

May General Meeting: a rude awakening to the pitfalls of theatre management

Review of a preliminary profit and loss statement for the year demonstrated a loss on net performance revenue for the season of just under \$2,000. This is due, in part to the cancellation of our Fall production and road closures causing performance cancellations of the pantomime. A Spring production performance was threatened with a cancellation when a water main burst outside the theatre, necessitating an authentic "pitfall" right outside the door, but we were able to continue albeit without water! We have never before had to face "beyond our control" circumstances and our loss is a rude awakening for us all. Fortunately we have the funds to continue into another season.

The loss on the Spring production is directly in line with the fact that we made the decision to reduce Friday ticket prices without taking into consideration the increased cost for theatre rental over previous seasons. The charge, made by the Town, for use of the sound equipment as of last year and the HST added to the bill this year amounts to an increase of more than a 25% – not a good time to take a 20% reduction in Friday night ticket sales. They will be \$15.00 again for the upcoming season.

Despite suggestions from various members on alternate distribution venues for next season's brochure, nobody actually followed up on their suggestions. It was decided to distribute via the Shelburne Free Press this year, and remain with the Hills of Headwaters boxes. Canada Post is now too expensive. This will, as usual, be augmented with store and sponsor distribution opportunities and, if members with other suggestions would take the time to explore these, it will be appreciated.

A preliminary proof of the brochure was approved. It combines the visual impact of the basic creative, used during the past two seasons, for continuing easy recognition with members' concern about the necessity to communicate the very fact of Shelburne's having a theatre. All those present liked the creative and it was decided to go ahead and get the advertising space sold. Once the brochure is printed and distributed, we can begin soliciting sponsors for the 2014-2015 season.

Pursuant to discussion at the AGM and consequent experimentation in advertising communications materials for *Jenny's House of Joy*, the addition of the line "Shelburne Community Theatre" to our logo was agreed upon.

Norm Foster period piece scores a big with Shelburne theatre-goers

Jenny's House of Joy truly brought the wild west to life in Shelburne. The gorgeous set effectively transformed Grace Tipling Hall into an 1870s Kansas brothel, transporting audiences back in time. Familiar songs, like *Rawhide*, set the tone and put everyone in a good mood.



Cast members found that creating their own costumes played a big part in developing their characters.

Fabulous performances were turned in by the cast as each brought her character to life.

Jeanette Massicotte gave warmth and charm to the madame of the house, Jenny, and her humour and obvious love for her girls made her a delight to watch on stage. The role of Frances, the hard-liquor drinking, been-there-done-that professional working lady, was expertly played by Melina Prentice who delivered quick wit and raunchy remarks with ease.

Newcomer Kat Peeters gave a solid performance as Anita, bringing out her character's naivete, and showing real emotion during a touching scene with Francis. Amber Tabor returned to the TSC stage as Natalie, the educated "new girl" with big ideas, and skillfully turned her proper character into a lady of the night, surprising audiences and putting everyone in stitches.

Rounding out the cast was the character of Clara, the wife of a gentleman caller, touchingly

Norm Foster period piece... (Cont.)

played by Debbie Tait. Debbie brought heartfelt emotion to her role, making Clara someone we could all identify with.

Jenny's House of Joy would not have been the successful show it was without the work of an experienced crew. Director Jean Miller knew what she wanted from her cast and crew and was able to guide them to perfect the production.



Set design, props and decor combined with the costumes to create an authentic nineteenth century wild west atmosphere.

Everyone worked hard to find authentic costumes and props, often working at home to turn thrift store finds into bloomers and petticoats. Stage Manager Jane Turnbull and Assistant Stage Manager, newcomer Barb Pollock had their work cut out for them with several quick costume changes, audio cues, and on-stage prop striking. Lighting master Mike Hale put the lighting board to good use, easing the show from one scene to the next with short blackouts marking the passing of time.



Jen and Melina quickly revealed their seamstress talents but Kat and Amber had to call on family members for a bit of expertise with the needle.

Producer Bob Turnbull put it all together, finding volunteers to fill in roles both back stage and front of house, and assembling the crew that built *Jenny's House of Joy* on the Tipling Hall stage during the Easter weekend.

Next Season's Productions

Rights have been obtained for the scripts selected for next season.

The Rick Abbot mystery-farce, *But Why Bump Off Barnaby?* scheduled for the end of March, has eight wonderful zany characters so, please make a point of auditioning on January 4th, 2015 – you won't want to miss the opportunity.

What the Heart Wants is what every budding diamond in the rough has been waiting for! There are three acts, which can be treated as three short plays, and the idea is to team experienced directors with wannabe actors, wouldbe directors with experienced actors, experienced crew with new directors or actors, etc. It's a learning experience for everybody, so if you want to try something new, this is your chance! You can email info@tiplingstagecompany.com for a copy of the script any time before April 2nd, 2015.

NOTICES

Members are needed to participate in the Fiddleville Parade on Saturday, August 9th. We were unable to take part in the last Santa Claus Parade and we had to back out of the Easter Egg Hunt due to not enough actors being available. You do not need to be an actor to march in the Fiddleville Parade. Anybody who is available in the early afternoon, please come and take part. We need to support town activities if we want residents to support us. Somebody is also needed to volunteer to co-ordinate. **Please contact Jean Miller at 519-925-3146 or email: jeanmiller@designandcopy.ca.**

The audition date for the pantomime, *Little Red Riding Hood*, is Thursday, August 28th at 7:00 pm at Grace Tipling Hall. Please note that this is a weekday evening instead of the usual Sunday afternoon. We are hoping that it will be more convenient, at this time of the year, for people auditioning. We would also like all auditionees and anybody interested in joining the crew to register by email at info@tiplingstagecompany.ca.

Email articles to be included in the September newsletter to info@tiplingstagecompany.com before August 31st. Attach a Word file or cut and paste the article into the email message.

This month's newsletter was written by Jean Miller and Amanda Philip.