

GABRIOLA PLAYERS



Winter 2023 newsletter

A note from the directors

It's safe to say our SOLD OUT performances of *Halfway There* – the first play to be staged at the newly reopened Gabriola Theatre Centre – were a huge hit with audiences. Check out a small selection of some of the marvellous feedback we have received on page 3.

Our thanks to those who came out to our Panto Sunday screenings at the Rollo this month. Not as much fun, of course, as a live show, but a great reminder of how entertaining these three Robin Bailes pantos were. Gabriola Players has donated half the proceeds to the PHC Christmas fund for Gabriola families. Hopefully we will be back on stage at the Community Hall next year.

Speaking of pantos... Life on Gabriola TV did a feature this month about the pantomime tradition on Gabriola. To view the piece, click [here](#).

Auditions for our March production of *Art* were held earlier this month. Director Jean Wyenberg has now cast the play and rehearsals will begin in January.

Also in January, we will be performing *Honour Among Thieves* at the Vancouver Island One-Act Play Festival in Qualicum. More on this on page 7.

We are once again seeking submissions from local writers for our own **One-Act Play Festival**. If you've written a play – or know someone who has – details about submitting are on page 7.

It's been a while since we've been able to offer our members a free cookie and beverage at performances and we thought it was about time we found other ways to show our appreciation of their ongoing support. For details of new member benefits, see page 6.

As always, a big thank you to our season sponsor, **Tina & Guy** of Royal LePage, and all the other island [businesses and organisations](#) supporting us this year. We really could not do what we do without them.

Wishing you and yours the happiest of holiday seasons. See you in 2024.



Ray Appel, Tom Radcliffe and Jeff Malmgren will appear in ART in March 2024.

Halfway There



In November we transported audiences to Stewiacke – a small Nova Scotia town located halfway between the Equator and the North Pole – where old pals Rita (Miranda Holmes), Mary Ellen (Helen Shilladay) and Vi (Donna Deacon) meet every afternoon to share the gossip with their friend Janine (Christine McKim).



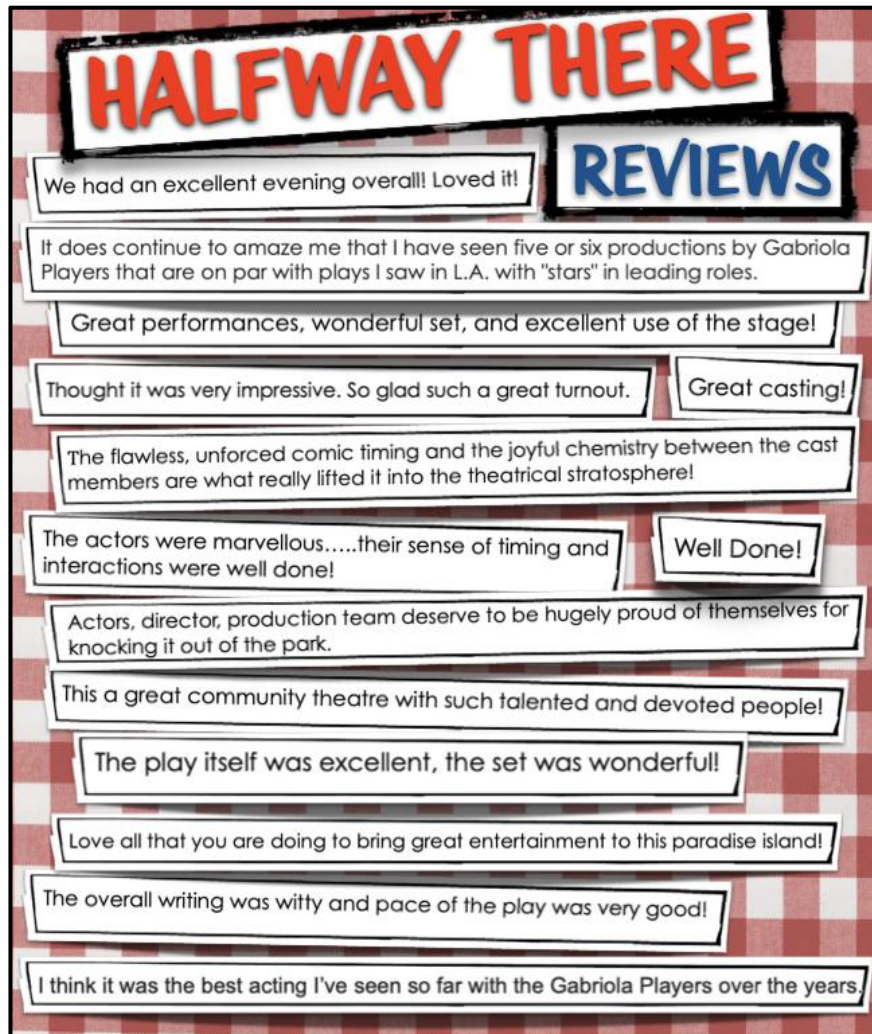
Into this well-established mix enters Sean (Scott Rivers), a doctor newly arrived in town as a locum.



