

# GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Autumn 2023 newsletter

## A note from the directors

It's a new season at Gabriola Players, following our annual general meeting last month at which we said a very fond farewell to some board members and welcomed some new faces.

We were thrilled that this year there was a successful applicant for the **Don Whitton Memorial Bursary**, established in 2011 to honour one of our founding members. To find out who that recipient is and details of our recent Annual General Meeting, see page 3.

Our 2023/24 season will kick off in November with four performances at the **Theatre Centre** of Norm Foster's hilarious play *Halfway There*. (There is more information about the play and who is involved on page 4.)

Sadly, as previously reported, we are not going to be able to mount a panto this year, but we did not want the kiddies left out. So, in December we will be doing a series of **screenings** of pantos past. Don't worry, adults can also come along to boo! (More information on page 5.)

What's coming in 2024? Check page 6 to find out.

Many thanks to all our members for your continuing support with either an annual membership or as one of our new Sustaining Members. These fees are an enormous help with non-production overhead costs.

Our heartfelt thanks also to **Tina & Guy** of Royal LePage, who are once again sponsoring our season, and to the many island businesses who are offering their support by advertising in our programs. We honestly could not do what we do without their support.

### The new Gabriola Players board



Ray Appel



Joe DiCara



Shelly Green



Luisa Handford



Miranda Holmes



Dave Innell



Christine McKim



Wendy Phillips



Scott Rivers



Benjamin Sams



Neil Shilladay

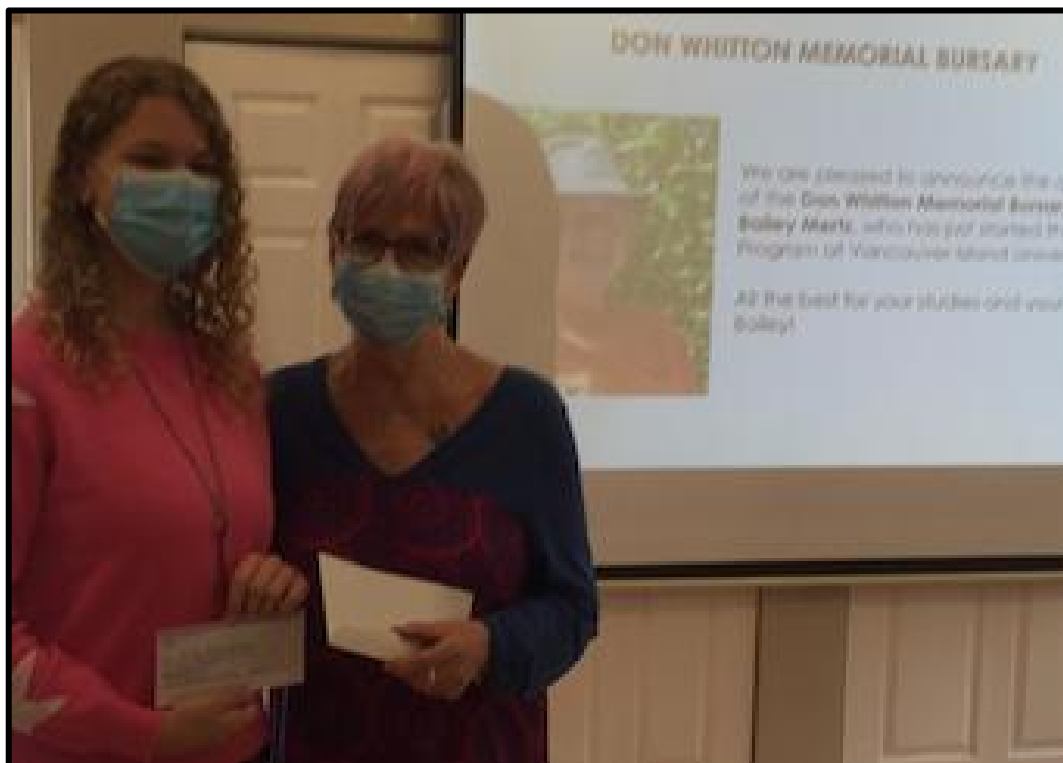


Kerry Woodrow



Lynne Young

## Don Whitton Memorial Bursary



Gabriola Players was delighted to announce that there had been a successful applicant this year for the **Don Whitton Memorial Bursary**. At our annual general meeting last month, Don's wife Sue presented **Bailey Mertz** with a cheque for \$1000 to help towards the costs of her studies at Vancouver Island University, where she has just begun their Theatre Studies program. Congratulations, Bailey and good luck with your studies!

