

Pam Niesiobedzki-Curtis, a passion for theatre, a passion to learn

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

'I've been in theatre since I was three years old,' said Pam Niesiobedzki-Curtis. 'My parents brought me into ballet, jazz and acrobatics and I've been involved ever since.'

'In November, I was working with three plays at the same time. We opened at Blackhorse Theatre with Red Velvet Cake for November. I've done the auditions for the Savanna Sipping Society, playing through February at Caledon Town Hall Players (CTHP).'

She did the costuming for 'Twas, at Guelph Little Theatre, which ran until December 1. That last show was cancelled due to the weather. 'They were all running at the same time.'

In addition to her work with 'Twas in Guelph, 'I am the fund raising manager and production manager.'

She said, 'Theatre Orangeville did 'Twas a few years ago but we are the first community theatre to do it.'

'I've been writing a grant for \$45,000 for one of the theatres,' adding, 'I've won Thea awards for costumes, sets, props and directing.'

Ms. Niesiobedzki-Curtis has a passion for learning and has several degrees and certificates: these include a Masters of Education, certificates for Principal and Supervisory Officer, Sr Qualifications: art, dramatic arts. She has taken courses from ACT-TO in directing and comedy.

'For me, it is life long learning,' she told the Citizen. 'When I was in grade nine, I was with a team of girls and we entered a science competition and we won. I take courses and I travel to take them; I think we should never stop learning. All the years I was teaching, I took at least one course. I taught in the Upper Grand district School Board. I loved working with the kids.'

'I'm looking forward to taking courses at Yale,' she said. 'I'll stay down there for the month of July. And I'm taking a course with Theatre Ontario. You just have to find what interests you and take it. I'm out to try and learn new things. I am looking to improve myself ' it doesn't have to be a formal university course.'

'I advise anyone who wants something interesting to do to join something, get involved.'

By getting involved, Ms. Niesiobedzki-Curtis' favourite direction is community theatre. 'Community theatres,' she commented, 'are very welcoming. You don't have to have a specific skill. You can learn something ' there's so much out there. People should take advantage rather than be stuck at home.'

The hyphenated Curtis on her name is that of her second husband, a gentleman who also is 'very involved, with the Guelph Trail Club, of which he is president and which keeps him interested and busy in the protection and maintenance of those trail ways. He is also the hall manager for our church.'

At the time of speaking, Red Velvet Cake was about to run at Black Horse Theatre: 'This is the first community theatre to do Skin Flick and Ghost Island Lights,' she mentioned. She is dashing all the time with her myriad of commitments to several theatres. 'I have been with CTHP for years,' remarked Ms. Niesiobedzki-Curtis. 'I was involved with six theatres [as treasurer, on the Boards, directing, designing the choreography, and the sets; building the sets with help from others ..] but I have stepped down from some. I've always been a multi-tasker: everything's in separate briefcases.'

Her point is always to 'find something you enjoy and get involved with a group

that does that. You can have the satisfaction of making something that is bigger than yourself. It takes the stress off being alone.

?There are all sorts out there to join,? she emphasized. ?You have to make the first step.?

Withal, she also made the point that, ?People need to extend a hand when they know another person is on her own, especially seniors.?

For herself, ?I want to keep doing what I'm doing. I like to travel, and, as a playwright, I like to write, although I don't have as much time for that as I'd like; I make a point of mentoring, bringing in people as assistant directors ? you have to shadow a director to learn how. Also assistant stage manager ? get them learning from someone who's doing it.?

She summed it up: ?At the end of the day, I'm tired. But I enjoy what I'm doing. I see people come together and do the best they can. It makes them feel good about themselves and that's important.

?I enjoy theatre,? reflecting, ?Community theatre is something that provides opportunities. People belong to a church and that's an opportunity to get involved. The opportunities are endless. It's important and nice to get together with other people.?