



AACT Turns 25 - You're Invited to the Party!

It's Birthday Party time and you're invited to the celebration!

The American Association of Community Theatre was incorporated 25 years ago on January 22, 1986. In June AACT will celebrate this notable milestone during the national AACTFest11 in Rochester, NY. The rest of the details are still in the planning stages, but one thing is certain: there will be cake!

Twenty-five years is a long time, but the foundation of AACT goes back more than 25 years before AACT was formed. The National Association of Community Theatre (NACT) put down the roots in the 1950s. In 1958 the American Community Theatre Association (ACTA) was founded and later became a division of the American Theatre Association (ATA).

Does Your Theatre have a Birthday?

AACT wants to help your theatre celebrate when you reach a milestone birthday. AACT will produce a frameable, congratulatory (and complimentary) certificate especially for your theatre, complete with founding date and years of service.

When your theatre plans an anniversary celebration, let AACT know. A certificate from your national organization will add a special touch to your festivities and your theatre wall.

To order a theatre anniversary certificate, contact the AACT office with the theatre's founding year and the date you want to present the certificate. Please allow two to three weeks for receipt of the certificate.

In 1985 the nation's community theatre leaders grappled with a crumbling ATA and how to continue to serve community theatre. In early 1986 ACTA disassociated with ATA and incorporated as the American Association of Community Theatre. AACT, founded by ten past presidents of ACTA, adopted all past officers, award recipients, festival activities, and other aspects of ACTA and

NACT as part of its history. Within a year of its founding AACT had 380 members, a mailing list, newsletter, membership directory, and more, thanks to President Bea Miller and dedicated board members and past presidents all over the country. Also adopted was the national biennial festival program known today as AACTFest.

Read more about AACT history at www.aact.org/aact/history.html. ♦



Join the party! Attend AACTFest11

for birthday cake and celebration of AACT and American community theatre. Go to aactfest11.org for details. Register at www.aact2.org/event/aactfest11registration.

See page 12 for details on AACTFest11 workshops.

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Rod McCullough
AACT President
2009-2011

Just for the magic.

About twenty-five years ago, a major oil company produced a full-page ad, explaining why the corporation gave to the performing arts. They listed all the reasons we're familiar with, and we use. To add to the quality of life in their communities. To be sure their employees, and their employees' children, have access to all the positive aspects of the arts. To make it easier to recruit employees to their communities. To add to the economy of their communities.

At the end, though, they said the most compelling reason was...Just for the magic.

Lately, our community theatres have been buffeted. Economic downturns affected ticket sales and donations. Heavier

At the same time, though, we can't ignore the very thing that our audiences and our communities expect of our theatres: magic!

competition for dwindling state, county, and city funds. Increased pressure from funders to measure impact and justify our existence. A volatile investment environment has eaten away at our endowments. We've spent time and energy finding ways to meet those challenges.

At the same time, though, we can't ignore the very thing that our audiences and our communities expect of our theatres: magic! For those of us who spend hours memorizing, rehearsing, building, painting, prop-searching, and tailoring, it doesn't feel like magic.

But it's different for the person who comes to our theatre in the evening, tired from a full week of work and wishing he or she was anywhere else in the world. What they watch us create on stage and the rejuvenation they feel at the final curtain are, indeed, magic. It sets us apart.

Many of you are currently working on plays that are part of the AACTFest11 process. Congratulations to you for making

that commitment. We're looking forward to seeing you in June in Rochester!

For anyone who loves theatre, AACTFest is a feast! Even if you've never been, I urge you to make plans to join us. If you want to see excellent theatre, if you want to attend great parties and meet new people, if you want your theatre to get better, come to Rochester.

You'll find yourself right in the middle of a whole convention attended by community theatre true believers, ready to share their passion and their knowledge!

Our friends in Rochester are planning a great event, but they don't know exactly how many to plan for. Do them a favor and register today!

Just for the magic.

You can contact Rod via email at rmccullough@dmplayhouse.com, by fax to 515-974-5367, or you can call him at 515-974-5353.

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AACT Celebrates Milestones

Preparing to blow out the candles on AACT's tenth birthday cake, (from left) Past President and Spotlight columnist Twink Lynch, President (in 1996) Ron Ziegler and past presidents Ginny Winsor, Ross Rowland, and John Viars.

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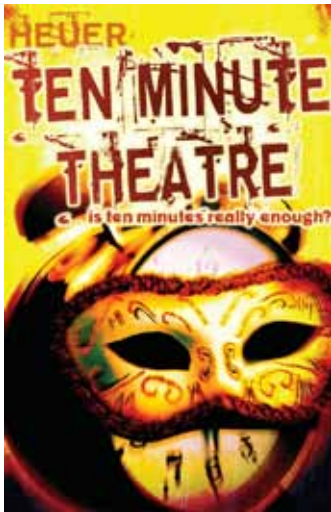
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5

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TEN-MINUTE THEATRE



FEATURED TEN-MINUTE PLAYS:

TRAPPED by Scott Haan
WAITING IN LINE TO SEE THE VIRGIN MARY by Karen Michelle Sarver
GINGER by Robin Pond
GREEN EGGS AND HAMLET by Justin Moran
MY BIG FAT GREEK DIVORCE by Theodore Reis and Matt Thompson
THE ELEVENTH MINUTE by Marika Barnett
THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME FOR WRITER'S BLOCK by John Shanahan

"I think theater ought to be theatrical...you know, shuffling the pack in different ways so that it's — there's always some kind of ambush involved in the experience." —Tom Stoppard

1 DARK HOURS—NEVER AGAIN!

Every company has them. Dark hours. In theatre, it's when your stage is quiet and sits there sulking, furious that she's not full of life. With ten-minute plays, you have the opportunity to flood this darkness with beauty, language, perspectives, and ideas...when your stage sits idle, longing for drama, fill those dark hours with ten-minute theatre.

2 NEW AUDIENCES NOW

Looking for more exposure? Produce an evening of ten-minute plays. Adding ten-minute plays to your programming is a smart way to diversify your audience, broaden your actor and volunteer base, and increase revenue. Ten-minute plays invite new and different audiences to the process.

3 THE SET IS IN YOUR MIND—SERIOUSLY?

Seriously. Whether it's black box, proscenium, or found space, ten minute plays make developing audiences easy. Sets are minimalistic so plays can be performed in front of a curtain, in an aisle, or in the lobby. Or reach across boundaries and perform them in your community: a street corner, jewelry store or coffee house will do. Take the leap and create a whole new level of excitement and interest.

4 BOLD AND DARING, YES AND YES AGAIN!

These plays are bold, they punch like a seasoned prize fighter—crisp, clean and flawless—and that's why audiences love them. Every genre, every theme and every form of conflict is represented in our collection. Daring? Not really, but any time we step outside Operation Normal, it feels daring. For theatres today, it's important to try something new—to stand out—after all, what will your audiences remember tomorrow... the brown cow or the purple cow?

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Ron Ziegler, Field Services Director
Susan Austin, Membership Assistant
Darlene DeLorenzo, Advertising/Festival
Assistant

Upcoming AACT Meetings**AACT Summer Board and Committee Meetings**

June 20-22 & June 25, 2011

AACT State Contacts Meeting June 22

AACT Annual Membership Meeting June 24

Hosted by Theatre Association of New York State

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Educational Conferences**Technical Theatre Conference**

June 20-22, 2011 in Rochester, NY

Community Theatre Management Conference.

June 20-22 in Rochester, NY

Did you know?

You can post a photo on your AACT Community profile. Sign into your profile. Hover over the faceless figure to see the "Add Photo" box. Contact the AACT office if you have questions.

Celebrate World Theatre Day!

Need ideas? See *Spotlight*, Nov-Dec 2010 or go to:
www.aact2.org/page=WorldTheatreDay

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Spotlight

Spotlight is published bimonthly by the American Association of Community Theatre for its members and is annually distributed to an expanded list of known community theatre organizations and interested individuals.

Editor: Julie Crawford
Design: Jim Covault

AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org or at the phone numbers below.

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Liquor Liability: To Buy or Not To Buy?

by Ken Roberts



This article was originally published in August of 2005, but it remains a relevant topic that bears repeating.

Our theatres are constantly competing for today's entertainment dollars, and one of the first things they have discovered is that by offering alcoholic beverages, they can win out over most other entertainment venues. Because many of our patrons enjoy cocktails before a performance, during intermission, afterwards, and especially at our fundraising special events, the issue of a theatre's liability when serving alcohol is constantly at the forefront.

