

Arts & Life.



Joanne McDonald/ This Week
“News of the World” by David Fanstone, was one of seven plays staged for the Rotary Club of Lincoln’s Lamplighter Tour. From left : Andrew Fecik, Jens Hansen, Katherine Cooke, Jeanette Heil and Jeremy Bryson.

Lamplighter Tour spins magic at Vineland Station

BY JOANNE McDONALD THIS WEEK

LINCOLN— The creative energy of the Rotary Club of Lincoln's third annual Lamplighter Tour roused and stirred the spirit of 1939 as talented actors transported audiences to local life during one of its most vibrant eras.

From the rustic stone bridge built in 1907 to the original administrative building, the Horticultural Experimental Station at Vineland set the century-old scene for playwrights to spin out their storytelling magic during the tour's November 16-19th run. Seven engaging plays were highlights of this year's massive production and successful endeavour by Jennifer Southward, Producer; Bev Haskins, Artistic Director; and John Ripley, Assistant Artistic Director. Steering committee members also included Margaret Andrewes, Bob Bujas, Alice Klamer, Jennifer Turner and John van der Beek.

History came to life as the plays peeled back the decades for audiences to taste all the joys and sorrows of local life in Vineland Station.

Talented actors took the audience to 1939 for 'News of the World' by playwright David Fanstone. Set in the original administrative building of the Agricultural Experimental Station, it was June 7, 1939 as a unique on-air team from the Canadian Broadcasting Network parleyed "on-the-spot" coverage for their listening audience. It was a hot June day at the Vineland Agricultural Station as "Lunch Hour" by playwright John Ripley, invited the audience to

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join a group of workers and office employees in the old "boiler room" at the Agricultural Experimental Station, as they discussed news of the world.

In "A Conversation on the way to the Vineland Station," by playwright John van der Beek, four housewives and two precocious children shared differing opinions during a walk into the village for a day of shopping. Audience members hitched a shuttle bus ride for the walk through the rural landscape.

Playwright Katherine Albers' engaging "He said / She said," found the Culps entertaining the Wilsons from Cooksville during an evening of gender-driven differences of opinion about the news of the day, set in the "Toye House" built in 1914.

Playwrights Joe Fiocca with John van der Beek, in "The Sermon," brought rumours of war and reported atrocities attributed to Hitler right to the pulpit where Rev. Hall of Vineland United Church was preaching a sermon of love and forgiveness for the German people. His parishioners were not impressed. The play was staged at the "Hanna House" built in the 1930s for the minister of Vineland United Church on the recommendation of E.F. Palmer, the director of the Agricultural Station. On a historical note: Rev. Hall was real, the sermon was really delivered and the pastor was immediately dismissed.

Rev. Hall's infamous sermon was the subject of much discussion by local residents in "A Controversial Discussion" by playwright John van der Beek. Audience members joined the congregation returning from church via shuttle bus as they returned to the Agricultural Experimental Station.

In "A Kindly Gesture" by playwright Diana Bujas, audience members stopped at the rustic stone bridge built in 1907 to hear stories of people, many of them homeless after the depression, who found lodging and work with local residents and were treated as members of the family.

Lamplighter tour guides set the scene for each play and led their audiences to eavesdrop on the dramas unfolding at each of the proud historical sites. The Lamplighter Tour ended in Miss Nettie and Miss Nan's tearoom in the Moses F. Rittenhouse Hall at the research station for a taste of old-fashioned desserts straight from the recipe books of the 1930s, including Queen Elizabeth Cake, Lemon Bars, Peach Cuppa Cuppa Cuppa and Baby Brownies, made by more than 30 local volunteer bakers.

There in spirit, Lincoln's own philanthropic son, Moses F. Rittenhouse was born on a farm in Lincoln County, August 12, 1846. At 18 he moved to Chicago and made his fortune in the lumber industry. Through all of his success, Moses never forgot his roots in Lincoln and funded many projects that shaped the town, from libraries, to the experimental station on the shore of Lake Ontario. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Vineland experimental station.

The Lamplighter Tour, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Lincoln is committed to raising funds for cultural and community development in Lincoln.