



Photo: Upper Canada Playhouse

What do knickers and kick-starting a small town's economy have in common? You'd be surprised. Audiences will soon find out when they experience The Playhouse's second comedy of the summer season. Knickers, playing July 5-30, is one of the most infectious comedies to hit the Canadian theatre scene. It's written by Sarah Quick, who also happens to run a summer theatre much like The Playhouse in Bobcagen, a small Ontario village much like Morrisburg.

The play deals with the challenges that all rural areas face finding ways to boost their local businesses and economy, saving and creating local jobs, attracting a tourist trade and improving the quality of life of their residents. It also highlights the politics and sense of humour that make small town life so colourful. The play is set in the fictional Northern Ontario town of Elliston Falls where the population is dealing with the closing of their paper mill which has been their main source of employment for generations. The economy and the mood of the town has taken a hit and desperation has set in.

We visit a local community hall where three local ladies, Barb, Terri and Mary, hold their weekly Weight Watchers meeting to weigh in on how they and their families are dealing with the stress of losing the town's chief employer. When Amanda, a tourism officer the town brings in to get the economy rolling again, meets up with the ladies, they hatch a scheme to start a custom underwear business to create jobs and also to erect a gigantic pair of knickers on the grounds of the old mill to attract tourists. The business and the comedy take off and the audience is treated to a hilarious, touching and timely story about coping with tough times, entrepreneurial spirit and fighting for your community.

'The show has had great success wherever it's played, especially in small towns where people can relate to the challenges the ladies face', remarks Artistic Director Donnie Bowes who directs the show. 'People will relate to this show and know folks like the ones portrayed in it. I sure can.' The audience will also be introduced to many other characters, all played by the four ladies themselves, and who paint a vivid cross-section of small town life. Bowes has put together a talented cast of actors for the show including area favourite Brenda Quesnel as Terri who starred in several Playhouse hits including *The Amourous Ambassador*, *The Sensuous Senator*, *Whose Wives Are They Anyway* and the cantankerous maid in last season's *Boeing, Boeing*.

She's joined by Stephanie Folkins as Mary, who was also seen last season in *Boeing, Boeing* as the hilarious German stewardess. Alanis Peart, from The Playhouse's *There's a Burglar in My Bed*, is Amanda and Playhouse new-comer and veteran actress Heather Dick plays Barb. *Knickers* is an entertaining, uplifting and authentic story about everyday life and opens a window to a world where good friends, a good story and a good laugh always win the day.



*Knickers!* plays July 5-30. It's followed by *Plaza Suite* August 2-26 & *The Great Kooshog Lake Hollis McCauley Fishing Derby* September 6-30. Shows Tue/Wed/Thu/Sat/Sun at 2PM; Thu/Fri/Sat at 8PM