

# BACK TO THAT

News from The New Zealand Theatre Federation Inc.  
[www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz](http://www.theatrenewzealand.co.nz)



Cast and Crew of *The Problem*, Invercargill Repertory Society on their way to the Westport Regional Final. They did Jetstar jumps in all the places Jetstar couldn't take them.

Read about their journey on pages 4–5

## President's Column

### *Focusing on The Future*

One of the most successful National Finals, on many fronts, was held in Wellington during September. Te Whaea as a venue was ideal. Theatre, AGM, Workshops, lunch and birthday celebrations were all held under the one roof. Cross-fertilization of ideas and inter-disciplinary activities abounded. Our thanks to Wellington District for their organisational skills and supportive genial hosting.

The Executive has been struggling with many issues over the past two years, and last month saw them make some hard calls. The Library will close on November 26th. Although this has been a mainstay of NZTF for 40 years, times, needs and competition have impacted.

Technology, lifestyles, work environments, have all changed the way we conduct our lives. NZTF and its guardians have to move and grow with it. The Constitution is undergoing revision at an SGM to be announced. The Festival has under-gone revision also (page 4). You will see from this, that the Executive has not been sitting on its hands, but being proactive rather than reactive to events that if not dealt with, could have rung the death-knell for NZTF. We have now rationalised many parts of our operation, from standardizing of membership fee (last year) to measures outlined above.

***Focusing on The Future*** — Our new catch-cry. Now we must look more deeply at our image and perception, in the theatre community. How are we perceived? Do we need to re-brand? Are we fulfilling our membership's needs? More workshops across the board, we are being told. Your feedback as always, is vital.

I am deputising for Ewen Coleman, President, as he takes a well earned break in London. We hope he returns refreshed in body and spirit.

*"Theatre is not a way of life,  
but a way to life."*

Bryan Aitken  
NZTF National Vice-President



## Annual General Meeting & Open Forum

National Office holders confirmed at the AGM are Ewen Coleman, President, Bryan Aitken Vice-President and Sharon Saxton Treasurer. Hon Auditor Barry Meyers was re-elected.

The meeting was informed that the National Executive had taken the hard decision to close the May Ives Library from 27 November because of Playmarket's new policy of providing free perusal e-copies. A letter has since been sent to all members informing them of this and advertising a sale of all scripts. Please note this means NZTF will no longer have a phone and the email address is now [info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz](mailto:info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz).

Our constitution needs updating and since the AGM has been sent out with proposed changes. Please take time to send us your comments on it by December 1st.

Under 'general business' Wellington District in response to the September earthquake in Christchurch proposed the establishment of a Trust fund for the purposes of theatre restoration now and in the future. Members would be asked to donate a night's takings or what they could afford to a fund managed by four independent people. The meeting agreed that Wellington District should proceed further with the idea and report back.

After the AGM, several 'matters arising' from the SGM held 21 November 2009 were covered in an Open Forum. See p4 for decision on 2011 festival structure. It is noted that talks with APRA are ongoing but a Public Liability policy covering all our members is not possible. A poster and photo competition has been held - see p8. Results of the members' survey will be announced in the new year.

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## 40th Celebration

President Ewen welcomed everyone to the celebration with a special welcome to Bill Sheat who was President 1973-4. Apologies had been received from, among others, Ailsa Toy, a foundation member. With the federation's first minute book in his hands Ewen spoke of the federation's beginnings rising an amalgamation of the British Drama League and the NZ Drama Council.

People formerly connected with NZTF sent messages of congratulation: Sharon Major Executive Officer 1981-2 said "long may NZTF continue as a wonderfully positive force for theatre in NZ"; Max Sullivan National Treasurer 1990-2 sent his regards to all the old team and Doug Clarke Executive Officer 1990 - 1994 wrote it was nice to think that in some small way his 20 plus years involvement had contributed to the success of NZTF.

Awards were then announced: Meritorious Service Awards went to Jeanette Ogg who was nominated by Performing Arts Tauramanui and to Margot Stuart nominated by Porirua Little Theatre. Life Membership was conferred on Barry Grant, National President 1979-80. He has since thanked the Executive for the significant honour and says he will wear the badge with pride. Lois Paynter of Auckland was also made a Life Member.

