

Diamonds and clever twists bring comedy to the Caledon Town Hall Players stage

By Constance Scrafield

Jack of Diamonds by Marcia Kash and Douglas E. Hughes is next up at the Caledon Town Hall Players (CTHP), opening November 7 and running over the two weekends to November 14.

The play's director, Sherry Michielin, told The Citizen that she likes this play for the way it pokes fun at itself.

This is Michielin and seven of the nine cast members' first time performing with CTHP.

She has a long history with community theatre as well as being a drama teacher in Brampton. Michielin has also been involved with Brampton Music Theatre. In all her connections elsewhere, she did comment, 'I had heard good things about this theatre in Caledon.'

As the history goes for many people, coming back to community theatre after an extended break to raise a family and build a business is a source of great joy. So it was for Michielin. That return was a number of years ago, and she still loves being part of the arts.

There are many differences, Michielin says, between staging a play in the CTHP theatre building and her usual venues, primarily the scale of space.

The Caledon theatre interior and stage are smaller than the school auditoriums Michielin is accustomed to using. Set as it is in the actual historic Town Hall of Caledon, the theatre has served its theatre company very well for well for more than 60 years.

One of the big benefits is that actors and directors can rehearse in the theatre as the building is dedicated to the plays and entertainment produced there. Usually, the rehearsal of plays and performances elsewhere needs alternative places to rehearse.

'This works really well,' said Michielin, 'We have had the whole time to set the blocking and getting used to the set.'

Of the seven people new to this stage, they are coming from far enough away, as do the regulars, where the convenience of rehearsing where they will perform is a definite plus.

The retirement home that is central to the story is not the typical nature of this type of play, which has created fun, unexpected versions of characters. One is a Southern Belle; another is very sketchy. They are all a far cry from the usual 'old guy,' as Michielin described them.

She has been very pleased with the progress the actors have made to be ready. They were all off-book two weeks ago, and their enthusiasm for this very funny show will shine in performance.

Nine characters are part of this story, each with their own endearing personalities, except perhaps for mean nurse Harper. Then, there is the wicked Barney Effward, who scams some of the others, convincing them to invest their savings, only to lose it in one of his Ponzi schemes.

To clarify where, in due course, clarity may become scrambled, it all begins with Jack, a former jeweller who used to sell diamonds on a late-night television show and now lives in the luxurious retirement home where he has befriended a number of other residents.

As we join them, they are living happily and well, playing cards, gossiping and indulging in all the joys such a life would offer. However, once Barney's theft is exposed, panic that they may lose everything is controlled by the residents themselves in a wildly

funny flurry, introducing the mysterious Mr. Smith, and each of them brings their own special skills to bear, each quite distinct, said Michielin.

Starring in the show are Mike Delany as Jack, Richard Tawton as Wilf, Michelle Barnes as Rose, Deena Baltman as Flora, Jennifer Haynes as Blanche, Angela Terra as nurse Harper, Kevin Wrycraft as Barney, Pamela Mior as Mortimer, and Ekta Sharma as the police officer.

Laugh-out-loud funny, the director said Jack of Spades is "an unexpected opportunity to escape the world in a delightful way."

Her praise for the play is its interesting moments that will captivate the audience. And for the Caledon Town Hall Players, she said, "In places like Caledon, it's nice for people to come and experience it because it is more than they might expect."

Running from November 7 to 14, there are two dinner theatre nights planned for this production.

Tickets and information are available at www.caledontownhallplayers.com or by calling 519-927-5460.