

Newsletter – July 13, 2020

Message from Laurie Harley, President of the Shaw Guild

There is no shortage of interesting videos for you to enjoy in this edition. To avoid that competition, I thought it best to pass on creating a video this time and return to a written message.

Like most of our communications these days, this Newsletter contains both good and not-so-good news.

The pandemic continues to take its toll with the recent announcement that the Shaw has been forced to cancel all public events and performances scheduled in August. We're anticipating a bit of good news shortly when the Province is scheduled to announce what will happen with the current emergency orders and state of emergency. Fingers crossed that a lessening of restrictions may offer the Shaw flexibility to welcome audiences back in the fall even if in a more limited way.

The issues of racism and inequity continue to dominate our thoughts. Please take a few minutes and read a thought-provoking article by Andre Sills about his experiences in the production of *Octoroon* (2017) and *Master Harold and the Boys* (2016). You may have seen the article in a recent Shaw publication but it was important to republish it here for all Guild members to read. We continue to listen and learn.

But there are also reasons to celebrate. In this edition, we recognize four Guild members who have received Ontario Service Awards for their years of dedication and support of the Shaw Festival – hats off (or raise a very large martini glass!) to congratulate Glenna Collins, Margie Enns, Elaine Evans, and John Mather.

Did you know the Guild is now producing videos to support the Town's Stage 2 reopening? When asked by the Lord Mayor if the Guild could help, we welcomed the challenge. Watch our first production: "Dining Out in NOTL – The New Way"; coming soon: "Backyard Entertaining – The New Way". Who knew the Guild had such hidden talents!

Then watch a "Special Niagara Moment" – a wonderful gift from the Shaw to all of us at the Guild. We loved Peter Fernandes' Gift of Song and now we're treated to Patrick Galligan and Shakespeare's Sonnet 98. It offers a peaceful, relaxing moment to savor.

Until next time – stay safe and keep well.



A Special "Niagara Moment" from the Shaw to the Guild

Tim Jennings sent the following to Laurie Harley: I trust the members of the Shaw Guild enjoyed their **Gift of Song** last month, and our **thanks again to all of you for your support of the artists fund**. It is hugely appreciated!

In the same spirit we wanted to create a special **Niagara Moment** just for them. Niagara Moments is a project meant to connect our patrons back to favourite places in and around town through peaceful poetry readings by our company.

Click here to view on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Y6UQY498Yqg>

If you could please forward to your members with our gratitude for your continued support, we would appreciate it. **The link will expire on July 31.**

Shaw Guild Volunteers Produce a Video for the Town!

Lord Mayor Betty Disero, remembering comic skits performed for a Guild Hosting Kickoff a couple of years ago, approached Gwen Laing, a Guild member, to ask if the Guild would be interested in producing a few short videos to provide residents with information on Stage 2 of COVID Guidelines. Of course, we jumped at the chance, never having done this before but loving a challenge!! A small team was assembled to produce the first one, *Dining Out in Niagara-on-the-Lake in Stage 2*: Brenda Weafer (Activities Chair), Cheryl Morris (Communications Chair), Marg and John Mather (Greeting Chair +), Arlene Carson (Docent Chair), and René Bertschi (videographer around town and COVID face shield maker). The Old Winery Restaurant kindly agreed to provide the location. View the finished result here, and pass it along to your friends:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJIUkXHPJws>.

Next video planned is *Backyard Entertaining in Stage 2*.

On Octoroon – Perspective From Within and Without by André Sills

In this time of COVID and protests about George Floyd's death, André looks again at an article he wrote three years ago. Read his perspective here. <https://www.shawfest.com/sfh/an-octoroon-perspective-from-within-and-without/>

Ontario Service Awards:



Elaine Evans

A member since 2009, Elaine had this to say about her experience as a volunteer for the Guild:

My contribution to the Shaw has been a pleasure and a gift to me. Any arts educator would be in heaven being a docent at the Festival Theatre and having the opportunities that I have enjoyed over these many years. Who else gets to be in the same room with such amazing Canadian artists as we docents have? Who gets to be on the Activities Committee making napkin roses for the Spring Luncheon!! Who gets to exercise her 'curriculum chops' writing interactive Student and Family tours with the talented Arlene Carson? I couldn't describe any volunteer job at the Shaw that I would enjoy more than those I have done.