Lois was present to accept her badge and certificate and later sent a letter saying how surprised and delighted she was to receive Life Membership. She says that NZTF has afforded her many rich experiences from 1970 onwards when she appeared on TV with Dr John Reid to speak about the wide range of opportunities NZTF offered. Her nervousness at the time, dropping her sugar sachet into her coffee was not caught on camera thankfully, she says. She remembers being seconded to the National Executive and thus representing NZTF at the opening of Hawera's newly built space, adjudicating a play without words in Wellington, a play with no script at an Auckland secondary school, taking classes and participating in Master Classes.

Over the years Lois has met many caring, clever and inspiring people and she thanks NZTF for 40 years of fun, fulfillment and friendship.



*Lois and Bill Sheat were invited to cut the cake and glasses were raised. Ewen Coleman Margaret Robertson and Nanette Wright behind.*

### *Tribute and Thanks to Denise Walsh*

Denise's resignation as representative of the Otago/Southland District was received with regret at the recent national executive meeting. She has been sent our very grateful thanks for all the work accomplished for NZTF over many, many years through two national presidencies, work on three national workshops, her organisation of the Otago/Southland District and its festivals and for her work as an adjudicator. We thank her for her vision, energy and commitment.

We are sorry she will no longer be part of the governing body but know she will continue to espouse the cause and as an honoured Life Member will always be one of us.

It was agreed at the national executive meeting that it was most appropriate that the Best Production of a New Zealand Play at national finals be named after her and the play that won the award this year was *75th Day* by Philip Bentley produced for Napier Repertory Players by Sharon Kerr.

## Festival of Community Theatre 2011

### National Finals

August 5–6  
Theatre Royal, Nelson

### Regionals x4

July 8–9 & 15–16  
Hosts tbc

### District Festivals

Mid June  
Local venues to be decided by locals

The cost of participating in the Festival of Theatre has risen considerably over the past few years, particularly in the areas of time and travel. Thus the executive floated the idea of cutting out the middle tier (the Regionals) as a way of helping to reduce costs, then expanding the National Finals, to embrace more teams.

But the question of quality control and stature of the National Finals was raised by groups, along with the loss of the vital adjudication process - one of the reasons for the Festival's existence. The Open Forum after the AGM wanted to retain that aspect somehow. After much discussion, a new structure was formulated for trialling. In 2011 there will be four Regional Finals, two in the South Island, two in the North Island. This will mean that all teams potentially will have no more than 400k to drive to a Regional Final.

Regional Finals on both islands will be held simultaneously over two weekends. There will be one adjudicator for the two South Island regionals and one adjudicator for the North Island regionals. They will confer, compare markings and decide which teams from those four semi finals, will go through to the National Finals. This new structure will allow regional finalists, if they are geographically between the upper or lower locations, to choose which Regional Final they wish to participate in. Improved technical information from teams and host venues, is also required.

National Finals will be hosted as now. It will be required however that more technical information be sent out so teams have better advance knowledge. If an experienced Stage Manager is not readily available, a professional or person of advanced experience will be employed to manage the backstage area.

The National Executive will continue to work with Districts in organising and allocating Regional and National Finals. These are being held a little earlier next year, so as not to be impacted on by the Rugby World Cup.

## The Legend of the "Bayer"

Invercargill Repertory Troupe's Journey through the 2010 New Zealand Theatre Federation's Festival of Community Theatre and Beyond!

*Milton Munro writes:*

It all began with a rather innocuous little phone call from director Debbie Webster: "Fancy being in my play *The Problem?*" "Why not!"

Who could have known that a brief and seemingly simple conversation could lead two actors, a director and their manservant down a complex rabbit hole of ups and downs, trials and tribulations, highs and lows but ultimately give them an experience unlike anything else? I certainly didn't!

