simcoe Theatre
Theatre Aurora
Theatre Etobicoke
Toronto Finnish Theatre
Toronto Irish Players
Uxbridge Players
The Village Players of Coldwater
Weston Little Theatre
Whitby Courthouse Theatre

HAPPY



NEW



YEAR !!

**ACT-CO Board of Directors
2004-2005**

David Nash
President &
Theatre Ontario Rep
905-855-1439
president@actco.ca

Laura Walters
Vice-President
416-801-9543
vicepresident@actco.ca

Brandon Moore
Past President &
Secretary
905-508-5253
pastpresident@actco.ca

Ron Ashton
Treasurer
905-274-5440; treasurer@actco.ca

Maureen Lukie
Gala Chair
416-469-5061; gala@actco.ca

Michael Roantree
Editor – ACTION NEWS
905-668-7938; action@actco.ca

Margery Cruise
Festival Chair
905-936-9486; festival@actco.ca

Ruth Smith
Education Chair
905-473-1977
workshops@actco.ca

Mark Nathanielsz
Webmaster
Festival Assistant
905-421-9697
webmaster@actco.ca

Laura Pennington
Area Rep – South
905-852-9894; south@actco.ca

Vic Blackman
Area Rep – East
416-492-4595; east@actco.ca

Louise Boutin
Area Rep – West
905-857-5175; west@actco.ca

Larry Armstrong
Membership
416-241-4166
membership@actco.ca

Rand Houghton
Education Assistant
905-898-0770
rand_houghton@hotmail.com

**ACTION NEWS
GUIDELINES**

E-mail submissions to:

action@actco.ca

or

mail submissions to:

Michael Roantree
3010 Cochrane St.
Whitby, Ont.
L1R 2P2

Please ensure that all submissions for plays for the Callboard or for the Show Calendar include the name of the author(s) or specific credit for musicals.

DEADLINES

Mar/Apr	Feb. 15
May/June	Apr. 15
July/Aug	June 15

Subscriptions & Renewals

Members of Groups belonging to ACT-CO
may subscribe to ACTION NEWS.
Send \$10 (cheque made payable to ACT-CO) to:

Michael Roantree
3010 Cochrane St.
Whitby, Ont.
L1R 2P2

Be sure to include the name of your Group.

For More Information:

ACT-CO WEB PAGE
website: www.actco.ca

E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

General
info@actco.ca

Membership
membership@actco.ca

ACTION NEWS
action@actco.ca

Workshops
workshops@actco.ca

Privacy Policy
www.actco.ca

An information note from Andrea Emmerton

Practical Playwriting offers Winter Workshop

What is Practical Playwriting, and what is its Winter Workshop?

A successor to ScriptLab's famed Writers' Intensives, Practical Playwriting offers seasonal workshops to a variety of writers for the stage and the camera in which to experiment, learn, play, and grow artistically and professionally.

Are you starting a new play or screenplay and want some useful, non-intrusive feedback?

Are you working on scenes toward a complete draft or revision?

Join Practical Playwriting's Winter 2005 Workshop!

We won't tell you how to rewrite your work, but we will give you honest, informed, and provocative responses to what you've written. Then it's up to you.

What's in it for me?

Several recent and upcoming productions have resulted from work created and refined in our groups, including Dianne Lococo's *Georgian Bay Triangle* and *The Perfect Manhattan*, Stephanie Nickerson's *Stealing Freedom* (Best New Play Award, and Patrons' Pick, 2004 Toronto Fringe Festival), and David Copelin's *Bella Donna* (Seahorse Award for Best Stage Play, Moondance International Film Festival 2004; optioned for production in 2005 by Stratford's new Equity company, PostScript Productions; to be published in 2006 by Playwrights Canada Press). ***Yours could be next!***

Who leads the Workshop?

David Copelin is a produced and published playwright and translator, a professional freelance dramaturg, a former story consultant for Warner Bros. Pictures, and a member of the National Council of the Playwrights Guild of Canada. He has years of university teaching experience at the university level, and is the author of *Practical Playwriting* (Boston, 1998). Since 1999, David has led twelve Writers' Intensives for ScriptLab.

When is it?

Nine Sunday evenings, 7:00pm to 10:00pm, from January 16 through March 20, 2005.

Where is it?

The Playwrights Guild of Canada, 54 Wolsley Street, 2nd floor, Toronto (one block east of Bathurst, one block north of Queen).

How much does it cost?

\$325.00, payable in cash or by cheque made out to David Copelin. GST is included.

How do I get into the Workshop?