Glenna Collins

Glenna has been a member of the Guild since 2006. Over the last 15 years Glenna has conducted backstage tours, hosted at the theatres, bartended at Guild events, conducted workshops for Education and volunteered each year for the Shaw Garden Tour. She has twice welcomed the public into her own garden for this annual fundraiser, first when her garden was brand new and then ten years later.

The main focus of her volunteerism at the Shaw is her work as a Docent. Glenna, a retired teacher, particularly loves to engage with young people through the Student and Family interactive backstage tours.

Glenna is a true ambassador for the Shaw, making sure her neighbourhood knows what is on through a weekly newsletter and arranging outings for neighbours to see plays at the Festival.

John Mather



“Volunteering with the Shaw Guild is such a rewarding and enjoyable experience, providing the opportunity to connect directly with Shaw’s patrons”.

John and his wife Marg retired to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2009. Shortly afterwards, he joined the Shaw Guild, initially as a Host. Over the years, John has also served on the Nominating Committee for the Guild Executive, delivered materials for ‘Playing this Week’, volunteered annually for the Shaw Garden Tour, and worked with the Steering committee which led to the introduction of MVP.

For the past five years, John and Marg, have coordinated the volunteers in the successful Greeter program at the Festival Theatre. This program has grown from 50 when it first started to 100 dedicated volunteers today. As John says, “our greeters have become our extended family”.

In addition, John has volunteered for community activities including NOTL’s Bicentennial, Rotary’s Holiday House Tour, the Terry Fox Run and Canada’s 150 Celebration.

Margie Enns

Margie has been volunteering at the Shaw for 35 years. To put that accomplishment into perspective, she joined in 1984 when the average cost of a house in Canada was just over \$76,000. How things have changed!

And they’ve changed at the Guild as well.

Margie tells us her time with the Shaw started because she really enjoys live theatre. She used to go to a play with her husband, who would be bored, so she decided to do this on her own and that led to volunteering. Things were much simpler back then. Jean Ghent on switchboard would call her when volunteers were needed to tear tickets. She always enjoyed meeting patrons, and that continues today.

Margie, we thank you for your sharing your memories with us, and for your many years of service. It’s wonderful to see your contributions recognized with an Ontario Service Award.

Members Share Thoughts and Stories

Margaret Fairman:

I have just spent the afternoon listening and feeling overwhelmed with emotion to the Stratford/Shaw Actors recount their experiences as black actors and crew members. I wept openly and that profound sadness lingers.

My sincere hope is that those in power will LISTEN! My only power is to donate to the cause, supporting their productions, and delighting in seeing them on stage and in leading roles. I will never forget Master Harold and The Boys, and Octoroon. They were emotionally painful productions to attend but I saw each three times. I felt drained each time I left the theatre.

I applaud TC for seeing this for what it is, Racism in the Arts. Thank you for bringing these outstanding, award winning, intelligent, talented actors to our stages.

From the Guild: We encourage everyone to view the [Black Like Me panel discussion](#) Margaret has referenced, and please share your thoughts with us, related to the Shaw Festival or the Guild itself. Send to info@shawguild.ca

Lorraine Horton: Shopping in a Pandemic



In such a few short months, the world as I have known it for all of my life, has turned upside down. Having been born at the end of the Second World War, I have never experienced severe hardship, never encountered economic strife, never felt threatened by another human being. Lots of luck involved, I think.

Now, I wander, somewhat detached from others around me, masked to keep these same others safe, and make my way to a line-up to be permitted into a store. As I look around me, there is no conversation, smiles if any are hidden behind various designs of masks, cautious movements are made to keep the prescribed 6 feet from those in front, checking from time to time to ensure the shopper behind is doing the same. A sense of unease and distrust has infiltrated this Congo line. If our expressions could be determined, we the faceless would be seen frowning at anyone not similarly masked. We all inch our way forward until we are given both a disinfected cart and a nod to enter.

On the inside, shopper and cart wind through the aisles, following arrows, trying very hard not to touch anything until removing the item from the shelf. Distances remain and occasional apologies for trespassing are extended when mistakes are made.

At the check-out, masked and shielded, cashiers do their job and carefully place your item in an area where you may bag it yourself or offer the plastic bags that not so long ago were shunned by most of us.

I exit the store. No pleasantries in passing, no conversation with others. Eyes forward, job done.

