



North Grenville Community Theatre

Kemptville Players Inc. / North Grenville Community Theatre

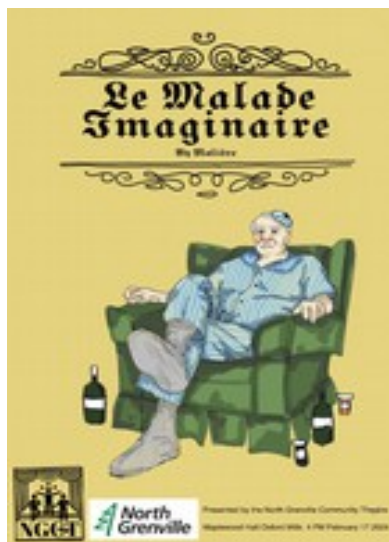
President's Report 2023-2024

Welcome back. I must say, one of my annual highlights is the President's Report for the AGM – and here goes...

Money first, and you can get more details in the Treasurer's Report. Our financial situation improved during the past fiscal year. We had lost thousands of dollars during the COVID-19 years, and, even though we always want to help other community groups, we do need to pay our bills. As we emerged from the pandemic we started up by providing some shows for free – several of which were at the International Plowing Match as the virus abated, and also as community fund-raisers in our celebrated Romance on the Road Series. After the IPM, however, we decided that we had to start recovering at least some costs for our shows.

In stepped the Municipality of North Grenville this past year with a grant of \$500 that allowed NGCT to provide Romance on the Road for free once again. That meant that all of the ticket revenues from Romance on the Road continued to help our non-profit friends. Thank you, North Grenville, and thanks to Darrell for managing that grant request!

In fact, North Grenville gave us two grants. The other was to stage a French-language theatre workshop, a first for us, and, we think, a first for our region. We adapted a famous play, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, by

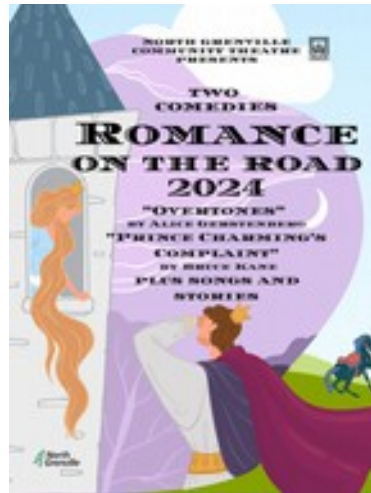


the great Molière. Although the audience was small, this was a terrific workshop and all participants learned a lot.

Our AGM in 2023 included some entertainment, which was a read-through of a short play by me.

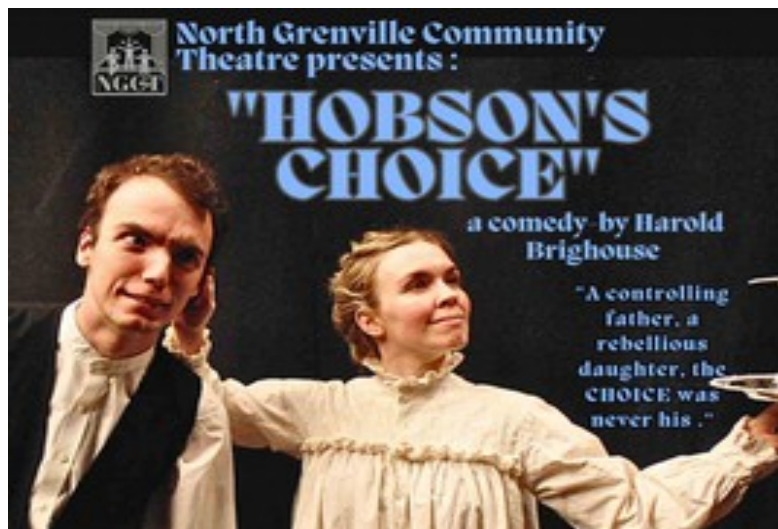
We love EODL. Our biggest money-maker in 2023 was the EODL one-act festival , which we hosted. Paul Rochon was our lead for that very successful weekend – thanks Paul!

So to keep the connection active, we have submitted our entry into the EODL one-act festival in Perth, November 1-2. It is called Trapper, the author is providing it royalty-free, and it will be directed by Robin Churchill. Robin directed our EODL entry last year as well, Go Robin!



People should enjoy our AGM and we try to keep it light. We hope people in attendance at this year's AGM have fun with the surprise we have prepared.

Our Fall performance in 2023 was Hobson's Choice, directed by Darrell Nunn. This was also an experiment to see what technical issues would arise when we stage a play in the theatre at Parish Hall. It was a very useful experiment, which will help us when we return to that venue.



Come Spring 2023, we were on the road again with Romance on the Road our fund-raising traveling show that has been popular with partner non-profits. Thanks, Darrell and everyone that participated, for these engaging short comedies on love gone wrong.

Our biggest NGCT show of the fiscal year, in terms of audience numbers, was the 2024 Spring Play, Bloody Murder, directed by me. That show also earned us some money, helping with our recovery to profitability. We were almost stuck short-handed on Tech – but we were saved by Pete and Brian – thanks!



