

Idle



Pursuits

Remember Me?

By DEBORAH QUAILE

John and Margaret Snowdon have done a wonderful job with their latest play at the Arboretum dinner theatre in Guelph.

Throughout March and April *Remember Me?* is their romantic comedy of the season that poses the question: How does a couple recapture the missing magic in a marriage? The stage setting is opulent to reflect a couple of affluence. As empty nesters that now live in a gorgeous apartment with a spectacular view, Brian and Mary believe they have an ideal marriage. They pride themselves on being best friends, but in special asides to the audience they question how exciting life really is, and whether they listen to one another. One Sunday morning after Brian leaves to play tennis, Mary's old flame, Peter, shows up. Or does he? Even though Brian cannot actually see Peter, he succumbs to an outburst of jealousy and tries to rid his wife of her fantasy affair. He even hires an actress to pose seductively with him in an attempt to arouse Mary's ire, but she won't fall for it, and then the real Peter shows up!

The Snowdons are using a smaller cast this time that tightens the action and storyline. These actors have worked hard to set their characters and the group has certainly meshed onstage. Cath Judd and Wayne Moore, new to Theatre in the Trees devotees, play Mary and Brian. Both fit the part of active and very youthful seniors, and Ms. Judd does get the point across that she is suffering from a loss of some sort in her life. As Mary notes, when at work every-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

thing seems fine, but on weekends something seems to be missing. Brian's slight inattention is a feature in many long-time marriages, and Mr. Hanson accomplishes this with a comfortable display of affection to his wife, but one that's devoid of any skyrocketing passion.

"We have a solid, functional union," he notes, "...pleasant, very smooth... everything you want after two kids and 27 years... isn't that how you're supposed to end up? Best friends?"

When Mary allows herself to be swept away by Peter's surprise passion, her admission to the audience that adultery through fantasy could help half of the marriages in the theatre provoked much laughter.

Rick Renaud is a familiar face in Snowdon productions. He maintains a good sense of timing, and convincingly plays a man whose own marriage has become a little stale and boring. He blurts out that

he's "never stopped loving" Mary and quickly manoeuvres her into the bedroom, much to the delighted amusement of the theatregoers.

But once again Erin Murphy enters with a character who's quite removed from the ordinary, this time portraying Tori Clark, the floozy-ish faux-love interest of Brian. She quickly gets on his nerves, however, and he tells her he'll "throw in an extra \$25 if she'll keep her mouth shut." Ms. Murphy plays the perfect comic foil to compliment the suddenly uncomfortable married couple and garnered quite a lot of laughter from her audience.

Thankfully, romance comes to the forefront and rescues the troubled characters of *Remember Me?*. It's a show that everyone will enjoy, especially those whose marriages may have seemed a trifle routine of late. It's good to know that a dash of spice can be added to comfort and recapture a taste of magic.

Local artist partakes in international show

By DEBORAH QUAILE

Everton artist Susan Strachan Johnson has been invited to take part in a huge international show of contemporary art in Florence, Italy. The Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea 2003 will take place next December. Numerous Canadian artists have been invited, but the steep registration fee - \$1,800 Euro or about \$2,800 Canadian - may prove to be prohibitive for many.

"I'm applying for grants and saving up my pennies," says Ms. Johnson with a laugh. She has already had an offer of somewhere to stay during the exhibition.

The Biennale 2003 will be the fourth to be held in Florence since a meeting organized in October 1999 by the World Bank and UNESCO, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It will take place at the Fortessa da Basso in Florence with an international jury of contempo-

rary art scholars.

"It's good to know that I have already been accepted if I can get my work there. It would be terrific exposure because my art is taking a new direction."

Ms. Johnson is currently transforming a meeting room into a children's chapel for St. David and St. Patrick Anglican Church in Guelph. Her recent commissions include the 2000 Wellington Plowing Match, the World War I trench exhibit at the Wellington

County Museum and *In Remembrance*, a multi-media collaboration that focuses on the poem, *Do Not Stand on My Grave*.



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KILLING COLD

By DEBORAH QUAILE

Quaile Reviews

My small town is well known in the winter for the snowmobiles that zip along whitened streets and days of frigid temperatures with frequent white-out conditions that make you feel as if you're part of this new novel by David Wickes. But you really don't want to be because, in the blurred white wasteland, a killer lurks silently on skis, on swift feet, or on a roaring snowmobile.

Homicide Detective Lieutenant Jack Petersen is out in the cold again with another chilling case. As an affluent community on a private lake in rural Minnesota is terrorized by a brutal serial killer, Peterson is called in to investigate while a wicked series of storms dumps six feet of snow that severely hampers police business - but unfortunately not the killer.

Killing Cold is written in a very masculine voice with short, snappy chapters that keep readers flying through quick bites of text. Mr. Wickes juggles a large cast of characters, from police detectives to residents, flipping back and forth between scenes with relative ease as he builds fear and draws out the tension to make his audience wait - for someone to strike or someone to fall prey. Although the murders are mostly sexual assaults, the mystery man doesn't seem too deterred by the fact that a male could be the next available victim. As the community is cut off from the outside world, the manhunt team can only hope to stop the atrocities before more occur.

The author has his police background down pat: he knows exactly what techniques and equipment are available and how they're used. Along the way readers will be taught a little more about investigations as they follow the action. Mr. Wickes also adds dollops of humour to highlight his writing, spread as lavishly as the frequently changing condiments on Detective Jack Petersen's beloved dietary staple - burgers. This is a chilling book at any time but was especially so during the dark nights of blowing snow and frigid temperatures recently experienced.

