

Music Mania countdown

Voyage of laughter sets sail this Thursday

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It's that time of year again as Music Mania sets sail on another voyage of laughter, music and fun in its latest masterpiece, "Thirty Knots."

In her second year with the show, Cathy McNaught takes on the challenge of skit director as well as chorus member, actor and writer. How did she get involved in directing?

"You go to a general meeting, and they say 'we need someone to direct skits' and no one else puts their hand up, so you feel guilty and agree to give it a try," she laughs.

Despite the hard work and concentration involved in learning

words and music as well as directing, it's all worthwhile, stresses Cathy.

"The people are great and it's a lot of fun." The job of director involves getting a group together to write the skits, all of which are original.

"We also have to make sure we have people in line to do the acting, but most of the people who write are acting as well anyway. Then I have to organize meetings and rehearsals and make sure the props we need are available." Although she has acted in plays before, this is the first time she's tried her hand at directing.

Cathy got involved through her husband Al, who was approached to sing in the show three years ago, after someone heard him per-

form a solo in the United Church choir. The following year, Cathy joined the chorus, and they're both involved in the 1990 30th anniversary production.

The McNaughts have lived in the area for four years, but Cathy first saw Music Mania on a visit to Stouffville about eight years ago.

"I thought then it must be nice to be involved, but I didn't imagine I ever would be."

This year, Cathy feels, the show is particularly strong musically, and gives the chorus an excellent chance to shine.

Music Director Ann Bell is certainly no stranger to Music Mania as she heads into her fourteenth show. Over the years she's undertaken a wide variety of roles, including chorus director, comic director with Linda Hollin, and a three-year stint as show director.

"I've also been a member of the skits and the chorus. I started off with the chorus, then I was approached to do a couple of lines about three years later."

In fact about the only thing she doesn't do is write, she says. Like many of her fellow troupers, it was a friend who first got her involved.

"I'd never even seen the show; the first one I saw was the first year I directed."

Although she grew up in Good-

wood and has spent much of her life there, "I wasn't aware of Music Mania for a long time. We were in Durham Region and at that time we had very little communication with the Stouffville area."

When she did sign up, she was lucky to be accepted, she notes. "There were four criteria for people coming in, and the only one I met was that I had a 640 telephone number. Otherwise I couldn't have been in it at all."

When she first started, "90 per cent of the women involved were homemakers; maybe five per cent are now, so the pressures are much more for everyone."

Being involved in the show is a big commitment, acknowledges Ann, "but it's so worthwhile. You make friends who will be your friends for life. It really is a very rewarding experience, working with 67 people for about three months and all of a sudden 14 pieces of music come to life, and you all just feel so good about it."

Mary Niec's background in dance made her a natural choice to choreograph the show, and when she heard someone was needed to take charge of choreography three years ago, she called Doris Harvey and offered her services. "I've been in the area for about six years, but I hadn't actually been to see the show," admits Mary.

"It was my students (at King City Public School) who kept telling me I should go."

She's been dancing since she was eight years old, and her experience includes a seven-year stint with a ballet company in Windsor. After studying in Europe with a Polish dance group, she later returned there to study choreography, which she now teaches her students.

She thoroughly enjoys her role in Music Mania, both as choreographer and dancer.

"It's work but it's not work," she explains. "When you're there with the dancers they're such a nice group, it's really most enjoyable."

When Mary is working on a number, she takes into account whether the chorus will be involved and, if so, she carries the theme into her dance, "or we create our own, depending on the type of music we're using."

For her, as for so many others, Music Mania is more than just a show, it's a unique community event and the source of some wonderful and enduring friendships.

