

Arts & Entertainment

Creatures aplenty in Phoenix's latest offering

Youth theatre group ready to put on six-story production next week

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

It'll be an unusual assortment of characters taking to the stage next week for the latest offering of St. Paul's Phoenix Youth Theatre.

Watch closely and you're likely to see a frog, rabbit, buzzard, muskrat and a slew of other creatures who usually stick to the forest and shy away from the limelight.

But these aren't your average critters. Not only are they loveable — most of them, anyways — and humorous, they also sing and dance and hold valuable lessons for adults and children alike.

"All the characters are quite lively," said director Rob Croezen, who's at the helm of the production along with Mike Coates, a retired teacher from W.I. Dick Public School.

The play, called Tales From the Storyteller's House, The Stories of Thornton W. Burgess, will run from November 17 to 19 at St. Paul's United Church, 123 Main St. E.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and showtime is 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$10 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors and \$5 for kids under 12.

The theatre group has adapted six stories for the stage with a cast of 10 local youths ranging in age from 12 to 21.

"I think it's going to be really fun," Mr. Croezen said.

Children's author Thornton Burgess wrote more than 170 books and 15,000 stories throughout his life. He died in 1965 at the age of 91, but his plethora of loveable characters — including Reddy Fox, Jerry Muskrat, Sammy Jay and Peter Rabbit —

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lives on.

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But Mr. Croezen and the cast hope to change that.

"We're hoping parents and grandparents will bring their children and grandchildren to enjoy these wonderful stories and introduce them to these magical characters," he said.

Some people might know Mr. Burgess's stories from the old TV cartoon 'Fables of the Green Forest'.

Many of Mr. Burgess's stories were published daily in newspapers and read to kids as bedtime stories.

"They (the stories) had a large audience — people without easy access to the library," Mr. Croezen said.

Although the stories were written for kids, cast member Danielle Proulx, 16, see PHOENIX on page B10



Phoenix's upcoming production includes (from left) Mallory Bryson, Danielle Proulx, Steve Bevers and Corey Gustafson.

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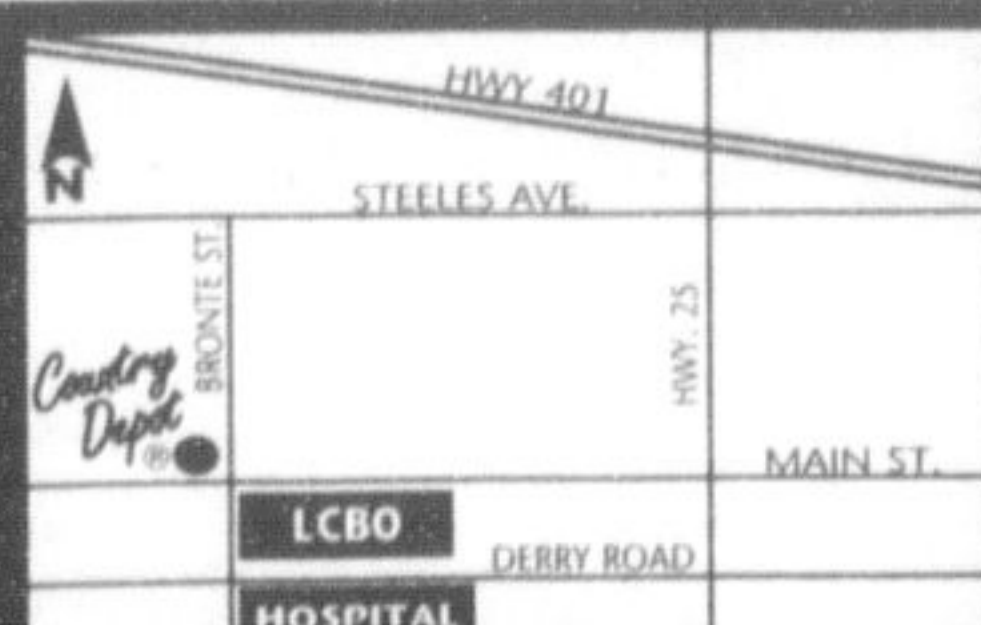
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