Contact David Copelin at 416-696-8742, or at copelin@sympatico.ca

ONLY 8 WRITERS PER INTENSIVE!**THEATRE IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

By Andrea Emmerton

Community Theatre Coordinator

Would you set up house with someone without establishing parameters? Theatre Ontario, PACT and TAPA (formerly TTA) share office space. That has only been accomplished by all of the groups working out the house rules and by checking in at joint staff meetings to make sure the collaboration is working. Cats and dogs in a household seem to reach an agreement in order for them to cohabit peacefully (well, most of the time.) So, why is it that when it is time to produce a play, the collaborative process can go out the window?

Have you often sat as an audience member watching a production that seems to have all the elements, but is not working for you? We talk about acting styles and how muddled a scene can be if the actors' intentions and objectives are not clear. What happens when a director and a designer are not on the same page? You get the same lack of clarity and consistency. How can this issue be addressed, as it seems to be a recurring theme?

It must start with the selection of the play. Too many times plays are selected that are way beyond the capabilities of the company. Don't jump all over me for this one: I am not saying that challenging work should not be attempted, but that groups should be more aware of their limitations. For example, it doesn't make sense to add *Peter Pan* to the playbill, when you are performing in the basement of the local church or do not have rigging to fly Peter; or to try to mount a production of *Twelve Angry Men* when the group consists mainly of women.

As soon as the play, producer and director are selected, then the wheels are put in motion to find the design team. Directors, being the weird and wonderful creatures that they are, sometimes have preferences for designers with whom they like to work. Check for their preferences before selecting the design team, which includes set, costumes, lighting, sound, and stage management. Make sure that they all have copies of the play and that they will have read it several times before the first production meeting.

The first production meeting should include all of the design team. The meeting could be as informal as getting together at the local watering hole, or be a more formal meeting, but this is the time for the director to share the concept of the play with the others. At this point, it is important to make sure that all members of the team have a clear understanding of the work and what the director's expectations are. If there is anyone at that meeting who doesn't agree with the original concept, now is the time to speak up and perhaps withdraw from the project. It is also important, at this time, for the producer to ensure that the director isn't asking for design elements that are beyond the capabilities of the team.

It is vitally important that this group of artists, who have been chosen for their particular skills, all work from the same basic idea. Many changes will likely occur over the rehearsal period, but as long as discussions continue, any problems can be solved. It is important that production meetings be held regularly to ensure that any issues that arise may be dealt with promptly and that all members of the team attend all of the meetings. There is nothing worse than having a costume designer and lighting designer work with a colour palette and then discover that the set designer has arbitrarily changed the colour of the walls a week before opening. It is also important for the design team to attend as many rehearsals as possible to make sure that the furniture, props, costumes etc. are working for the actors.

It is also good to remember that the director does have the final say about everything that is being added to the production. While you might not always agree with him/her, once you have voiced your objection, you must always respect the director's wishes. It is also a good thing to remember that all of the design elements are there to support the work of the actors. I'm sure that you have seen productions where the costumes, set or lighting become the focus instead of the work that is being done. You walk away from a production thinking "what a great set," or squinting at figures in the dark because a lighting designer prefers to light at a low level or where sound levels overpower the spoken words. A good production is made up of many elements and the strong collaboration among the production team is of prime importance. Actors will feel much more secure when they know that their work is being supported and the whole company will benefit from a pleasant and productive atmosphere.

Good theatre is a team effort where all of the elements come together to provide an evening's entertainment. And after all, isn't that what we are all aiming for?

On a sad note: One of Richmond Hill's Curtain Club long time members, Maggie (Smith) Meacher lost her battle with colon cancer on October 17 at the age of 39. Maggie had become a member of The Curtain Club when she was eleven years old and over the years became an actor, co-producer, assistant stage manager, served on the Executive, and contributed in any way that she could. If a job

needed to be done, Maggie was always one of the first to volunteer and always with a smile on her face. To know Maggie was to know a person who always looked for the positive in every situation. She always tried to find the best solution to a problem without confrontation and she usually succeeded.

During her illness, over almost three years, with the help of her loving husband Steve, Maggie surrounded herself with caring and supportive friends and continued to be involved on productions with both The Curtain Club and Blackhorse Village Players in Tottenham. She attended Theatre Ontario's Summer Courses this past year, and I don't think anyone in Ralph Small's storytelling class will ever forget the picture of Maggie sitting on the floor, with a silly hat on her head, reading her favourite children's story. I know I won't.