Most of our theatres are protected by a provision in their policies known as "host liquor liability," which covers alcohol-related claims against the theatre when spirits are served at *no charge* to patrons. Host Liquor Liability is normally provided at no charge. Even with the best of intentions however, our theatre volunteers are not usually trained to know when to stop serving patrons who may have had too much, and in a crowded lobby or events facility, it would be difficult for even a trained bartender to keep up with everyone's consumption. For this reason, a theatre can be held liable if a patron were to leave their event and cause damages or injuries while under the influence of alcohol.

Full liquor liability coverage is needed in cases where any charge is made for drinks, and, depending on your state laws, whenever a liquor license is required. There are states that require a liquor license even if a theatre is not charging for alcohol, in which case that theatre

probably will have to purchase liquor liability coverage. Liquor liability is usually available as an endorsement to a General Liability policy, but can be purchased by itself. As an endorsement it is much less expensive. Buying it on a stand-alone basis might make any theatre reconsider selling alcoholic beverages.

Because it would be an added expense, many theatres have tried to find creative ways to "sell" drinks without charging for them outright. These can include raising ticket prices at events including alcohol and putting out a "donation" receptacle at the bar. In the eyes of the insurance companies, as well as most state alcoholic beverage commissions, neither of these methods absolves theatres from purchasing liquor licenses and liquor liability insurance. Some theatres have discovered that by partnering with a local restaurant or caterer who has their own liquor license and liquor liability insurance, they can collect a percentage of the liquor receipts and still keep the patrons happy. Be careful though, make sure to have the theatre listed as an additional insured on the restaurant/caterer's policy, and check on local municipal ordinances and permit requirements before entering into such arrangements.

A good rule of thumb regarding whether or not to purchase Liquor Liability in most cases is simple: *No charge, no need*. Of course, this depends on your state liquor laws, so by all means do your homework, which leads to the other simple rule: *When in doubt, check it out!* ♦

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AACT Staff Milestone

Congratulations and thanks to Darlene DeLorenzo on ten years of service to AACT as a staff member. Darlene joined the AACT staff in March 2001 when the AACT office was located in Lago Vista, Texas and has continued in her position, working remotely, since the office moved to Fort Worth in 2008.

Through the years, Darlene has had many duties, but she particularly enjoys and excels in advertising sales/vendor relations and festival support, earning her the title of Advertising/Festivals Assistant. She has a talent for supporting, encouraging, and assisting people. Although most of her contact is through phone and email, her smile and caring shine through.

“My association with AACT and theatre lovers everywhere has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life,” she relates. “I have truly been blessed! Thank you all for that.”



Darlene DeLorenzo

Darlene’s love of theatre was developed as a theatre patron and through her work with AACT festivals. When not working for AACT, Darlene and her husband Joe enjoy traveling and visiting with family. Darlene has three children and six grandchildren.

Thanks for helping AACT grow, Darlene! ♦



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A promotional poster for the musical 'Cumberland Blues'. The background is dark with faint silhouettes of people. The text is white and centered. There are five framed black and white photographs: one of a man playing guitar, one of a woman and a man, one of a group of people at a table, one of a woman and a man in a crowd, and one of three men in a scene.



It Is Better to Receive Than to Give

by Wally Hurst

No matter where your political leanings are – right, left, or somewhere in the middle, Chris Matthews, long-time staffer of the legendary Thomas “Tip” O’Neill and now MSNBC talk-show host, wrote the best book ever on politics when he penned *Hardball: How Politics Is Played Told By One Who Knows The Game*. It is simply brilliant, highly entertaining, and a very practical book if you are asking anybody in government for anything.

Perhaps of the strangest-sounding “rule of the game” is the title of this article. How can receiving be better than giving? Aren’t we supposed to be open to the needs of politicians and what they want to do with their careers as we try and win them over? Aren’t we supposed to research their backgrounds and be prepared to shift their focus on to our theatres in terms of their own agendas? How does receiving do more for us than giving?

You have to look at politicians in a somewhat peculiar way in order for this rule to make sense. **When you ask for help, and someone invests in you, the more committed they become to seeing you succeed.** Even if it is only their time taken to listen to your problem – or even just to meet you and read your literature – they have invested in you. In this particular way, they are just like

your donors, both large and small. If you think of your donors and sponsors as investing in your theatre (and you should!), then understand that they want you to succeed as well as get those discounts and free tickets. It is a measure of confidence in you and your programs that keeps your members, donors and sponsors giving you money every year: think of your local, state, and national representatives in the same fashion, and treat them accordingly. You will be amazed at the results you can achieve.

Benjamin Franklin said it best: “if you want to make a friend, let someone do you a favor.” By helping you – even in some small way – your representative in government has invested in you and will feel responsible for your success in some way. We still have retired members of Congress and the state house keep in touch with us, because they have contributed in some way to the success of this theatre.

Did I mention that you **HAVE** to keep in touch with all these people, whether they are in office or not? One of our favorite legislators – who got us a substantial state arts grant a few years ago – retired recently. We kept in touch, and when our local utility suddenly demanded a “security



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deposit” of over \$3,000 to continue our electric service (after over 30 years!), we called our retired friend – who was now serving on the state utilities commission. The “problem” was solved satisfactorily in our favor – in less than 48 hours – with an apology from the utility and a promise never to do that again.

When people help you, they want to keep helping you: they are “invested in your success.” Encourage them, thank

them, and let them know you are working hard “to see us all succeed.” ♦

Wally Hurst is Managing Director of Lakeland Theatre Company in Littleton, North Carolina. Previously, he served as Legislative Director and lobbyist for the California State Firefighters Association. He helped pass several important pieces of legislation, and taught lobbying to hundreds of local firefighters. Wally was also a trial attorney in California. He is a proud member of AACT's Advocacy Committee.

Endowment Auction Supports Festival Travel

By John Viars, Silent Auction chair

The twelve companies participating in the national AACTFest11 will each receive \$1825 to help cover expenses of traveling to the festival. This is possible thanks to generous contributions and support of projects like the AACT Endowment Silent Auction.

We are now soliciting items for the Silent Auction to be held at AACTFest in Rochester, NY. All items of value will be accepted, but best sellers in the past have included:

- Jewelry, theatre-related or otherwise
- Works of art, theatre-related or otherwise
- Celebrity items of a unique nature
- Specialty props, costume items
- Subscriptions, gift certificates, play royalties, etc.
- Packages, including t-shirts, books, theatre-related gifts

Even if you can't attend the festival, you are urged to contribute a special item to this biennial event. Remember, proceeds from this auction will support the cost of travel for participating companies.



Please send items by June 20 to: AACTFest 11 - Silent Auction/Ruth Legg, Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd., Rochester, NY 14607, 585-232-1366.

You may also bring items with you to the festival. Deliver to the Geva Theatre Center Tuesday afternoon. You may also drop them off at the Festival Registration desk in the hotel on

Tuesday. AACTFest volunteers will transport them to Geva.

Regardless of the delivery method, we need to know what you intend to contribute. Email <info@aact.org> a description of the items you are sending, their value, the method you intend to use for delivery, and when they will arrive. Or you may find it helpful to download the Auction Contribution form from the AACT website, www.aact.org or request one from the AACT office.

Questions? Contact the AACT office at 866-Our-AACT (687-2228) or <info@aact.org>. ♦



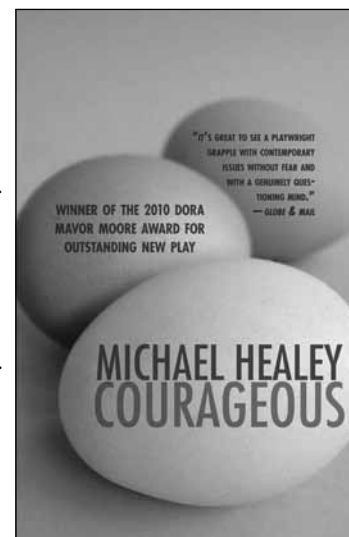
A FOSTER CHRISTMAS
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A FOSTER CHRISTMAS NORM FOSTER

Light up the tree and break out the eggnog, Christmas has arrived with this collection of four festive plays by Canada's most-produced playwright. Includes: *Ethan Claymore*, *Bob's Your Elf*, *The Christmas Tree*, and *Dear Santa*.

From the creator of *The Drawer Boy* comes a wicked comedy that pits character against character, and exposes the hot-button issues of gay marriage, religious freedom, and liberal immigration policy as battlegrounds for individual expression.

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AACTFest 11 Workshops: The List is Growing

Several workshops have been added to the AACTFest11 line-up since the last issue of Spotlight went to press. Here is the current list. Descriptions previously published are not repeated, but can be found in the Jan-Feb Spotlight (available online) or find a complete list of workshops at aactfest11.org.



