

Thoroughly Modern Millie



Laura Ferguson as the twisted and dark Mrs. Meers.



Dorian Goodwin and Emily Boyle share their first kiss.



Dorian Goodwin went from jerk to love interest as Jimmy.



(L) Laura Ferguson and (R) Breighanne Brandford as Miss Dorothy.



Emily Boyle does a thoroughly impressive job as the modern Millie.

Robert Massey High River Times
The Windmill Theatre Players present *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at the Memorial Centre on Saturday night. The night featured lots of laughs and a couple of sighs as the actors put on a thoroughly entertaining show, which ran from Nov. 19-27.





Festival will be putting on an act

Okotoks hosts regional one act play festival at Rotary Performing Arts Centre this weekend.

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Curtain rises on one-act play festival

Theatre: 12 short plays compete at Rotary Performing Arts Centre Friday and Saturday

By Stephen Smith

Staff Reporter

Derek Losoncy of the Foothills Theatre Company is not content for his troupe to just show up at this weekend's regional competition in the Alberta One Act Play Festival. He said he's looking for his group's lone entry "Essay" to win the event.

"We're shooting to make it three out of four here in regionals," he said. "We're hoping to move onto provincials one more year and bring that prize home."

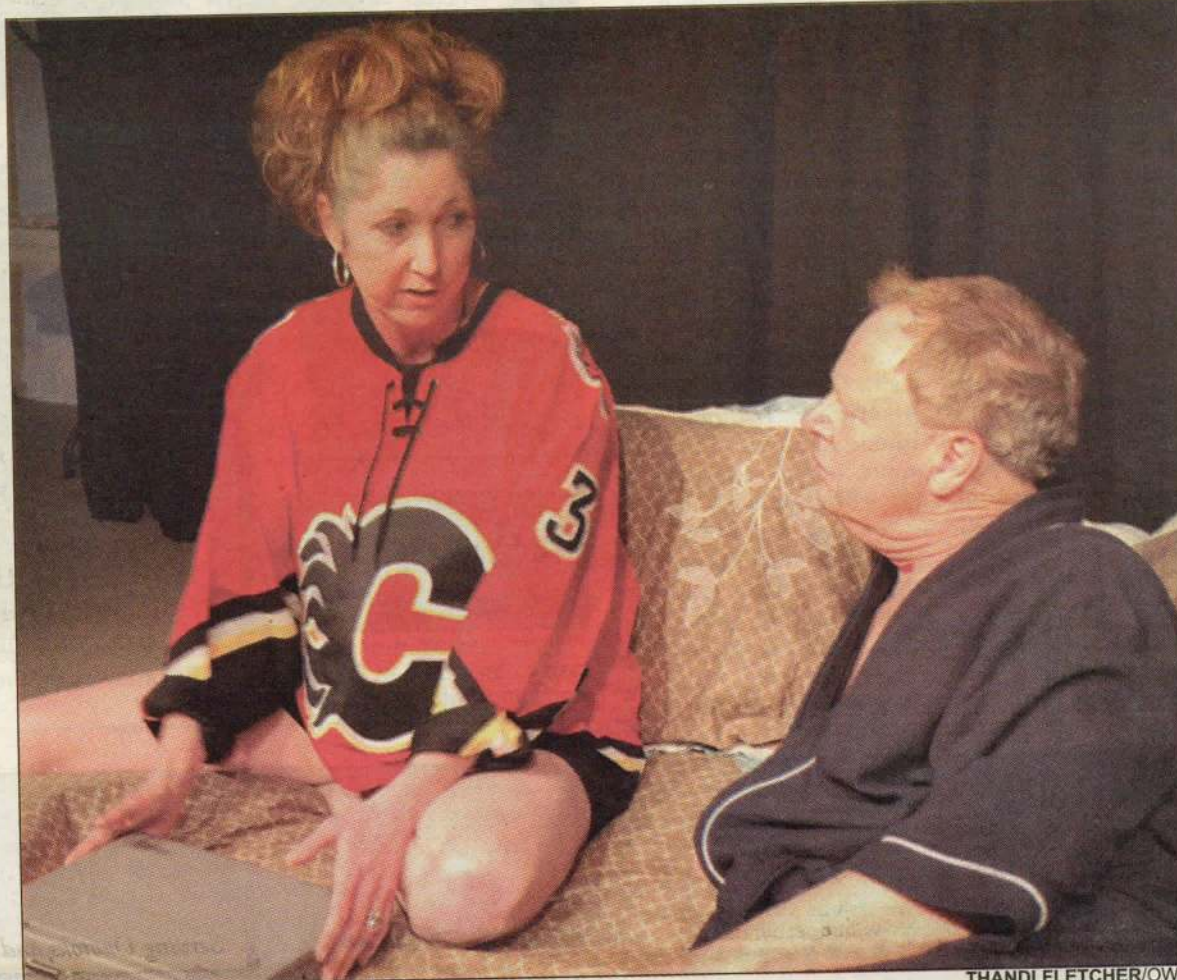
Okotoks' Foothills Theatre Company has won two of the last three one-act play competitions for this area, but has never won the provincial tile. To get back to provincials, May 20 and 21 in Lethbridge, they will have to first win the regional competition which will be held March 18 and 19 at the Rotary Performing Arts Centre in Okotoks.

