

News from the New Zealand Theatre Federation Inc.



L.J.J. Theatre
Winners of the Book of Honour

President's Column

Dear Members,

What a great weekend we had at the National Final so ably run by Wellington District. The venue at Lower Hutt was great (good to see a local authority providing such a good facility for the arts) and even though there was more than a bit of rain, the warmth of the hosting paved the way for a wonderful weekend.

The plays were of a very high quality and very diversified. It was great to see such expertise on stage and such a wide range of plays being presented. I, and others, felt that we were seeing the start of a resurgence in theatre presentation and applaud these teams for providing such a rich, satisfying weekend for us.

The icing on the cake was the wonderful workshops provided on the Saturday afternoon and the good turnout of people wanting to increase their skills base. Voice, dance and stage combat kept people on their toes and people got really involved. That is one of the great things about our theatre folk, they will join in immediately.

On the administration side, now we have portfolios sorted we will move into the next stage of making some forward plans and will invite your input into this. All our mail is to go to the library, where it will be sorted and sent on to those who need to get it. However, if some still travels to Westport, Lyn will happily send it on, but we don't want her to have to keep doing this so please take note of the new postal address.

Many of us had great trouble getting home on the Sunday - but even that could not take away from a wonderful theatre weekend. You are all doing great work out there, but it is important that we don't get isolated from one another. Strength comes through unity. May your current productions go well.

Yours in theatre,
Denise Walsh.



Reporting Back from the AGM held June 28

The people nominated were duly elected. President Denise comes in for her final year, Ewen Coleman becomes Vice President and David Brockett was re-elected as National Treasurer. The remit allowing Life Members to have a vote was passed.

It was announced that henceforth all communication with NZTF will be through the library. **Our official address is Room 110 Square Edge Arts Centre 52-56 The Square, Palmerston North 4440.** To get in touch ring 06 356 5565 or email nztflibrary@xtra.co.nz or post to PO Box 329 Palmerston North 4440 Please update your contact lists now!

It was suggested by Bob Cater that some sort of badge be given to acknowledge Life Members and those who have been given Meritorious Service Awards. This was endorsed by the meeting and will be actioned by the Wellington District.

Festival of Community Theatre 2009

Final in Manawatu June 26/27.

South Island Regional will be June 5/6

North Island Regional June 12/13.

A letter has been sent to all members about these dates and our official address.

*Are you interested in becoming an individual member of NZTF?
Send a cheque for \$40 to our official address.*

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Theatre in the Bush One Act Plays

Contributed by Lesley Courtenay

In May Pahiatua Repertory Society held an inaugural one act play festival. With a history of entering one act play competitions organized by The New Zealand Theatre Federation and Norfolk Island, Pahiatua Repertory Society decided to give it a go themselves.

'Theatre in the Bush' was named after Pahiatua's geographical position within the old 40 mile bush area. We were looking to make it a learning experience and one that would serve to connect theatre societies and build relationships that would hopefully endure. It was timed to complement the NZTF festival so it could serve as an experience and a run up for groups that might have little experience with festivals. We wanted to encourage or remind groups to give one acts and festivals a go. They are an excellent learning ground and with the adjudication process we have learnt that you gain from every festival entered whether you succeed in winning a place or not.

With an original limit of twelve plays, the final 9, entered from Taupo, Napier, Palmerston North and Pahiatua, proved to be an excellent number. The festival was separated into youth and adult categories and sponsorship allowed us to offer a prize pool of \$3000 for best productions and acting in both categories. Our adjudicator Brian Staniland did a wonderful job for both the teams and the audience and had a hard job on his hands selecting from the plays entered. Pahiatua Repertory Society won best adult production with Napier Little Theatre as runner up and Tararua College took out both winner and runner up in the youth production section. Acting prizes went to Stephen Fisher of Palmerston North, Jill Foster of Napier and Caroline Miller and Ashtonp-Rose Hempo of Tararua College.



It was a great experience. We were so well supported by the teams and our local community that it is certainly one we are going to repeat in 209. And, we would love to make the next one even more successful. If you have an interest in entering, especially if you are not in our local area, please let us know and we will send information. We would love to hear from you and how exciting to have an entry from Bluff or Kaitaia!

