

NFLT NEWSLETTER – May 2016



Amaya Silva, Mason Moore, Danielle Gosse and “the nose” in “Pinocchio”.



Lifetime Recognition honoree Sara Hale flanked by two pros – Pam Giroux and Peter Platenius

Summer Greetings everyone, (and happy black fly season)!

Please find below the president’s report for our 2015 and 2016 theatre year, followed by some key points of information that arose from our annual meeting held May 9th in the Tichborne Hall. Finally, of interest may be the Pioneer Drama article entitled, “Hats off to Volunteers!”

1) NFLT President’s Report

May 9, 2016 AGM

Throughout the course of our busy 2015-16 theatre year, we have embraced many on-going goals, and I am proud to report that we have found a high level of success in key areas:

- fostering creativity
- forming partnerships
- providing a sense of belonging



Gillian Hoffman and Sidney Drew break some moves in “Pinocchio”.

Creativity

Talk about **creativity**! First off, we provided the opportunity for our seasoned faithful to flourish. Here are just a few examples: **Donna Larocque** blew us all away with her breath-taking big book set in “Pinocchio”; **Geoffrey Murray** did the same with his costumes; and **Pam Giroux** wowed us with powerful performances in both “The Miracle Worker” and “Pinocchio”.

But we also provided equal opportunity for new talent to shine – **Carol Belanger** astounded us all with her directorial debut in “The Miracle Worker”; **Nancy Hilder** was awesome in her first time role as producer for “Pinocchio”; retired couple, **Carol and Greg Morris** of Arden, were wonderful in their first stage appearance when they took on roles in “Pinocchio”; and **Johnathon Wistead** (actor and legend in the making) and his sister **Jennifer** (make-up artist extraordinaire) proved a most pleasant asset to our “Pinocchio” production.

Then, of course, **Gillian Hoffman** danced, acted and charmed audiences in “Pinocchio” as **Sidney Drew and Annika Putnam** got delightfully serious on us in “The Miracle Worker”, and **Mason Moore** simply shined as “Pinocchio”, and...well, need I say more? Yes, we fostered creativity, wouldn't you agree?



Partnerships

NFLT has **partnered** with many community groups, making us an important link in the fabric of our life here in Central and North Frontenac.

The **Limestone District School Board** and **GREC** invite us to do two productions a year in their facility. And **Central Frontenac Township** helps support this monetarily. We are truly grateful of this arrangement.

Local businesses have helped us out again in a variety of ways. For example, the **Sharbot Lake Pharmacy**, the **Dollar Store** and the **Parham General Store** kindly facilitated (in a big way!) the sale of tickets.

In the fall, student representative, **Gillian Hoffman** and **Johnathon Wistead** of



“Pinocchio” fame and I helped out with **Community Living – North Frontenac’s** masquerade ball, decorating and emceeing. We look forward to offering continued support to this wonderful group.

Land O’ Lakes Public School appreciated our loaning to them of black curtains and our theatre lights for their spring production.

Clarendon Millar Community Archives was grateful to borrow backdrop flats for their display in Plevna on General Stores.

And some of our equipment will be in use this Saturday the 14th at a benefit concert for **Julie Druker’s good friend Buck** who suffered a horrendous house fire in the fall.

Partnerships – we help to form, be included in and appreciate these **ties that bind**.

Belonging

And finally we continue to bring people together, providing **a sense of belonging** by working toward a common goal – a performance - each person an important link. And if

you were to talk to anyone who has experienced an NFLT production, chances are they will tell you of the strong friendships and the feeling of being **a vital part of a family** that occur throughout the course of rehearsals and performance week. This sense of belonging is reassuring and builds spirit, confidence and a true sense of being part of something special.



Margo McCullough, Assistant Stage Manager, "The Miracle Worker" (station sign by Donna Larocque)

I would like **to thank** all who helped us find success in NFLT's theatre year 2015-2016. A heart-felt thank you to:

- > our dedicated executive
- > our wonderful participants
- > our many patrons and community partners
- > and a special shout out to all the behind-the-scenes people, (including our photographer, videographer and web-site manager **Wendy Parliament**), who are so instrumental in our success.