Once at my car, I am relieved to remove my mask but now am concerned – did I wipe the door handle, steering wheel, did I touch my face? I feel foolish and unreasonable. But then, I look around me and watch the parade of masked people going to and fro. It all seems so unreal. I shake my head, drive away.

What makes this okay? Doing the right thing, seeing family, golfing, social distancing with friends, looking forward to a rosy future where once again I will smile at passers-by and comment on the weather. Such a Canadian conversation, one I miss.

How interesting it will be to read the historians' versions on the great Pandemic of 2020. And won't we have stories to share with those small grandchildren that will begin with "remember when?"

Phyllis Schaefer

We were driving past The Shaw Festival Theatre when we spotted this deer having either a late lunch or early dinner in the gardens by the parking lot.



SHAW GUILD PROGRESSIVE STORY

The first part of this story was written by Sheila Hill, with the baton passed to Laurie Harley and then to Alan Walker to write the next pieces. If you wish to contribute, please send a note to info@shawguild.ca and we'll slot you in!

The story begins:



Dr. Watson: Tell me, Holmes, what was the final piece of evidence

Sherlock Holmes: My dear Watson, it was the moment she closed the piano.

As the curtain rang down in the Festival Theatre, Julie turned to her husband with a smile as if to say, I told you so. Robert nodded at her and they started to exit the theatre. As they entered the main aisle suddenly all the house lights went out and in the darkness Robert took Julie's arm. The public address system asked all patrons to remain calm whilst the emergency lighting was activated. As Julie and Robert waited, the sound of a revolver shot was heard, followed by the thud of what seemed a body falling on the stage. Robert turned to his wife saying that Shaw really had an exquisite sense of timing and trusted this was all part of the evening's entertainment. (Sheila Hill)



Julie was a seasoned Sherlock Holmes fan and fancied herself somewhat of an amateur detective. How would the "dynamic duo" handle this situation? Here was a perfect opportunity to test her skills. She squeezed Robert's arm and said: "Let's not rush out. Let's play along and solve the mystery of what happened on stage." Robert recognized that mischievous expression on Julie's face and knew there was no point in objecting. So, while other patrons were making their way to the exits, Julie and Robert slipped back into an empty aisle and turned their attention to the

stage. The theatre was still dark, but now, to their amazement, a lamp with a single bare bulb was glowing at the edge of the proscenium. They both contemplated: “What’s that doing there?” (Laurie Harley)



“It’s the “ghost light” darling”, Robert whispered, “I think it’s meant to chase away mischievous spirits”, he added. “Not that”, Julie responded, in a somewhat exasperated fashion, much as Holmes was forever doing with his loyal, but somewhat dim and pedantic friend, John Watson. “I mean that bloody large bloodstain that stretches from centre stage and which ends at the open trapdoor”! In the eerie light cast by the ghost light, Robert was now able to see the blood. He took a sharp intake of breath, and Robert murmured in a shocked tone, “And what’s that doing there?”. He pointed to a bloodied cricket bat lying at the edge of the open trapdoor, and which upon careful examination they could see was adorned with the letters TC!

They realized that the sound that they had first thought was a revolver shot could well have been that of a cricket bat, perhaps used as a lethal weapon; they took a tentative step forward and looking down into the open trapdoor they could see..... (Alan Walker)

WHO WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ON PART 4?

The Show Must Go On: “Okay, move the pier!”

Part 6 of a series by Paddy Parr, Shaw Gardens Chair

In 2000 the dream of expanding the Festival to provide sorely needed rehearsal space, administrative offices, a large greenroom, and recording studio, was in the very early stages. It took almost two years to finalize the design, raise the monies, select the architects, and tender the project. By 2002, we were ready to go, and I was fortunate enough to be the “owner’s rep” to sit at the Project Management table for the next two years, overseeing the build! What a ride that was.....

The first task in the fall of 2002, was to prepare the site for construction. This was a very painful time for company members, and many patrons, because all the greenspace, gardens, and parking lots, were to be either drastically altered, or eliminated totally. Just looking at the Landscape Architect’s blueprints made my heart sink! The beautiful Austrian Pine tree-line that ran the full length of the main entrance fire-lane, was to be completely removed. As well the elegant diagonal walkway through the Wellington Street berms, covered in well nurtured Purple Sand Cherries, was also slated for total demolition to make way for the new “welcoming face of Shaw Festival”. It was painful to watch, but necessary for the Donald and Elaine Triggs Production Centre to take life.