We would also like to encourage other groups to try this too. It really is not too big a challenge if you have a dedicated team of enthusiastic people to organise and run with the idea. If you are interested in starting your own festival we would be happy to offer any advice that might be useful. Contact Pahiatua Repertory Society PO Box 91 Pahiatua - a little town with a big theatrical heart!

Elizabeth Watkin Grubb QSM

Heartiest congratulations to Elizabeth on her award of a Queen's Service Medal for services to drama education and the community.

Elizabeth is HOD Drama at Mountainview High School. She is an actor, director of classical, modern and musical theatre, a member of the South Canterbury Drama League, and works for the Aoraki Festival of the Arts, Riding for the Disabled, Friends of the Theatre Royal, Voices for Hospice, St Mary's Anglican Church and many other community organisations

For over ten years Elizabeth was involved with the Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand and has acted as a consultant in Shakespearian studies for schools participating in the Sheilah Winn Festival. She was a founding member of ANZDA the Association of New Zealand Drama Adjudicators and served on the council of the Speech Communication Association of New Zealand.

What makes her award even more special is the fact that her husband William was also given a QSM at the same time. A double like this was given some years ago to another husband and wife team, theatrical couple Rose and Brian Hudson of Wellington.



Drama Development Trust

On the final night of the Festival, secretary Margaret Robertson standing in for Chairman Jim Barr, presented vouchers for \$75 for use in the May Ives Library to each of the finalists. A cheque for \$1000, a donation for use in the library, was also presented to President Denise.

A new initiative was also announced. Groups may now apply for subsidies towards capital expenses. This is in addition to the grants scheme for individuals and groups wishing to further their knowledge. Monies available each year for all these grants will not exceed \$1500. Closing dates will be April 1 and October 1 of each year.

Send for application forms from PO Box 22 249 Wellington 6441.

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NZTF Festival of Community Theatre 2008

The Little Theatre in the Lower Hutt Civic Centre was an ideal venue for last month's annual festival. The public and backstage facilities were all very spacious and the hall nearby was convenient for meetings and lectures. The inclusion of participatory lectures in the programme on Saturday afternoon added a real buzz to the whole weekend. Actors, audience members, organisers and the adjudicator all enjoyed themselves immensely. Thank you very much to the Wellington District committee for all their work in making this a hugely successful theatrical gathering.

Life Member Bill Sheat OBE opened the Festival on Friday night with some apposite words about the challenges of theatre. He said that competition in theatre is unavoidable. The competitors are TV, movies,

sport, pubs and pokies. The way to beat them is to be better. How do you get better? By improving your skills and what better environment to do that than in a competition. There is a compact which the performer and the rest of the team enters into with the audience. The person who buys the ticket from you is entitled to expect from you the best that you can do. Nothing less will do. Bill referred to quality; theatre is either good bad or indifferent. It has nothing to do with being an amateur or a professional. The challenge to the non professional is increased by the limitation on the time available to prepare the work. Finally he said he was sure that we would see productions by people who had accepted these challenges and who were determined to deliver to audiences that special magic that only live theatre can create.

Certificates of Appearance and Drama Development Trust Awards

In order of appearance

FAHS Feilding High School with *Legislate That* by Karla Crofts and Year 13 Students
directed by Karla Crofts



Wellington Repertory Theatre with *Two Women and a Chair* by Michael Olsen
directed by Liz Lipski



Pahiatua Repertory Theatre Society with *The Donahue Sisters* by Geraldine Aron directed by Peter Lea

Photo on page 5

Aranui Theatre Company with *Bottom's Tale* by William Shakespeare edited and directed by Robert Gilbert



L.J.J. Theatre with *Bent* by Martin Sherman directed by Laurence Wiseman

Photo on page 5

Bryan Aitken Award for Best Youth Production

FAHS Feilding High School

Selecon Design/Technical Award

L.J.J. Theatre, Christchurch

NZ Theatre Federation Award

Best Actor – Male



James Marshall and Jack Jenkins

NZ Theatre Federation Best Actor Female



Adrienne Hurley with Claire Marsh

NZ Theatre Federation Best New Director



Laurence Wiseman with Hayden Rogers

Other directors nominated for this Best New Director award were Anne Corney of Napier Repertory Society, Stephanie Drew of Wellington Repertory Theatre and Selena Aitken-Boyle of South Otago Repertory Society.

