

## **A-SPIRE PLAYERS**

### **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION BOOKLET**

Welcome to A-Spire Players, Interlake Manitoba's Community Theatre association!  
Enclosed is some basic information that you should be aware of as a member of our organization.

#### GENERAL

1. Amateur Status. Members may not receive remuneration for their performances. Payments or donations for where members perform shall be made to A-Spire Players.
2. We're not just theatre arts but all performing arts. As much as we're known for our Summer Theatre program and putting on theatrical performances, in past we've hosted and our members have done poetry readings, improvisation comedy, dance recitals and musical performances including Celtic, Country, Choral, Fiddling and Rock.

#### OUR UNUSUAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

3. In most amateur performing groups, it is common place to have an Artistic Director select and plan which plays, presentations and/or productions the entire group will present in a given year. The Artistic Director's selection becomes the production schedule for the entire group and all of the group's members work on each production together.
4. Unfortunately, at A-Spire Players', due to our small venue we've found that we can't support the large productions necessary to employ all of our willing members at the same time; so consequently, we've taken an alternate route. Instead of having one large, centralized production at a time, we've found that by having a number of smaller concurrent productions enables us to ensure the maximum number of our members can be involved at the same time. Any members may request to put together a production or show; it's the inner strength of our organization.
5. This method has other benefits; having a number of smaller productions also allows us to have a wide variety of productions all going on at the same time. This approach also opens up opportunities for our members that are just not available in a single, large centralized group. For example, we don't just have one director, we have multiple directors; and the same can be said for every other position.
6. As well as completing the business activities of the association, the Board of Directors reviews each member proposal and then coordinates the association's resources and between the groups. This includes everything from allocating budgets, assigning regular rehearsals times, arbitrating scheduling conflicts, coordinating multiple-group performances and taking care of common tasks of putting on performances like advertising, tickets, sales etc.

#### OUR HOME

7. We're one of only a handful of the performing arts groups in Manitoba to have year-round access to a theatre, with our own sound, lights, stage and storage.
8. With multiple productions going on at the same time, the theatre itself becomes a shared resource. While each group is putting on rehearsals and preparing for performances during any given week, other groups will be holding their rehearsals and preparing for their performances during the same time frame.

9. All of a group's props and equipment must be removed from the stage and the theatre left in good order at the conclusion of all rehearsals unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors. Each group must respect the other groups' stuff and right to share the building.
10. There is also a list of other tasks to do at the conclusion of every group's rehearsal posted at the "prompter's spot" in the hallway heading downstairs at the theatre.
11. In addition, A-Spire Players doesn't own the theatre. We are however, in a symbiotic rental agreement relationship with the Gimli Unitarian Church committee and have been for over 25 years. As the owner, the Church committee regularly rents the building out as a hall, to other groups and individuals; so through regular conversations and the calendar downstairs, the two groups carefully coordinate the usage of the building.
12. As part of our agreement with the Church committee, there are some standing rules that apply:
  - a. No open flame (candles, torches) in or on the church property;
  - b. No smoking in or on the church property;
  - c. No changes to the church or property are to take place without prior approval;
  - d. Some specific items like the electric piano are the property of the Church and are not be used without prior approval;
  - e. All presentations conducted in the theatre should not affront the character of the church as a religious institution; and
  - f. Communication with the Church committee is to be completed through approved channels only.

Note: The proper name for the building is actually the "Gimli Unitarian Church" and not the "A-Spire Theatre" as many people have come to believe.

## ACTIVITIES

13. Within A-Spire Players, we generally attempt to run a number of fixed types of activities during the year, including:
  - a. Programs – These groups tend to run throughout the year and are open to all members. The idea is to meet and participate on a regular basis, learn some new skills, practice some old skills and try out new things – In past, we've had both musical, Improvisational Comedy and Sketch Comedy programs;
  - b. A-Spire Follies – Each Winter, we hold our annual production called the "A-Spire Follies". The "Follies" are open to all members and member groups and is used to give everyone the opportunity to participate both behind and on-stage in a series of short segments dramas, comedies, musical solos and ensembles throughout the show, similar to an old Vaudeville show. This is the perfect opportunity for newer member to make their stage debut;
  - c. Short Productions – After the "Follies", a number of short plays or productions of approximately 45 minutes in duration are prepared in order to supplement our summer program. We feel that this is a natural progression for most members from the short segment material in the "Follies";