Being part of the Project Management team gave me a decision-making voice, and I decided that we must find “homes” for as many plants and trees as we could, rather than destroy them! Volunteers worked with Shaw’s Head Gardener, Ingrid Riedke, to dig up and give away plants and cuttings. Many of the Purple Sand Cherries were moved to Ingrid’s home, along with other easily transplanted trees. This somewhat eased our hurting hearts knowing these ‘green gifts’ of the Festival would live on in the gardens of others. I also suggested to staff that they should feel free to grab pieces of the parking lot rubble-wall as edging for their personal gardens!! I know I enjoy mine to this day knowing they are not in a landfill!

One traditional annual feature of “Opening Week” in May, was always the glorious main entrance portico Wisteria. It rarely disappointed being in full bloom to welcome the incoming season and was always featured Opening Night!!!! I was horrified to see on the plans that the entire Wisteria covered portico was to be removed, structure and plantings, and a smaller one installed in its place. We decided to cut back the mature “tree form” Wisteria, and I told my site supervisor that I wanted to dig up the ‘mother plant’ and move it to someplace on the Festival grounds. He said, “According to the Landscape Architect, it can’t be done as it won’t survive”. I said, “Let’s try, and if it dies, we will remove it then”. Always willing to humour me, he agreed, and we scheduled “the dig” using a small Bobcat. The day of the event, he came to my office and said, “It can’t be done....all the roots are embedded in a concrete pier”. I said, “Okay, MOVE THE PIER”! AND HE DID! That was in 2002, and I am happy to report that eighteen years later, my “grand lady of the East Lawn” bloomed yet again to welcome Season 2020 this past May. I couldn’t resist capturing her photo. She never disappoints, and I invite you all to watch for her in full bloom in Season 2021!



Shaw Opportunities for Youth and Adults

Virtual Musical Theatre Camp - Aug. 10-21, 2020 for ages 11-14

A daily dose of on- and off-line activities for youth to explore and express their dramatic creativity, Virtual Summer Theatre School will bring the play to your home! Offered in partnership with Carousel Players, the camp experience will offer a mix of instructional time with Carousel Camp Counsellors and Shaw Festival Ensemble. Participants will spend one hour of online screen time per day (10am-11am) with the camp faculty for vocal and physical warm-ups and technique instruction, and optional drop-in sessions throughout the afternoon will allow time for rehearsing and coaching.

At the end of the session, campers will have the opportunity to share their performing talents. Each student will record a song (or duet if a shared household). Songs will be edited together to create a showcase at the end of the camp, and there will also be a choreographed group number! *Surprise Supplies* boxes will be delivered to the campers’ homes up to a week before camp starts. Cost \$70/participant.

For more information and to register: <https://carouselplayers.com/classes-and-camps/summer-theatre-school/>

Online Adult Acting Intensive: "Zoom-in, Up Close...Monologue Exploration" - Aug. 17- 21, 2020 for ages 18+

A playful and engaging opportunity to explore monologues. Led by Tara Rosling, Shaw Ensemble member, this exclusive online program also includes sessions with other members of The Shaw Ensemble, Shaw coaches and one-on-one mentor sessions. For ages 18+. All levels of experience welcome.

For more information and to register: <https://www.shawfest.com/event/online-adult-acting-intensive-zoom-in-up-close-monologue-exploration/>

Shaw Performances Cancelled Through to End of August

The Shaw Festival is forced to cancel all public events and performances scheduled in August due to the extension of the Province of Ontario's Emergency Orders and the continuation of the State of Emergency in the Province and Niagara. In discussion with and under the guidance of The Shaw's insurer, it has become clear that scheduled performances cannot proceed as originally planned.

"While we are disappointed with these further cancellations, we are focusing our energy on planning for the future so that we can safely welcome audiences back to our theatres, hopefully in September – even if in a more limited way," said **Tim Jennings, Executive Director/CEO**. "In the meantime, we continue to stay in touch with our patrons through a number of digital and other initiatives and thank you all for your support."

Here is the link to the complete media release: <https://mailchi.mp/shawfest/shaw-festival-cancels-august-events-and-performances-2020?e=c8c4d3a221>