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Logan Park High School students representing  
New Zealand at the 2008 International Youth Drama  
Festival held in Tokyo

# President's Column

Dear Thespians All,

It is about now that we start to think how we will do things better next year. We will be well organised and ready for all eventualities. Hopes and dreams have their place and keep us happy I guess and when things fall slightly off the tracks we grin and fix things up.

Many of you have had very successful productions and people are aiming higher all the time. That is why we need to try to encourage new directors to follow in your footsteps. Speaking of which - take note of Nanette's wise words and look towards next year's festival.

I blithely said I would do this edition of Backchat for Margaret who is overseas and now panic has set in and I am unsystematically getting things together with the able help of my design person who is one of Logan Park's Y13 students. It is great when our young ones can help us, especially in the areas we are not so conversant with. You can read about him in this edition.

I won a place with Park Players in the first Performing Arts World Festival in Toyama Japan during August. It has changed from a drama festival to allow more participation. More about it in another article.

Pahiatua won the Top Play Award In Norfolk Island. Our very best congratulations to them.

It is not too long before your Christmas Plays - Pantomimes - Happenings - Awards Nights - take place. I know they will all go well and that you will get personal satisfaction as well as inspiring your audiences.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the finals in Palmerston North.

*Yours in theatre,*

*Denise Walsh, President.*



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

## Backchat Designer



Matt Norrish, a year 13 student at Logan Park High School attending Otago Polytechnic in 2009 to pursue a career in design and computer technology.

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# Festival of Community Theatre 2009

Those of you who have been to previous finals in Palmerston North know that it is a great place for celebrating theatre. Preliminary organising is well under way Joan tells me and they are looking forward to hosting it.

As you know OUR OWN UNIQUE LIBRARY is now housed there and at the Finals will be an ideal time for you to pay a visit and celebrate it in its new home. One of the plans is to have some playwrights read from their work and perhaps we might get to toast it in its new home. We will

know the firm plans in plenty of time for you to arrange to be involved.

Joan and Sheridan with the Manawatu Branch have overcome all sorts of problems to get it up and running and it is being seen as an invaluable resource by Massey University. Ours is the only library that carries so many unpublished New Zealand Plays, many of them of historical importance.

Now just a reminder in case you have put the new address in a safe place - here it is again:

THE N.Z. THEATRE FEDERATION LIBRARY  
P.O. BOX 329,  
PALMERSTON NORTH 4440

Phone/Fax: (06) 356 5565  
Email: nztflibrary@xtra.co.nz

*Make our library your first port of call for New Zealand Scripts.*

## Some Thoughts For You To Ponder

### Video Competition:

Many of you work with lively children's groups.

Many of you have really expert filming people.

Would you like to have a DVD competition.

- 15 minute excerpt from a play.
- Best from each region go to one judge.
- Great recognition for your young ones.

### High Schools' Competition:

Work has to be filmed anyway

- Entries from the standard that requires original writing
- Time limit
- Best from each region go to one judge
- Another avenue for these talented players

The work is being prepared anyway.  
There would be an entry fee.  
Certificates and Prizes.

*Have you got thoughts on this or any other event we might be able to hold?*

*Send your comments and ideas to D. Walsh at our New Zealand famous library.  
Thanks*

# International Youth Drama Festival 2008

The play we took to the festival was very pertinent - it was about the affect discarded rubbish is having on the world. We were very aware that most of our audience would not have English as their first language and there would be many young Japanese school children in the 2,000 audience of avid theatre goers.

So simple language, big movement, bright costumes and lots of happenings. Rubbish bags, penguins, oil, fish, cans, and many other weird things and creatures featured. Still wondering what customs thought of our large striped bag full of used plastic bags and used aluminium cans.

After our performance the students were approached by many Japanese primary school teachers as well as by other nationals thrilled about the message which they understood completely.

We were privileged to see many great performances some of them being professional. A young troupe of Chinese being trained specifically in acrobatic routines and a Chilean group who had the Auditorium laughing for an hour as they rollicked through an ancient Greek Myth.

Dancing from studios in Toyama and other parts of Japan was another highlight and the standard reached is unbelievably good. This was of such a high standard it had to be seen to be believed. With the dancing the wonderful sets and costuming created a really magical world again and again.