- d. Full-Length Productions – Historically starting in the Fall, experienced members have the opportunity to participate in full-length productions, normally 90-120 minutes in duration, also in preparation for the Summer program;
- e. Training Programs – In order to support and prepare individuals for specific roles in productions, A-Spire Players has a number of training programs including Basic Acting, Sound & Lights, Stage Managing and Directing. These programs are run either on a limited-number- or individual-basis as the need demands; and
- f. Our Summer Theatre Program – Although the culmination for many of our activities, during the summer, we look to our members to provide technical support for visiting groups and assisting with Facilities Management (repairs, cleaning), Volunteer Coordination (phoning, event planning) and Front of House (including ticket purchases, reservations, advertising and ticket sales)

14. Participation. Keep in mind that for everyone that performs on a stage there's an equal number of people who work behind the stage to make it happen. It is A-Spire Players policy that all active members, are expected to volunteer annually as either: production crew for another in-house production; technical support for visiting groups; or assisting with support activities including Facilities Management (repairs, cleaning), Volunteer Coordination (phoning, event planning) or Front of House (including ticket purchases, reservations, advertising and ticket sales).

15. Harassment. The theatre is a place of creative expression and every member of our organization has the right to enter a safe, bully-free space when they enter our theatre. Members shall not engage in or facilitate any discriminatory or harassing behaviour directed toward other members or any others in the context of activities of the organization.

16. There is no guarantee that you will be selected for a specific part or role of your choosing with a production or that there will be a production available that fits your schedule. To get involved: join a running program; find out who looking for people for a production either on or off-stage; and volunteer to help out with whatever is going on!

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES

17. Our current annual membership fees are \$15 for adults and \$3 for youth, however it is subject to review each September at the Annual General Meeting and may increase at that time.

18. Membership fees may be paid at any time of the year but our official membership year is September 1 to August 31 with annual memberships expiring as of August 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

19. Memberships may be paid up to 60 days in advance of the year, so if you pay your membership fee in July or August, your membership will still be good for over a year until the following August 31<sup>st</sup>.

20. If you're not a current member with A-Spire Players, for rehearsals only, you have up to one month as a trial period before you must pay for your membership.

21. Membership fees must be paid in full prior to:

- a. participating in any presentations, performances, training courses, or seminars;
- b. receiving any financial benefits associated with membership;
- c. voting at the Annual General Meeting or any Special General Meeting; and
- d. continuing rehearsals beyond a one month trial period.

22. You can pay your membership fee through the following methods:
- a. At an Annual or Special General Meeting; or
  - b. By going to any branch of the Noventis Credit Union and having the fee deposited directly to the “A-Spire Players” account. (Make sure they get your name for the deposit)

#### MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

23. Public Information. For general information, including contact information, A-Spire Players maintains:
- a. A website at [www.aspireplayers.ca](http://www.aspireplayers.ca); and
  - b. A Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/A-Spire-Players>
24. Internal Communications. The standard for communicating information within A-Spire Players is by e-mail and by telephone. Please ensure that we have your current email address and telephone number(s) by emailing [info@aspireplayers.ca](mailto:info@aspireplayers.ca), updating your information on the website registration or messaging via the Facebook page.
25. General Meetings. As a member, you are specifically invited to attend the Annual General Meeting in September and any Special General Meetings that may be called. Notices for these meetings will be posted on the website and distributed by email.
26. Board of Director Meetings. Records of Decisions from board meeting will be emailed out to all members shortly after each meeting; it’s how we keep our members aware of what’s going on. Any member may attend the meetings of the Board of Directors by contacting any board member to confirm the date, time and location of the next meeting.
27. Attendance by the Public. Members of the public may attend the Annual General Meeting but Special General Meetings are closed to members only. Members of the public may also attend meetings of Board of Directors by making prior arrangements with the Chairperson.

#### GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

28. As a member you will be held to the material contained in the following documents and should read and become familiar with them, including our:
- a. Constitution;
  - b. Standing Policies (approved by the Board of Directors and/or the membership); and
  - c. Interim Policies (those with Board approval but requiring membership approval).
29. As an example, our Standing Policies include items such as our organization’s expectations, protocols and supporting references on Participation, Harassment, Productions By Members, Productions By Visiting Groups, Youth Participation, Finances, Ticket Sales; and External Contacts.
30. As these documents and their supporting references are subject to change, the most current editions are available on the A-Spire Players website by clicking on the two faces of the Muses in the top right corner of the website at <http://aspireplayers/admin.html>

#### QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

31. If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this booklet or in the governing documents, please contact any member of the Board of Directors; call us at (204)642-8079; email us at [info@aspireplayers.ca](mailto:info@aspireplayers.ca) or message us via our Facebook page at “A-Spire Players”.