> Sara, Pam, Wendy and Tim enjoying the NFLT's Awards afternoon last fall

So please, spread the word, **"Join us!"** Take a walk on the creative side! We'll be looking for you this year on or off the stage!

Thanks and Good Cheer always!
Brian

2) Membership Initiative

Sally Angle, executive member at large, outlined the rationale for reinstating a **membership fee**: to help offset administration costs (insurance, taxes, hydro) plus production costs (copyright payments, sets, costumes advertising, tickets, programmes, etc.) and to provide members with a positive sense of investment.

With that in mind, Sally moved that we reinstate a membership fee for NFLT at a cost of **\$5 per year per person, \$10 for a family** and that membership records be kept. (Article 1- section 1). Doug MacIntyre seconded. The motion was **carried**.

Then, Sally moved that a fee of \$5 per person (\$10 per family) be charged for participation in NFLT productions *and that that fee constitute membership in NFLT - one doesn't have to pay twice - for one year from date of payment*. (Article 1- section 2d). Ian seconded. **Carried**.

It should be noted, that Sally has generously offered to manage all this data. Forms were distributed to members to fill out and also note on the reverse side any experience they had which could be kept on record. Fees were then collected. Sally will keep a membership list on her computer plus collate individual experience in a separate production resource booklet.

At a later date, the membership form will be discussed at further length by the Executive as Doug MacIntyre has some more specific information he would like to be considered for the form. (i.e., previous roles, time conflicts, talents - read music, singer, dancer, instrumentalist, etc.).

3) Playbill - Fall, 2016; Spring, 2017

The Fall show will feature **Craig Godfrey's** music - filled, cottage – themed, “**Turtle Crossings**”. Brian Robertson will direct.

Our Spring production will bring the comedy “**The Hand That Cradles The Rock**” to the stage and it sounds like a fun dance between female assertiveness versus male masculinity as a young father tries his hand at being Mr. Mom. **Doug MacIntyre** will have a few laughs directing that, for sure!

Please see our web-site for updates and further information about these upcoming productions – perhaps this will be an opportunity for your big break!

4) Ongoing Initiatives:

> **GREC routines** continue to evolve and include:

- * an actors' etiquette and school code of conduct handbook
- * the assurance that *parents of actors only pay for one performance* and can avail themselves of vacant seats for subsequent shows just before curtain opening
- * no reserved seating unless a disability (sight, hearing, physical) needs to be considered

A duotang advising directors of these and other issues will be organized by Doug MacIntyre and be ready for the next production.

- **Canada 150** – NFLT is a proud supporter and participant in Central Frontenac's Canada 150 campaign **culminating in celebrations throughout the year 2017**. Check our web-site for future related developments, and let us know if you have any ideas on how NFLT can become an important part of the celebrations, cheering Canada's 150th birthday!



5) Committees

If anyone has an interest in helping out on one of our many volunteer committees, please contact us at 613-279-1335

- Sound organization, design and engineering
- Lighting organization, design and engineering
- Storage organization – props, costumes, set pieces, tools etc.
- Make-up organization and application
- Grounds and interior maintenance of our hall and trailer
- Archives
- Publicity
- Artistic Director
- Music Director
- Stage Director

Pioneer Drama Service – Hats off to Volunteers!

Volunteers. Finding and Keeping 'Em

By Flip Kobler

Flip Kobler began his performing career as an actor before morphing into a writer. Flip and his wife, Cindy Marcus, have written for Disney and now run Showdown Stage Company and Showdown Theater Academy in Valencia, California. Pioneer Drama Service is pleased to offer several plays and musicals by this dynamic duo.

It takes a village. Trite, but true. If no man is an island, then no show is a peninsula. Even a one-man show can't operate solo. Someone has to work lights and sound. Someone has to run the house, take tickets, give out programs... You see where I'm going here. Any production needs help. And unless you're independently wealthy, that help comes in the form of volunteers. But where do you find 'em, how do you use 'em, and most importantly, how do ya keep 'em?

Finding Volunteers

The most obvious place to recruit volunteers is from your **cast and crew**. Trouble is, they're often too busy rehearsing to do all the other set, costume, painting, props, tickets, and publicity tasks, as well as the bajillion and seven other things that need doing, to actually do that need-doing thing.

So let's look outside the cast and crew.

