



North Grenville Community Theatre

Kemptville Players Inc. / North Grenville Community Theatre

President's Report 2022-2023

Our AGM in 2022 included some entertainment, which was a read-through of the short play we would later perform at the International Plowing Match in Kemptville. We put on that show, *Desperate Farm Wives*, for free, and people who came in to the IPM didn't have to buy tickets, so we do not have an accurate count of attendance. We do know that hundreds of people saw the play, it was well-received. One reason we wanted to take part in the IPM was to help rebuild our visibility in the community and we did get a lot of positive feed-back.

After the IPM we decided that we had to start charging for all of our shows. We had lost thousands of dollars during the COVID-19 years, and, even though we want to help other community groups, we need to pay our bills.

Our Fall performance in 2022 was *Shirley Valentine*, directed by Darrell Nunn. I thought that was terrific theatre, with a tour-de-force by a single actor, Jorie Basque. Unfortunately our audiences still seemed to be covid-averse, and we struggled to make ends meet financially. In retrospect, we saw that our large investment in advertising for this play did not give matching results, which is a good reminder that we need to rethink how we reach our potential audience.

Come Spring, we were on the road again with *The Many Faces of Love*, our fund-raising traveling show that has been popular with partner non-profits. Thanks, Darrell and everyone that participated, for three engaging short comedies on love gone wrong.

We were saddened by the passing of our friend, Louise Atchison, who had been so involved in bringing music to several of our past performances. And we were honoured to be part of the tribute to Louise that was staged at the Urbandale Arts Centre. Thank you, Laura Drover, for managing our part of that event.



Illustration 1: Louise Atchison getting ready for We'll Meet Again, KPI, 2004



Illustration 2: Emotions ran high in The Desperate Farmwives at the IPM

Our biggest show, in terms of audience numbers, was the 2023 Spring Play, The Admirable Crichton. We sold 420 tickets for that show, a small step towards profitability. Since The Admirable Crichton is in the public domain, we decided to open a YouTube channel and offer it for public viewing.

It was another year of partnerships, such as partnering with the North Grenville Concert Choir for the Santa Claus Parade, and partnering with Kemptville Youth Musical Theatre, in negotiating with the Municipality for the move of our costumes to Bell Hall. And of course we plan to partner with all the theatre groups of EODL when we host their one-act festival in November, 2023. You know, we tested our physical endurance by riding in the cold, cold 2022 Santa Claus parade with our friends from the choir. Not many people who endured that Arctic experience have offered to repeat it. This is a reminder that we have to be careful when we accept invitations to be in community events. Yes, we do want the visibility. But we have to be realistic with our people, not over-committing our volunteers. When we can, we do get out to see people, we were also in Buskerfest and at the Seniors' Expo.

The incoming Board will have several challenges. It still needs to work to bring us back into financial balance. Even more pressing is a need to look at our human resource. I have circulated a plan in the Executive for how we can get more people into key functions. That should be a top priority for the incoming president, and so should the strategy we need for finding locations to rehearse and perform. At present we are sounding out the Parish Hall theatre in Kemptville Campus as a venue, there should be more news on that during the coming months.

Over the past year we revised our policy for working with young people and the vulnerable sector. That will help us when we get back into programming for youngsters.

One thing to look forward to is the revival of our Murder Mystery mini plays, which groups can use at fundraising dinners. Thank you, Cathy Raina, for your work on this.

We know what our main play is this fall, Hobson's Choice, directed by Darrell Nunn and Produced by Anik Whyte. Should be great. We have an entry in the one-act festival in November, The Death of Me, directed by Robin Churchill and Produced by Debbie MacGillivray. Pretty soon we will buckle down and figure out the next big question, which is the Spring show for 2024.

Hey – my closing paragraph from last year looks OK for an encore:

The actor. The Audience. What a thrill when magic happens between them. But, remember. The magic doesn't happen by accident. That is why we need groups like ours that can do the million things that build the actor – audience connection. Let's keep doing it, year after year.

Steve Wendt

President, KPI / NGCT