

'Everyone is an actor'

Visiting director brings psychology to Huronia Players

by Ray Baker
 Ron Payne is married, with a daughter, mortgage, car, the usual things. He stands 6'4", and at thirty eight years old and 185 lbs. is in pretty good shape - which is just as well with the active life he leads.
 With his lanky frame crunched up in the front seat of his car, we sat and talked for forty-five minutes in the car park of the Sacred Heart School in Midland last weekend. The snow drifted down, the school was not yet open, and Ron waited to go through another rehearsal with the Huronia Players in their latest production of Woody Allen's 'Don't Drink the Water'.
 He is their director, courtesy of Theatre Ontario, and drives down from Bracebridge, where he manages Santas Village. Out of the 40-50 applicants for the job of general manager at the Village he got it, I think, for two basic reasons.
 1. He considers Santas Village as a huge stage lot. He provides the setting, as it were, for the annual deluge of kids (and parents). The projected \$250,000 improvement for the children's playground is just one example of good stage management.
 2. His basic background of an up and coming corporation executive who chucked everything to return to his first love, the theatre, must have put him on top of the list. In the last eleven years he has either played or directed in 38 productions. His personal group in North Bay forms a base of operations from which he works outwards.
 I think Ron could earn an easy \$50,000 a year as a practicing psychologist. People first and last are his motivation. Some of his statements give a rare depth of insight into what he describes as 'New Theatre'.
 "Everyone is an actor. At work or at play, it's a defence mechanism" or again "after hundreds of collective hours of rehearsal you gain five seconds of applause. That's what it's all about."
 The Apprenticeship of Don Quixote
 Like an orchestra leader who can detect one 'off' note in a whole symphony because he himself can play each instrument, so Ron has been the route! lighting, acting, stage sets, casting and directing. Then he plays by a 'gut feel' never forcing the pace. He

prefers to direct on an adult 'show and tell' basis, never asking more from a player than he himself can demonstrate and feel.
 He is part of the 'New Theatre of Canada' - jigsawing the players, the plot, and the performance together, into a situation that the audience can identify with and enjoy.
 This is a complete switch for the Huronia Players. Rather than employ a veteran actor of the old school (Danny

Walsh) and an adaptation of a Russian concept (Chekov's Cherry Orchard) as they did last year, they now have a modern American comedy with a young intense director and a refreshing approach.
 He knows nobody in the cast, has no bias, and starts by asking "well what do you want to do?" His criteria for success is "the actors know when they put out their best, the accumulation of these collective bests gives a cohesive whole. The audience reacts, and enjoys the performance".
 He had no idea or intention of directing the Players until recently, when Joan Hanna spotted him after a mime presentation. His basic love of mime which he says is "non-verbal communication" is the same for a class of kindergarten children or a room full of professors. His best "total identification sessions" are with children of 11 years old.
 The innocence of youth
 Ron feels that all children are born mimics and actors, reaching a peak around 11, after which they acquire inhibitions. His job, working with adults, is to re-acquire that ability to live the part which he knows children do without any effort, in fact which we all did in our childhood, accepting anything and everything without question.
 His psychological approach to 'The New Wave' of Canadian Theatre is to lead, not drive, to orchestrate, not conduct. There is little difference in his eyes between professional actors and the average "Community Theatre Group". The only basic difference being the ease of long practice of the professional, but "every man and woman is born to a part" or as Shakespeare said "all the worlds a stage, and all the men and women merely players".
 A tilt at windmills
 Why Don Quixote? Well I asked Ron "what about the next 11 years" how did he see himself? He said, "Ray, I am a resource person, enjoying my work with groups like this (The Huronia Players) I just want to continue what I'm doing. I am one of the last

Count me in.

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Don Quixote director?

Director Ron Payne made sure the set was ready and what he wanted prior to dress rehearsals for the Huronia Player's production of 'Don't Drink the Water'. Payne is a guest director and has come to Midland for this one production through the auspices of Theatre Ontario.

Martyr's ski tour hosted by Midland Ski Club

Second annual "Martyr's Tour" for cross-country skiers is set to go Sunday, March 13, said organizer Eric Rothwell of the Midland Ski Club.
 Martyr's Tour is so named because the ski route passes through two Huron Indian villages where French Jesuits established Christian missions more than 325 years ago. The tour originates at St. Ignace, east of Concession eight, Tay Township, the village where Fathers St. Jean de Brebeuf and St. Gabriel Lalemant were martyred. The second village is St. Louis where the missionaries were captured.
 Also on the route is the Bavarian House.
 End of the trail is Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, near Midland, the reconstruction of the first European community in Ontario and the central residence of the Jesuits' mission to the Huron Indians. Brebeuf and Lalemant once lived there.
 Total length of the ski trail is about 20 kilometers (12 1/2 miles).

Orpha Henderson died Sunday

Orpha Henderson, beloved wife of the late William Lewis Henderson, died on Sunday, February 27 at Georgian Manor, Penetanguishene, in her 84th year.
 Mrs. Henderson was a former Midland resident and is survived by daughters Helen (Mrs. Ed O'Connell) of Chicago and Betty (Mrs. Anthony Quigley) of Penetanguishene and by son Bill Henderson of Midland.
 She is also survived by sisters Mrs. Eva Higley and Mrs. Leon Castner, both of London, Ontario.
 Orpha Henderson rested at the Nicholls Funeral Home, Midland. Funeral services were Wednesday, March 2 at 2 p.m. Interment at St. Mark's Cemetery, the Reverend Sid Maddock officiating.

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For more information, or to receive the free booklet "Serving the Mentally Retarded," contact your local Ministry of Community and Social Services office, or write to:

Mental Retardation Community Services Development Branch 3rd Floor, Hepburn Block, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9

Keith Norton, Minister of Community and Social Services

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