Standing in their way are 11 other one-act plays including five from the Dewdney Players in Okotoks, two from High River's Windmill Theatre Players, one from Bragg Creek Performing Arts and three from a new participant, Strathmore Theatre Players Guild.

With many other quality entries Losoncy admitted it will be tough for his company to repeat as Foothills area champs. They won last year with the one-act "Michael and Karen" written by Okotoks' playwright and actor Paul Rancourt.

Toronto playwright Hanna Moscovitch penned this year's offering, "Essay".

"It's about a first-year university student named Pixie (Kelsey Ranshaw) who decides to write her end of term paper for her 18th and 19th century history of warfare class



THANDI FLETCHER/OWW

Charlotte Bouck and Don Gaede play a married couple looking to spice up their marriage in the Windmill Theatre Players' production "Friendly Skies". The show and 11 other one-act plays are in competition Friday and Saturday at RPAC in Okotoks.

on Elizabeth Farnese," said Losoncy who is directing the play. "She's not necessarily somebody that academics would consider involved in warfare at that time."

Farnese was queen consort of Spain who exuded great influence on her country's foreign policy in the first half of the 18th century. In "Essay" Pixie's decision to make the

queen the subject of her paper puts her at odds with both a teaching assistant (Rancourt) and her history professor (Jeremy MacKenzie).

Losoncy said the play was right for competition due to the timely content.

"It's got some really light moments and it touches on some issues that are poignant to the day,"

he said.

Down in High River the Windmill Theatre Players have been hard at work preparing the one-acts "Friendly Skies" and "In the Beginning" for regionals.

Windmill's Eric Baxter is doing double duty, directing the former play and acting in the latter.

"Skies" is the story of a married

couple mired in a rut considering bringing another couple into the bedroom to spice things up while "In the Beginning" is a modernized telling of the story of Adam and Eve set in a bar.

While Baxter is proud to be involved in both works he admitted the comedy "Friendly Skies", starring Don Gaede and Charlotte Bouck, may be more of a contender for regional one-act supremacy.

"It's a bit adult in tone but it's not totally crude," he said. "We do drop an 'F-bomb' once. The whole play is set basically on a bed. Our motto for it was 'our bed is our stage'. It's very funny so I'm expecting a lot from it."

The writing of "Friendly Skies" was a first time collaboration between Calgary Paul Taylor and Terry Williams, who moved with his family to Okotoks from the Stampede City last summer.

Williams explained at its heart the play is the story of a husband and a wife at a crossroads in their relationship.

"The sort of line for the show is, what does a middle aged couple do when they finally carve out some time for intimacy," he said. "The answer in the play is they talk about getting involved with the neighbours of course."

"Friendly Skies" makes it appearance at the Foothills festival at RPAC Friday night. "In the Beginning" and "Essay" both go Saturday evening. See the attached schedule for the complete list of shows. Tickets for one of the three play sessions are \$15 each. A pass for the whole festival is \$35. For more information e-mail Jane Platt at janepep@me.com

ssmith@okotoks.greatwest.ca

One Act Play Festival Schedule

Friday, March 18 SESSION ONE

7:00 - 7:15 p.m.: Dinner For One (Dewdney Players)
7:30 - 7:55 p.m.: Friendly Skies (Windmill Theatre Players)
8:10 - 8:40 p.m.: Dead (Dewdney Players)
8:55 - 9:20 p.m.: Unplugged (Dewdney Players)
9:25 - 9:45 p.m.: Public Adjudication
9:50 - 10:50 p.m.: Private Adjudications

Saturday, March 19 SESSION TWO

1:00 - 1:25 p.m.: The Wages of Sin, or Pefidious Work (Strathmore Theatre Players Guild)
1:40 - 2:25 p.m.: Cards, Cups, and Crystal Balls (Dewdney Players)
2:40 - 2:55 p.m.: The Hardy Boys & the Mystery of Where Babies Come From (Strathmore Theatre Players Guild)
3:10 - 4:10 p.m.: Final Case of Deenie Druwes (Bragg Arts)
4:15 - 4:35 p.m.: Public Adjudication
4:40 - 5:40 p.m.: Private Adjudications