Maggie Meacher was an amazing young woman and at the service celebrating her life the following was published: "Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, champagne in one hand—strawberries in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming; 'WOO HOO—What a Ride!' " Author Not Known. Maggie will be greatly missed by all of us who were fortunate to call her friend.

We've probably all been touched by the loss of someone like Maggie. Our theatres are richer places because of the contributions of people like her; emptier places without them. That kind of dedication, that doesn't say "I can't" or "I won't", that asks "what else can you teach me?" is a foundation for excellence in anything...not just theatre.

A BIT ABOUT GUNS...

By Vinetta Strombergs

Professional Theatre Coordinator

When is a gun not a weapon? When is it a toy?

In the last year, I have had to deal with issues surrounding guns in three completely different contexts:

1. A drama teacher calls me to get a clarification about plastic replicas and procedures on storing them when used in a production. Where can one easily find this information?
2. At a student showcase, one of the presenters is performing a number from *Chicago* and suddenly a prop gun appears—no one was forewarned! Why did this happen and why was it a problem?
3. A Summerworks show is using a gun onstage, which prompts the production manager to email every show the following information, in case it comes in handy later.

With thanks to **Michelle Ramsay, Production Manager of Summerworks** and **Derek Bruce, Production Manager of the Fringe of Toronto**, I would like to share the following information about guns: Basically, if somebody brings in a prop gun (non-firing or firing) they must have somebody in the company with a **PAL (possession and acquisition licence)** who will be responsible for the gun at all times.

UNLESS...they have rented the gun from an authorized company. Then the PAL is transferred with the gun and the company does not need to have their own personal PAL. When the renter signs the rental form for the gun, they are stating that they have been **properly instructed by the rental company in the correct use and storage of the gun.**

Correct procedures state that when the gun is not in use it should be in a **lock box** (not left lying on a props table.) The company should not leave their guns in storage at the theatre but should bring them to and from the theatre for every performance.

In order to get a PAL you need to take a Canadian Firearms Safety course. They are not offered very often. It is \$120 and takes 10 hours plus a test. Here is a link to instructors who offer the course: <http://www.fseso.org/416.htm> You then have to send in an application to the Canadian Gun folks. Here is a link to the application site: http://www.cfc-ccaf.gc.ca/en/forms_assistance/indiv_forms/1039.asp

If you are going to rent a gun, please have the rental form available with the gun, or if someone in your company has their PAL, have them bring their license with them to all rehearsals with the gun. Proper storage and handling must always be displayed.

If you want to rent a gun, here is a number of a guy that will be able to help you out. He will be able to provide you with a gun and proper training so you don't need to take the course: Fantastic Creations, 95 River Street, Toronto, ON M5A 3P4 or Phone: 416-410-6042.

If your **gun is obviously a prop** then it doesn't matter. Now what does that mean? "Obviously" if the gun is bright orange or green, like those water pistols, we can tell it's not really dangerous (unless you just had your hair done or you're wearing silk.) However, if it's possible for the gun to be mistaken for a real gun, you **MUST** take appropriate precautions.

Remember: If that gun goes missing, and a crime is committed with it, you may be held responsible.

If your show requires gunshots, you may also want to warn any neighbours living around the theatre or rehearsal hall. These are strange times. You do not want

to bring harm or fear to anyone. Be a good neighbour. Think first before you use guns in your show. Be prepared and be responsible.

More information available at www.theatresafety.ca, under Best Practices.

A Glossary of More Theatrical Terms

Author unknown

Set

An obstacle course which, throughout the rehearsal period, defies the laws of physics by growing smaller week by week while continuing to occupy the same amount of space.

Monologue

That shining moment when all eyes are focused on a single actor who is desperately aware that if he forgets a line, no one can save him.

Dark Night

The night before opening when no rehearsal is scheduled so the actors and crew can go home and get some well-deserved rest, and instead, spend the night staring sleeplessly at the ceiling because they're sure they need one more rehearsal.

Bit Part

An opportunity for an actor with the smallest role to count everybody else's lines and mention repeatedly that he or she has the smallest part in the show.

Green Room

Room shared by nervous actors waiting to go on stage and the precocious children whose actor parents couldn't get a baby-sitter that night, a situation which could result in justifiable homicide.

Dark Spot

An area of the stage which the lighting designer has inexplicably forgotten to light, and which has a magnetic attraction for the first-time actor, A dark spot is never evident before opening night.

