

Don Cherry visits Wal-Mart



PHOTO BY MICHELLE EWING

Popular hockey commentator and former player Don Cherry was greeted by Damian Ewing and Father Mark Curtis on a recent visit to Milton's new Wal-Mart. Don Cherry was in town signing copies of his latest DVD "Don Cherry Sixteen". He took the opportunity during the visit to congratulate young Damian, who on his 10th birthday requested donations for Rose Cherry Home for Sick Children in lieu of birthday presents. The Brookville youth raised over \$500 in support of the hospice located on Sideroad 15, Milton. Father Mark Curtis, who serves on the board of directors of Rose Cherry Home, was also on hand at Wal-Mart to welcome Don and introduce Damian to the hockey legend.

recreation & entertainment

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN HALTON

Burl-Oak Theatre Group - "Lost in Yonkers"

By BREN CHISHOLM

The Burl-Oak Theatre Group is currently rehearsing Neil Simon's "Lost in Yonkers", the renowned Pulitzer Prize-winning play that deals with a pair of motherless Jewish boys left with their tough-spirited grandmother in Yonkers during WWII.

At its most basic, "Lost in Yonkers" is the story about making one's way through the tangled web of family relationships and attempting to endure life without losing the core sense of self. The audience sees how our differences, personal challenges and individual senses of humor are all components of what makes a family.

The BOTG produce three, full-length, live plays each season, from Fall to Spring, at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, located on 130 Navy Street.

Rehearsals are held at Burl-Oak Studio in Oakville on 1290 Speers Road, Unit 12, every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evening at 7:30 pm. All members are volunteers and each production is testimony to the hard work that goes into creating theatre.

In 1976, the BOTG was formed by a small but ambitious group of people who were members of the Hopedale Presbyterian Church in Oakville. The members at the time were a combination of Burlington and Oakville residents, hence the name Burl-Oak. They have since grown and have several dedicated members from the Mississauga area.

Their first presentation was a workshop production of four one-act plays performed at Sheridan College in Oakville, followed by Simon's "Plaza Suite" at the same venue. From there, they moved over to Nelson High School in Burlington to perform "Barefoot in the Park", another well-known Simon play.

In 1977, the group marked the official opening of the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts with "The Odd

Couple". It was obvious even back then that Burl-Oak had developed a reputation for comedy but as a change of pace, they presented a drama, "Murder in Company", at Hopedale Church.

From that point on, all of their productions have been presented at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, which has grown over the years as a respected venue.

A notable feature about the BOTG is that members are supported and encouraged to become involved in all aspects of theatre. Skill improvement is readily available by attending workshops and as a result, their own members direct most of their productions.



A scene from the Burl-Oak Theatre Group's production of The Cemetery Club.

The Oakville Players and Everyman Theatre Company combined in

1979, with a subscription series of several plays and opened the Oakville Drama Series' first season with Noel Coward's "Private Lives".

BOTG proudly continues to be an essential part of the Oakville Drama Series producing three plays out of the seven in the series. The year 2001 marked the BOTG's 25th Anniversary.

George Thompson is directing "Lost in Yonkers", worked on twelve plays for BOTG since 1968, including, most recently, "The Cemetery Club" and "No Sex, Please: We're British". He says of "Yonkers", "This play is still a comedy but has very serious overtones. It's still definitely 'Neil Simon' but with a bit more bite than usual".

What makes this production particularly interesting for its players is the fact that the actress playing Aunt Bella is Tamar Kunder who worked professionally until her children came along. After they grew up, she got back into theatre and has since been in three BOTG productions. "Lost In Yonkers" marks the debut of her son, Ben, who also acts in the play alongside his own mother!

"Lost in Yonkers" will be performed from Thursday, January 13th to Saturday, January 15th, and from Wednesday, January 19 to Saturday, January 22, 2005, at Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. Tickets are only \$21.00 and can be ordered at the box office by calling (905) 815-2021, or by going online at www.oc4pa.ca. Half-price tickets at \$10.50 are available for seniors and students on Wednesday, January 19.



A scene from the Burl-Oak Theatre Group's production Mama.

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