All these directors were reported as being well organised and having good rapport with their casts.

Olga E. Harding NZ Playwriting Award

Legislate that! – (An OSH approved, tick-the-box, self-funding production)

by Karla Croft and year 13 Drama Students.

Adjudicator Amanda Jackson wrote that this play is funny, contemporary and light-hearted with quickness in the writing that held the attention of the reader. A strong theme held the different pieces together and a sense of immediacy was evident and, although the subject matter itself may date, it will always be an interesting, humorous chronicle of our time.

Three Jannat Aitchison Awards

Josh Bain for original music for *Legislate That*, FAHS Feilding High School .

Lesley Courtney as Rosie in *The Donahue Sisters*.

Runner Up:

Pahiaua Repertory Society with *The Donahue Sisters*.



NZ Theatre Federation Book of Honour for Overall Winner



L.J.J. Theatre with *Bent* by Martin Sherman directed by Laurence Wiseman.

So what did you miss out on if you weren't at the lectures?

Here's a pictorial record of the happenings. At Bert Van Dyke's workshop Anne Corney, Adrienne Hurley, Judy Lea and Claire Marsh loosen up ready for amazing vowels to emerge. By the end of this session we were singing a four part African song in perfect harmony.



Jennifer Shennan led us on a Medieval dance circuit and then we enjoyed the contrasting formality of the Pavane as we approached Royalty in line.



Allen Henry aims for a spot on the wall and one of us trusts him to miss. With choreography we would be convinced that a connection had been made and pain inflicted. No one should fight on stage without a well worked out plan.

Photography by Joan Ford

Profile of Kaitaia Dramatic Society

Contributed by Cheryl Rapira, Secretary

The Kaitaia Dramatic Society has a great heritage; an article in Keith Parker's Kaitaia 1930's notes a 1927 performance by the Kaitaia Amateur Theatrical party! Christmas 1934 the Kaitaia Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society was formed and in 1948 KDS as it is today came into being with the AGM recording 72 members. Like many rural community theatres there have been peaks and troughs, years when productions were low to none, instances when there were not enough committee members for a quorum and issues on where the club would be housed. We now have a 120 seat theatre in a council owned community centre. Through the years dedicated individuals have kept the society going and it is this wonderful atmosphere and second family that I am fortunate enough to be involved with.

Being the eldest of 6 kids meant I had to find some way to keep my siblings quiet....so I put on plays. Impromptu, slapstick, funny skits entertained them for hours on end. At college drama class was the only A on the report card. And then life, marriage and kids came along. So, in my late 40s and with some anticipation I found community theatre.

Over the past few years we have put on a number of productions (e.g. *Wednesday to Come* by Renee, *The Lover* by Harold Pinter, *The Big OE* by Alison Quigan and one act plays by NZ playwrights) each time recruiting more people into the creative process of theatre. We find ourselves in 2008 with a committee of experienced individuals and enthusiastic newcomers all committed to profiling community theatre. Kaitaia Dramatic Society is setting goals, strengthening relationships and letting one and all know of its future plans

for the Far North area. Just some of the things on the horizon are a living heritage open day, a Christmas float, reintroduction of the Northland one act play festival (ie Festival of Community Theatre - Ed), researching KDS history, workshops, and establishing a Far North Maori theatre group.



Cast of Sisters by Alison Quigan and Lucy Schmidt directed by Cheryl Rapira, June '08.

Community theatre is such a great buzz and I have been fortunate to be embraced by mentors who have encouraged me to learn and grow. The theatre is a great way to express oneself creatively, not only on stage but in all the different aspects it takes to mount a production. It is so a team thing and when it comes together you get such a sense of achievement. A bonus is the increase in members' confidence, lateral thinking, initiative and people skills and the icing is audience appreciation. I recommend anyone contemplating theatre to find the nearest one, or start their own. I have found another family in Kaitaia Dramatic Society and look forward to putting on many more performances with my adopted siblings. See you at the theatre!