ACTOR ORIENTED WORKSHOPS

All You Need is a Body: Creative Movement for Actors and Directors

presented by Suzi Takahashi
Using exercises inspired by Anne Bogart's Viewpoints training, participants will explore creative movement for the stage. Suzi Takahashi, the artistic producer of the NYC's critically acclaimed movement theatre troupe, ExPGirl, will lead this workshop focusing on stretching the imagination in the ways movement can help tell story. Come dressed to move. All you really need to make a great play is just a body!

Introduction to Stage Combat presented by Adriano Gatto
Introduces you to the fundamental concepts of stage combat. Safety is the number one priority as you learn the basics of partnering, weight sharing, throws, falls, chokes and hits.

Stanislavsky System presented by Igor Golyak

In Character presented by George Douglas Lee

Bring Joy, Power and Passion to Your Singing presented by Ed Linderman

In the works: **Improv Comedy** with Mike Smith

DIRECTOR ORIENTED WORKSHOPS

How to Cut a Show For Festival presented by Celia Couture
The moment we cut a play it is no longer the same play, so the challenge is to maintain the integrity of the piece and still fall within a 60 minute time constraint. While cutting a play is NOT an exact science there are some key decisions that you can make as a director that will make the process easier and the result more successful! Using a familiar and popular story, Cinderella, participants will walk through the successful cutting of a play.

AACTFest11
June 20-26 Rochester, NY
www.aactfest11.org

A Chair, Where? Creating a Successful Groundplan

presented by David Shane
Creating a groundplan is just as important to a show's director as it is to the scenic designer. This workshop looks at how the right groundplan can help force action, enhance the play's staging, and make the storytelling flow!

The Race Card – The Cultural Relevance of Theatre?

presented by Vanessa Adams-Harris
Are our productions culturally relevant to our communities? What is a cultural show? Why won't THEY come to an audition? How to get "them" to participate in your production. What's the hook? This workshop can speak to the age old question that I ask and that I hear others asking regarding bridging the gap for cultural-diversity within our community theatre settings. Won't you come and ask the wrong questions, hear the right answer, and gain

hope for inspiring your home theatre to trust the healing forces of this art form.

There Are No Blackouts on Broadway presented by Penny Notter

Keep the lights on and the action moving! Penny Notter will lead this workshop on how to stage a musical with multiple scenes and blackouts as a seamless, non-interrupted production – without changing text or content! Participants should stay tuned for an announcement of which musical we'll be focusing on.

Dare to Be Different: Direct a Musical You've Never Seen presented by Jim Hoare

DESIGNER/TECHNICIAN ORIENTED WORKSHOPS

Victorian Hats on a Budget presented by Jim Boman

Creating Performance Venues from Nothing presented by Spence and Beth Watson

Hodge Podge Costumes presented by Jessica Lee

In the works: **Creating Foam Puppets and Costumes** with Gayle Argetsinger and Crystal Farrell

MANAGER/ADMINISTRATOR ORIENTED WORKSHOPS

Great Egos and Hams! presented by Tracy Alexander
Theatre volunteers are a unique breed, and you can use those quirks to your advantage! Tracy Alexander, a veteran of 15 years of volunteer coordinating with Midland Community Theatre, shares her secrets on how to build (or re-vamp) a volunteer program without whining . . . ok - maybe a little wine.

Click This! Building a Great Website for your Theatre

presented by Jad Jordan
If your theatre doesn't have a website, you're missing the opportunity to reach out to your audience and your community 24 hours a day – for practically nothing! Jad Jordan, creator of the TheatreRocs website, will demystify the process of creating this powerful marketing tool.

Technical Theatre For Managers and Administrators

presented by USITT's Executive Director, David Grindle
Ellipsoidals, DMX, multicable, and other technical terms. What do they mean and how do I just get more light on stage, props that do what I need, and a set I understand? We all work in theatre, but don't all speak the same language. Learn how to bridge the divide.

Musical Rights, Are You in Compliance? presented by Marsha Amato-Greenspan

New York and Chicago: Taking Great Theatre Group Trips

presented by Sandy Levitt

Absolutely Free Ways to Computerize Your Theatre presented by Scott Bloom

Yo, Theatre Staff, What's with You and the Board? presented by Robert Miss

continued on page 15

Technical Theatre Conference Features a Top Designer and Progression Workshops

The AACTFest11 Technical Theatre Conference will offer Progression Workshops in three core technical areas: 1) sound and lights; 2) costuming, make-up and millenary; and 3) set design and dressing, props and technical direction.

Award-winning designer Curtis J. Phillips, Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, will offer Design, Painting and Dressing a Set workshops in conjunction with technical direction and props master workshops.

Prof. Phillips holds a BFA in Scenic Design from SUNY Fredonia and an MFA in Scenic Design from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Professional theatrical design credits include produced designs for Off-Off Broadway for The Mint Theatre Company and the American Globe as well as Off-Broadway for the Signature Theatre, Musical Theatre Works, and Manhattan Class Company in New York City.

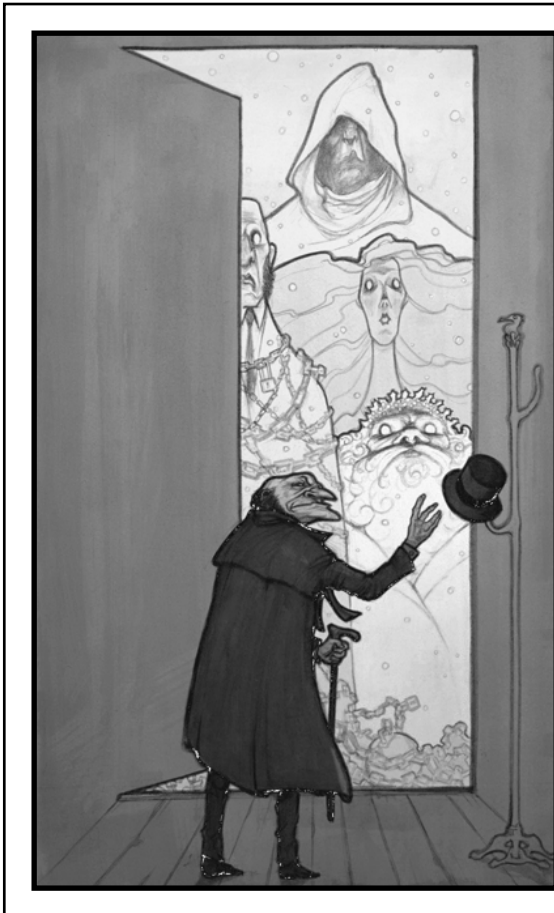
He has also acted as a resident and guest designer for regional theatres across the country, including Theatre

Cedar Rapids, Bristol Valley Theatre, Chautauqua Theatre Company and Cumberland County Playhouse where he designed the first licensed production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. He recently traveled Turkey with the University of Minnesota's production of *Footloose*.

The Technical Theatre Conference will be held in the state-of-the arts facilities at the Roberts Cultural Life Center, June 20-22, 2011. Cost for AACT members is \$190, which includes workshops, lunch, two dinners, and transportation from and to Radisson Rochester Riverside (AACTFest11 Headquarters Hotel). Register by May 31 to take advantage of a \$25 early bird discount.

For more details and to complete your registration, go to www.aact2.org "Calendar" -> "AACT National Events" or contact the AACT office (toll free) 866-Our-AACT (687-2228).

Watch the AACTFest11 website <aactfest11.org> for details on the other Technical Theatre Conference Progression Workshops and presenters. ♦



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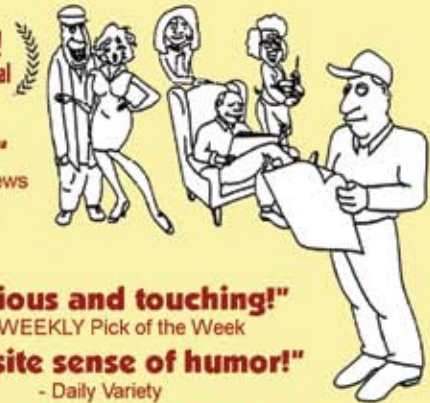
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Short Form Theatre/Big Impact

presented by Tara Phares Pauley

If All the World is an Address, Then How Do I Get My Mail

Delivered? presented by Marsha Amato-Greenspan

MISCELLANEOUS WORKSHOPS

Panel Discussion: Careers in Community Theatre

presented by Harv Thompson, Jack Phillips, Terry Petrie and others

AACT is actively promoting community theatre as a good place to work professionally. There are a variety of possibilities for those with training in theatre to find employment in communities across the country. Panel members will be using their own successes as examples to demonstrate that community theatres are sources of good jobs that provide an opportunity to become involved in a community and make a cultural contribution to the quality of life in that community.