After the phone call we had three weeks to prepare. No worries! We rehearsed as much as we could but we all have busy lives so we went into the show feeling very much under prepared. We took the stage a bundle of nerves. I mean I should feel nervous – this being only my third show but Nicole, a seasoned professional was worse than me! But we had nothing to worry about as it was a complete success. Apart from having to make up a few lines, oh and some technical issues around the balloon – seemed it looked too much like a balloon and not enough like a baby! We were on cloud nine; we had done it! We could go home and relax, see our kids again and tend the garden – you know the usual stuff we neglect when we take to the stage. We had of course forgotten the adjudication. Stress levels begin to sky rocket – what if they didn't like it? What if they thought we had misinterpreted the play? What if they saw through my thin veneer of confidence and realised I don't know how to act! We waited nervously for this cruel and savage process to begin. Well. We had nothing to worry about. It was a refreshing and positive experience. We could see where we had gone wrong and what was good. It gave us a lot to think about and develop. Nice. Smiles all round. We hadn't even entertained the possibility that we could have been good enough to reach the next round. Ha ha, one hour and two very good plays later we were going to Westport! Elation followed by shock horror. How the hell are we going to do this!

We had two weeks to figure out how we were going to do this. We looked at flights to Hokitika and then hiring a car – far too expensive. We would have to drive. At this point I made a wee error of judgement.

## The Legend of the "Bayer"

I said "I'll drive; I don't have to pay for petrol, so I don't mind driving". Note to self – next time you volunteer for driving duties clarify exactly how far it is you have to drive before offering. It was agreed, we would drive up on the Friday, do the show on the Saturday and home again on the Sunday. Invercargill Repertory kindly offered to pay accommodation so we were set. All we needed to do was rehearse. And we did. We rehearsed with gusto. By the time we were ready to leave we had this play nailed!

Road trip time! We hit the road at half six Friday morning and arrived in Westport approximately twelve hours later (admittedly we did have breaks for French pastries, petrol, lunch, Jetstar jumps (front page photo), scenery admiring etc. We were exhausted. We managed to watch three of the four plays before I was forcibly removed from the theatre for snoring. That night the Christchurch earthquake struck. I remember being woken up and trying to roll over and go back to sleep before being forcibly dragged from my bed and propped into a door frame. The two of us huddled in the door frame while everyone else just rolled over and slept.

The next day we were no better – even a trip to fabled Denniston failed to lift our energy levels. It showed in our performance. It also didn't help that we had over rehearsed. One of us dropped a line and we both lost our place. Here we are on stage, staring at each other, with nothing going through our minds except expletives. An eternity passed before we picked it up again. We came off dejected. We had blown it. There was no hope. Doom and gloom. We went into adjudication with our heads hung low. The adjudicator was amazing. He was supportive and highlighted everything we had done well and gave us some tips on how to overcome our error in the future. We left with heads held high. We thought that our mistake would cost us our place in Wellington but we were ok with that. Wrong! We along with three others from the South Island were off to Wellington. Damn, how are we going to get to Wellington!

Wellington. Wellington!?! Wow it was going to take some serious cash to get to Wellington and we only had two weeks to get it! We tried the usual routes of funding – nothing. We started to panic. Luckily we got some corporate sponsorship (thanks Bayer), we were able perform our play for money (thanks Rotary) and we held a show with the other finalist from Southland. With a bit of an injection of money from our own pockets we were off.

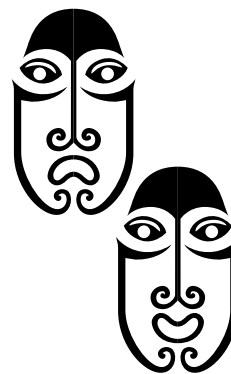
Wellington was a blast! We had a fantastic afternoon of sightseeing and shopping followed by some really good theatre that night. The workshops were amazing and we can't wait to bring what we have learnt back home to friends and fellow thespians. We took the stage on the final night and gave the best performance we had done yet. We left the stage elated at how far we had come and what we had all achieved together. Sure we didn't win but that's not why we came. We came to learn and better the craft we have chosen as our passion and we achieved that whole heartedly.

The four of us returned to Invercargill exhausted and drained. But within each of us is a determination and a will to encourage the festival in Southland. We want others to share in the experience we had and to use the festival as an opportunity to develop themselves as an actor or a director in such a supportive and friendly environment.

We would like to thank the Federation for providing this platform for us to perform and grow and above all else have a damn good time doing it. Take care and I hope to see everyone again next year.

