

MAR 14 1984

Letters to the Editor

Stage North worth saving

Editor,
Alaska Highway News

The directors and members of Stage North are extremely distressed at hearing that the Performing Arts Department of Northern Lights College is being cancelled. After all, Stage North was born out of the Performing Arts Department and has given infinite enjoyment to the community in the way of alternate entertainment. If it were not for the inception of the department by the college such quality entertainment may never have been established in this area.

The Performing Arts

Department has allowed people of all interests to gain experience in theatre from a professional artistic director and turn

“something to do” into University transfer knowledge. There is no other college course which comes into direct contact with some 2,500 members of the community. How many activities are there in which three generations of a family, the mentally and physically handicapped, and members from every economic and social group can participate with equal opportunity, enjoyment and personal

reward?

Would it not be tragic to hear in years to come that “ once there was a damn fine drama department in Fort St.

John I wonder what happened to it?
..”

Norm Bryson
President,
Stage North

Stage North in danger?

DUP
FEB 29, 1984

By Nigel E Hannaford

On Monday, Alderman Temple urged the citizenry of Fort St John to press the board of Northern Lights College to continue the Performing Arts program, without which, he said, such productions as *Fiddler on the Roof* or *The Wizard of Oz* would not be possible.

These productions were actually done by Stage North, an organization with no institutional ties to the college, but there is no denying the very heavy involvement of the college's Fred Galloway. His expertise and energy were the catalyst for getting all that local talent together into what were frankly first rate shows.

Now, it looks like we're going to lose Fred Galloway. Last Friday the college board voted to terminate Performing Arts, effective April 30. They didn't have much choice. The government isn't going to fund it any more.

The formula used for funding of community college courses is sufficiently complex to keep astute accountants from their coffee breaks, but when all is said and done, the provincial government is prepared to allocate about \$30,000 less than the \$45,000 the college needs to keep Performing Arts alive.

That is the situation.

It wouldn't be hard to argue that what Stage North does has been a great morale builder in a depressed community. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education would tell you that they are in the business of providing education, not entertainment.

All the same, I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that it's a real injustice when the only theatre professional north of Prince George (if indeed there are any there) gets chopped after organizing such successful community productions. If you live in the south, there's no problem. Whatever you want is available, somewhere.

In the north, we don't have that much access to 'culture'. What little we have, we value highly.

If you are inclined to take any action on this matter, the places to write are a) Jack Heinrich, Minister of Education, whose officials are responsible for this situation and b) Tony Brummet, who I have no doubt, will be as sorry to learn of this as we are. What we need, in effect, is an outright grant to make up the difference. It's no good asking them to bend the rules, but surely there's some way to get \$30,000 together to keep this kind of expertise available in northern BC?



Rehearsals are going well for Stagenorth's new production 'Fiddler on the Roof'. Here, the cast rip into a number called 'Tradition', where Teveye (played by Jack Temple, in the cap) extols the

virtues of a life lived by solid and inchanging customs. The show opens January 27 at Northern Lights College.