

Group sees theatre company as a great boon for Halton Hills

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well become a destination for theatre-goers. Theatre, shopping and dining is a very popular project for tour operators and I know in Fergus last year they had something like 86 busloads coming from Toronto, Hamilton and as far away as Flint, Michigan. That's the kind of thing that theatre can do for a community. I think we could create jobs at the theatre for local people, as well as for the professional actors. It would be nice if our tourist dollars stayed in our own community."

She estimates the town, as renter of the theatre, could reap a profit of about \$20,000 per show.

As well, Phenix said other acting companies' managers have told her the addition of a professional company to a community brings many benefits to the existing amateur theatre groups. For example, a professional company spends a lot of time on audience development and that audience tends to spill over to amateur theatre productions. A professional company's presence also tends to result in improvements to the theatre and to the services it provides, said Phenix, and all the amateur groups get the benefit of that as well.

The other theatre groups in town—Georgetown Little Theatre and Georgetown Globe Productions have been approached and Phenix said the response has been enthusiastic.

"I think most of us saw the more theatre there is, the better it is for everybody."

While the Crisp company will need money, at least \$25,000 to \$30,000 per show to get off the ground in 1999, Phenix said the

group is not asking for a town handout of taxpayers' dollars, but it is asking the town for a number of things:

- To have Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson act as a patron—Halton MP Julian Reed has already agreed to be a patron, Phenix said.

- Demonstrated community and business support—a critical element when the repertory group applies for Rural Job Strategy funding.

- Practical help—assistance in finding sponsors as well as letting residents know there is a repertory group forming and needing support.

- Improve the visibility of the John Elliott Theatre through signage around the town. For example, one side of the Alcott Arena sign should be devoted to the theatre, she suggested.

- An early decision by the town committee studying new rates and fees for the John Elliott Theatre.

"I think we can make it work, and I think it's worthwhile going after," said Phenix.

For more information or to become a sponsor call Jo Phenix, at (519) 855-6896 or Jack Crisp at 833-1002.

Auditions planned

Auditions for a Christian Children's television pilot will be held Saturday, Oct. 3 and 17 from 10:30 a.m. until noon at X'Cape Youth Drop-In Centre in Milton.

Those trying out must be 6-12 years old and be willing participants in Bible sharing session. There is a \$5 processing fee per family.

The drop-in centre is located at 174 Mill St. in Milton.

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