Things were about to start changing.

The reviews

Everyone fortunate enough to be in the audience for this wonderful play loved it, as you can see from just some of the feedback we received from audience members.



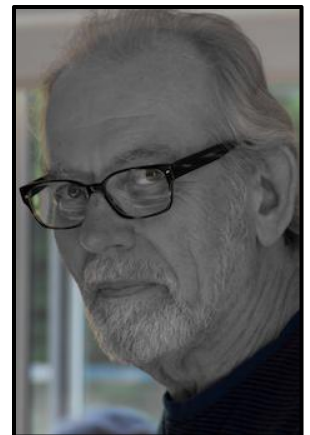
Dennis Johnston

We recently learned of the death of **Dennis Johnston**. Dennis was active with Gabriola Players for many years, serving as our treasurer, as well as directing plays and writing one – *Lemon Yellow Laces*.

That play, adapted from a story by his wife Sharon McInnes, was first performed at the Gabriola Players One-Act Play Festival in 2015 and later that year entered into the Vancouver Island One-Act Play Festival, where Dennis received an award for Best Original Script.

Our deepest condolences to Sharon at the loss of this truly lovely man.

For those who've never seen *Lemon Yellow Laces* (and those who would like to watch it again), the play can be viewed by clicking [here](#).



Huge thanks!

Gabriola Players would like to offer a huge thank you to **Mid Island Co-op**. In October, staff from our local Co-op presented a cheque for \$1000 to our president, Dave Innell. The money is from Mid Island Co-op's **Community Support Fund**.



Robin Blackburn (left) and Mandy Miller (right) presenting a cheque for \$1000 to Dave Innell, president of Gabriola Players.

In a statement issued before the presentation, Mid Island Co-op CEO Ian Anderson said: *"Mid Island Co-op is thrilled to partner with Gabriola Players in its mission to bring the magic of the theatre to the community. The arts have the unique power to inspire, provoke thought, and unite people, and we believe that by supporting Gabriola Players, we are not only contributing to the cultural vibrancy of Gabriola, but also enriching the lives of all islanders."*

After accepting the cheque, Dave Innell explained what this award will mean: *"Like performing arts organisations everywhere, Gabriola Players took a huge hit during the lockdown days of Covid, from which we are still recovering. We're in a period of capacity-building and this money will assist us in offering subsidised workshops for a variety of roles. It will also be a big help towards making some long-needed upgrades to our sound system and in other areas which will improve the quality of our productions, both for those involved in mounting them and for the audiences who see them. Thank you so much Mid Island Co-op for your support of community theatre."*

And another heartfelt thank you to Peter Baker of the [Kasahara Trust](#), who, after attending a performance of *Halfway There*, made a \$500 donation to Gabriola Players on behalf of the Trust. This support means so much to us.

Gabriola Players Theatre Society is a registered charity. Donations made via Canada Helps will receive a tax receipt immediately. Tax receipts are issued by our treasurer for donations over \$25 sent by cheque to Gabriola Players, PO Box 274, Gabriola, BC VOR 1X0 or by e-transfer to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com.



GABRIOLA PLAYERS

Members only

It's been a while since we've been able to offer our members a free beverage or cookie during intermission and it seems likely there will be none available for the foreseeable future. Some of you have indeed taken advantage of the \$15 discount members receive on the cost of workshops. Still, we feel it is long past time to offer a bit more.

Beginning with our March 2024 production of ART, members will receive advance notice before tickets are made available to the general public and will be offered a 20% discount on opening night seats.

We are also pleased to be bringing back table reads for members only. Beginning early in 2024, members will be invited to gather and hear **FIRST ACTS** of various plays, followed by a discussion. Members who are keen to hear a specific play being read by our actors are very welcome to suggest it for a future event. In the past, members have been keen to get involved in the actual readings themselves. If you would like to do so, please send an email to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com. The first reading will be *Sleuth* by Anthony Shaffer on Wednesday, January 31 at 7pm at the Gabriola Arts and Heritage Centre.

Information about these and other special events and offers will be sent by email to **Members Only**.

If you are not yet a member of Gabriola Players, but would like to become one, click [here](#) for more information.