SESSION THREE

7:00 - 7:25 p.m.: Auto-da-Fe (Dewdney Players)
7:40 - 8:00 p.m.: I Know My Human Rights, I Think (Strathmore Theatre Players Guild)
8:15 - 8:40 p.m.: In the Beginning (Windmill Theatre Players)
8:55 - 9:30 p.m.: Essay (Foothills Theatre Company)
9:35 - 9:45 p.m.: Public Adjudication
9:45 - 10:45 p.m.: Private Adjudications

Scene

PEOPLE • VISUAL ARTS • THEATRE • MUSIC • LITERATURE • FILM

Play within a play takes Foothills festival title

Theatre: Bragg Arts performance big winner in Okotoks

By Stephen Smith

Staff Reporter

A tale of an old-style radio production that goes horribly awry took two of the major nods at this year's Foothills Regional One-Act Play Festival in Okotoks earlier this month.

One of the big challenges for the show during the festival was it featured a cast of 12 packed on the modest stage at the Rotary Performing Arts Centre.

Atkinson said the outrageous physical nature of the show was definitely complicated by the restricted confines of RPAC.

"There's actually a scene where Bernice

The director of the show, Isabel McNab, said much credit for the success of the show should go to the playwright.

"We needed a spring production," she said. "Poor Dani offered to write a script and we committed to doing it before she realized how difficult it would be to write a murder mystery comedy, not the easiest form to pull off."

While a talented group of performers in Bragg Creek begin their preparations for hopefully another championship run, this time in Lethbridge, Okotoks performer Buoninsegni is able to kick back and enjoy his Best Actor win in the Foothills one-acts.

He said it comes after two near misses. "Twice before I received honourable mentions," he explained. "So I have been close. I've been in the pool of contenders but this is the first I've won. So it's nice."

The actor was recognized for his portrayal of Eloi Duvenet in Tennessee Williams' "Auto-da-fe". It's a tragic tale about a son reaching out to his smothering mother who was played by Florence Maione, runner-up for Best Actress.

Buoninsegni said he and his costar took a bit of a calculated risk selecting the show for competition.

"Most festivals will have a few shows from the darker genres but the majority generally, from what I have seen, have been more on the lighter side," he said.

With a frantic Best Actress comically knocking things all over the place and a Best Actor playing a troubled, suicidal son, the 2011 Foothills Regional One-Act Play Festival was a winner in terms of its range and talent.



Bernice the writer (Karin Atkinson) attends to fallen grand dame, Evelyn (Dani Atkinson), in a scene from "The Final Case of Deenie Druwes". On March 19, the Bragg Arts Theatre Society show won Best Production and Best Actress for Atkinson, at the Foothills one-act play competition in Okotoks.

Bragg Arts Theatre Society's "The Final Case of Deenie Druwes" was selected as Top Production and cast member Karin Atkinson nabbed the prize for Best Actress at the festival held at the Rotary Performing Arts Centre (RPAC) in Okotoks March 18-19.

Also taking home honours were Steve Buoninsegni of Okotoks' Dewdney Players for Best Actor in the play "Auto De Fe" and Foothills Theatre Company's Derek Losoncy won Best Director for "Essay".

Atkinson, a first-time winner at the festival, admitted she was floored by her win.

"I was honestly quite shocked," she said. "There were so many good plays this year and comedies don't usually win the acting awards. They usually go to dramatic performances. I wasn't expecting it so I was very surprised and ecstatic."

Atkinson played a writer named Bernice in "Deenie Druwes". It's a play about a play; in this case a radio drama that turns tragic in a humorous manner.

runs from one end of the stage to the other and has to knock down everything between," she said. "I was so afraid of something falling off the stage into the audience or of an actor being knocked off stage."

Somehow the cast managed to get through the 50-minute show without harming anyone or permanently damaging anything.

By winning top play at the Foothills region, "The Final Case of Deenie Druwes" is now off to the Alberta one-act play festival May 20-21 in Lethbridge.

Atkinson admitted she's pleased by the location of this year's provincial festival.

"I actually studied drama at the U of L (University of Lethbridge)," she said. "All of my friends are still in Lethbridge so I am very happy to be able to get together and celebrate with everybody."

Atkinson's sister, Dani, wrote "Deenie Druwes" and she also appears in the play as a flamboyant grand dame of an actress named Evelyn.

