

A simple story of a simpler time

BY GREG FRY

THE women made break fast and the boys played baseball. The milkman delivered milk and the Professor discussed demographics. Fairly routine material that was portrayed extremely well in Neptune Theatre's production of the popular classic *Our Town*, playing until March 10 at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium.

Placed in front of a warm bluish backdrop, the characters of *Our Town* magically celebrate the small events in their daily lives as they follow their routines in the fictional town of Grover's Corners. Over a twelve-year period, we witness the characters experience life and fill the roles of common people.

The Stage Manager, played well by Robert Seale, guides the audience through three acts consisting of daily life, love and marriage, and death and immortality. He also introduces Emily and George, a young couple who experience rural life at its prime, enduring the hardships and welcoming their future. Waneta Storms plays a strong Emily while

Chuck Campbell compliments her with his portrayal of the fragile, introverted George.

The supporting cast of *Our Town* creates a believable community. In particular, Walter Borden's Professor Willard was delightful, his animated gestures smoothly highlighting his monologue.

The set is simple. Consisting of mainly two tables, two stepladders, and a few chairs, it proved to be effective in creating the illusion of busy kitchens, relaxed bedrooms, rural churches, and brilliant soda shops. Imagination is a necessity when viewing *Our Town*. However, the cast's actions assist in creating the setting and the mood. For example, when Mrs. Webb is in the kitchen kneading the bread, it, though not physically present, is nonetheless intuitively seen. The only problem is in the sound effects which do not measure up to the quality of the rest of the play. Nevertheless, they provided a subtle humour throughout the production.

Director Linda Moore proves that a tight cast and a minimal stage set can be very entertain-



Robert Seale as the Stage Manager and Walter Borden as the animated Professor Willard in Neptune's OUR TOWN

ing. Her vision of *Our Town* was remarkable; even though she is using a Pulitzer Prize-winning script, she emphasizes the strength of the characters and moves through the material at an incredible pace.

Neptune's rendition of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* stresses the trivial events in our daily lives — the audience can relate to the theme of the play. The

script, written in 1938, proved to be very refreshing, although it must be accepted that such a character-driven script would not be written today. *Our Town* proves that watching solid characters progress through a simple plot can be very entertaining.

Tickets for Our Town are only available through the Neptune Theatre box office and can be reserved by calling 429-7070.

Flashlights under the duvet

BY MARK FARRANT

THE First Time: True Stories Vol I & II, are clever collections of anecdotes from Canadian authors, describing (in detail, in some cases) their first sexual encounters.

Each story is a well written journey into the author's past, recalling the good and "not so" good memories of their first encounter with the same/opposite sex. I suspect that many of these stories may have been altered to create a more "controversial" tone, but the belief that all these stories are true makes them all the more intriguing.

These stories are absolutely hilarious and I found myself glued to the pages in absolute delight. Each writer would recall "memories of love" (and embarrassment) from the back seat of daddy's car, or from a cubicle at McDonald's — romantic stuff, eh. Each story is well written and is more or less devoid of the "Penthouse Letters" format one might expect from a subject of this nature. Even with all the sleaziness aside, I was as excited as ever to move through the text. I took on a sort of "flashlight under the duvet" mentality like the one I had in high school. You know you're reading something good when you're totally afraid of someone discovering exactly what you're reading: the explanation is often worse than the actual discovery.

These books are small in for-

THE FIRST TIME

TRUE STORIES VOLUME 1



EDITED BY CHARLES MONTPETIT

Slide through tales of lost virginity and of the first penile encounter: "It looked like a deflated pink balloon, something about as menacing as a stick of bubble gum."

mat (they will easily slip into the inside of a jacket or knapsack, if you are paranoid of discovery) and each story is only about twenty pages in length at the most. I was quite proud to sit in the Grad house with a big 'ole coffee and some smokes and read away.

"Hey Mark! Whatta ya reading?"

"Oh, it's this book about sex and losing your virginity. Cool, eh?"

There is a lot of nostalgia connected with each of these short stories, both from the author's perspective and from memories recalled by the reader. You may find yourself relating to the anecdotes, laughing with some personal connection (and perhaps the shame of it all), or just being amused by the content. The list of contributing authors includes Budge Wilson, Martyn Goodfrey, W.P. Kinsella, Julie Lawson, and Mary Blaksee.

So, why not curl up with your partner (or yourself) and slide through tales of lost virginity and of the first penile encounter: "It looked like a deflated pink balloon, something about as menacing as a stick of bubble gum."

The First Time: True Stories, Volume I & II are inexpensive and a really enjoyable read. And hey, they would probably make a great gift for those of you who are still searching for that "unique" way of expressing your love in the post-Valentine's Day months ahead.

the box

■ The eyelevelgallery, a local artist-run centre, is looking for submissions of ideas for **internet art**. The selected piece will be presented in *eva*, an internet journal of electronic visual arts, and there will be a small artist fee for it. The piece can be realised on the gallery's computer if necessary. Interested parties should include a written description of the intended piece in their proposal. Send to eyelevelgallery, 1672 Barrington Street, Halifax, B3J 2A2. Or, you can fax 425-6412 (also a phone number) or email ak593@ccn.cs.dal.ca to enter your proposal for consideration. The deadline for submissions is March 16.

■ Part Two of the *Masters of Modern Sculpture* film series will be screened this Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. **Beyond Cubism** captures innovators "moving beyond the innovations of cubism into Dada and minimalism" and features the work of Duchamp, Man Ray, Miro, and Giacometti. Admission is free but donations are accepted.

■ Artist Wilma Needham is showing at the **eyelevel-gallery** this month with an exhibition entitled *Balance*. Taking inspiration from the greenhouse her father toiled in, Needham created the work to help her deal with the anger and fear caused she felt as Alzheimer's disease claimed her father. She writes: "I was frustrated by my own helplessness. *Balance* grew out of my need to describe, act on, and in some way understand the tension I experienced." The exhibition runs until March 23 at the Gallery, 3rd floor, 1672 Barrington Street. The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 12-5 p.m.

■ An exhibition of contemporary ceramic works from the Atlantic region, guest curated by **Arthur Handy**, will open tonight at the Dalhousie Art Gallery at 8 p.m. *Clay: Medium-Based Practices* will include works by Joan Bruneau, Neil Forrest, Ghita Levin, Ray Mackie, Joan McNeil, Walter Ostrom, Peter Powning, Craig Schneider, Tom Smith, Kathi Thompson, and Marie Ullmer. Sculptor and teacher Handy will give a talk this evening dealing with his selection methods and curatorial thesis. Tomorrow at 8 p.m., Joan McNeil, one of the artists whose works are featured, will discuss her work in an illustrated talk.

■ There are some great films showing at **Wormwoods** over the next week for one or two time engagements. *Bladerunner* (the original voiceover version) plays Saturday night at 11 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. while *Mother, Jugs and Speed* (starring Bill Cosby, Harvey Keitel and Racquel Welch?) and *My Left Foot* fill the same slots the next week. Special March break screenings running at 2 p.m. Monday through Friday are, in respective order: *The Princess Bride*, *Babe* (Oscar nominee for best picture), *Babe*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Secret Garden*.