Yeah But I Don't Know How to Talk to Them (working with special populations)

presented by Joan E. Kole, PhD

The Unbroken Circle (Native American storytelling)

presented by D. Terry Petrie ♦

Lorraine Tetlus Receives Spotlight Award

The AACT Spotlight Award partners AACT with theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of their local theatres. Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award.



Manatee Players Managing/Artistic Director Rick Kerby presents the Spotlight Award to Lorraine Tetlus

Manatee Players of Bradenton, Florida celebrated December with their annual volunteer appreciation holiday party. This annual party featured food, prizes for all and an abbreviated performance of the *Crosley Christmas Show*. The evening was capped with a special AACT Spotlight Award to longtime cherished helping hand, Lorraine Tetlus.

Lorraine has been an active Manatee Players volunteer since 1998 - meaning this petite, elderly woman can be found at the Manatee Players' theatre two to three days every week. What started as a one-time volunteer stint helping with a mailing, has turned her into being a fixture at the theatre and the "go to" gal whenever there is a need for some administrative task to be done.

In fact, Lorraine is secretary and treasurer of the Manatee Players' Guild. She has helped out in the box office and ushers at least twice during each run of a production. Lorraine serves dinner to the cast and crew at every Tech Sunday, assists at every fundraiser for youth theatre scholarships including baking cookies, and never says "no" when called upon at the last minute to make copies or to collate grant applications.

Lorraine Tetlus is tireless in her support and praise for Manatee Players. But, in addition to Manatee Players, she volunteers for the Friends of the Manatee Public Library and the South Florida Museum Service League, all downtown Bradenton institutions.

The staff of Manatee Players is always happy when Lorraine, our 2001 Office Volunteer of the Year, is in the theatre building with her stories and her good cheer, but especially when she quietly places baked goods for the employees to enjoy next to the coffee pot in the kitchen. ♦

Spotlight Award

Ma, Moonflowers & Me

A romantic comedy in two acts for people old enough to know better
by Jo Morello

4M (50-75); 4F (40-80s); 1F (17)

(Theater may add non-speaking roles as desired.)

After a 10-year courtship, Al, 65, decides to marry Barbara, 70—but there are complications: a long-missing first wife and especially Ruth, his thrice-married, 80-something mother who blocks his every effort. Things start changing when Tina, a spiky-haired teen, delivers two tiny moonflower plants.

First 25 pages: <http://www.jomorello.com/ma-info.pdf>

THE SPLIT

An award-winning comedy in two acts about marriage and other laughing matters

by Jack Gilhooley & Jo Morello

2M (middle-aged); 3F (30s to middle-aged)

When an outrageously successful, husband-and-wife playwriting team go dry, do they take it out on each other? Of course—and on anyone else in their way.

First 25 pages: <http://www.jomorello.com/split-info.pdf>

jomorello.com • jo@jomorello.com • 941.351.9688

AACT Elections - Meet the Candidates

Ballots will be mailed in April for the annual AACT elections. Each member, except Associate Members, will receive one ballot. The Nominating Committee is charged with preparing a slate that will facilitate the election of a Board and Nominating Committee that is representative of the membership and provides the organization with skills and knowledge needed to conduct the affairs and further the mission of AACT. The AACT Board includes nine Member at Large positions, three elected each year. Six Member at Large candidates are presented by the Nominating Committee this year to fill the three positions. Because of the particular skills needed by AACT officers, a single slate is presented. The Nominating Committee is chaired by the immediate Past President and has four members, two elected each year. Four candidates are presented to fill the two open positions. Following are bios of this year's candidates. See the box for a list of those who are continuing on the Board and the Nominating Committee. **Be sure to watch for and return your ballot before May 1.**

Members at Large

Three to be elected to serve three-year terms: 2011-2014



Nancy Eppert serves as Chair of the AACT Education Committee, member of the Workshops Committee and on the Convention NYC 2012 Task Force. She has chaired Artistic Directors and Education Directors conferences, and served on state and regional AACTFest committees.

Nancy provides training and program consultation for the University of Kansas Standardized Patient program; created training presentations in support of Arts-In-Education programs; board development consultation for theatre companies in Louisiana, Missouri, and Kansas; developed training programs for the Kansas City Coalition for Community Collaboration. Nancy is the Chair of the Youth L.E.A.D. program for the Independence Chamber of Commerce and is the Artistic Director of the "Enchanted Forest," an annual Halloween event for the City of Independence, MO. Nancy serves as the local Community Relations Specialist for The Church of Jesus Christ



Susan L. Harrington is a lifelong resident of Boston, MA. She presently serves as a member of the board of the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres (EMACT) and serves as liaison for EMACT to The New England Theatre Conference (NETC) and AACT, serving as the AACT State Contact for MA. She is a former member of the Board of the Footlight Club of Jamaica Plain, MA, the oldest continuing community theatre in America. Susan is the first and only person of color to serve on The Footlight Club Board. She continues to hold membership in The Footlight Club and is also a member of the Arlington Friends of the Drama of Arlington, MA and the Hovey Players of Waltham, MA. She has served as the production manager or co-production manager of 15 productions. One production, *Interview* by Jean-Claude van Italle, was the 2003 Region I representative at AACTFest '03 held in Torrington, CT. This "fugue for 8 actors," part of his "America Hurrah" was invited to participate in Marche en Famenne, Belgium's international festival Estivades, which is held every three years. She has also served with various groups in the capacity of stage manager, assistant stage manager, assistant director, props mistress, costumer, and house manager.



Rick Kerby was the Entertainment Director for the *USO of Metropolitan New York* and the organizer of the *Miss USO Contest* prior to moving to Florida. Other directorial credits include numerous shows at the Surflight Theatre in

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—PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS, NYC



New Jersey, Theatre By the Sea in Rhode Island, The Arundel Playhouse in Maine, Wolford House Dinner Theater in Virginia, New London Barn Playhouse in New Hampshire, Westbank and Duplex Theaters in New York City and on many cruise ships. He has served on the faculties of Wagner College on Staten Island and the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in New York City. Rick is the Managing Artistic Director of Manatee Players where he has been recipient of several Handy and Sarasota Magazine awards, named Best Director at the Florida Theatre Conference, three time winner as Best Director at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) and two time winner as Best Director at the national festival of AACTFest. He has served as an adjudicator for Professional Theatres for the Florida State Division of Cultural Affairs. Rick is the newly elected President of the Florida Theatre Conference, Past President of the Florida Association of Community Theatres, Community Theatre Festival Chair for SETC, and AACT State Contact for Florida.



Ruth Legg was appointed to the Board last year. She is Chair of AACTFest11 and President of the Eastern States Theatre Association (ESTA). Her involvement in theatre started in grade school; her community theatre experiences in college. Ruth holds degrees in theatre and communications from the University of

Charleston and Penn State. She has been involved with the Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) since it was formed in 1987; she has served as a Roving Adjudicator, President, and chair of TANYS and ESTA Festivals. She is Professor Emeritus at Finger Lakes Community College, where she developed and headed the theatre program until her retirement. Ruth is a founder of the Ontario County Arts Council and served on the boards of Bristol Valley Theatre, Smith Opera House, and Geneva Theatre Guild. Ruth has directed and designed over 100 college and community theatre productions, co-authored a children's play, and is a TANYS award-winning director. She has adjudicated the Eastern Massachusetts, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland Festivals and ESTAFest/Original Works Festival. Ruth received the TANYS Mary Eva Duthie Award for Outstanding Contributions to Theatre. She shares her home in the Finger Lakes area with a cat and his dog. Ruth is author of a novel, *Veils of Conspiracy*, a political thriller.



Elizabeth Nelson is currently a Member at Large on the AACT Board. She is the Artistic Director of First City Players (FCP) in Ketchikan, Alaska, a blue collar town without road access on an island in Southeast Alaska. She began her nineteen-year tenure as its first paid employee and has helped build it into a successful

community theatre with full spectrum programming under very challenging conditions. FCP has grown to a season of five main stage productions; Artscool Summer Theater Camp; Gigglesfeet Community Dance Festival; Actout, theatre programming for kids; an annual Jazz & Cabaret Festival; and a summer melodrama; as well as contracting with the school district for theatre enrichment programs and productions. FCP now has over 300 volunteers, two full time employees, an annual budget of \$250,000, and is recognized by Ketchikan as an integral part of community life. Elizabeth holds a BA in Theater Arts from Northern Michigan University. She is a frequent theatre instructor at the University of Alaska Southeast and provides regular technical and artistic support to performing arts organizations in her region. She served eight years on the Alaska Community Theatre Festival Board, with two years as President. She enjoys travel, food, wine, reading, and camping with her family.