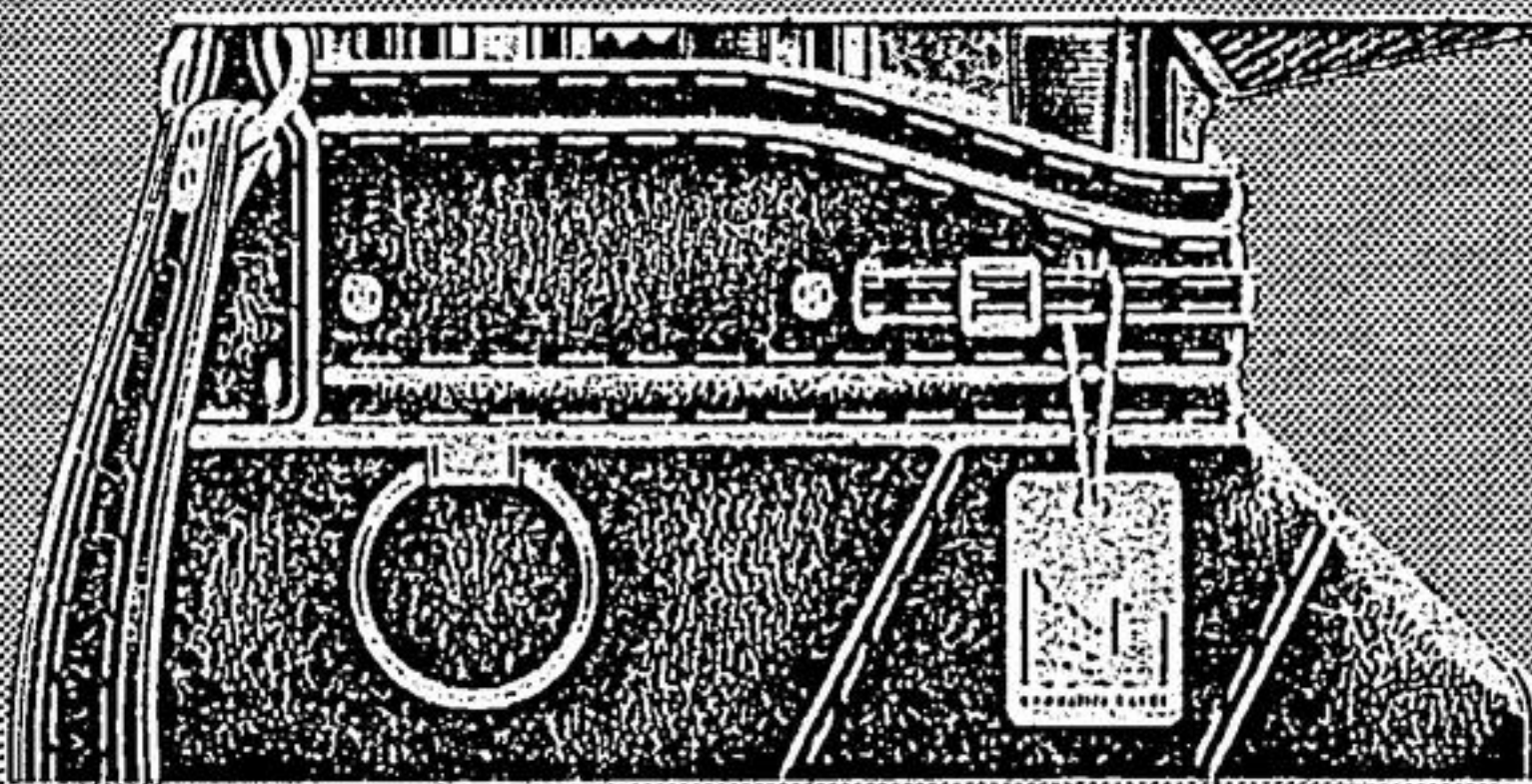
"Thirty Knots" casts off on Thursday evening at Stouffville District Secondary School. Tickets, available from Card's Hardware and Stouffville Printing and Sun, are \$3.50 for children, \$5 for adults on Thursday night and \$6 on Friday and Saturday.

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Members of the Music Mania cast 'brush up' during rehearsals at Stouffville United Church, as the group gears up for its 30th anniversary show beginning Thursday night. Lorraine French (left), Cathy McNaught (seated) and Doris Harvey are enjoying the work that goes into the show.

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\$5,000 grant for Stouffville

Whitchurch-Stouffville is receiving a \$5,000 grant from the provincial government to assist in a study for land use planning, Durham-York MPP Bill Ballinger announced last week.

The grant "will offset the cost of a further study to implement a municipal work plan on land use planning for housing," Mr. Ballinger said in a release.

This grant follows a similar one for \$23,000 to be put towards housing needs studies.