Show Calendar

Oshawa Little Theatre

Dial M For Murder
By Frederick Knott
Feb 3-5; 10-12; 17-19 at
8:00 pm
Matinee: Feb. 13 at 2:00
pm
Oshawa Little Theatre
62 Russett Ave.
Oshawa
905-723-0282
www.olt.on.ca

Scarborough Players

Picasso at the Lapin
Agile
By Steve Martin
Jan. 13-15; 20-23; 27-29
Scarborough Village
Theatre
3600 Kingston Rd.
Scarborough
Box Office: 416-396-4049

Mississauga Players

Whose Wives Are They
Anyway
By Michael Parker
Jan. 27-30; Feb. 3-5
at 8:00 pm
Burnhamthorpe Library
Theatre
1350 Burnhamthorpe Rd.
E.
Mississauga
Box Office: 905-812-1759

Theatre Aurora

Wait Until Dark
By Frederick Knott
Jan. 21-22; 26-29;
Feb. 2-5 at 8:00 pm
150 Henderson Dr.
(Between Yonge St. and
Bathurst St.)
Tickets/info:
905-727-3669

[http://members.rogers.com/
theatreaurora/](http://members.rogers.com/theatreaurora/)

The Curtain Club

Painting Churches
By Tina Howe
Jan. 20-22; 26-29;
Feb 1-5 at 8:00 pm
Matinee: Jan. 23 at 2:00
pm
The Curtain Club
400 Newkirk Road
Richmond Hill
Box Office: 905-773-3434
www.thecurtainclub.org

Georgetown Little Theatre

Jake's Women
By Neil Simon
Feb. 10-12; 16-19
at 8:00 pm
John Elliott Theatre
9 Church St.
Georgetown
Box Office: 905-877-3700
[www.georgetownlittle
theatre .ca](http://www.georgetownlittletheatre.ca)

Markham Little Theatre

Sylvia
By A.R. Gurney
Feb. 9-12 at 8:00 pm
Markham Theatre
171 Town Centre Blvd
Markham
Box Office: 905-305-7469
Toll free: 1-866-768-8801
www.markhamlittletheatre.com

Scarborough Music Theatre

The Goodbye Girl
Book by Neil Simon
Music by Marvin
Hamlisch
Lyrics by David Zippel
Feb. 10-13; 17-20; 24-26
Scarborough Village
Theatre
3600 Kingston Road
Scarborough
Box Office: 416-396-4049

The South Simcoe Theatre

The Dining Room
By A.R. Gurney
Feb 3-6; 10-13; 17-20
The Old Town Hall
1 Hamilton Street
Cookstown
Box Office: 705-458-4432

**Durham Shoestring
Performers**

Stop Kiss
by Diana Son
Jan. 21-22; 26-29
at 8:00 pm
Arts Resource Centre
45 Queen St.
(behind Oshawa City
Hall)
905-725-9256

**Georgetown Globe
Productions**

Globetrotting (Cabaret)
Feb. 3-12
Box Office: 905-877-3700

www.georgetownglobeproductions.com

**The Blackhorse Village
Players**

Dangerous Obsessions
By N.J. Crisp
Jan. 12-29
Blackhorse Village
Players
s.w. cor Hwy 9 & Mount
Wolfe Rd,
Caledon
Tickets/info: 905-880-
5002
www.blackhorse.ca

**Newmarket Stage
Company**

Self Help
By Norm Foster
Feb. 24-26; Mar. 3-5
Curtain 8:15 pm
The Old Town Hall
460 Botsford Street
Newmarket, Ont.
905-830-1082

Nomads Acting Group

*Snow White and the
Several Dwarfs*
by Sue Plyte and Dave B.
Harris
Feb. 3-5; 10-12
At 8:00 pm
Sat. matinees at 1:30
Tranzac Club
292 Brunswick Ave. (at
Bloor)
Toronto
Box Office: 416-391-4692

Callboard

The Curtain Club

Auditions for:
Marvin' Room
By Scott McPherson
Jan 2 & 5
7:00 – 10:30 pm
Callbacks: Jan. 8 at 3 pm
The Curtain Club
400 Newkirk Rd.
Richmond Hill
For more info, contact
Nicole Forero-
Goedmakers at 905-508-
5253 or at
willowrose@look.ca

Oshawa Little Theatre

Auditions for:
Meshuggah-Nuns
Book, Music, and Lyrics
by
Dan Goggin
4 Women & 1 Man
Jan 3 & 5 at 7:30 pm
Oshawa Little Theatre
62 Russett Ave
Oshawa
(enter at rear of building)
For more info, call
director
Michael Roantree
905-6668-7938

Mississauga Players

Auditions for:
Joan of Arc
Jan 17 & 19 at 7:30 pm
2133 Royal Windsor Dr.
Unit 10
For more info:
905-823-7100