For us a highlight was the Noisy Friarbirds from Australia who are a group of young people with severe learning difficulties. Their performance in a much small space was accepted by great warmth as were the students from a comparable school in Toyama. It was great they got to share and experience alongside everyone else.

The week was packed with workshops, outings, performances, eating and a lot of fun. I was also a critic - one of about ten and this was demanding but exhilarating.

After the Festival we went to Tokyo for a few days where three of my ex-pupils from Japan met up with us and acted as our guides. It was a perfect arrangement - we got to see our young friends again, I knew where I wanted us to go and they could guide us there. Our hotel was just below the Tokyo Tower which we used as a very convenient eating spot when we didn't want to eat Japanese. We visited beautiful temples, did some exciting shopping and ended the whole wonderful time with a long day in Disneyland. The team lost all inhibitions and became children again as they rushed from ride to ride.

When ever I have taken a team away they have impressed their hosts with their courtesy and willingness to fall in with any arrangements made. We had two wonderful interpreters who we were sad to leave as we were sad to leave new friends made from around the world and a magical world of entertainment.



# From the Back Room of the National Festival Secretary

Earthquakes and festivals are a bit alike, they catch you unawares and one is never quite ready for them.

I experienced my first big earthquake last week in Napier and almost decided to shift back to the south, possibly Bluff, as I haven't heard of earthquakes there!

Anyway back to my analogy regarding festivals. Now is the time to start thinking about your entries for the 2009 Festival of Community Theatre.

Read, read, read, all you talented directors out there as many plays as you can. Choose one that you really want to do.

Don't look for the perfect festival play... there isn't one. The Winning festival play is a fallacy. It is what you do with a play that makes it a winner. You need to have a passion for the play you decide to direct.

Actors, start asking your favourite director what play he/she is staging in 2009 and is there a good part for you?

Look at new NZ plays, extracts from classical theatre, write your own, ask someone to write a play, and do not forget the wonderful resources of the May Ives Library and the Play Bureau for perusal copies.

The dates for the Regionals are June 5th and 6th, June 12th and 13th. The Nationals are to be held in Palmerston North on 26th and 27th June so the district festivals will be held in May 2009.

Napier NZTF District is on board again this year after a long absence and they are running a district festival as

well as the North Island Regionals.

Kaitiaki and Keri Keri are also showing strong interest. South Otago is hosting the Otago Southland district festival so all in all things are looking really promising for next year.

There will be a new handbook out hopefully early 2009 with revised forms. Please read them carefully and send copies to your district and to the national secretary.

Districts might think about running a directors workshop to encourage new directors. Festival is a fine training ground. Napier Rep is running one early in December with that idea in mind. I mentioned that because I am tutoring same.

Don't hesitate to ring or email me if you require any help or information and I will try to help you.

I am still enjoying my new life up here in Napier, this lovely Art Deco City, with a vibrant cultural scene, wonderful restaurants, great wine, a bit like paradise really. Went to a great lecture by Roger Hall on how to achieve overnight success after 15 years. Truly delightful and funny.

Read those plays now.

Nanette Wright

Email: [bry.nan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bry.nan@xtra.co.nz)

Phone: (06) 835 2016

Apology: Usually Margaret puts in upcoming shows but I have no access to this information so sorry everyone but I know they will be a success and a great culmination to your year.

## 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](mailto:info@plays.co.nz) | Ph: 07 5710752

[www.plays.co.nz](http://www.plays.co.nz)

## Something To Reflect On

The first thing to do in life is to do with purpose what one proposes to do.  
*Pablo Casals, 1876-1973. Spanish Cellist, conductor and composer.*

Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got.  
*Janis Joplin, 1943-1970 American singer and songwriter.*

Learning to understand our dreams is a matter of learning to understand our heart's language.  
*Abbe Faraday, b.1935 American Psychologist and dream researcher.*

To me, the difference between the artist and the non-artist is that the artist is the one that does it.  
*Helen Garner, b. 1945 Australian writer.*

One person's definition of success is another's first step. Only you can rate your accomplishments, and find peace within yourself. *Anonymous.*

## Festival of Community Theatre 2009 Dates

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.



Postage  
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Send contributions for next issue to:  
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or PO Box 329 Palmerston North 4440