What's Coming Up

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| New Plymouth Repertory Society | <i>Father's Day</i> by Eric Chappell | August 12 – 23 |
| Butterfly Creek | <i>Ten Times Table</i> by Alan Ayckbourn | October 9 -18 |
| Foxton Little Theatre | <i>Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime</i> by David Tristram | August 8 – 23 |
| Heretaunga Players | <i>Ladies in Retirement</i> by Edward Percy & Reginald Denham | July 31- Aug 9 |
| Kapiti Playhouse | <i>Noises Off</i> by Michael Frayn | July 30 - Aug 9 |
| Levin Little Theatre | <i>Beyond a Joke</i> by Derek Benfield <i>Audition Arabian Knights-The Panto</i> by Richard Lloyd | July 31 - Aug 16 Aug 10, 6.30pm |
| Mana Little Theatre | Audition for 2 one act plays by Pam Valentine | August 24, 7.30pm |
| Porirua Little Theatre | Auditions <i>Bat Boy The Musical</i> by Farley & Fleming | August 2 – 9 |
| Stagecraft | <i>The Pohutukawa Tree</i> by Bruce Mason | Sept 10 – 20 |
| Tawa Community Theatre | <i>Show Time Memories</i> directed by Adele Mahan | August 21 – 30 |
| Wellington Repertory | Audition <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> by Oscar Wilde | August 2-3 |
| South Canterbury Drama League | <i>Home</i> by David Storey <i>Theatre Royal Buddy</i> by Rob Bettinson & Alan James | August 8 - 16 Sept 12 - 20 |

Looking for a New Zealand Play for 2008?

Order a Perusal Script Now!

"Brilliant fast moving script.... Fun to stage, hilarious to watch..."

Toni Henderson
Director for Tauranga Musical Theatre"

"Looking for a NZ play that will pull in the crowds? This is it!"

Phil Ormsby
Artistic Director Flaxworks Theatre

"Ideal comedy for the Repertory Theatre! "

Gregory Brownless
Past President Tauranga Repertory Theatre"

"Hilarious, dramatic, insightful. Williamson's plays are winners for the audience and producer alike".

Stuart Gunn
Artistic Director Absolute Theatre

Outrageous NZ Comedy!

"Another winner from the writer of Crazy Ladies!"

Understanding WOMEN

Mike, Dave and Julian spend a weekend in a garden shed determined to break an age old mystery. Armed with a case of beer, a box of girlie magazines and a holy book they are going to "understand women". What they discover is not quite what they expected.

By Devon Williamson

Hilarious NZ Comedy!

Crazy Ladies

An outrageous comedy! Five school friends stage their own reunion after 25 years apart. Friendships are rekindled, secrets are revealed, a janitor is kidnapped! Hilarious and uplifting.

By Devon Williamson

For perusal scripts and information contact: | Email: info@plays.co.nz | Ph: 07 5710752

www.plays.co.nz

Sheilah Winn Winners 2008

This year the NZTF Award for Outstanding Producing was won by John Paul College for their production of a Richard III scene.

Congratulations to NZTF Associate/Members who won awards; Wellington High School won the Patrick Smyth Award for Best Connection with the Audience with their Julius Caesar; Mountain View High School won the Jan Fraser Award for Student Directed Ensemble Work for Antony and Cleopatra; Fielding High School won the Bernina Award for Outstanding Student-Directed Costume Design for Macbeth

Individual members of NZTF teams were also recognised for special performances: Jack Buchanan of Wellington High School, James Stock and Jess Kelly of Mountain View High School, Nell Guy and Theresa Ammann of Logan Park High School. Congratulations to you all.

A Wellington District Happening

Next month Stagecraft Theatre will host the annual competition for the New Players Theatre Company Thespian Intelligence Challenge Shield. They narrowly won it last year from Khandallah Arts Theatre who had held the Shield for a number of years. Teams of 4 from different societies compete against each other to answer questions on all manner of topics and much fun is had by all. To help lubricate proceedings Stagecraft will be serving complimentary bubbles and nibbles.

Why not get together with likeminded people in your district and organise a night of conviviality?

Famous Last Words

It's OK, I know all my lines
Don't worry, I won't trip over that
Yes I understand that sound cue
We don't need a technical rehearsal
Of course I can get off-stage in a blackout

Thanks to New Players News April '08



**Postage
Stamp**



Editor Margaret Robertson
Technical Assistant Matt Norrish, Logan Park High School

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Contributions please to
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or PO Box 329 Palmerston North 4440