

# Encore!

JUNE 2007

## 2006/07 Executive

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Valerie Russell

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Valerie Russell

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## ***Message From the Chairman of the Board***

What's So Behind the Scenes of "Behind the Scenes"?

I've never liked the expression behind the scenes; it somehow makes all the tasks that are not related to acting sound secondary. Actually, it isn't even accurate. What is "behind the scene" about a set or lighting design? Costume design? The product is there to see by all during the performance. What is worse than this perception is its influence on the *process* of production and the *definition* of roles in community theatre.

A director or a committee chooses a play. Often the production crew is found after the director has started blocking the play. Actors are rehearsing on a stage sketched out in tape while the director paints scenes with large sweeping brush strokes. Stage managers, lighting designers, props people, set designers and artists are either not found or are waiting to start their *behind* the scene jobs *behind* the job of actors and directors. Several of the key players in the creative process do not get involved in the production until about a month before opening night because this is how it's done.

Consequently, stage managers, for example, have defined their role as manager or organizer: someone who takes over when the director's job is done: the lighting designer as a person who hangs lights and keys in cues when the show moves into the theatre, and so on. This process allows for very little collaboration and leads to stress for both the stage manager and the lighting designer, who by that point should know the show inside and out and the director who is making decisions about blocking, set changes, costume changes lighting etc who at that point should be fine-tuning character work.

The stage manager, as John Kelly (adjudicator and Director) said has the most important job and for that reason is called Stage Director in the U.K. A stage manager should be involved in the crucial decisions and should be involved in all rehearsal as the play evolves. Perhaps the most unfortunate consequence of the existing process is that for the volunteers( stage manager, lighting designer, stage designer, costume designer and props people) the creative process has been a job carried out in isolation rather than in a collaborative, creative and social atmosphere.

The Players have very talented and dedicated production crews. By the way, if you are an actor and have never helped in production please do so; you will appreciate all of these talents and develop some new ones of your own. I'm sure everyone involved "behind the scenes" has asked: "Why am I doing this?" We enjoy it because we enjoy the creative process and the learning that occurs in a social setting. We enjoy it because we grow as artists and craftsman. We enjoy it because it brings people together. We enjoy it because we each have a unique talent waiting to be developed.

What is the solution? So far I have not mentioned the Producer who has the most challenging job of all: to bring all of the talent and creativity together at the right time. The Producer and Director will greatly benefit in the long run by involving production crew as early as possible in the process; *involving* is the operative word. People feed on creative input. "What do you think?" needs to be asked and the opinions offered need to be respected.

Productions will improve and volunteers will come back as their "behind the scenes" efforts will be brought to the forefront.



**NORTHUMBERLAND PLAYERS**

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# The Unsung Heros of Non-Musical Theatre

My very first involvement with the Northumberland Players was working backstage for a production of “My Fair Lady”, way back in the day when it took at least six able-bodied men to orchestrate the elaborate scene changes. In spite of having a singing voice like a catfight in a culvert and dancing like bamboo wind chimes in a clothes dryer, I’ve had a particular fondness for the annual musical ever since that experience. After nearly a quarter of a century, I finally made the effort to navigate that gaping chasm between “*Players who do the Musical*” and “*Players who do Dinner Theatre*”, and sampled the fare on the other side.

There was a comfortable familiarity in the casting process and rehearsal schedule for dinner theatre, but the significantly smaller cast and crew led to an almost immediate sense of camaraderie that can sometimes take weeks or even months to develop within the larger scope of a full scale musical production. Similarly, the voyeuristic thrill that comes from watching the director of a musical gradually coax the first lyrically perfect performance from a chorus of 20 was rivaled by the excitement of seeing an individual actor master a particularly challenging passage for the first time. Within the comparatively intimate network of a dinner theatre cast and crew, it’s impossible not to get to know everyone involved – and based on my experience, you’ll even get to know people you that you thought you’d known for years!

