

The Independent FEATURE



Rob Kemp is one of many Barrhaven students who have been nominated for Cappies Awards this year. Kemp's make-up skills are as good as his acting skills. Above, Kemp is shown posing as Ebenezer Scrooge with his former Nepean Eagles teammate, Jose Soares Da Silva, who portrayed Bob Cratchit. He is also shown as a Nepean Eagles football player, and, right, he is made up as a monster for Halloween at the Watson's Mill Haunt in Manotick.

The many faces of St. Mother Teresa's Rob Kemp

BY BARRHAVEN
INDEPENDENT STAFF

St. Mother Teresa High School student Rob Kemp said it was a perfect situation for him.

In fact, it was so perfect that it made one of the most difficult decisions of his high school life a no-brainer.

For the past two years, Kemp had wrestled with the decision of playing high school football or being involved with the school's Cappies play. Because both activities took up time after school in the fall, it had to be one or the other.

At the end of the school year last June, Kemp was approached by St. Mother Teresa teacher Lindsay Laviolette, who asked him if he would be interested in playing the lead role of Ebenezer Scrooge in the school's production of A Christmas Carol.

"There could not have

been better news than that," said Kemp. "That is like my dream role. I was thrilled. I got the script and studied my lines and the character throughout the summer."

Kemp had wrestled with the decision of drama vs. football the previous year. Kemp grew up playing for the Nepean Redskins and Nepean Eagles youth football teams. In his last season of minor football, he was selected to play in the National Capital Amateur Football Association Pee Wee All-Star Game as an offensive lineman.

He got involved in the school's CAPPIES production of Peter Pan while he was in tenth grade. He was also able to play for the school's junior football team, as they played a spring schedule. There were no conflicts.

But in eleventh grade, Kemp had a decision to make. Would he be an of-



"The real" Rob Kemp celebrates his 18th birthday last month.

fensive guard for the Titans football team, or would he be Monsignor O'Hara, the most significant make role in the school's Cappies musical, Sister Act. Kemp

chose to be a part of the school play.

"It was a tough decision to make, and I wish I would have been able to do both," he said. "I love

football, and a lot of my friends are friends that I made playing football. But this was something I wanted to do, too."

Kemp was able to find a compromise and stay involved in football, as he became the offensive line coach with the Nepean Tyke Eagles, with players ranging in age from 8-10. Because the team practiced from 7-9 p.m., the schedule did not conflict with the play.

"Coaching was great," he said. "It kept me in football and I really liked working with the kids."

While Kemp did well and enjoyed his role as Monsignor O'Hara, he was even more passionate about overseeing the make-up for the play. Kemp's obsession with Halloween and gore led him to develop an interest in theatrical make-up.

"Halloween is like my Super Bowl," said Kemp, adding that he spends

months preparing his gruesome Halloween costumes with the intent in scaring the wits out of every trick or treater in Chapman Mills. Kemp has volunteered as a make-up artist and monster at the Halloween Haunt at Watson's Mill in Manotick for the past couple of years.

It was his expertise in make-up that made his portrayal of Scrooge that much better. Not only did he receive a Cappies nomination as best lead actor, but he also earned a nomination with the make-up team that he led.

"It's exciting to be nominated in both categories," he said. "We had a great make-up team, and the play really allowed us to showcase what we could do."

Kemp's make-up skills allowed him to transform from a 17-year-old student into a believable crotchety old man.

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He worked on Scrooge's mannerisms throughout last summer as he studied the character. His grandfather, David Chescoe, grew up in London and helped him with the accent. Kemp said it was "part Grandad and part Winston Churchill."

Kemp was so convincing as a crotchety old Scrooge that many audience members and even Cappies critics thought that the role was being played by a teacher and not by a 17-year-old student.

"As an actor, that was like the best compliment you can have," he said. "You want to be believable in your role."

Kemp's make up to be Scrooge was his complex as the character. It involved a prosthetic application, which he created himself, and a lot of make-up.

"I made a mold of my

face layered on latex and produced a prosthetic," he explained. "Then I applied it to my face with copious amounts of make-up." The finishing touch was an elongated prosthetic nose, and a liquid spray product

to whiten his hair.

Kemp will "Scrooge up" one more time, as the cast of the play will perform a scene at the Cappies. He is looking forward to the Cappies gala this weekend, as it will close the book

on his high school theatre career. He will be going to Carleton to study biochemistry in the fall, but hopes to keep his foot in the door as an actor and a make-up artist. Lavolette, who directed the play, has

already talked to Ottawa Little Theatre about him. He has also expressed interest in Sock 'n' Buskin Theatre Company, which is run by students at Carleton University.

"I really enjoyed the ex-

perience of being part of the school productions," he said. "As much as I am looking forward to going to university, this is one of the things about high school I am going to miss the most."

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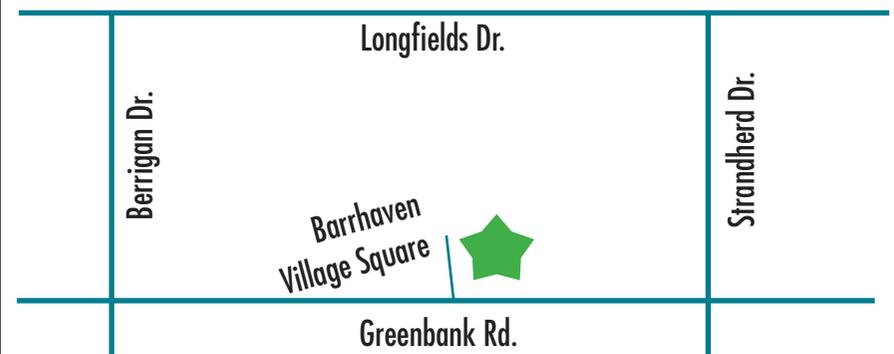


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