Also on hand for the presentation (as pictured on the cover) was past bursary recipient **Luisa Handford**, now a graduate of the theatre program at Capilano University. And now (see below) a new member of the Gabriola Players board.

## Annual General Meeting

It was sad at our AGM to say farewell to board members **Jean Wyenberg** (one of the founding members of Gabriola Players) and **Linda Hellenius**, both of whom we know we will continue to see in non-board roles.

Continuing on the board this year are **Ray Appel**, **Joe DiCara**, **Miranda Holmes**, **Dave Innell**, **Scott Rivers** and **Lynne Young**, who will be joined by new members **Shelly Green**, **Luisa Handford**, **Christine McKim**, **Benjamin Sams**, **Neil Shilladay** and **Kerry Woodrow**. Welcome, new board members!

With no panto this year and a limited season, the treasurer has forecast a deficit at the end of this financial year. This forecast was approved by the members. It is, however, worth noting that similar deficits were forecast during the seasons we were forced online by Covid, but we ended up in the black thanks to generous donations from individuals and the support of local businesses who advertised in our programs.

We also revealed the main events planned for our 2023/24 season, details of which can be found on the following pages.

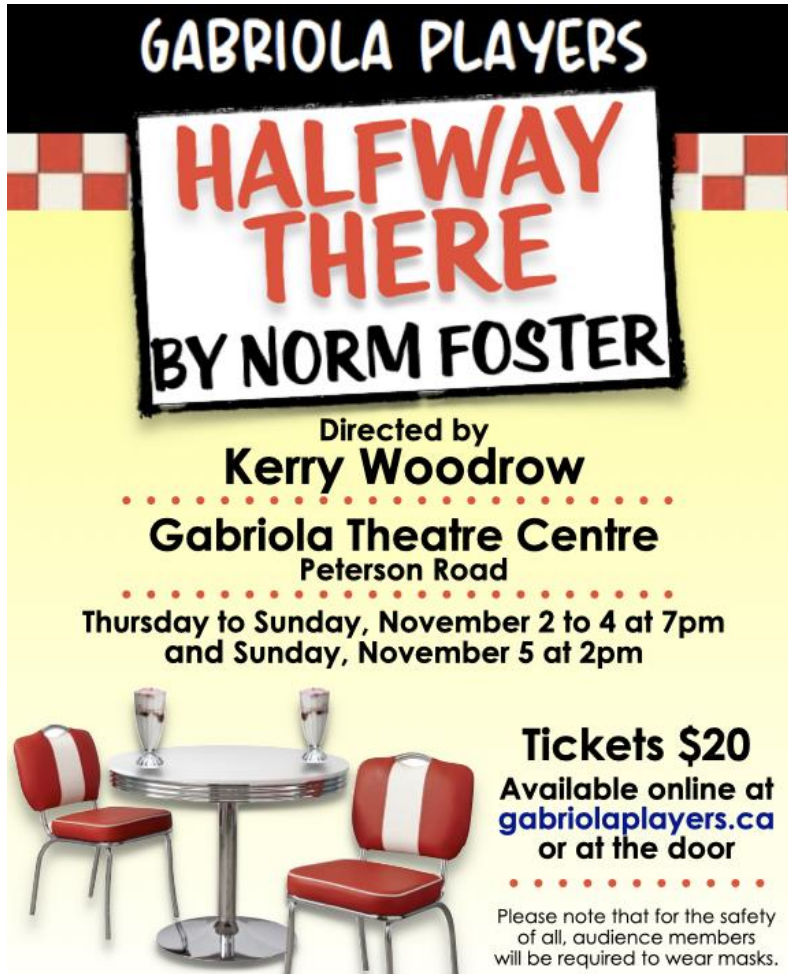


# Halfway There

## By Norm Foster

In a diner in a small Nova Scotia town (the claim to fame of which is its location exactly halfway between the Equator and the North Pole), old pals Vi, Rita and Mary Ellen meet in the afternoons to share the day's gossip with their friend Janine. Into this well-established mix enters Sean, a handsome doctor from Toronto, just arrived in town as a locum. Things are about to start changing.

