



Windmill Theatre Players

The

WIZARD

of

OZ

The Wizard of Oz is presented through arrangement with Tams-Witmark Music Library Inc.

November 17 - 26, 2011

Highwood Memorial Centre, High River

Struggling to get the word out

Health: The King's Speech renews awareness of stuttering

By Stephen Smith

Staff Reporter

Getting on stage and performing in front of a live audience takes some courage. If you're someone who stutters it can be all the more daunting, but Okotoks resident Steve Wager has been doing it for three decades.

Wager, who is in his early 50s has spent much of his adult life as a member of the Windmill Theatre Players despite the fact he has also been stuttering since early childhood often struggling at the beginning of a word several times before being able to continue on.

A spotlight has been put on his particular speech disorder due to the success of the film "The King's Speech." The movie, nominated for 12 Academy Awards including best picture, features actor Colin Firth as King George VI who was afflicted with a stutter.

Wager has seen the film and admitted it opened some dialogue between he and another member of his family

"After my wife and I saw 'The King's Speech' we met up with our son and I just shared some of the difficulties I had when I was younger," he said.

Wager admitted during his teen years his speech impediment was so pronounced if he called a friend's house he would hang up if someone other than his pal picked up because he feared he wouldn't get one word out to someone he didn't know.

Lisa Rutter, an Okotoks-based speech language pathologist, explained stuttering is something that affects about one per cent of the population.

In Canada just fewer than 300,000 individuals are afflicted by the speech

disorder. That rate is generally higher in pre-school children, ranging in the Foothills from one to five per cent, with many of those children outgrowing their stammer as they grow up.

Rutter, who sees speech clients both through her Now We're Talking private practice as well as her work with Alberta Health Services, said much about stuttering still remains a mystery.

"We really don't know the root cause of stuttering yet," she explained. "There is research being done into genetic links. Stuttering often runs in families so that seems influenced by genetics. We do know that stuttering is not caused by mental or psychological impairments.

"It results from a breakdown in the speech system. As we're talking, messages are sent from the brain down to the speech muscles and back up again. With stuttering something is occasionally breaking down along that pathway."

One thing that has helped Wager work his way through his speech disorder has been the support and acceptance of the people around him.

"My family has never teased me, my friends never did when I was going to school and nobody does it now," he said.

Wager, who is also the rugby coach at Foothills Composite High School, said he has always had the respect of his players.

"I can't remember a kid that I have coached, a boy or a girl who has said something about my stuttering," Wager explained.

Speech therapy, especially in children, can help lessen the frequency of stuttering.

Wager vaguely remembers having some when he was seven or eight years



STEPHEN SMITH/OWW

Okotoks resident Steve Wager has stuttered since early childhood. It hasn't kept him from being a rugby coach or stage actor. The acclaimed film "The King's Speech" is raising awareness of the rare speech disorder.

old but doesn't feel it helped him much.

Over time he's found his own ways of dealing with his stutter.

"A person does learn a few tricks," Wager said. "I haven't done the things you see in 'The King's Speech' like swear or put marbles in my mouth. But I find if I can't get a word out I immediately look for another word that's going to be easier for me to say.

"Now I'm never worried about standing up in front

of people. I'll do speeches at work I'll go on stage with the Windmill Theatre Players."

Performing in plays has long been a confidence builder for Wager. Ironically, it's pretty much a stammer free zone for him. In 30 years he can only recall stuttering one time during a performance.

It is evident Wager is ready to give "The King's Speech" himself.



Windmill Theatre Players present

**Cookies and Plays
and Songs and**

An evening of One Act Plays,
songs, and delicious and
delectable cookies!

Saturday, March 24, 2012

High River Centennial Library



Windmill Theatre Players

and



host the


**2012 Foothills Region
One Act Play Festival**



Highwood Memorial Centre
High River, Alberta
March 29, 30, & 31

Session 1: Thursday, March 29	8:00pm
Session 2: Friday, March 30	7:00pm
Session 3: Saturday, March 31	1:00pm
Session 4: Saturday, March 31	7:30pm


****SOME OF THE PLAYS ARE FOR A MATURE AUDIENCE****




Windmill Theatre Players
presents
Cookies, Plays and Song
High River Centennial Library
Saturday, March 24th, 2012
7:30 p.m (doors open at 7:00)
\$5 tickets available at the door

2 plays performed by the
Medicine Tree Manor Players
Musical numbers by The Holy Os
Windmill Theatre Players production of
The Private Property of Roscoe Pointer
For more information
call (403)258-0877
www.windmilltheatreplayers.com

H.R. TIMES MARCH 20, 2012



2012 Foothills Region ONE ACT FESTIVAL
HIGH RIVER 

THURSDAY, MARCH 29 - (8:00PM CURTAIN)
*Sanctuary Dewdney Players Okotoks
The Private Property of Roscoe Pointer Windmill Theatre High River


FRIDAY, MARCH 30 - (7:00PM CURTAIN)
Glegy for a Lady Pine Tree Players Canmore
*I've Hit an Iceberg Dewdney Players Okotoks
Nineteen Nose Creek Players Airdrie

SATURDAY, MARCH 31
- **Afternoon Session** (1:00PM CURTAIN)
Trouble's Just a Bubble Pine Tree Players Canmore
*1-900-Desperate Strathmore Theatre Strathmore
The Last Waltz Nose Creek Players Airdrie
Guerrilla Gorilla Strathmore Theatre Strathmore

- **Evening Session** (7:00 PM CURTAIN)
When Shakespeare's Ladies Meet Pine Tree Players Canmore
*The Wooden Pear Dewdney Players Okotoks
Babel's in Arms Pine Tree Players Okotoks
Medea Strathmore Theatre Strathmore

Admission: \$10.00 per session or \$30.00 for a Festival Pass
All sessions are at the Highwood Memorial Centre, 128 5 Ave SW, High River
Contact Celia at 403-652-7913 for more information

* Plays marked with this symbol, contain language and/or subject matter that may be offensive to some.