Chris Serface was raised in the Pacific Northwest, where he discovered the theatre at an early age and became involved with the local community theatre scene. At 17, he was the youngest board member of Capital Playhouse and helped the organization grow from a seasonal production schedule to year-round programming. During his educational and professional travels, he has found himself involved with theatres from Washington State to Utah, working closely with Capital Playhouse, Weber State University, Capital High School, Utah Musical Theatre, The Wasatch Playhouse, The Garage Theatre, The Abbey Players, Lakewood Playhouse, and Tacoma Musical Playhouse as an actor, technician, director, musician, volunteer, or board member (sometimes all of them at the same time). Currently, Chris serves as the Director of Education for Tacoma

continued on page 20

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Apply Systematic Magic to Learning Lines



The Magic Memory Potion

By Paulette MacDougal

Does anyone love the memorization process? Wouldn't we rather spend that time at the dentist? Maybe some of us, especially those on the far north side of AARP, have even dropped out of stage performing entirely for fear of forgetting lines? Such a shame!

What if there were a magic memory potion, something like the love potion in the Donizetti's opera *L'elisir d'amore* (*Elixir of Love*)? But this one, instead of causing someone to fall in love, would gift us with instant recall – photographic memory – after only one reading of a full script!

Alas! For now, this magic potion is still in the realm of Sci-Fi. But in the meantime, we have a substitute: Jewell P Fitzgerald has shared with me a memorizing technique she taught to many senior actors in the Reprise Theater before she retired. In the absence of a Magic Memory Potion, with her permission, I am passing it on to you.

I first encountered Jewell, Professor Emerita, Edgewood College, a prominent leader in Madison (WI) Community Theater, and her Reprise Theater at the Senior Adult Theatre Conference some years ago in Las Vegas, where she and Reprise were conducting a workshop.

Because my comedy, *Two Husbands in Heaven*, had won the playwriting competition that year, I was a guest of the conference. (Amid the clanking of the slots, I got plenty of advice about which roulette and black jack tables to invest my \$1000 award, but as a non-gambler, I resisted.)

My intention that morning was to attend a different event, but as I passed by the door of the Reprise workshop, producer Tom Haig, in the style of a carnival barker, literally pulled me inside. Tom and his wife Bobbie were founders of Reprise, a theatre for and by senior adults, and presided over it for 13 years.

Reprise Theater under Jewell Fitzgerald's direction later premiered my *Two Husbands in Heaven*, in Madison, with Tom and



The Regina Theatre at Edgewood College (Madison, WI) production of Paulette MacDougal's Two Husbands in Heaven

Bobbie in the lead roles. I had some initial trepidation about whether the six elders in the cast, who were all well-past their Golden Birthdays, could memorize this full-length play, full of colorful language.

To my delight, in the late rehearsals and in several performances I attended, I didn't notice one of my precious words missed or misspoken. How did they do it? Apparently by following Jewell P Fitzgerald's Memorization System. Try it out. Let me know how it works for you. ♦

Paulette MacDougal, playwright, Artistic Director of Paradox Players, Austin, TX, can be reached at paulette.macdougal@gmail.com. Her play, Two Husbands in Heaven is published by Dramatic Publishing Co.



The 10-Step Magic Memory System

By Jewell P Fitzgerald

1. **FIRST READ** Read the script for the story only.
2. **THE MOVIE** Read the script, seeing it like you are watching a movie.
3. **YOUR ROLE IN THE STORY** Read the script, seeing it from the point of view of your character. What part in the story does your character play? How does your character relate to the others? What does your character contribute to moving the plot forward?
4. **AFTER BLOCKING** Read the script, mentally looking at the stage, watching the action in front of you from the point of view of the audience.
5. **PERSPECTIVE OF YOUR CHARACTER** Read the script from the eye view of yourself on stage moving as previously blocked.
6. **THE SEQUENCES** Read the script for sequences of action. Think: The first sequence, the second sequence, etc. (See Sidebar.)
7. **THE ORDER OF THE SEQUENCES** Read the script for your scenes only and memorize the order of the sequences. (This is a safety measure. If you know the sequences, if someone goes up on their lines, you can ad lib to the next sequence.)
8. **WHAT YOU DON'T NEED TO MEMORIZE** Read the script and mentally determine what you don't have to memorize. Example: If someone asks your character, "Where

is Charles,” either you know the answer, don’t know the answer, or deny that you know the answer. Then you respond with whatever answer the playwright has supplied you, having decided whether it is a lie or not.

9. **STUDY WHAT’S LEFT** Read the script, noting all the shifts of thought, non sequiturs, points where your character initiates a speech. By now (the second rehearsal after blocking), you will find that you know almost all the lines, and you absolutely know the sequences of the scene.

10. **NOW MEMORIZE** Look at the lines, hear them, feel the movement of yourself and others on the stage, and feel the set around you. Cover the line and recite it aloud, then look at it and check it. Memorize incident by incident, not page by page.

By this tenth reading of the script you will find you know over 85% of the script, and will only have to drill about 15%. Break a leg! ♦

Jewell P. Fitzgerald, Professor Emerita, Edgewood College, Madison, WI, is available for private coaching sessions. jfitzgerald60@charter.net

THE SEQUENCE

Jewell Fitzgerald’s Definition

A sequence is a small incident that contains a single action, i.e., what happens? what happens next? For the actor, this knowing should include both internal and external actions.

Director Jewell P. Fitzgerald breaks this down into four parts:

1. Stimulus
2. Realization
3. Crystallization
4. Physical Reaction

The playwright supplies steps #1 and #4. The actor, supplies steps #2 and #3 internally, before externalizing step #4.

Ms. Fitzgerald likens this process to learning a piece of music, specifically, playing the piano. The composer provides the melody (the stimulus). The performer learns the phrases (realization), and the measures (crystallization) before physically executing the note-to-note performance (externalizing).

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Musical Playhouse in Tacoma, WA and is also on the board of the Washington State Community Theatre Association as its Secretary. When not involved in some kind of theatrical endeavor, he tries to find time to spend with his five nephews who live in Virginia.

Officers

To serve two-year terms: 2011-2013



President

Linda M. Lee has been Executive Director of Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc. (TNT) since April 1995. A graduate of Texas Christian University with a BFA in Theatre, Linda began her career at Casa Mañana, where she served as actor, teacher, costumer, and Playhouse administrator.

She co-wrote the music and lyrics for three children's musicals, and sang with a musical group. In 1979 she joined the fledgling Creative Arts Theatre & School (CATS), becoming Executive Director in 1987. She was also an advanced acting instructor, touring company director, director of mainstage productions, composer, and photographer for CATS. Linda was a Board member for TNT from 1988–1994, serving as Secretary for two years. She is Treasurer of the Live Theatre League of Tarrant County, and is on the Board of Texans for the Arts, previously serving as Secretary. Linda is a Fellow of AACT and the Southwest Theatre & Film Association. She has served on the Theatre & Musical Theatre Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts. Linda is married to lighting designer Jay Isham. Their son, Preston, is majoring in Music Theatre at Oklahoma City University.



Executive Vice President

Gary Walker received his BS Chemistry from the University of Louisville, post graduate studies at Indiana University, and MBA from Grand Valley State University. He has worked in R&D and environmental areas and currently is employed as an IT professional in the automotive industry.

Gary has been active in many arts nonprofits including co-chairing Grand Rapids Festival of the Arts, President of the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids, President of Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, President of Grandville Arts & Humanities as well as numerous other board positions primarily in the financial and development areas. Gary is completing his third term as Treasurer of AACT and has served on a number of committees and task forces while on the AACT Board. His first involvement with AACT was as the chair of fundraising for the national AACTFest hosted by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre. Locally he has acted and crewed a number of shows and continues to volunteer with Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, currently chairing its season selection committee. Gary has also presented workshops in board management and fundraising for nonprofits for state and local organizations. He and his wife Jan reside in an historic home in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Vice President Festivals

Kristi Quinn has been active in community theatre for over twenty years. Currently the VP Festivals, Kristi served for six years as the Region V Representative on the AACT Board. She serves as a member of the Finance, Workshops, Marketing, History, and Membership Committees and the Fund Development Task Force of AACT. Kristi completed the AACT Adjudication Workshop and has adjudicated several festivals.

She serves as artistic director for the Pioneer Valley Players in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa and leads the theatre program at the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community Schools. She is currently a Board member of the Nebraska Association of Community Theatre. Kristi participated as a core committee member and chair of several state and regional festivals, which were held at the Sioux City Community Theatre. Her theatre experience includes acting, directing, set decoration, and costume design as well as public relations, grant writing, and development. She has been employed as executive director of the Sioux City Community Theatre and development director of the Sioux City Art Center. Kristi resides in Dakota City, Nebraska and is the Director of Community Development for the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council where she writes grants, assists in strategic planning, and dabbles in public relations.



