



North Grenville Community Theatre

Vice President's Report 2025-26

Hello everyone,

Another year has gone by, and we are nearing the time of the AGM again. It has been a year full of surprises, (some good, some bad) and small triumphs. Last fall saw us pack up our costumes and props from Bell Hall where we had become almost comfortable and make a hasty exit into some storage cubes. Many thanks to all who helped with the fast and furious packing and schlepping of countless (*I didn't* count them anyway) boxes and, in the end, bags of our assets. Especially Steve, who quietly moved a mountain of bins the packing team and I had created into the pods. It would be nice to know where we are going next- but we have had no word on that. We did have a meeting with the arts and culture council early this summer which many groups in the art and history community attended, that may bear some fruit. The general request was for a dedicated arts hub building that can house the historical society, some arts groups, a natural history collection and the costumes for NGCT and KYMTC in an appropriate manner.

We did a little work on the loading dock this spring and made the stands for the flats a whole lot taller and stronger. Big shout out to Mike McCoy and Eric Bawden for coming out to get that sorted. We will continue to store our hard assets, the many flats, doors, stairs etc. that make up our set builds on the loading dock space for as long as we can. Our set furniture went straight out to be donated this time. No room to keep it!

Our fall play did so well! Our audience was quite excited to come out and see a classic and they turned out in healthy numbers. I was so sad that Lee Gaw was not able to reprise her role of Martha and so relieved that that Robin and the cast were patient with me while I blundered through in her wake. Bless the audience members who insisted they never noticed the script in my hand. The famous window box is still with us, I am hoping it will make a reappearance in Cathie's fall murder mystery, "Murder-Most Unexpected" which is in rehearsal now and will be shown first as a fund raiser for Habitat for Humanity this fall at the United Church.

Our spring play was a welcome comedy for us- our North Grenville audience does love a good laugh. Alyson did a great job doing *The Perils of Persephone* for the second time in her directing career. And she brought us a play by a beloved Canadian playwright! There are still some strong rural roots in this community, and the audience genuinely appreciated the humour. The cast bonded so well and became close, it was lovely to see them still chatting weeks later on Messenger. Let's keep up with those group chats for the casts- a great idea initiated by Steve!

I want to just quickly mention the mask making workshop with Odyssey Theatre we did in early July. It was exciting to share this workshop with local groups. They are using the Trillium grant they received to build an online course on mask making. We had representatives from Station Theatre in Smiths Falls, Theatre Night in Merrickville, Dundas Players from Winchester, and of course KYMTC, join us. Patricia Cameron of Painted Key Art Therapy provided our venue in her studio at the college. We learned a skill and it was a social success; it's never a bad thing to spend a day with our sister theatre groups when we can.

I know that we have had various committees in the past few years, and sometimes it just seems that it is the same few folks juggling the same jobs under different titles. And sometimes it takes a while to get familiar with the post. For instance I am still finding it difficult to define what I am doing with the Publicity committee – there are few things that are natural to the task, arranging the tv interview and newspaper ads, getting us on the Municipal Centre calendar and marquee and setting out posters and signs, and making sure we have some social media coverage, but the post could be richer and get out in the community in more ways. I have gotten us back into conversation with the Chamber of Commerce and have spent some time talking to local businesses about what we do, but that could be a regular role before every show – moving towards a time when we look for sponsors from the community. If you would like to help or have some media or marketing experience, please reach out to me!

For my part I am feeling that a couple of terms as VP are sufficient and I am considering stepping down after this coming year. That is not to say I don't want to do the fun stuff. And I may not even want to give up the keys to various things. I just believe it is time to share the tasks that make up the executive roles, so that those that step in will feel comfortable in the space.

To that end I am proposing a couple of motions. One is that we expand the number of members at large to 6 from four. If this is possible, we will never be short of a quorum for voting purposes at meetings, because sometimes we are away at various other group activities.

We would also benefit from new voices and ideas and be finally able to share out some board tasks. How would you like to be the liaison with the Municipal Centre booking? It is a learning curve! Or manage the Box Office questions? Or we could create a Social Media Chair and those who are contributing so faithfully to our social media presence – you know who you are- could finally have a title. Or you could become part of the next thing I am bringing a motion on.

The second thing that I will be suggesting is that we bring back the idea of a reading committee to NGCT. Many of you wonder how we choose the plays we do. We can trace back the history of when our official reading committee slowed down. The interruption of Covid had a lot to do with it, as did the need to find a director willing to step forward to do a play. Currently we are working with plays that are submitted to the board as proposals by the directors themselves and that is working well enough. We do have a roster of plays up until 2028.

I would like to see a stronger committee, not just a reading committee but one with an expanded role and responsibilities. A Production Review Committee could take the submissions we receive and report to the board their findings and make recommendations on the plays. An agreed upon grading system would help with this. Perhaps you could even ask technical questions and get feedback about what our limitations are from the tech side of our organization. The committee could also continue to search out plays and review them as well as actively inviting involvement and submissions from possible directors. The board will of course still pre read the plays that are voted on and recommended to it. It won't be a grueling task, we don't get a great influx of proposals, but we would get more if it were gently made known that we welcome visiting directors. We also welcome *new* directors, under a proviso that they spend a season as an assistant director to an experienced one first.

There is the possibility of adding such chairs as Emeritus, and Observer, who would be welcome at exec meetings because of their long commitment to Kemptville Players. But that is a matter for future discussion.

It was a good year, one that has left us with a few unanswered questions, but we are stronger in many ways and in good financial shape, for a nonprofit group. Let's look forward to our fall production-"I Love You You're Perfect Now Change", best of luck Darrell, Chad and Mark!!!

Thank you all for being along for another trip around the sun with our lovely theatre family!

Yours, Catherine Potts-Halpin