For me personally, the rewards of involvement were entirely different, but uncompromisingly equal. I don’t hesitate to encourage everyone I’ve worked with on musicals to expand their personal horizons and explore the realm of dinner theatre. Similarly, I know that the there are untapped talents demonstrated in past dinner theatre productions will translate brilliantly into musical theatre. The bottom line is that the mandate of the Northumberland Players is to provide a venue for local talent – so why not take full advantage of the opportunity and explore your potential in all aspects? I suspect that you’ll find it very rewarding.

Kevin

## **Congratulations**

To Moira Cascone (producer,) Shannon Oliver (director,) Kevin Ward (stage manager,) Lynne McCall (stage manager,) Camille Stopps, Nancy Little, Jim West, Howie McCourt (cast) and all the crew of Sylvia, thank you very much for all your hours and a fabulous production.

# ***Board Member Bios***

## **LYNNE McCALL**

I've been a member of the players since its inception, working on all but a handful of plays in some capacity or another. From a simple prop, to make up , to costume designer for musicals ,to stage manager...and every once in a while a small acting part. Acting parts usually required some degree of nakedness. At my age, this won't be happening anymore.

This is my third stint as a member of the board of directors. In my regular life I teach art and soon, a pre-apprentice furniture restoration course ...to our criminal youth, at Brookside Youth Center. I have two beautiful daughters. Michael Rose is going into third year art history at U of T and Elly has just been accepted to Humber for ..what else.. Theatre!!

*Interested in being on the board of Northumberland Players? This dedicated team of 12 members meets once monthly and also serves on smaller ad-hoc committees to plan and organize our season, work on fundraising, membership, renovations and eventually to manage our theatre space. Why not get involved? The Annual General Meeting will be in October, and we will then need 4 new members to stand for board positions please call Jack Boyagian 905-373-4481 if you would like more information.*

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## **Helen Pitt-Matthew**

Helen moved to Port Hope in October 2005 with husband John and dog Murphy. Joined the Players upon arrival and has helped build sets, joined the Board and been an enthusiastic audience member.

A graduate of York University, majoring in Theatre with two years of Performance training, Helen hopes to lend her skills and become involved in all aspects of the Players.

In the early '80s Helen was a member of the Os-hawa Little Theatre and became involved in a number of productions as a singer/dancer, including, Gypsy, Music Man, Fiesta Cabaret, Jesus Christ Superstar and co-wrote a musical entitled 'Live From Casablanca', which is based on the movie 'Casablanca'. This endeavour raised \$8,000.00 for the Building Fund and enabled the newly built theatre to purchase a curtain for the stage.

In the early '90s Helen performed with Showcase Productions (Toronto) which mounts plays for kids! As the 'Goose' in Charlotte's Web she toured several Ontario cities. There's nothing like performing for children!

Mid '90s Helen took a year of classes with Second City under the tutelage of Allan Gutman and Linda Kash (of Philadelphia Cream Cheese fame!) Late '90s appeared at the Leah Posluns Theatre in the production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat as one of the wives and back-up singers.

Was a member of the women's singing group 'Toast' (Toronto) in 2001& 2002 performing in Dinner Theatre, Benefits and also appeared on Breakfast Television.

While nurturing her love of theatre, Helen has kept bread on the table (with John's help of course) by working in the banking industry and in telecommunications. Now she is retired and she and John are renovating their 130 year hold home. When she isn't wearing her tool belt, she loves to read, sing, entertain and play golf. Once appeared on the Hope Garber Garden Show in London, Ontario. Shared the stage with Hope Garber's son Victor! The year, 1958; the job, modeling children's fashions!

## **Kevin Ward**

Born in 1963 as the middle child of non-political back-to-the-earthers, Kevin spent his formative years in rustic isolation. As a direct result, Kevin has never developed social skills. Throughout elementary and secondary school, the comment “mark reflects effort” was a recurring report card theme. In retrospect, the argument could be made that the comment was more reflective of the teachers than the student. At 16, Kevin’s first full time job at Cobourg Home Hardware taught him three essential life lessons: customer service is paramount, you can’t put latex paint over oil paint, and red-heads should never wear red shirts. After returning to school as a “mature student”, Kevin graduated at the top of his class and accepted the position of Creative Director for Classical 96 & 103 FM. A decade later, Kevin opted to accept a job offer where he could consistently tell the truth, and continues to fulfill his role as General Manager of the Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce – incidentally the largest and most proactive business organization in Northumberland County.