H.R. TIMES MARCH 27, 2012



Alberta Drama Festival Association
Foothills Region
ONE ACT PLAY FESTIVAL
Hosted by
Windmill Theatre Players
March 29 - 31
Highwood Memorial Centre,
128 5 Ave SW, High River

Participants from High River, Airdrie, Canmore,
Okotoks and Strathmore.

Performances: Thursday, March 29 - 8:00 pm
Friday, March 30 - 7:00 pm
Saturday, March 31 - 1:00 pm
- 7:00 pm

Admission Prices: **\$10.00** per session or
\$30.00 for a Festival pass.

For more information contact Celia at 403-652-7913.

H.R. TIMES MARCH 16, 2012



Windmill Theatre Players
www.windmilltheatreplayers.com

SUGAR
Based on the film
"Some Like it Hot"

Dinner Theatre
April 20, 21 & 26, 2012
Adults: \$45
Children 12 and under: \$35
Dinner served from 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Curtain 7:30pm

SUGAR is presented through arrangement
with Tams-Witmark Music Library Inc.
Directed by **Cliff Cameron & Joann Newton**
Musical direction by **Laura Ferguson-Frick**

Regular Theatre
Sunday Matinee:
April 22, 2012
All tickets: \$15.00
Doors open at 1:30pm, Curtain 2:00pm
Evening Performance:
April 27 & 28, 2012
Adults \$20, Students & Seniors \$15
Doors open at 7:00pm, Curtain 7:30pm

All performances at the
Highwood Memorial Centre, High River

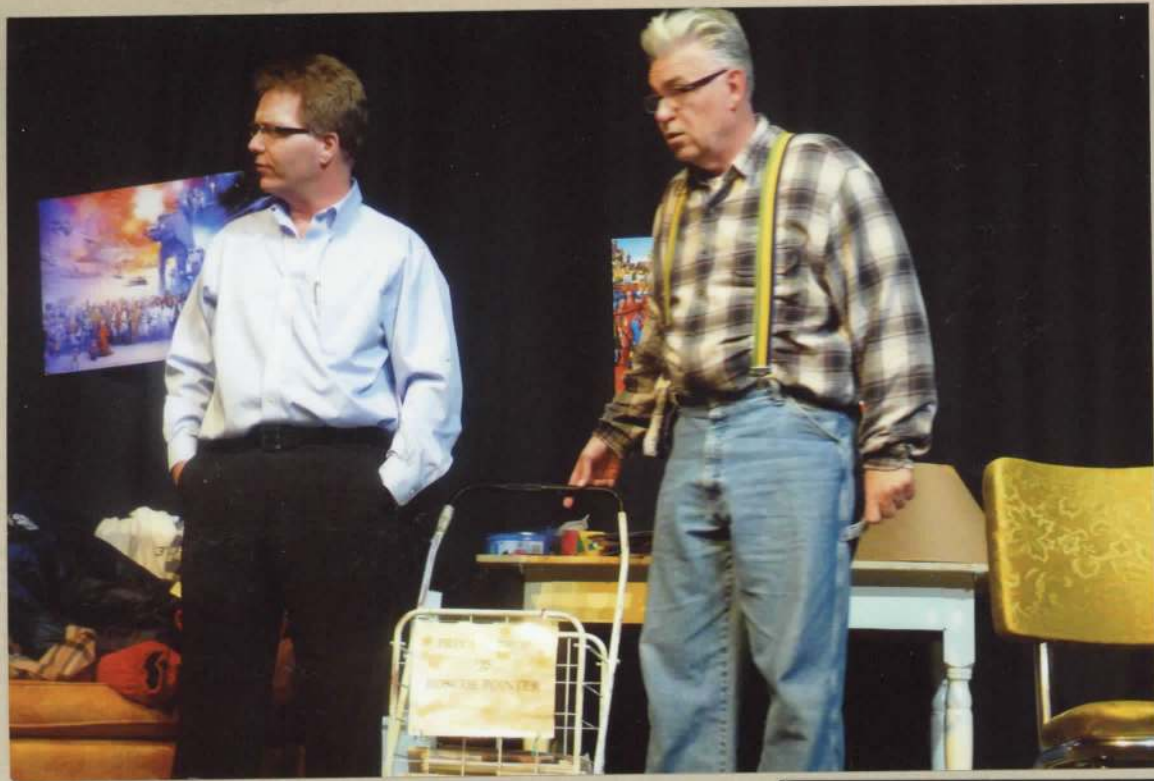


To Purchase Tickets
Contact: **Celia**
Tel: 403-652-7913
Email: wtp@shaw.ca



*The Private Prop.
of Roscoe Pointer*







Windmill Theatre Players present

Cookies, Plays, and Song

High River Centennial Library

Saturday, March 24th, 2012

7:30 p.m (doors open at 7:00)

\$5 tickets available at the door



For more information call (403) 258-0877

www.windmilltheatreplayers.com