

Grapevine - November 29, 2001
Denman Conservancy Association Update

submitted by Des Kennedy

In the long-gone days of 1979 this community produced the first "Scrooge: A Denman Island Christmas Comedy." Scripted by Des Kennedy, the play took place on the small stage located at the far end of the community hall. The production, which raised funds to renovate the Anglican Church, featured thespian stalwarts such as Gordon Wright, Diane Rains and Marcus Isbister as bewildered shepherds, three generations of Kellys, and Hamish Tait, Glen Snook and Dr. George Stafford-Meyer as three dim-witted Wise Men.

Ten years later Des updated the script and a new, expanded production was mounted as the first-ever event on the new stage in the renovated community hall and raised money to help complete the renovation job. And another first: it was the first-ever public appearance of the fabulous Carmen Mirandas who went on to blaze a glittering trail of glory across the social and political landscape of the island.

>The 1989 version featured a stellar cast of 49 performers, including an Oscar-worthy turn by Norm Kelly in the role of old Ebenezer Scrooge; Theresa Comeau as the alluring Belle; a reprise of their Wise Men roles by Hamish Tait and Glen Snook; a best-supporting-actor nomination for Stirling Fraser playing Richard Nixon playing little Tiny Tim; smouldering performances by John Kirk and Michael Lindsay as dysfunctional fire fighters; an all-too-familiar scene with Mike Comeau cracking corny jokes across the counter; a sacrilegious stint by Louise Fraser and David Graham as the expectant Mary and Joe searching for suitable accommodation; Jude Kirk as the Ghost of Christmas Present proclaiming her signature line: "Touch my Tutu!" And much, much more.

>The 1989 version was captured on video by Eddie Johnston wielding the island's first known video camera. Now, twelve years later, Denman Conservancy invites you to a feature screening of this local Christmas classic. The 75-minute video will be shown on the big screen at the Senior's hall on Saturday, December 8th at 8 pm. Come early if you want to stock up on popcorn. Admission is \$5 with proceeds being split between Conservancy's Chickadee Lake campaign and the Community Hall's grand piano fund.

Please note that the show would not be of interest to children and we're unable to provide childcare. Bringing a cushion to soften your seat is a good idea. Also, be aware that this is an archival tape, shot on a hand-held camera in a darkened hall - it's a long way from technicolour panavision with Dolby surround sound. But it's pure Denman Island, laced with topical references of the day, and a "must see" for those who were here at the time, as well as for more recent arrivals with a healthy curiosity about how things were.

