

## CHICAGO PRODUCTION TEAM

It is Monday night at 6 pm and the *Chicago* production team has gathered for their weekly meeting before that night's rehearsal. The session has yet to begin, but there are no latecomers straggling in. It is down to the last few weeks before production and in the room there is a fairly intense level of excitement, stress, fatigue and focus.

It's been 5 years since the last big community musical production in Revelstoke. For those who remember, each year the musicals got better and more 'professional'. Each year, the talent of community citizens was evoked and allowed to shine. The hiatus occurred for a reason. The Revelstoke Theatre group had obtained the Mt. Mackenzie Playhouse, and time and energy focused on smaller productions throughout the year. However, when the group no longer had access to the Playhouse, the idea of a community musical production began to percolate once again. Production Stage Manager, Martin Ralph, completes the picture with a big smile, "We decided to go in the complete opposite direction (from small productions), and totally overdo it!"

The *Chicago* production has recruited nearly 200 volunteers, ranging from high school student to seniors, and includes visiting residents from Australia, Scotland and Denmark. Among many others, the production team includes:

Producer: **Alan Chell**  
Associate Producer: **Peter Waters**  
Artistic Director: **Lyn Kaulback**  
Musical Director: **Bob Rogers**  
Technical Director: **Brad Binnington**  
Choral Director: **Jasmin Brackenbury**  
Production Stage Manager: **Martin Ralph**  
Stage Manager: **Marissa Davis**  
Sound Engineer: **Grant Leiterman**  
Lead Crew: **Dan Levine**

As well, there are people in Costume, Hair, Make-up, Props, Musicians, Stage Crew, Set Artists, Choreography, Promotions & Programs – each job is as important as the next.



*Chicago* will be the first musical the group has done that is still playing on the world theatre circuit. And there has been no holding back, for *Chicago* is all about the 'roaring 20's' – very splashy, lots of sparkle. The sets are colorful and the energy is high.

The love of theatre comes through as the members of the production team talk about what draws them in to volunteer the time and energy it takes to pull off a production this big. For Director Lyn Kaulback, the creative process is incredibly stimulating. "Taking 25 people who don't know each other, and seeing the actors come together and strive for a common goal, a common purpose, is so rewarding". For many, it's the biggest production they have done – all speak of creative and personal challenges, satisfaction, building friendships, the love of theatre. Martin Ralph laughs, "you have to be a little bit crazy to do this!"

Although Producer Alan Chell claims to have "no artistic talent at all", his organizational and financial talents enable the more creative people to fully pursue their artistic expression without having to worry about logistics and coordination. "For a production like this, there are so many areas both on and off stage that come together – to see the finished product is an incredibly rewarding experience."

Musical Director Bob Rogers is a keen musician himself and would rather play in a production than direct, but he emphasizes how challenging the musical score for *Chicago* is for the musicians. "We have a core group of 13 musicians, many who play multiple instruments. The score is really, really difficult because it was written for voice and is in a key that is very challenging to play. Without the musicians we have, it couldn't be done." Sound engineer Grant Leiterman loves working with friends, networking, and the satisfaction of seeing the creativity, and the talent. "The payback is so big", he says.

Suddenly, Martin Ralph takes a call on his cell phone. He puts down his phone with a big smile on his face. Another member of the crew has asked if he's had time to eat before rehearsal (no). Dinner is on its way. "That's what it's all about!" he says. Through the intensity and the stress, everyone takes care of each other.

The discussion turns to the difference between professional and amateur theatre. In a community production like this one, the work, the sweat, comes from the *heart* rather than a paycheck. For Technical Director Brad Binnington one word sums it all up, "the word *amateur* comes from the French word for *love*."

When asked if anything else is needed from the community, there was only one answer "BUY TICKETS!" The *Chicago* production runs 4 shows, Wednesday to Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> and is not to be missed. Tickets are on sale at the Community Centre.

Submitted by Jill Zacharias, Photo courtesy of Cathy Burke, CFDC Volunteer Committee members