



North Grenville Community Theatre

President's Report, 2026 AGM, Kemptville Players, Inc.

Hi. As your President, I chair the KPI/NGCT board. I have been President since 2021, and will continue one more year if elected at this AGM. Of course, if, and when, someone else who can look after this small non-profit corporation appears on the scene, I will be happy to move on. The Board has a lovely spot called "Past President" which does sound inviting. Last year in the report to the AGM I said "I am getting old. The time will come when my usefulness has declined like spit disappears on a hot griddle." Hmmmm, no one has button-holed me about that, yet. Well, onward and upward.

This has been a successful year for NGCT. You will get more details from our Treasurer, but the monthly reports suggest income exceeded expenses over the year. We have to keep an eye on that. Our expenses have been going up and we want things to work out just right. Yes, I do mean Goldilocks budgeting, not too hot, not too cold. Since we are a non-profit corporation, we do not want to be overzealous in accumulating profits. On the other hand we need to carry enough funds to weather future difficulties.

This year we increased our ticket price to \$25 for our main shows, and that seems to have worked out satisfactorily.

We have been very active with our outreach. We help local community groups and non-profits by staging entertainment for them. Thanks to Darrell Nunn who manages the touring series, *Romance on the Road*, which continues to raise money for our friends. Thanks to Cathie Raina for her popular *Murder Mystery* offerings. In fact, our gifts back to our community are substantial. They amount to thousands of dollars annually. On the advice of our financial reviewer, we have featured this outreach in a strategy statement, and we will be asking members to approve that in a resolution.

Our big shows over the past year were both successful, financially and artistically. We performed *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and *The Perils of Persephone*.

Arsenic and Old Lace was our main show for Fall, 2025, and it was a humdinger. It was directed by Robin Churchill. For us, it was a show reprised. We had done *Arsenic and Old Lace* 39 years earlier, in 1986, directed by Ron Watkin. Members might be interested to know that we staged it back then in Parish Hall. Everyone was thrilled this time that we planned to have one of our actors, Lee Gaw, return to her 1986 role as Martha Brewster, but that did not happen due to a brief illness. Cathie Raina played

Abby Brewster for us this time, whereas in 1986 she had done set decoration, same show. Everyone had fun with the 2025 blockbuster, and it cleared a profit for us. Congratulations one and all.

Alyson Reid stepped up for her debut directing a full-length play when she presented *The Perils of Persephone* in Spring, 2026. This was another theatrical and financial success. It was classic Dan Needles: warm, witty, and rooted in the rhythms of rural Ontario life. Thanks, Alyson, for putting on a play by a Canadian author. The play featured performances by several people new to NGCT, new stage hands, and an amazing reconstruction of a mammoth tusk by Catherine Potts- Halpin. Good job, all!

Our entry in the 2025 in the Eastern Ontario Drama League one-act play festival this time was something new, on several fronts. It was the first performance of this Canadian play. It was the first play written by this emerging author, Roos Spanjers, and Roos directed the work, which was another first for her. The venue for this festival sold out early, so not many NGCT people were able to attend, but we did have an invited showing of the dress rehearsal at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in North Gower. This play opens our minds to a bygone time, when the Netherlands suffered under the Nazi occupation in World War II. It is also about the connections within a family that are catalyzed when today's children are introduced to a treasure of stories that their great-grandmother shared with their mom about growing up as a teenager in Amsterdam during those dark days. It was a moving performance, thank you Roos for putting it on. It achieved significant acclaim at the festival, winning the prestigious Margaret Shearman Award for an Outstanding Original Canadian Play. NGCT stage manager Noriron was nominated for the EODL Colin Mawson Award (Outstanding Contribution by a Student) for their work managing both this production and the group's previous entry, *Trapper*.

On to the murder mysteries. Cathie Raina exceeded expectations with the popular whodunnit 'Murder at the Manor'. Cathie wrote it. This show was performed five times from February to May 2026. Two were fundraisers for The House of Lazarus and for the new mosque in Kemptville. The other three were performed for the community association at Equinelle, the Kemptville Masons and for Home Support. We don't have a way to measure exactly how much we contributed as volunteers, but these shows raised several thousand dollars for the hosts.

Darrell's *Romance on the Road* series was a success once again! Five shows in 4 days, and our host groups raised over \$2,500. Four of these five shows were at churches, and I am happy to report that, so far, no church has commented on our comedy edging into risqué. Thanks, Darrell, for the shows and thanks for keeping us out of trouble. One of the plays was "*Mosquito*" which is a short comedic play written by Canadian playwright and our friend from the Humm, Rob Riendeau. Thanks, Stephanie Gilman for recommending this, and thanks, Darrell, for supporting a local author.

Did you know we have a YouTube Channel? You can find us on YouTube with our channel – North Grenville Community Theatre. As of August 11 that channel had had 1,868 views. We have a half-dozen shows posted there. We can only post material that is in the public domain.

One initiative has helped a lot for getting word out about our plays. NGCT has put in place a web-based CRM system for reaching our client base. As of August 11, we have 777 emails addresses in that database, so we touch a lot of people when we send out a mailing. The number continues to grow.

Costume storage is always a fundamental need for theatre groups. Over the years we have stored costumes and some stage materials in various places, including (years ago) an exterior container provided by the town of Kemptville, storage space loaned by local businesses, and notably in the basement of Leslie Hall, before that was torn down. Shortly after the Oxford Mills Library closed in

1998, North Grenville proposed a longer-term solution, which was to let us use space vacated there. We, later joined by two other local groups, kept costumes and stage props at that place for many years. When renovations began in Oxford Mills we had to move, North Grenville once again found a place for us, in Bell Hall. That location was ideal and we would have happily stayed there, but in 2025 we learned we had to make way because a better use had been found for that space. All our costumes had to be removed from Bell Hall, and they were placed in storage pods that are now parked at the municipal centre. This was only meant to be a short-term solution, and the costs to the municipality are not sustainable. We appreciate all the support that we have received from North Grenville over the years, but we don't know what will be happening next about our storage, it is a dilemma. This will be an important issue for the incoming Executive, and I suggest they consider all possibilities, once we find out what the future holds.

I am happy to say that we bring new people into the group with almost every show. We should welcome them. We have to be careful that we plan ahead, and make sure that our skill set doesn't age itself into oblivion. We also don't want to concentrate too many critical functions in too few people. I am looking forward to our Vice-President's report, because she is going to talk about some forward-looking ideas, to involve more people in the group management and the planning of our performance schedule.

We are thrilled to welcome our new Treasurer, Donna Duffett. One of the first things she did, new in the job, was re-register our alternate business name, North Grenville Community Theatre, for the next five years. Good work, Donna!

We are always thankful to our local sponsors. B&H Your Community Grocer, for being our in-person ticket outlet, North Grenville for providing space for us to store materials, and the Marlborough Community Recreation Association for rehearsal space. We would not be able to function without help from the community. Of course, our most important support is from the people who come to our shows. Let's keep them coming.

Some time ago Paul Rochon set up an annual award called the President's Award. We don't have to give that award every year, but this year I do have something in mind. That will be announced at the AGM. You can find the list of previous recipients on our website, under History.

An amateur association like NGCT relies on the skills of its members. Although, as a theatre group, one might think that mostly comes down to actors and directors, there are many more critical skills. Set design and building; technical aspects of sound and light in the shows; publicity; financial management; costumes and makeup; props; and, corporate management, such as the Secretary faithfully preparing minutes and agendas.

Thank you, one and all.

Steve Wendt
President, KPI Inc., 2025-2026