Vice President Public Relations

Sue Ellen Gerrells, the Executive Director of the Alabama Conference of Theatre and AACT Marketing Committee Chair and Festival Commission Rep, has served as an arts administrator for over twenty years. For ten years, she provided publicity and program

management for Theatre USA, at the University of South Alabama in Mobile; worked for University of California San Diego's theatre department as assistant publicity manager; and has been on the boards of the Joe Jefferson Players and Mobile Theatre Guild in Mobile, AL, the Yokosuka Community Theatre in Japan, and the Stage Club of Singapore. She holds a master's degree in English and a BA in Drama and English. As an actor and director, Sue Ellen has been involved with more than 100 productions in the past 40 years.



Treasurer

Tim Jebson has been the Executive Director of Midland (TX) Community Theatre (MCT) for the past fourteen years. At MCT, Tim helped the organization increase the size of the budget, purchase a 1929 downtown historic theatre, and raise \$3.6 million for renovations to the Cole

Theatre in order to host the 2006 AACT International Theatre festival. Recent directing credits include *Hairspray*, *Oklahoma*, *White Christmas*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Les Misérables*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Tuna Christmas*, *The Producers*, *Cats*, *Proof*, *Take Me Out*, *Ragtime*, *Art* and *Evita*. Prior to working in Midland, Tim headed the Salina (KS) Community Theatre, the Mansfield (OH) Playhouse and the Weathervane Playhouse (OH). Tim has served on the Board of Texas Nonprofit Theatres and currently serves on the Board of the Midland-Odessa Area AIDS Support board – he has chaired an annual fundraiser that has raised \$200,000 over the past 10 years for AIDS counseling and support. Tim has been married to Lisa for the past eighteen years, and they have a nine year old son Zach. In his spare time, Tim enjoys playing golf, fantasy baseball and football, and playing Rock Band.

Nominating Committee

Two to be elected to serve two-year terms: 2011-2013



Dr. Tom Cowley is a retired chemist (actually a spectroscopist). He is retired from a Fortune 100 company where he spent 30 years in various management positions. As part of his work he gained long experience in locating, recruiting and hiring quality people. Tom has been involved in community theatre for more than 50 years. He

has taken part in nearly all aspects of the community theatre experience. He has acted (over 50 roles), directed (20 shows), and provided technical support for others (over 100 shows). A firm believer that "the beast (community theatre) must be fed (given leadership)," Tom has served on theatre boards at all levels. He served on his local theatre board (18 years), the Oklahoma Community Theatre board (18 years), the Southwest Theatre Association board (4 years), and the AACT board (9 years). With AACT, he served as Region VI Representative for four years and last year completed four years as Vice President for Planning and Development. Tom's efforts in leadership have led to numerous awards for outstanding service. Notable among these are OCTA's Bill Crawford Award and AACT's Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award and the Art Cole Award.



Nick Credgington was born to a theatrical family from Stratford, UK. In 1970 he became the first civilian technical director for the Fort Lewis (WA) Entertainment program. Over the next nine years he worked his way up to Chief of the Entertainment Division. He also served on the boards of Lakewood Players and Capital

Area Association of Performing Arts; was active as an actor, director, designer and consultant for several other community theatres; was active in the Army Theatre Arts Association and the American Theatre Association; and guest instructed at the University of Puget Sound. Nick served as a board member of Freighthouse Theatre and advisor to the Pierce County Arts Commission. In the mid 80's Nick traveled to China as the Performing Arts Rep for the Seattle/Tacoma Trade Commission. In 1989, he returned to the Army as Director of Entertainment for the northern half of South Korea. He moved up in 1994 to honcho the US Army Soldier Show, and is now Deputy Chief of US Army Entertainment Division. Nick has served as a Member at Large on the board of AACT and as Vice President for Membership.



Mary Doveton has produced and directed over 230 shows in professional, educational, and community theatres. She was a founder of the Lawrence Community Theatre (now Theatre Lawrence) and has served as its director since 1984. Mary holds degrees from Clarke University and the University of Kansas. She is

an AACT Fellow. Mary adjudicated the 2007 National Festival for AACT in Charlotte, and has also judged state and regional festivals. She served on the AACT Board of Directors, including as national Treasurer from 1994-97 and Vice President for Education from 2000-04. She served as one of six Regional Mentors for the Kansas Arts Network from 2008-10 as well as on grant review panels for several states. Theatre Lawrence has passed the \$4 million mark in its \$6 million capital campaign, and Mary is looking forward to the birth of both a new theatre and another grandson.



Morrie Enders is the Executive Director of Lincoln Community Playhouse in Nebraska. As a self-proclaimed "Theatre Evangelist," Morrie is proud to have spent a lifetime in community theatre. He was Artistic Director of Kalamazoo Civic Theatre in Michigan and the Artistic/Managing Director of La Crosse Community

Theatre in Wisconsin. He has had productions performed in Germany, Monaco and Japan. In 2007, Morrie received the AACT Distinguished Merit Award and was given the designation of Fellow of AACT. ♦

Board Members by Regions

These persons' terms end in 2012 and 2013, so they will serve with those elected this year.

Region I

Bevie Lord, MA, Region I Rep
Dave Sheppard, MA, Member at Large

Region II

Scott Bloom, MD, Member at Large
Sherman Ward, Jr., NY, Region II Rep

Region III

Ginny Morrison, OH, Region III Rep
Frank Peot, WI, Secretary

Region IV

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Kristi Quinn

AACT Vice President for Festivals Kristi Quinn stands by the fountain in the square in Heidelberg, Germany. Kristi was in Europe to represent the AACT Festival Commission at the Region X festival in Kaiserslautern, Germany, October 8-10, 2010.



Kristi Quinn

Tim Jebesen, AACT Convention Planning Committee Chair, checks his messages from Hauptstrasse (Main Street) in Heidelberg, Germany. Tim was in Germany as an adjudicator for the Region X festival in Kaiserslautern in October.



Kristi Quinn

Festival Chair Michael Snead (left) and Stage Manager John Snead (center) work with the Caroline Community Theatre during a technical rehearsal at the Virginia Theatre Association Community Theatre Festival. The festival was held January 15, 2011 in Richmond, VA



AACT Field Services Director Ron Ziegler (center) participates in discussion with Festival Chair Paul Larson (right) during a planning meeting for the California and Region VIII AACTFest. The meeting was held in Chino, CA, January 23, 2011. In the foreground is committee member Karen Larson.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Region VIII Representative Gil Savage (left) discusses the upcoming California and Region VIII festivals with festival volunteer Mike Barbin in the lobby of Chino's Seventh Street Theatre. Gil was in Chino attending the initial organizational meeting for the festival on January 23, 2011.

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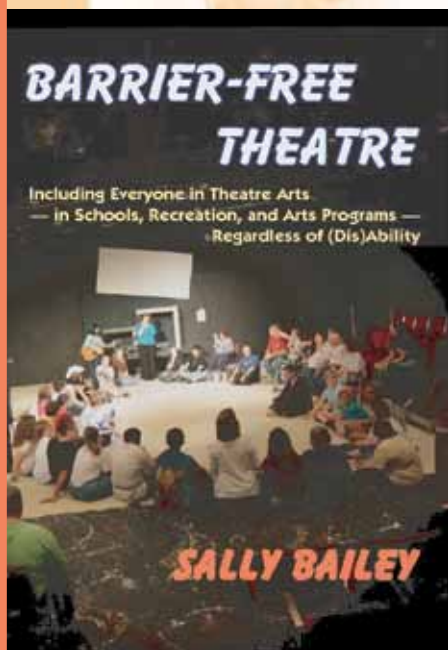
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Sally Bailey, MFA, MSW, RDT/BCT started with the drama program at the Texas School for the Deaf. Then on to TheatreVirginia and The Shakespeare Theater at the Folger.

In 1999 she became head the drama therapy program at Kansas State University and director of Barrier-Free Theatre specializing in creating accessible programming for children, teens, and adults both normally abled and with a wide variety of disabilities.

Her book shows how to use the theatre arts and drama therapy for education, joy, and involvement with others. Sally is a past president of the NADT and a recipient of NADT's 2006 Gertrud Schattner Award.

Promoting the Plant

Asheville (NC) Community Theatre combined a plant sale with its production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, transforming the lobby into a “lush greenhouse of (innocuous) wildlife.”

The One-Day Plant Sale starred “The Annuals” - impatiens, petunias, salvia, and marigolds, selling for \$2-30. A theatre volunteer who is head grower at a local nursery organized the sale. Check out Asheville Community Theatre at www.ashevilletheatre.org.



