

The Great Kooshog Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby

After Marnie Walsh's glowing review in the Shelburne Free Press, there's not a lot more that can be said about our talk-of-the-town production of Norm Foster's hilarious tale of about a fishing derby at Kooshog Lake.



Paul Welch as Kirk Douglas

such places as the fictional Kooshog Lake.

When opening night came along, the audience was noticeably impressed by the fascinating country store we created on stage. Chuckles soon turned to outright laughter as Sienna's (Michelle Graham) first nap of the day was interrupted by James Bell (Darrick Rosborough), the stranger who gets 'stuck' in Kooshog Lake during the annual fishing derby. Laughter grew louder at Rhonda (Kelly McDowell) introducing herself to the stranger, after making several excuses to look him over, then Kirk Douglas (Paul Welch) had everybody's attention as he explained how fuel pumps work. The hapless James continued to be hit on by Rhonda, baited by Kirk

The key to our success was, as Marnie pointed out, "a script that not only suited the actors but suited the audience, too."

The Great Kooshog Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby captured the imagination of the actors right from day one – at the read-through, where it was hard to concentrate because everyone was laughing so much. The Kooshog Lake residents and 'the stranger' in their midst were all such great fun to play that it didn't take long for the actors to develop their characters the way they saw their individual personalities, and to create that sense of community found in



Sohayla Smith as Melanie and Darrick Rosborough as James

and trivialized by Sienna. Last to arrive at the store, with the gliss of a harp to James's utter confusion, was Melanie Morningside (Sohayla Smith) whose subsequent scenes with James drew both laughter and empathy.

The performances were impressive as indicated by the well-deserved standing ovations that followed them on several occasions and such remarks as "Your best show yet!" and "I enjoyed it so much" from patrons as they left the building.



Michelle Graham as Sienna and Kelly McDowell as Rhonda

Murder Mistaken

Rehearsals are underway for the classic crime melodrama, *Murder Mistaken*, by Janet Green, under the direction of Bev Nicholas.

The play, first performed on the London stage and later, in New York under the title *Gently Does It*, followed by a film version entitled *Cast a Dark Shadow*, was one of what was a highly popular genre in pre- and post- WWII years. The revival of *Gaslight*, first in London and now in Toronto, has created new interest in these early psychological thrillers. Crime melodrama has been replaced by more realistic mystery and detective drama today but, whether it inspires cynicism or empathy, it's great fun to visit.

Whichever way he's perceived when we open in May, protagonist Edward Bare, played by Josh Oatman, will make an impression. Attractive, charming and likeable, he's ruthlessly ambitious in attempting to obtain the wealth he craves. Your classic psychopath – whose *faux pas* in aspiring to be the upper class gentleman that he is not will create some chuckles – it is a challenging part.

The other characters – the quintessential maid, lawyer, murdered wife and more wealthy ladies destined to replace her – also provide great parts to test the skill of the cast which includes Lori Singer, who is returning to our stage after a long absence. An experienced cast in the hands of an able director will provide Shelburne audiences with a change of pace (pun on the town's tagline not intended!) after our popular comedies this season.

Enthusiastic participation at the AGM

Our AGM was held on February 28th after the tear down of *The Great Kooshog Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby* set. Long term members and new members attended the meeting, making for interesting discussion and a great flow of ideas.

After the preliminaries of accepting minutes from the previous meeting, and approval of the agenda for the AGM, Jean as chair, walked through the balance sheet for the last season and the profit and loss statement for our current one. She noted that with the success of the most recent production, things were looking up.

We had a report on the dates for the 2016-17 season were before Council and heard that, due to conflicts, our April 2017 date selections had to be changed to the first two weekends in May. Unfortunately we run into the issue of a shortened tech week, but this is perhaps better than having a show on the Victoria Day weekend.

A brief discussion about a possible change in the number of plays allowed everyone to voice an opinion – should we continue with three plays per season, or go back to two? Many members felt that things were turning around; there are new people involved with the Company, and larger audiences, as well as our annual subscription. It was ultimately decided to continue to offer three plays.

The next point, whether or not to raise ticket prices, brought about a motion from Toby to keep them at \$15 for the next season and revisit the issue in a year. Rising production costs prompted us to consider the change, however, it is hoped that renewed community interest in the theatre will help offset these increases.

We heard a summary from the Reading Committee about their choices for next season. Nothing has been decided yet, and email discussions are ongoing. The Committee was considering a number of plays, and is always open to new suggestions. Michelle asked about joining the Committee, and was welcomed to do so. Anyone in the Company is eligible to participate and join the Reading Committee. Debbie suggested that directors with plays in mind contact the Committee to explain their choices and how they will make them work for the Company. Jean, who has put forth plays that she is interested in directing, agrees that this is the way to go. The Committee agrees that a season will be chosen soon so that advertising the next season can begin.

The election of the new Executive provided some lively discussion among the members. To set things in motion, Jean read out her nominees for each position, and several nominations were made from the floor. A few new members were interested in participating on the Executive, and some longer term members were nominated as well. Toby suggested a new position for Publicity/Public Relations, though discussions eventually led us to keep the Executive at the current four positions, with extra "jobs" to be done by active members. Voting was done by a show of hands for each position resulting in our new Executive:

President: Jane Turnbull
Vice President: Josh Oatman
Secretary: Michelle Graham
Treasurer: Jean Miller

It was a very successful and productive AGM, and it was wonderful to see so many members interested in participating.

Two Minute Questionnaire results

The questionnaire was developed for the recent winter production audiences to give us some insights on how we are doing in two areas – reaching out in terms of communications strategy and the plays of more recent seasons they most liked. Approximately 16% of the total audience participated.

First time audience members were asked where they found out about us and people who had seen our productions before, were asked to check their favourite shows. Checked boxes rather than respondents were tabulated, and respondents answering in both areas were included since the objective was to ensure that we are moving in the right direction - not to claim scientific polling results! 38.5% of all checks were by people who were seeing us for the first time.

How they found us:

Newspaper	25%
Word of Mouth	22.5%
TSC Member	13.5%
Social Media	13.5%
Town LED Display	6%
Poster	6%
Search Engine	6%
Brochure	4.5%
Radio	2%

Some of these medias require a little clarification. Newspaper encompasses both editorial and paid advertising in several publications, social media could refer to either newsfeed posting or paid advertising, search engine – both results and paid advertising, radio – public service advertising and ticket give-aways. In each case, it would get far too confusing to break it down and the differences could be quite lost on many respondents anyway. However, the response indicates competent use of the various medias in reaching several target markets in a wide area.

Their favourite plays:

The Great Kooshog Lake	
Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby	22.5%
The Trouble with Trent	18.5%
But Why Bump Off Barnaby?	17.5%
Secrets of a Soccer Mom	10%
Jenny's House of Joy	8.5%
Drinking Alone	8.5%
Last of the Red Hot Lovers	8.5%
There Goes the Bride	6%

Since recent productions got the most votes, we must surmise that either most participants only started attending our productions during the last couple of seasons or that they have short memories. Several checked all boxes. It would appear that we are giving them the 'right stuff' in selecting comedies for their entertainment.

HELP WANTED

MURDER MISTAKEN - May 6th, 7th, 8th, 13th & 14th
Front of house personnel for ushering and serving food and beverages during intermission. If you are available for one or more of these dates, please email info@tiplingstagecompany.

Somebody to co-ordinate an entry for Fiddlefest Parade in August. If you can do so, please email: info@tiplingstagecompany

YOUR STORIES for the June 2016 Newsletter should be sent to info@tiplingstagecompany by May 15th.