Kevin’s association with the Northumberland Players predates the advent of acid wash jeans, stylish mullets, and the births of Elly, Claire and Emlyn. Most recently, Kevin was an avid student of the esteemed Lynne McCall School of Stage Managing for the dinner theatre production of “Sylvia”.

Kevin has been partnered with the Players’ photographer of choice Jerry Taylor since 1982, and is a proud parent of Jeremy, Dad-in-Law to the lovely Anna and Papa to future Prime Minister, Ethan Taylor.

## **Tickets Now On Sale** **MAGGIE’S GETTING MARRIED**

**by Norm Foster**

**Directed by David Glover and Valerie Russell**



**Production dates October 19 to November 4 2007**  
**Best Western Cobourg Inn call 905-372-2105 for tickets**

If you have ever enjoyed TV's *Seinfeld*, *Friends* or *Everybody Loves Raymond*, then you will love Maggie and her family! Join the Duncan family on the night before the big day, when Maggie and her older sister make a startling realization and give new meaning to "sibling rivalry". A hilarious, modern, adult comedy that will elicit shrieks of recognition and gales of laughter from one and all!

Norm Foster was born in Newmarket, Ontario on St. Valentine's Day. Raised in Toronto, he attended West Hill Collegiate Institute and then went on to study Radio & Television Arts at Centennial College in Toronto and then Confederation College in Thunder Bay. Upon completion of his studies, he began a radio career that would span 25 years and which would take him from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg to Kingston and finally to Fredericton, New Brunswick. It was in Fredericton in 1980 that Norm was introduced to the world of theatre.

*Norm Foster is Canada's most-produced dramatist, and no wonder. His snappy dialogue, everyday situations and gently balanced characters dare to represent that great, under-represented middle of North American society." - Halifax Daily News*

## *Northumberland Players 2007-2008 Season*

### *Maggies Getting Married* by Norm Foster

in Dinner Theatre at the Best Western Cobourg Inn, October 19 to Nov 4 2007

Comedy: Parts for 3 females 30—60 years and 3 males, 30—60 years.

### *Not Now Darling* by Ray Cooney and John Chapman

In Dinner Theatre at the Best Western Cobourg Inn, Jan. 18 to Feb 3 2008

Comedy/Farce: Parts for 5 men and 6 women, 20 to 70 years

### *Musical* TBA (pending royalty confirmation) February 22 to March 2 2008

Capitol Theatre, Port Hope

### *My Husband's Wild Desires Almost Drove Me Mad* by John Tobias

In Dinner Theatre at the Best Western Cobourg Inn April 18 to May 4 2008

Comedy: Parts for 2 women and 3 men, 30+ years

### *Menopositive! the Musical* by J.J.McColl

Musical Comedy: April 3 to Apr 6 2008 at Victoria Hall Concert Hall Cobourg

Vocal parts for 4 women 40 years +

### **WE NEED DIRECTORS / PRODUCERS / STAGEMANAGERS**

The Players 2007/08 season is planned now. The first dinner theatre (above ) has been cast (and stars Rebecca May, Whitney Lake, Brenda Worsnop, Greg Curtis, Bill Taggart and one more man in his late 30s yet to be cast.) There are many production jobs ready to be filled ...there are lots of choices...lots of creatively challenging and interesting shows to get involved in...why not broaden your scope?...volunteer for a production team, assist in one of the productions and be mentored by a seasoned Player....its fun and rewarding!.....

call the PLAYERS 905-372-0577

***Come one come all!!!!***

**Northumberland Players Annual BBQ**

**at Lynne McCall's / 3625 Kennedy Road / Camborne**

**Sunday, July 15, 4 pm**

**Bring a salad or dessert and a lawn chair BYOB**

**RSVP to Lynne at 905-342-9645**

**Drive north on Burnham St.... Past Camborne church to Kennedy Rd.**

**Turn left....drive .8 Km to Fire # 3625**

**(large cape cod style taupe coloured house.)**

