

Caledon Townhall Players are 'Spreading it Around' in new play]

By Constance Scrafield

Opening Friday, May 5, the Caledon Townhall Players (CTHP) will present their new play, 'Spreading It Around' by Londos D'Arrigo.

A comedy, to be sure 'everyone loves a laugh' but this is close to reality too, and the truth of it may strike home in many ways.

Still, it is sometimes good to laugh at reality too.

The stage is located in the old theatre in Caledon Village on Highway 10, across from Knox United Church, where dinner is served on the Saturday nights of the shows 'dinner and theatre tickets are very popular.

Here are the basics of Spreading it Around: A well-to-do widow named Angie lives in a comfortable complex in Florida, home also to other retirees. She is a bit fed up with her son, who is always demanding money. It is unreasonable, thinks Angie, for her to be doling so much money out to him when he is perfectly well off himself.

So, Angie decides to put her fortune into a fund that takes care of people who are not so well off. She buddies up with a likewise fortunate widower, Martin, who agrees that their wealth would do more good helping people with needs than spoiling their already spoiled adult children.

They create the Spreading it Around Foundation and go to work, making life better for the people in the neighbourhood who need it while monitoring and directing those funds.

Play director Stephanie Bailey said, 'They wanted to spend it now and decided they were 'doing it together while we still can.'

It's not hard to imagine that when Angie's adult son learns about her giving his inheritance away, he and his wife rush down from up north for the first time to visit their mother and figure out what's going on and stop it.

Written by Londos D'Arrigo, this play was chosen from the collection of the company's reading committee, who chose from 16 to 25 shows, picking three for the theatre's season, as Stephanie explained.

'This is a true to life comedy,' she said. 'Not a farce, with things around the house going missing and doors slamming.'

The play is a cast of five, with three ladies and two men. She introduced us to the players for this show.

'Linda Smith is a regular on our stage. She plays Angie and is doing a fantastic job. She plays a character I think everyone will like; her age is not specific.'

Mike Milne is new to the company and plays Martin, the widower, 'who has to go through a change,' Ms. Bailey outlined, 'He recently lost his wife, shortly after moving to Florida. He becomes friends with Angie and has to go through finding his way.'

Angie's son, Larry, is portrayed by Gord Gardiner, a true long-time favourite on the CTHP stage.

Larry's wife, Traci, a passionate shopaholic, is played by Keilagh Heeley as the very self-involved daughter-in-law plotting about what she would do with her mother-in-law's money.

Between those two, they have engaged Dr. Krapinsky, Rosanna Armata's role as the psychologist, to assess his mother. As she is hired by Larry, they hope she will prove Angie is incompetent

‘They’ve been rehearsing since February,’ Bailey said. ‘And they are anxiously awaiting an audience. This play is sweet, funny, thoughtful.’

As director, Bailey said, ‘I can say there have been pitfalls and formed some really unique partnerships. Within this play, so much happens in pairs; we see them plotting their own things...’

They’ve all come at this totally 100 per cent. We learned what is most difficult is the fact that the plot is so realistic. Some shows that have lots of physical movement are easier. Finding ways to make it move, the reason they’re doing things, one learns what works between the actor and the director’s takes on the characters.

‘Farce can be very physical,’ the director made the point. ‘This has a lot of dimensions and each audience only gets one shot at seeing it and so delivery is all. These characters have more depth.’

This is the last show of the season and the CTHP new season starts again in the fall. Having the chance for audiences to come, the attendance has been very good for the first full season back. Contrasting last season with restricted protocols, this is the first opening for full capacity.

‘It’s great to have the audiences back,’ said Ms. Bailey, ‘The dinners are pretty full or people can reserve for the Dolce Family Restaurant.’

During rehearsals, the cast can still make each other laugh. All of a sudden, one of them notices something not seen before. The joy of live theatre is every night, things can be different. Something special happens over a mistake, working with some people that Bailey has never worked with before or not for a while.

‘I have raised my kids and now I can enjoy how much I love doing this,’ she remarked. ‘It’s a lot of work [in a community theatre], rehearsing three days a week and the cast having to learn their lines. You have to love it to spend that much time at it.’

Bailey has been involved in Theatre since 2001 and has been with CTHP for eight years. This is her fifth show directing, having started in high school as a stage manager, from which she followed her passion at the University of Guelph for theatre.

‘Then, opened a toy store instead of teaching theatre.’

She loves it all, and she has played all the roles backstage.

‘I do everything except act,’ she said. ‘As long as it is not on stage, I will happily do it.’

Spreading it Around opens Friday, May 5, and runs for two weekends on Fridays and Saturdays with both matinees and evening shows.

For all the information and tickets, go to caledontownhallplayers.com.