David Wickes is a former jet fighter pilot and retired entrepreneur from the Moffat area who is currently working on the third Jack Petersen thriller. His previous book was *Killing Time*.

Killing Cold

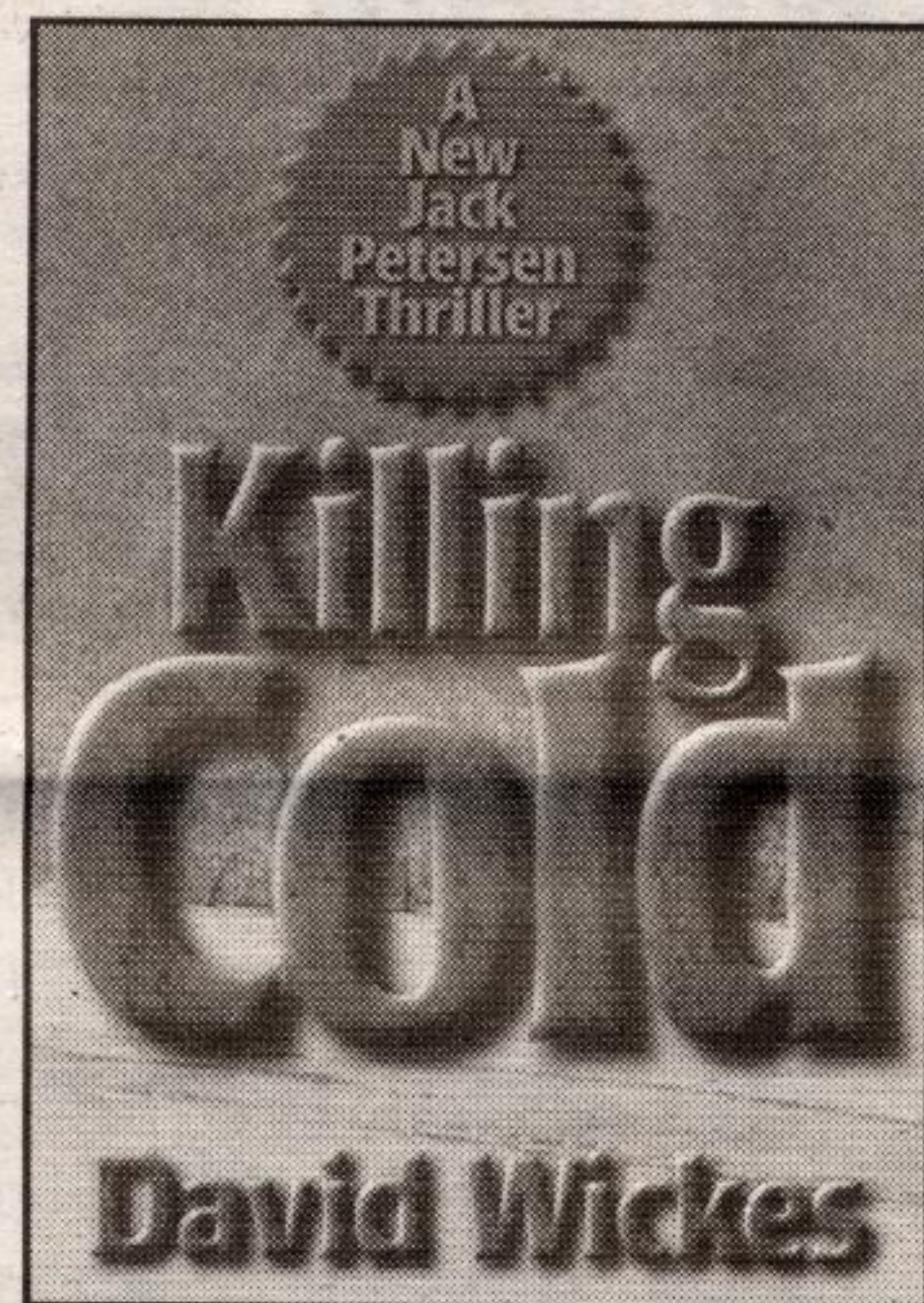
David Wickes

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Chapbooks by Gloria Hildebrandt

By DEBORAH QUAILE

Orchard House, Gloria Hildebrandt's home near Ballinafad, has produced a line of chapbooks that are carried by Best's Harbour in Glen Williams. The self-published, handmade and hand-bound booklets are compilations of her work, sewn together in signature beeswax-coated cotton thread and then stamped and numbered - a blend of antique bookbinding and computer technology. Chapbooks is a word used by book collectors for a small pamphlet of popular tales, ballads, or other writing that used to be sold by dealers or peddlers called chapmen. In the recent revival, many authors and poets use chapbooks as a way to get their work to appreciative audiences. Such pieces can be considered collectors' items.

Ms. Hildebrandt has produced eight limited edition chapbooks ranging from a children's Christmas story, to personally selected quotations regarding writing, to short fiction. Thoughtful and introspective, the

stories are written for either adult or young audiences. A *Tree's Second Christmas*, for example, is illustrated with colourful computer graphics for kids. Several of her other stories are about relationships, perspectives or sexual attraction to men. The three slim volumes of quotations are so interesting that readers may demand longer versions in the future.

In addition to creating chapbooks, Gloria Hildebrandt teaches writing, and writes articles and book reviews. More information on Orchard House chapbooks is available at www.ohouse.ca.

Inspiration,
Courage
&
Persistence



Quotations Selected by
Gloria Hildebrandt