## Obituary

We are sad to report that Ailsa Toy a Life Member of NZTF who sent apologies for the 40th Celebration passed away 21 October in her 90th year. Those that knew her would be aware of the huge contribution she made to theatre in Hawera before she moved to the Bay of Plenty. We send condolences to her daughter Marguerite and family.



# ON STAGE 40 2010

And the Results were  
and congratulations to

**Book of Honour**, the **Denise Walsh Award** and the **Ewen Coleman Award for Best Adult Production**: *The 75th Day* by Philip Bentley directed by Sharon Kerr for Napier Repertory Players



Director Sharon Kerr with the Hon Chris Finlayson, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

**Bryan Aitken Award for Best Youth Production**  
*The Package* by Trevor Norman directed by Gussie Johnson for Pegasus Southland Boys High School, Invercargill



Gussie Johnson and Bryan Aitken with the Youth Award Cup.

**Selecon Design/Technical Award** for *Soldier's Song* by Campbell Smith directed by Anne Corney for Napier Repertory Players.



Anne Corney with Pam Logan, adjudicator with the hook clamp.

**Best New Director** as chosen by Dale Hendry, adjudicator of the Regionals: Dean O'Flaherty director of *The Private War of Colonel Cooper* by John Broughton for L&D Productions

**David Brockett Memorial Award for Backstage Achievement**; Ross Foubister, Wellington

Nan Brockett presents Ross with this inaugural award of a theatre curtain carved out of linden lime with a small face peeping out from one corner.



**NZTF Award for Best Actor Male**: George Hollinsworth as 'Groom' in *Wedding Party* written and directed by TJ Ramsay, Dramatix Theatre Trust, Nelson with Pam Logan, adjudicator



**NZTF Award for Best Actor Female**: Margaret Dempsey as Dotty in *The 75th Day* with Pam Logan, adjudicator



**Jannat Aitchison Memorial Awards for Distinctive Emerging Talent** chosen by donors Nanette Wright, Joan Ford (and Denise Walsh): Actors Ben Black of *The 75th Day*, Taylor Barrett and Stanley McDowell of *The Package*

Photos of Ben, Taylor and Stanley follow



**Olga E. Harding, new New Zealand Playwriting Award** for *Wedding Party* by TJ Ramsay. Here TJ receives the mounted pounamu from Nanette Wright.



TJ started writing plays for a small theatre company 15 years ago and since then has written 15 one acts and 2 full lengths all listed with Play Bureau. Ten years ago she and her husband established Dramatix, a theatre company that focuses on presenting original works in all genres. Dramatix Publishing has also also

been formed, publishing a catalogue of plays from Top of the South authors.

**Drama Development Trust.** Finalists at Festival were acknowledged with the presentation of \$100 each and NZTF was given a cheque for \$1000 to be used for the future development of the federation. Here Scott Frater of Dramatix receives a Certificate of Appearance and cheque for *Complete Idiot's Guide to Grunge* from Margaret Robertson, secretary of DDT.



Consult with NZTF about setting up workshops info@theatrenewzealand.co.nz The right people can be found. Apply to the Trust for grants and scholarships for training and workshop subsidies [margaretr@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:margaretr@vodafone.co.nz)