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DON PATTERSON/OWW

Okotoks actor, Steve Buoninsegni, prepares to burn a photo as Eloi Duvenet in "Auto-da-fe." The role garnered the performer a Best Actor win at the regional one act play festival.

THEATRE



Windmill Theatre Players
Auditions for
"Catch Me If You Can,"
a mystery thriller

January 9 at 2:00 pm
January 10 at 7:00 pm

at the Highwood Memorial Centre

Parts for 4 men and 3 women

For more information or to get a script call
Steve at 403-652-7913

H.R. Times Jan. 4, 2011



Windmill Theatre Players
www.windmilltheatreplayers.com

CATCH ME if YOU CAN

Dinner Theatre

Apr. 8, 9, 14 & 15, 2011

Adults: \$45.00

Children 14 and under: \$35.00

Doors open at 6:00pm

Curtain 7:30pm

A Comedic
"Whodunit"

Regular Theatre

Sunday Matinee: Apr. 10, 2011

All tickets: \$12.00

Doors open at 1:30pm, Curtain 2:00pm

Evening Performance: April 16, 2011

Adults \$15.00, Students & Seniors \$12.00

Doors open at 7:00pm, Curtain 7:30pm

All performances at the
Highwood Memorial Centre, High River

To Purchase Tickets
(Dinner Theatre & Regular Theatre)

Contact: Celia
Tel: 403-652-7913
Email: wtp@shaw.ca



H.R. Times MARCH 25, 2011

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2011

HIGH RIVER TIMES

Getting set up —



Celia Penman photo

Windmill Theatre Players (L to R) Herb Haekel, Jesse Primmer, Charlotte Bouck and Eric Baxter build the set for their upcoming production of Catch Me if You Can, which runs from April 8 to 16. Visit www.windmilltheatreplayers.com to learn more.

Local teen moves up to assistant director of Windmill Theatre Players' production

ALICIA FOX
CLARESHOLM LOCAL PRESS

Emily Boyle has become well known in the Claresholm community for her acting and singing skills.

This year, the Grade 12 Willow Creek Composite High School student has been given a new opportunity in the form of assistant director with the most recent performance by Windmill Theatre Players in High River.

Boyle has moved up from supporting roles to main characters to the lead role, which she played last year in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. This year, she is trying her hand at helping to direct a comedic whodunit entitled *Catch Me If You Can*.

"It's not the movie," Boyle wanted to clarify. "It's completely different."

The director approached Boyle and asked her if she wanted to be the assistant director — a task she eagerly accepted.

At each practice,

Boyle was required to take notes as to what the director wanted to see the actors do during the blocked scenes.

She explained that blocked scenes involve the actors going up and trying things out.

"If he (the director) says, 'Yes, that's good, keep it,' I write it down here," she said, pointing to pages full of notes. "I write in pencil because sometimes it changes."

Boyle said the director is very open and has been allowing her to give suggestions as to what she thinks might work as well.

"You won't know what's mine and what's his, but some of them are my ideas," she said.

While Boyle was an assistant director of a musical within her school, this is the first time she has done so in a community setting.

Previously in the character roles she has played, Boyle said she has only had to focus on one character and go in depth with just their personality.

"(This time) I get to go in depth with all the characters," she said.

If anyone misses a rehearsal, she plays that actor's part. During her free moments, people will ask her to run lines with them, and during rehearsals she was able to ask the characters the hard questions.

For example, many of the characters have several layers, and they have to decipher what the character would be doing while in the level they're at.

Boyle will ask the actors questions such as "would your character be doing this in this