Like all Norm Foster plays, relationships are at the core of *Halfway There*: the friendship shared by the four women and now the budding relationship between Janine and Sean.



**GABRIOLA PLAYERS**

**HALFWAY THERE**

**BY NORM FOSTER**

Directed by  
**Kerry Woodrow**

.....

**Gabriola Theatre Centre**  
Peterson Road


.....

**Thursday to Sunday, November 2 to 4 at 7pm  
and Sunday, November 5 at 2pm**

**Tickets \$20**  
Available online at [gabriolaplayers.ca](http://gabriolaplayers.ca)  
or at the door

.....

Please note that for the safety of all, audience members will be required to wear masks.



As one reviewer described it, *Halfway There* is “just a lovely play, old-fashioned and truthful, warm and wise, funny and touching, and never in a contrived or tiresome lesson-teaching way”. And the emphasis really should be on *funny*.

Directed by **Kerry Woodrow**, the play features **Donna Deacon, Miranda Holmes, Christine McKim, Scott Rivers** and **Helen Shilladay**.

We are delighted to be performing once again at the newly refurbished **Gabriola Theatre Centre**, established by Antony Holland. Those of us who knew Antony know that, in addition to being an excellent actor, director and teacher, he was the best audience member any actor could want – always in the front row and, with comedies, always roaring the loudest with laughter. Antony would have loved *Halfway There* – one of the funniest plays you will ever see!

# Panto Sundays

Although there will not be a Gabriola Players panto staged live at the Community Hall this year, we didn't want kids of all ages left out of our season. So, we've booked the **Gabriola Theatre Centre** for the first three Sunday afternoons in December for screenings of pantos past.

## Sunday, December 3



In 2014 we staged the world premiere of [\*Will Shakespeare The Panto\*](#) by Robin Bailes. Alex Dewar and Aleksandra Brzozowski starred as Will and Rosie, ably supported by Paul O'Sullivan, John Gooding, Nadine Mourao as members of Will's troupe and Lesley Hazeldine as the dame. This was Joe DiCara's first appearance as a panto villain (a role he was born to play). With Jenn Feenan majestically playing Queen Elizabeth and a wonderful supporting cast, including Cec Ashley, Trish Gray, Sam Hooton, Ginny Lowes, Trish Gray, Herb Metcalfe and Nick Squire. "Pythonesque perfection" as one audience member described it.

## Sunday, December 10



Our fourth Robin Bailes panto, *Ali Baba* was staged in 2019 with Ray Appel as the hapless hero and Adrienne Muscat as the heroine. Joe was back as the villain, along with his bumbling bunch of thieves (BJ Godson, Paul O'Sullivan, Tom Radcliffe and Jean Wyenberg), Wendy Phillips was the dame and Donna Deacon her lovelorn swain. Another great supporting cast included Steve Compton, Ed Deeks, Steve Elder, Hilary Farmer, Jenn Feenan, Jasmine Ginn, Dave Hallam, Mitch Levine, Jeff Malmgren, Marshall Mangan and Lawrence Spero. One lifelong theatre goer described the [\*scene\*](#) pictured here as the funniest thing he'd ever seen on stage.