## What's On November/December 2010

<b>Howick Little Theatre</b>	<i>Four Flat Whites in Italy</i> by Roger Hall	Nov 13–Dec 4
<b>Paeroa Little Theatre</b>	<i>The Pirate That Jumped</i> by Leanne Smith	Nov 28 @ 2pm
<b>Detour Theatre (Tauranga)</b>	<i>Leading Ladies</i> by Ken Ludwig	Nov 10–27
<b>Unity Theatre Gisborne</b>	<i>Secret Bridesmaids Business</i> by Elizabeth Coleman	Nov 10–20
<b>New Plymouth Little Theatre</b>	<i>Shop Till You Drop</i> by Alison Quigan/Ross Gumbley	Dec 1–18
<b>Cue Theatre (Inglewood)</b>	<i>Lipstick Dreams</i> by Helen O'Connor/Simon Hopkinson	Nov 16–27
<b>Hawera Repertory Society</b>	<i>Ladies Night</i> by Stephen Sinclair/Antony McCarten	Nov 24–Dec 3
<b>Theatre Hawkes Bay</b>	<i>Forbidden Broadway</i> by Gerard Alessandrini	Nov 18–Dec 4
<b>Pahiatua Repertory</b>	<i>Mother Goose Golden Christmas</i> by Tony Nicholls	Nov 25–Dec 5
<b>Levin Little Theatre</b>	<i>Hansel &amp; Gretel</i> by Norman Robbins	Nov 18–27
<b>Kapiti Playhouse</b>	<i>GamePlan</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	Nov 18–27
<b>Mana Little Theatre</b>	<i>Four Flat Whites</i> by Roger Hall	Dec 1–11
<b>Porirua Little Theatre</b>	<i>Diamonds</i> a Musical Extravaganza Celebration of Diamond Jubilee (60th)	Nov 10–20 Nov 5–7
<b>New Players (Newlands)</b>	<i>Spreading Out</i> by Roger Hall	Nov 11–20
<b>Stagecraft (Wellington)</b>	<i>Silly Cow</i> by Ben Elton Audition <i>A Dolls House</i> by Ibsen	Nov 3–13 Nov 6–7
<b>Wellington Repertory</b>	<i>Black Adder II-The Early Tudors</i> by Richard Curtis/Ben Elton	Nov 20–Dec 4
<b>Hutt Repertory Theatre</b>	<i>Nuncrackers</i> by Dan Goggin	Nov 24–Dec 4
<b>Heretaunga Players</b>	<i>Scrubbers</i> by Cenarth Fox	Nov 24–Dec 4
<b>SC Drama League: Mill Theatre</b>	<i>Saucy Jack and the Space Vixens</i> by C.Mann	Nov 24–Dec 4
<b>South Otago Theatrical Society</b>	<i>Black Adder The Elizabethan Years</i> by Richard Curtis/Ben Elton	Nov 18–27

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[margaretr@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:margaretr@vodafone.co.nz)

### Playmarket

For your convenience a random list of titles is enclosed for filing. Let them know if you would like to be included in their special mailing group to receive a list of new and newly available playscripts, to help you with your programming. They will send free copy of any play that appeals on request. All you need to do is email Jean at [scripts@playmarket.org.nz](mailto:scripts@playmarket.org.nz) with your details, and you will be included on their list.

## Photography and Poster Competition

Entries came from near and far but Stagecraft of Wellington won all the categories! Stephen A'Court judged both photography categories and this image by Alan Burden for *Jane Eyre* won Rehearsal Photo: "powerful emotion... close to the action... dramatic lighting."

Second place went to Dramatix Theatre with *At the Sound of Sirens* by Andrea Seymour;



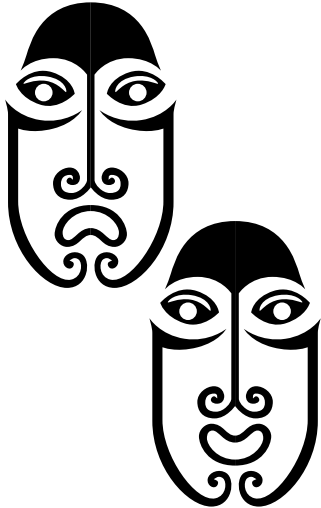
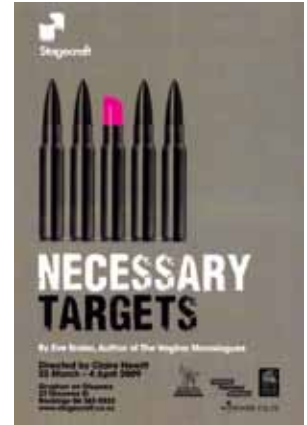
Publicity Photo Winner taken by Tabitha Arthur for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "fantastic camera angle, clever capture of fast moving moment..a mood of fun, movement colour suiting production. Exceptional."

Second place went to Wellington Repertory's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by Ross Miller.



Poster Competition judged by Chris Barrett and Murray Lynch of Playmarket and George Hajian of Alchemist Design chose this one: Stagecraft's 2009 production of *Necessary Targets* designed by Scenario.

Second place in Poster Competition went to Hutt Repertory Theatre for *A Lion in Winter*.



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**NB** Send NZTF communications to  
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