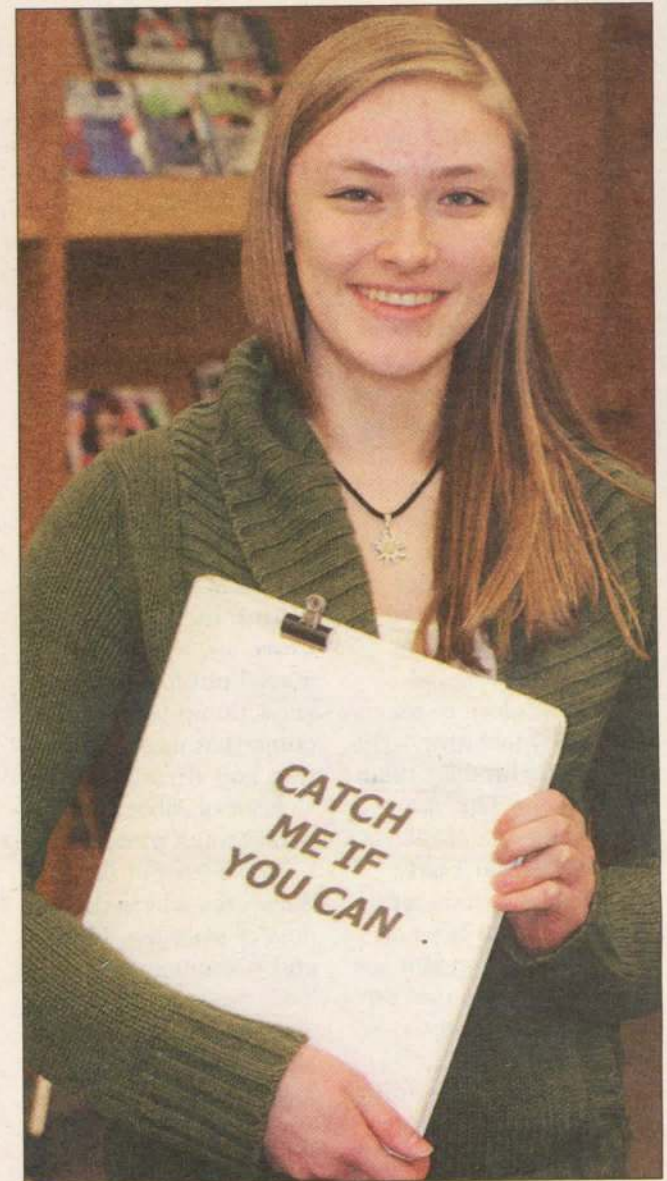


PHOTO BY ALICIA FOX, CLARESHOLM LOCAL PRESS

Emily Boyle, a Grade 12 student at Willow Creek Composite High School in Claresholm, recently took a position as an assistant director with the most recent performance at the Windmill Theatre Players production of *Catch Me If You Can*.

layer?" or "what would your other character think right now?" and work with them to create well-rounded characters.

This part as assistant director fits right into her future plans, as she has a long-term goal of owning her own theatre company.

She intends to take theatre at a university such as York, Ryerson, or Mount Royal, but would prefer to head out to Ontario since the

degree available here in Alberta is only two years instead of four.

The play itself began April 8 and will run until Saturday, but the first dress rehearsal was held March 27.

"You'll be on the edge of your seat the whole time," Boyle said, adding it's an excellent play that's not to be missed.

For tickets, call 1-403-652-7913. Visit www.windmilltheatre-players.com for more information.



PHOTO BY EVAN CAREEN,
HIGH RIVER TIMES

**Elizabeth Corban,
played by Breighanne
Brandford, goes
through one last dress
rehearsal before the
Windmill Theatre
Players production of
Catch Me if You Can
hits the High River
Highwood Memorial
stage April 8-16.**

Community

Windmill director finally catches his men

Theatre: "Catch Me if You Can" opens April 8 at the Highwood Memorial Centre

By Stephen Smith

Staff Reporter

Windmill Theatre Players' newest production "Catch Me if You Can" has a familiar title, but this is not the 2002 film about a runaway cheque forger — it is a murder mystery with its own share of intrigue.

"Catch Me if You Can" is a murder mystery set in an isolated hunting lodge not a remake of the Steven Spielberg film starring the globetrotting Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks in hot pursuit.

Steve Penman, the director of Windmill's "Catch Me If You Can" which premieres in High River on April 8, said when he first became aware of the script it did remind him of an old

movie.

"I have actually had an acquaintance with this play for a lot of years," he said. "I saw a movie back in something like 1980 or 81 called 'Vanishing Act,'" he said.

"It had a real interesting story with a lot of neat things going on. Then a couple of years later I was going through a bunch of Windmill scripts and I pulled one out and read it. It was exactly the same story but the play was called 'Catch Me if You Can.'"

Even though he liked the script, written in the 1960s by Jack Weinstock and Willie Gilbert, Penman shelved it because Windmill did not have enough men at the time to

cover off the male roles.

About a decade ago the experienced actor and director said he examined the script for a second time.

"I pulled it out again a number of years ago, about the time the movie 'Catch Me if You Can' came out with a totally different story," Penman explained.

He passed on doing the production again because he thought too many people would confuse it with the Spielberg film.

Then last year Penman said he looked at the play one more time and decided the moment was finally right to bring it to the stage.

The Windmill show stars Bill Stevenson and Breighanne Brandford as



BRUCE CAMPBELL/OWW

Police inspector Dan Levine (Jesse Primmer) inspects the identification of Elizabeth Corban (Breighanne Brandford) during a dress rehearsal of Windmill Theatre Players' humorous mystery "Catch Me If You Can". The curtain rises for the play this Friday at the Highwood Memorial Centre in High River.