Dracula vants your blood!

The River Valley Theatre Company (RVTC) in Shakopee, MN partnered with the American Red Cross in its promotion efforts for *Dracula*. The Theatre arranged for the Red Cross Bloodmobile to be at the junior high school (where *Dracula* was performed) on a Friday afternoon.

Each donor received a voucher

for a half-price ticket to *Dracula*. The Halloween Day



performance featured a “Hallowe’en Costume BOGO” (Buy One Get One). Patrons who attended the matinee on October 31 in costume could buy-one, get-one ticket free. RVTC’s mission is Creating opportunities for community involvement through the performing arts. Visit rivervalleytheatrecompany.com to learn more.

Holiday Fundraiser

Kalamazoo Civic Theatre asked “What could be better than celebrating the holidays with some of your favorite Civic volunteers?” in its promotion of its Holiday CD of Holiday songs sung by Civic volunteers and the Youth Theatre Chorus. CDs sold for \$10, available at the Theatre and at several local merchants. Orders could also be placed online or by mail (\$2 shipping). The order form/flyer featured the performers and track listing of the songs. A local firm underwrote the project. The Civic can be found at www.kazoocivic.com. ♦



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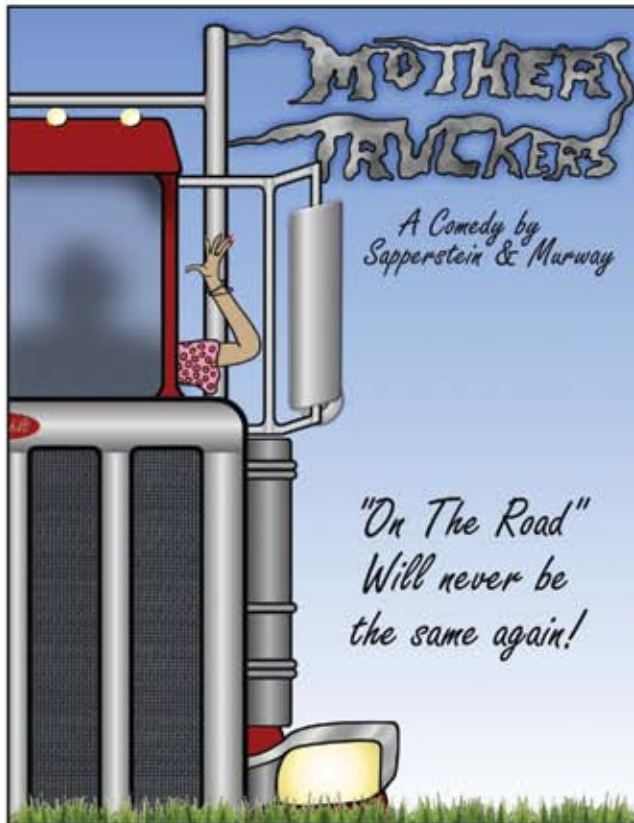
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New Comedy Play Released

Mother Truckers by Sapperstein & Murway



CAST SIZE: 4

LENGTH: 1 hour, 30 minutes (plus intermission)

Maxine and Charlotte are sisters. Two buxom and full figured women who have worked hard all their lives and never quite gotten out of "Trailer Park" status. Although they have a tough exterior, they are actually very good people.

Maxine's husband has just died of a sudden heart attack while he was on the road with their brand new Peterbilt Truck. Maxine reveals to Charlotte that Nelson's heart attack could not have come at a worse time. They just bought the new rig, and Maxine is left in debt up to her eyeballs.

Trying to help, yet feeling at a loss, Charlotte says, "It's a shame you can't just pick up where Nelson left off." Charlotte, of course does not really mean it, but Maxine suddenly figures... "Why NOT?" And so the adventure begins! And, while they're at it, they will take Nelson's ashes with them, hoping to find just the right place to spread them where he would be most happy.

The two women, assisted by Maxine's loveable yet intensely micromanaging neighbor, Mary Ellen, pack the truck and take off on their first run. They get off to a bad start by taking a wrong turn and creating a major incident in a "NO TRUCK ZONE," but soon feel reassured when they meet "Sugar Daddy" on the CB radio followed by Roy McCoy, a strange little guy with very big feet. Is it true what they say about a man with big feet?

Things get complicated they meet a hooker named Trixie at Rosie Mae's Truck Stop. It seems Trixie knew Nelson quite well and Maxine is not amused. It now becomes painfully apparent that they have found just the right spot for Nelson's ashes. In a roaring fury, Maxine locks herself in the Ladies Room, gives her farewell speech and flushes Nelson down the toilet. After all, he loved the water, the ladies and Rosie Mae's Truck Stop. What could be more perfect?

With Maxine finally reaching "Closure", the two women climb back aboard their shiny new truck and take to the road with the goal of putting their past behind them and looking forward to what lies ahead.

LOOK OUT... Here come the Mother Truckers. "The road" will never be the same again!

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New Roles

Christine Chernis Brandt has joined the **Minnesota Association of Community Theatres** as Executive Director. Christine earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Arts from California State University, Los Angeles and a Master's degree in Arts Administration at the University of California, Los Angeles. She has worked with a variety of arts organizations in California, Michigan and Pennsylvania, and has taught acting, theatre and nonprofit administration at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY and Salem State College in Salem, MA. In Minnesota, Christine has worked with Ticket Works, a company that provides box office and front-of-house services for theatres, and Minnesota Fringe. She also worked with Bloomington Civic Theatre as a consulting Director of Development. In addition to serving MACT, Christine is a consultant, grant writer and fundraiser. She began her MACT duties last October.

Kerry Goff has been named Artistic Operations Manager for **Fredericksburg Theater Company**, Fredericksburg, TX, succeeding the founder of the company, **Jeryl Hoover**. Kerry graduated from

McMurry University, Abilene, TX, in the spring of 2010 with a BFA in acting and directing and a minor in musical theatre. Past positions include: General Manager of McMurry Summer Dinner Theatre 2009, scene shop foreman for McMurry University Theatre, technical crew for Abilene's historic Paramount Theatre, actor in a troupe for Young Audiences of America in Abilene, and actor for an acting troupe in Abilene called **Voices Unmasked**. He began his new position July 1, 2010.

Adam Wagner is the new Artistic Director for **Grandstreet Theatre** in Helena, MT. An Indiana native, Adam holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the University of Cincinnati. Adam's musical compositions have been performed in numerous concerts and cabarets across the country and by talented Broadway performers including Christian Borle (*Legally Blonde*), Jill Paice (*Curtains*), and Alexander Gemignani (*Les Miserables*). As an actor, he can be seen in the film, *Teeth*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. He has also performed at the St. Louis Mury, Seacoast Repertory and Ogunquit Playhouse and has directed and choreographed several musicals for Grandstreet. He moved to Montana last July from New York City to begin his new position. ♦

Moving On

Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest11

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival.

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
II	MD	Montgomery Playhouse	Gaithersburg	<i>Conversations With the Spanish Lady</i>
II	MD	Newtowne Players	Lexington Park	<i>woman: revised</i>
IV	MS	Just Over the Rainbow Theatre	Hattiesburg	<i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>
IV	MS	Starkeville Community Theatre	Starkeville	<i>The Dixie Swim Club</i>
IV	VA	Caroline Community Theatre	Bowling Green	<i>Laundry and Bourbon</i>
IV	VA	Springfield Community Theatre	Springfield	<i>Heroes</i>



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Turning Gripes into Goals

by Twink Lynch

Some years ago I attended a workshop on conflict management conducted by a wonderful trainer, Mike Murray. Among other things, he provided us with a simple exercise for conflict resolution called “Turning Gripes into Goals.” Each participant was asked to write answers to the following four questions:

1. My frustration, gripe or problem is:
2. My real concern is:
3. What I am really wishing for is:
4. Therefore, my goal is:

This exercise takes the problem out of the emotional realm and into the intellectual realm, where reason has room to prevail and problems can be solved more easily. To get on with the problem-solving, participants add a fifth statement: “My problem is how to (accomplish the goal in #4).”

Back in June while I was working on my article for “Spotlight,” a 79-year old theatre group contacted me and reported that some of their Board members had begun to do occasional shows with new, competing community theatres. These new groups were “starting to use strategies, ideas, and procedures that our theatre uses. This is particularly bothersome in the marketing area, when they copy the programs we use. They have some of our mailing lists...and now our patrons are being solicited by two or three theatre companies with very similar marketing pieces.” This copycat phenomenon seemed to be the direct result of the Board members who went to work with the competing groups – “they are in a show, they want to see it succeed, so they pass on information and ideas that our group developed.” The competing theatres were “filling the house, increasing the professionalism of the group, and generally improving [their] situation, at the expense of our theatre.” What could be done to stop these wandering Board members from working with other theatres and sharing “company secrets?”