## Sunday, December 17



A chance to enjoy again what has been hailed as "the best panto ever" – our 2022 production of the fifth and final Bailes panto, *Cinderella*. Newcomers Katie MacLean and Benjamin Sams wowed as Cinderella and her Prince. A female villain this time (Helen Shilladay) with two nasty daughters (John Gooding and Neil Shilladay). Buttons (Donna Deacon) lost Cinderella but found love with Evie (Christine McKim). Love was also in the air for the baron (Tom Radcliffe) and the fairy godmother (Wendy Phillips). With Kerry Woodrow as Dandini, BJ Godson as Paige, Marshall Mangan as the "dancing king" and the ladies in blue: Bronwyn Cameron, Hilary Farmer, Jenn Feenan and Dianne Holm.

All three screenings will begin at 2pm. Entrance fee is \$5.

Coming in 2024



March 14 to 17

The First Draft Club (see next page) is back at work, so we fully anticipate there will indeed be at least one (if not more!) new one-act plays by Gabriolans included in next year's Festival.



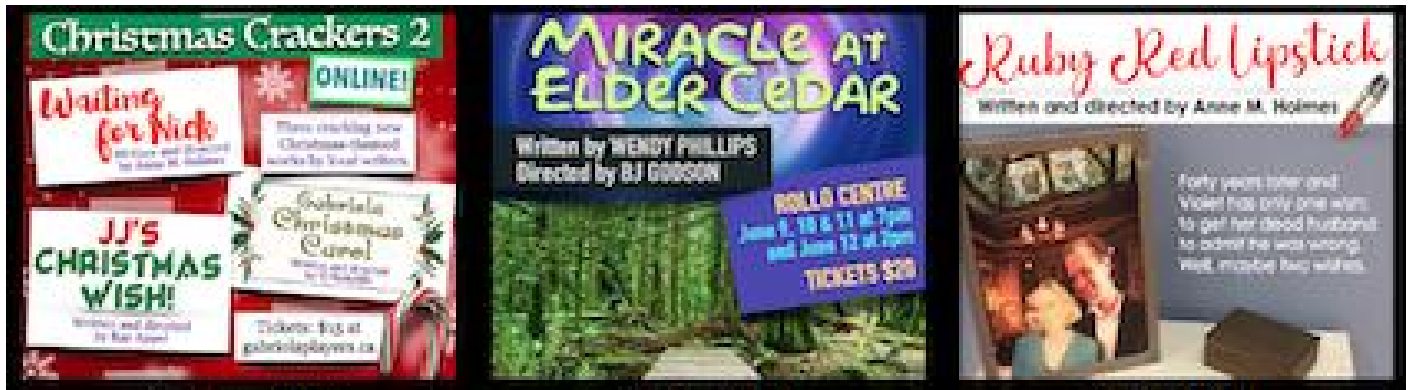
May 30 to June 2

"How much truth and honesty can human beings stand?" Mark Billingham, [The Guardian](#).

## First Draft Club

The **First Draft Club** began meeting in 2021 after our successful play writing workshop. Over that autumn they got together, read and listened to one another's work, and provided encouragement with stumbling blocks.

Out of that venture came the three plays featured in our 2021 online Christmas show. Another play was produced when we were finally able to get back to live on stage performances with our 2022 One-Act Play Festival. And yet another play that came out of the workshop was performed this past spring at the 2023 Festival. Not bad, eh?



We decided to get the band back together – with some new members. Meetings began in September and will continue until mid-November, by which time we hope we will have a number of submissions for possible performance at next year's festival. Looking forward to seeing what emerges.

## Membership

If you are a member who had previously signed up to automatically renew, you will have recently received an email message from PayPal informing you that these transactions have been cancelled.

As we explained in our own email message, earlier this year the Gabriola Players board took the decision to switch all memberships, ticket sales and other donations from PayPal to the registered charity **Canada Helps**.

Annual memberships can now be [purchased or renewed](#) on the Canada Helps website, although it does not offer an automatic renewal option.

Alternatively, you can opt to become [Sustaining Member](#) with a monthly donation of as little as \$3. A free membership is included and you will be provided with a tax receipt. And you will never have to worry about renewing.

Many thanks to everyone who has renewed.

A larger board this year than we've had in recent years means more capacity and thus we are looking forward to offering a number of "members only" events during the coming season to thank you for your support.

Watch this space!