

Caledon Town Hall Players have lots of Baggage

By Constance Scrafield

Take an IRA inspector, a pedantic, pain-in-the-neck sort of a chap whose baggage is mixed up with that of a lady book editor, who is very picky and opinionated. Introduce them to each other in order to restore each to the right baggage and see what fun will ensue. The Caledon Townhall Players' (CTHP) production of playwright Sam Bobrick's comedy Baggage is currently running, as it pokes at the many foibles and failings of us all.

Baggage is directed by Jeff Bathurst, who, wearing the director's hat for the first time, promises Baggage will keep audiences laughing.

Although he has acted in many productions with CTHP, "this is my first time directing" it's a fun experience," he said. "I've been really lucky. It's a small cast of experienced actors. We have worked together before in several productions."

"There's a touch of Pygmalion, the one with the happy ending, in this play where she decides she's going to improve this man," he added.

Bathurst is pleased to be directing the play.

"It's good to try new things," he remarked of this recent challenge in his theatre life. "A director wears a lot of hats in community theatre. I was painting the sets the other day."

"I'm very pleased with the progress," he commented as rehearsals continued. "There's a lot of laughs in this show. It's quite funny. The man is just divorced" he was a terrible husband. She's a book editor" very picky" sees this guy she can reform."

Like many participants in community theatre, Bathurst joins other groups in other productions over any given year. He enjoys meeting his fellows in the community theatre circuit.

"Working with various groups keeps it fresh," is his thinking.

CTHP has a play committee, the members of which read lots of plays and present their choices for presentation at the theatre.

Said one of them, Jen Massicotte, "Baggage is quite a funny play. How many times do you lose your luggage, but how many times do you meet the people who have it? We submit our ideas to the Artistic Director, Heidi Kachel, and she picks the ones she likes.

There are eight of us on the committee, but Heidi makes the final decision."

Massicotte's preference is for humorous plays.

"I want to laugh and I think most people do too," she said simply. "You have to give the audience what they want. We offer surveys and they seem to want comedies."

Kachel agreed.

"Baggage is a nice lighthearted, fun play. It deals with social quirks and ineptitudes."

Kachel has been Artistic Director with CTHP for six years, and has been with the group for 31 years.

As to what keeps her with the theatre group, she explained it with some humour.

"It's one of those things," she said. "I used to watch when Cheers was on TV and this just that kind of club, so welcoming. There's nothing to compare it to. It's home."

Over those many years, Kachel has done many things.

"I have acted in a number of shows and directed four plays," she said.

It might be almost said that Kachel's business, Harmonious Spaces, has an element of theatre to it.

She is a professional organizer and home staging. She enjoys the human side" how people feel about their personal spaces.

"It's not about the stuff," she said, "It's how people relate to it."

Now, having passed its 50-year milestone, CTHP is still going strong with the additional fun of one Saturday performance being matched with dinner at Knox United Church across the street from the theatre.

"People really like that and we usually sell out," Bathurst observed. "It's a great dinner" roast beef and then the show full of laughs afterwards. It makes for a great evening."

Baggage is playing Feb. 27 and 28 (includes the dinner show at 6:30 p.m. and a matinee that day at 2:15 p.m.)

The final weekend performances are March 6 and 7, with evening shows starting at 8:15 p.m.

For tickets and information, call 519-927-5460 or visit www.caledontownhallplayers.com



The cast of *Baggage*. The Caledon Townhall Player's production will be on stage for various dates through February and March.