We are getting older, as a group, and so are our friends such as the North Grenville Concert Choir so we decided to skip the Santa Claus Parade in 2023 instead of freezing our butts with the choir. Paul Rochon helped with our visibility at the blood donor clinic. Another community event that we have supported for years, through the efforts of our beloved Barb Stiles, is the Hey Day sale to raise funds for the Kemptville District Hospital. This year our hearts were broken by the passing of Barb. Her wonderful two daughters came out and ran the toy section of Hey Day in her place.

Cathie Raina led the revival of our Murder Mystery mini play group. This is a way to get people into theatre with less burden than being in a full-length play. It is intended for local non-profit groups to use our mini mystery plays at fundraising dinners. Cathie wrote a play about Al Capone in Kemptville. She has already had one performance that was very well-received, and she has more in the works.

We know what our main play this fall is. Our Town, directed by Darrell Nunn and produced by Debbie MacGillivray. This is a Pulitzer-prize awarded play, and everyone should get out to see it.

We are working on plans for our Spring show for 2024, which is currently proposed to be Mr. Pim Passes By, by A.A. Milne, directed by Steve.

There is certainly news on the way we store costumes and set materials. Thanks to the solid support of the Municipality of North Grenville, and especially Mayor Nancy Peckford and Councilor John Barclay, we have a terrific place for storage on Kemptville Campus. We share that space, and also space in Urbandale theatre, with KYMTC.



Which reminds me of Partnerships. NGCT has incredible community partnerships and I want to single out three, right now. The Municipality of North Grenville for supporting our storage needs, and also for considering us in their small grant programs. B&H Your Community Grocer for being our outlet for printed tickets. The Marlborough Community Recreational Association for being a wonderful partner at our main rehearsal venue, the Hall at Pierce's Corners. These partners help keep us viable.

Folks: I have been working on building up NGCT on the Web. Have a look, at ngct.ca. I think you will especially like what is there on past shows, and you will also find a lot of interesting reading in our previous newsletters. Of course you will also find our corporate bylaw and various policies. Enjoy your browse.

The incoming Board will have challenges typical of many volunteer-based groups. Let's talk about our organizational reality. Sure, we all like putting on shows but, do we have the organizational depth to commit to the long term? That depends.

For the last few years we have been very active, staging performances and working on community activities. We have tried to project our planning ahead by several years – in fact we do have a tentative schedule that reaches out until at least the 2026 AGM, BUT do we have the organizational depth to make these shows happen?

To stage theatre in our community we need quite a few dedicated human resources. We need people:

- working on set design and set building
- providing costumes
- managing publicity and tickets
- delivering technical theatre skills – sound and light
- running our Web services
- Doing Front-of-house
- Posters and programs
- And – acting.

Sometimes it feels that we have people who are committed to keeping NGCT alive in the community and so they connect to us for the longer term. They identify as NGCT resource people. When we have enough commitment from these folks, we can plan ahead.

Sadly, it does turn out that people get older, and some of our most solid team members can't continue to do what they do forever. They have to pull back. Unfortunately, some of our volunteers are able or willing to commit their time only on a show-by-show basis. That helps the show, and NGCT is grateful – however it does not help us in the longer term when we can't count on continuity, confident that we can field the experience so that key functions are being done.

It turns out that NGCT really has to think about two ways of operating.

The first way is what we have been doing. People come up with an idea, we float it around, it gets on the schedule, and NGCT delivers. That is NGCT's primary business model, but it only works when we know we have the expertise in place. Under this model NGCT will have major shows Spring and Fall, and a wide variety of other activities and outreach. The approval process for shows is fairly simple and requires just a director and producer to get it going.

The second way for NGCT is to manage our business on a show-by-show basis. In this mode, it will not be enough for people to come up with an idea, as they will also have to show that they have people committed for all the key aspects of the production. In addition to director and producer, they will have to lay out plans for tech, for publicity, for set, costumes, and so on. The production team is going to have to run the show. This means they are going to have to make their plans well in advance. Once approved they do get access to NGCT's financial reserves, name, insurance, costumes, equipment, audience, and to a large extent NGCT expertise, but they can't just assume NGCT will fill in whatever is missing. If we slide into the show-by-show business model our schedule will depend on what is proposed and approved. We can no longer innocently assume it will be the Spring and Fall shows we are used to.

Production teams will know what mode NGCT is operating in when they submit a show proposal. If the Board is convinced that there is enough NGCT commitment to support the show, approval can be the good old simple process. However if we do not have key functions staffed by NGCT volunteers – it will be different. The proponents will then have to demonstrate that all aspects are covered before approval is given.

Speaking of people, there will be a President's award. With or without that, some of the central volunteers for NGCT deserve a President's call-out. Terry Watkiss on Tech, Catherine Potts-Halpin on just about everything, Robin Churchill for getting into the world of directing, Cathie Raina for the murder mysteries, Paul Rochon especially for the EODL file, Richard Pickard for the books once again. Huzzah, all!

Hey – my closing paragraph from previous AGM letters looks OK for another 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