Interested in getting more involved?



**GABRIOLA PLAYERS HAS
A ROLE FOR YOU – AND
IT'S NOT ON STAGE!**

Some of the most important roles in our productions do not involve learning lines or standing in the spotlight.

They are the stage managers, producers, directors, stage crew and the sound, lighting, costume and makeup folks.

Gabriola Players would love to cast you in one of these roles. Be part of the fun of watching – and making – a play come together.

We'll provide training and support. You just need to enjoy making magic. Interested in joining our playful family? We'd love to welcome you!

For more information, contact gabriolaplayers@gmail.com

Honour Among Thieves revisited

**HONOUR
AMONG THIEVES**

By Elliott Hayes
Produced by special arrangement with PLAYWRIGHTS GUILD OF CANADA

A dark comedy about love and betrayal that asks,
"How far would you go to save someone you love?"

Directed by Donna Deacon
Featuring Wendy Phillips and Tammy Mueller

Sunday, January 14 at 2pm

THE VILLAGE THEATRE
110 West 2nd Avenue
Qualicum Beach

Tickets \$15/\$12 at echoplayers.ca

When we were invited to submit a production for a performance at the 2024 Vancouver Island One-Act Play Festival, we really didn't need to give the matter much thought. Anyone who was fortunate enough to see the Elliott Hayes play *Honour Among Thieves* at our own one-act weekend in June this year knows what an extraordinary piece this is.

Directed by Donna Deacon, the play featured Wendy Phillips and Tammy Mueller, who delivered amazing performances that received a well-deserved standing ovation.

As Donna describes it, this is "a taut one-act play, full of dark humour and high stakes, that begins with two women stranded on a dirt road and ends with a surprise".

It's a bit of a drive, but if you missed this amazing play in June you might want to take advantage of this opportunity to see it. (And, of course, support us at the festival.) Tickets for the performance on Sunday, January 14 at 2pm at the Village Theatre in Qualicum can be purchased [here](http://echoplayers.ca).

Call for submissions!

Speaking of one-act plays... When we were planning our 10th anniversary season in 2014, we decided we wanted to encourage local playwrights by offering them a stage at our popular One-Act Play Festival. A call for submissions went out and all three of the one-acts performed in 2015 were indeed new works by Gabriolan writers.

Since then we have endeavoured to ensure that at least one of the plays in our annual festival is a new piece penned right here on the island. Often there have been more than one.

Once again we are looking for new works to be performed at the end of May in our **2024 One-Act Play Festival**. If you've written a play you would like us to consider performing, please submit it to gabriolaplayers@gmail.com with the subject "One-Act Play Festival" no later than **31 January 2024**. (The earlier the better.)

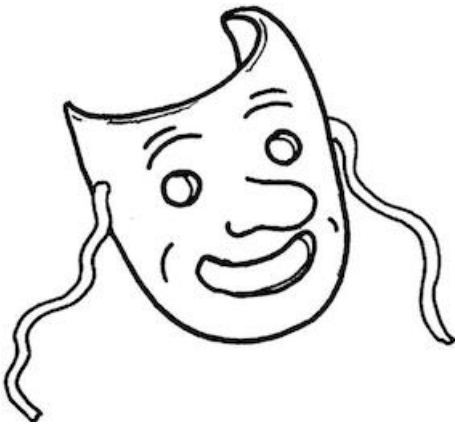
Plays should be no more than 45 minutes in length.

Small casts and simple staging requirements are ideal, but by no means a deal breaker. Knowing if you or someone else is interested in directing is also helpful.

If you haven't penned a play yourself, but know someone who has, please make them aware that we are soliciting submissions.



Staying safe



In the feedback we received after *Halfway There*, we were thanked by audience members for our mask mandate. (There were, of course, others who said they looked forward to the day when masks will be a thing of the past.)

We take the safety of cast, crew and audiences extremely seriously. A number of our regular cast and crew members, despite being fully vaccinated, have health issues that make them particularly vulnerable. Covid would not be "just like the 'flu or a bad cold" for them. Equally, we have audience members for whom a bout of Covid could prove very serious indeed.

We've all heard stories about super spreader events and we do not want any of our performances to become one of these. We actually had our own super spreader event at a rehearsal in 2022, which was what led to the development of our [health and safety policy](#).

We very much hope the time will come when venues are equipped with sufficient ventilation, air filtration and [upper-room UV](#) for masks to become unnecessary, but that time is yet to arrive. We will continue our mask mandate until it does. (Of course, if you turned up with a mask like the one above, we would not let you in!)

We thank everyone for their co-operation.