Since this problem appeared on my computer screen right at the time I was writing last issue’s article, I shared the many comments from an email discussion among community theatre managing directors with my correspondent. After reviewing the material, this is what that group did:

First, they had a Board retreat and looked at the reasons each Board member agreed to serve on the Board. “This was more important than we realized. At our stage of development, a person who serves to exert influence or secure their spot “on-stage” should not be on the Board. We need Board members

who have a keen interest in seeing every aspect of the group grow – not just for the group, but also for the benefit of the community!” They have re-designed their Board recruitment procedures and they are taking “much more time to develop and learn about potential Board candidates.”

Second, they looked at why a Board member would rather be performing somewhere else – the answer was simple: “they perceive they would *enjoy* performing elsewhere more than working at our theatre.” That was a real wake-up call, and the Board decided to change that.

They decided if they are the ten most important people in the group, they should act like it and be treated like it. They needed to “break the perception that the Board is the group of people who do the jobs others don’t bother finishing or no one else wants to do.” They needed to build “the perception that the success of the theatre is due to a strong, insightful group of people who steer the organization toward success.” Remember, this group is 79 years old. And here’s what they did:

1. They “rebuilt” the Board, “redefining and refining committees to a point where everyone was in charge of something they were highly committed to.” They “redefined the expectations of each committee and the process for responsibility, authority (budget) and accountability.” Their expectations are now clearly defined, and “everyone has committed to be held and to hold others accountable.”
2. They limited the number of committees Board members could serve on and the number of Board members allowed on any particular committee, hopefully ending the burnout that had resulted from the previous system. They stressed the need for Chairs of committees to become “project managers” and not “doers.”
3. They have instituted an aggressive newspaper, telephone, newsletter and website campaign to recruit volunteers to serve on the committees. They are going to hold their first “Meet the Board” night at the theatre in order to match interested volunteers with the head of an appropriate committee.
4. In addition, they have started an aggressive campaign to introduce Board members to the community by writing news articles, doing cable TV shows, and using their newsletter to make their Board members much more visible. They want everyone to know who the “Team” is that is leading the theatre group, and are ordering engraved nametags for Board

members to wear while at rehearsals and performances and other events at the theatre so they are immediately identifiable.

5. They have begun planning an effective recognition program – not just for Board members for but all the volunteers. They have realized they need to pat more people on the back, Board members especially. Board members do a “huge amount of work,” probably more than anyone realizes.
6. They are working on a “Team Building” program, getting the Board together for social events and fundraising-success parties so they can get to know each better and thus work better together. They want to get everyone involved in the process of selecting future Board members. And they are developing a “Board logo” that will represent the Board’s commitment to being a Team.
7. Finally, “we think the duty of Loyalty, Care and Obedience should work both ways. We are asking the Board to treat the Theatre as a valuable asset – the Theatre needs to treat the Board in the same manner.” In the end, they took no vote on the issue of Board members working with competitive theatre groups. “We felt that we should make it a privilege, and honor, and a source of pride to serve on our Board, and if we were successful in that, their need to work with outside groups would all but disappear.”

This resolve and comprehensive plan of action has all taken place in the last couple of months. Probably the most crucial piece was to organize the work that has to be done, factor

accountability into the design, and then begin to recruit the right people for the right jobs. Nothing beats a good match of talent and interest with a job needing to be done.

I am sharing this real story of a real theatre group because I think their approach to the problem of wandering Board members was so creative. They may never have heard of Mike Murray’s “Turning Gripes into Goals” exercise, but instead of just being mad at their wandering Board members, they looked at what their real concerns were and what they wished would be true (Board members feeling good about their job because they were doing their job well) and took responsibility to make the needed changes so that all Board members would want to work only for their home theatre group. Furthermore, they asked *their Board members* about their reasons for serving on the Board before they jumped to any conclusions. The involved Board members had a chance to share with the group what was really going on inside their heads and hearts, and, as a result, the decisions dealt with the real problem instead of someone’s angry fantasy. Bravo!

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, October 2002

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardsmanship for Spotlight for many years. Her early articles are compiled into a still-relevant book for Boards: Boards in the Spotlight. See how to order on the next page.

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
continuing through April 3	IMA – Europe Entertainment Tournament of Plays	EUR Various	011-49-631-411-6252 www.mwrgermany.com
March 3-6	Southeastern Theatre Conference ★Regional AACTFest 2011	IV Atlanta GA	336-272-3645 www.setc.org
March 4-6	New England Theatre Conference ★Region I AACTFest	I Concord NH	781-377-4233 www.netconline.org
March 4-6	Theatre Nebula ★Illinois State AACTFest	IL Palatine	847-359-9378 theatrenebula.org
March 4-6	Ohio Community Theatre Association ★AACTFest 11	OH Maumee	419-376-5756 www.ohiocommunitytheatre.org
March 11-13	Washington State Community Theatre Assn ★Kaleidoscope 2011 (State Festival)	WA Spokane	253-565-6867 www.wscta.org
March 11-13	Theatre New Mexico ★State Festival 2011	NM Artesia	575-748-1288 www.theatrenm.org
March 11-12	Bas Bleu Theatre ★Region VII AACTFest 11	VII Fort Collins CO	970-498-8066 ext 2 www.basbleu.org
March 16-20	Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc. ★State AACTFest 2011	TX Fort Worth	817-731-2238 www.texas theatres.org
March 18-20	Nebraska Association of Community Theatre ★Nebraska & Missouri 2011 State Festival	NE,MO Manley NE	402-234-2553 users.connections.net/NACT/
March 18-20	Pennsylvania Assn of Community Theatres ★PACTFest 2011	PA Wilkes-Barre	302-984-1278 www.pacttheatres.org/
March 18-20	Association of Kansas Theatres ★AACTFest 2011	KS Atchison	913-367-1647 www.theatreatchison.org
March 23-27	Minnesota Assn of Community Theatres ★MACTFest 2011	MN Fergus Falls	320-986-2822 www.mact.net
March 25-27	Indiana Community Theatre League ★Indiana State Festival 2011	IN Kokomo	765-453-2439 www.kokomocivictheatre.webs.com/
March 25-26	Delaware Theatre Association ★DTAFest 2011	DE Wilmington	410-398-3564 www.dtafest.org
March 31 - April 3	Iowa Community Theatre Association ★State AACTFest 2011	IA Newton	641-792-0690 www.newtontheatre.com
April 1-2	South Dakota Theatre Association ★AACTFest 2011	SD Aberdeen	605-225-2228 aberdeencommunitytheatre.com
April 14-15	Chino Community Theatre ★California State AACTFest 2011	CA Chino	909-455-6768 chinocommunitytheatre.org
April 14-17	AACT Region VI ★Region VI AACTFest 2011	VI Lewisville TX	432-682-2544 www.texas theatres.org
April 15-16	Washington State Community Theatre Assn ★Region IX AACTFest 2011	IX Richland WA	509-521-3449 www.wscta.org
April 15-17	Eastern States Theatre ASSN (ESTA) ★Region II AACTFest 2011	II Pottstown PA	302-547-5998 www.estafest.org
April 16	Chino Community Theatre ★Region VIII AACTFest 2011	VIII Chino CA	909-455-6768 chinocommunitytheatre.org
April 27 - May 1	Region V Association ★Region V AACTFest 2011	V Salina KS	785-827-6126 www.salinatheatre.com
April 29 - May 1	Association of Region III ★Region III AACTFest 2011	III Columbus OH	614-418-9672 region3aact.org
April 30	IMA – Europe Entertainment Topper Awards	Heidelberg, Germany	011-49-631-411-6252 www.mwrgermany.com

For dates farther ahead, check the website: www.aact2.org

★ Indicates festival in the 2011 AACTFest Cycle

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Celebrating AACT Milestones



10 years!
 Past Presidents blow out the candles at the Winter Meetings at West Palm Beach, FL. (See page 4 for names.)



AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford seated (center right) with Twink and future presidents Jill Patchin, Rod McCullough and (standing right) Jon Kerkhoff.



20 years!
 Art Cole, founder of AACTFest, is honored at AACT International Theatrefest 2006 by host Midland (TX) Community Theatre.

Fifteen years later many of these AACT volunteers are still active. How many can you name?



Bea Miller (left), 1st AACT President, proudly welcomed AACT to Theatre Memphis for AACTFest '99.



15 years!
 President (in 2001) Jack Phillips presents the Art Cole Award to Rod McCullough (current President) during AACTFest '01 in Harrisburg, PA.