Another great resource is **parents**. Duh, right? Parents of your cast and crew are often eager to help. They're a great place to farm out the work that needs to be done. Costumes, set or prop construction, publicity, tickets, etc. We'll talk about how to best use their talents and enthusiasm in the next section, but we couldn't do our shows without our Supermoms and Superdads.

Have you considered **the retired community**? A local 55-and-over complex? The Lions Club? The Legion? There are lots of active seniors out there looking to be even active-er. They'd love a place to put their talents and skills to use. And as a bonus, the more outside people who work on your show, the more tickets you sell because they love to bring their family and friends to show off the program they're supporting.

We worked at a theater in Florida that already had a fabulous volunteer system in place. The community theater did seven shows a year. They struck after the final Sunday matinee. On Monday morn, a group of retired guys came in and built the set for the next show over the next three days. Thursday morning a group of retired gals zipped in to paint the set. In less than a week the entire set for the next show was up and curtain-ready. They worked like a well-oiled machine, and these seniors knew their stuff!

Lastly, we'd like to suggest your **local church**, synagogue, or temple. We've done a lot of church productions and have discovered the one thing churches have in abundance is man-power. Talk to the local clergy, tell them what you need and see if they'd be willing to put it in Sunday's program or make an announcement from the pulpit. Congregations and youth groups are often excited to help out in the community. Plus, it's another resource for selling those all-important tickets.

Empowering Volunteers

Now that you've got 'em, how do you use 'em? We've discovered that people love giving their time, but hate wasting it. So when worktime rolls around, **be prepared and scheduled.**

If you can, **farm out jobs** to parents who can work on their own time. Tell a mom "I need this costume done by Friday please." That will let her work at home when she has the time, whether it's evenings, insomnia at 3 a.m., or while the baby takes a nap. Can you ask dads, uncles, or grandpas to build your flats or benches at home? They may not be able to come to the school to build on Saturday when the big workforce is scheduled, but if they have a specific task and timeline, you'll be pleasantly surprised what can be accomplished.

If you do have a big **on-site workday**, be sure to have clear goals prepared and the needed materials on-hand. "Today, our goal is to get the walls up." Or, "Today we want all the outside background flats painted." Setting ambitious yet attainable goals gives people a drive and sense of accomplishment. But ask people to come in for three hours on a Saturday morning without clear plans, and they'll often spend it drinking coffee and standing around wondering what to do. Ask for goals, not hours.

Keep in mind that volunteers are not just here as free labor. They're here out of love and devotion and want some input into the final show. If you ask a mom to make a lion costume, let her make it the way she wants. Let her feel empowered and creative. If you ask a dad to build a bookcase, you might have to live with the bookcase he built, not the one you imagined.

You may even come to a place where you have to choose between making the volunteers happy and getting the exact show you dreamed about. Remember, dreams are free, volunteers are hard to come by.

Keeping volunteers

The easiest way to keep volunteers is **to let them be part of the process.** Make them feel important, needed, and appreciated.

We already talked about giving them some creative freedom and input. Give as much as you can without hurting the show. People will come back if their creative urges are given an outlet.

Give them credit. Be sure to list the volunteers in the program, or even on a special board in the lobby. Everyone wants to be acknowledged for their hard work. Sing their praises via pictures on Facebook and other social media. We often have a collage board in the lobby during the final production. You know the kind of thing — pictures of the set and costumes in progress, photos of the volunteers working. The audience loves to see the "work in progress."

If they've come from the church, let the clergy know and if possible mention them during the service. If they're from the college, a card or letter to their professor will go a long way to having them come back, next time with friends.

If you do a curtain speech before or after the show, don't forget **to mention the people who helped make the show happen**. You don't have to mention everyone by name, but give credit where it's due.

However you go about it, make sure you show your appreciation. Remember that theater in Florida with the retired volunteers? Twice a year the theater throws a **volunteer appreciation night** of a black-tie catered dinner in the lobby. They give out silly awards like, "best non-burning fireplace," and "best period costume using Velcro," and the seniors absolutely love it!

It's fun and stupid, but it makes people feel valued. And at the end of the day that's what it's really about, isn't it? All of us want to feel like we matter. That we contribute. So **don't be stingy with the appreciation**.

You got this. You rock. Now get out there and break some legs.