



Two Educational Conferences Coming Up

Education Directors Conference

August 17-19, 2012

Hosted by Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre

Does your theatre's education program need a boost? Do you have great ideas that you can share with others about your education program? What to offer, setting curriculum, juggling the schedule, selecting instructors, recruiting students, registration, making sure all runs smoothly – this is just a sampling of what you will learn when you sign up for the biennial Education Directors Conference that will be hosted by the Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre August 17-19.

During two days of roundtable discussions participants will share materials, exchange ideas and tackle theatre education issues guided by an experienced education director, Penelope Notter, Associate Director of Grand Rapids Civic Theatre. The conference will begin Friday afternoon and conclude late Saturday.



Penelope Notter

Topics will include every aspect of conducting educational programs. Registrants will be asked to rank and add to the topics list prior to the conference, so the agenda will address the biggest concerns and needs of those attending. Plus, the conference will result in renewed enthusiasm and contacts all over the country - a network of colleagues whose friendship and support will be as close as an email or a phone call. The conference is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for their theatre's educational programs. ♦

Registration Fee:

\$199 AACT member, \$254 non-member \$25 early bird discount if register by July 18

Covers all sessions, breaks, facilitator, and materials.

For more information or to register go to www.aact2.org/event/EdConf12 or contact the AACT office.

Artistic Directors Conference

November 11-13, 2012

Hosted by Theatre Arlington (TX)

Have you ever wished you had someone to talk to who understands what it means to find just the right plays or directors for the next season or that you knew someone out there who also struggles with actor and technical problems? Then this is the right conference for you. The biennial Artistic Directors Conference will be held in Arlington, TX November 11-13 at Theatre Arlington. It will be held Sunday afternoon through Monday evening. It is open to anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for the artistic direction of their theatre.

The conference will foster interchange with Artistic Directors and Producers, assist them in their artistic long-range planning, and encourage them to re-envision more exciting ways to raise the bar for high quality theatre. It will create a network of artistic staff and allow them time to think and refresh. The conference will be facilitated by Murray Chase, Executive/Artistic Director of Venice (FL) Theatre.



Murray Chase

Two days of roundtable discussions will address providing leadership to the theatre's artistic goals, finding resources, developing the season, collaborating with the design team, overseeing guest directors, managing volunteer actors, creating youth and senior theatre programs, developing a minority volunteer and audience base, supporting playwrighting, and other hot topics chosen in advance by the participants. ♦

Registration Fee:

\$199 AACT member, \$254 non-member \$25 early bird discount if register by October 10

Covers all sessions, breaks, facilitator, and materials.

For more information or to register go to www.aact2.org/event/ADConf12 or contact the AACT office.

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Linda M. Lee
AACT President
2011-2013

Let's talk about commitment - no, not the kind with padded walls and a straight jacket (though many feel that anyone involved in theatre should have the papers ready), but that which deals with duty and devotion. When people marry, they commit to each other "for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health," signifying that this is a serious, thought out decision, as it should be. So why am I thinking about commitment when it comes to theatre?

Participation in theatre is time consuming and requires a high level of personal responsibility. Actors must attend

When someone says yes to serving on a board, that's a pretty serious commitment.

rehearsals, learn their lines and blocking, be present for all performances, and . . . hang up their costumes! If they do not follow through, then the quality of the show will suffer. The same goes for directors, designers, technicians and administrators. They must each play their part or the final product will be less than envisioned. In almost every case, the first requirement is that they show up to work.

So what about Board members? When someone says yes to serving on a board, that's a pretty serious commitment. That person is saying, yes, I will be responsible for making sure this organization pays its bills; delivers the services required for it to meet its mission; abides by the laws of the local, state and national jurisdictions; and survives to serve a future generation. There's a lot of better/worse, richer/poorer, sickness/health in organizations, all of which must be understood by those who choose to lead.

So what drives everyone crazy? When board members don't show up! How can one lead when one is not involved? Why does one say yes to the job if he or

she isn't going to participate? How can anyone else be expected to contribute if the board member doesn't?

There are a myriad of reasons: lack of training, unexpected life circumstances, over-commitment, crises in confidence, adversarial relationships, financial stress. If searching for excuses takes more time than actually participating, perhaps it is time to reassess. Though marriage vows include "till death do us part," that's not really necessary for board membership.

Honestly, it's not hard to be a good board member. Read Twink Lynch's book *Boards in the Spotlight* (available through AACT), seek out how to apply your talents to the tasks required, then just show up. You'll be committed – but in the very best way.



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Co, Dog, Got by Steven Dietz and Allison Gregory



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There's still time to sign up for AACT's 2012 National Convention in New York City! See the story on page 11 for updates on workshops, tours and tickets.



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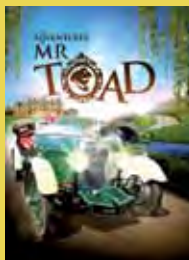
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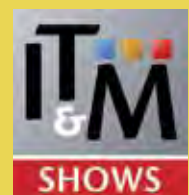


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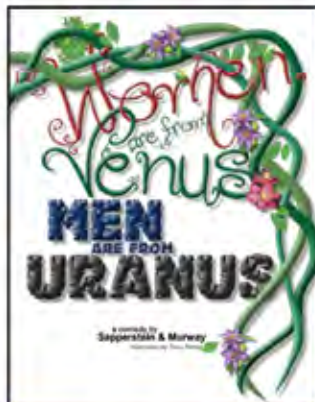
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CAST SIZE:
2 On-stage Actors
2 Off-stage Actors

Ever wonder exactly what transpired when the human race was created? Take a humorous trip into the differences between men and women in a delightful, light hearted love story that goes back to the very beginning.

Performed in Sheboygan Falls Wisconsin, February 2012 at the Final Approach Dinner Theatre to delighted audiences ranging between 100 and 250 per evening for 6 performances.



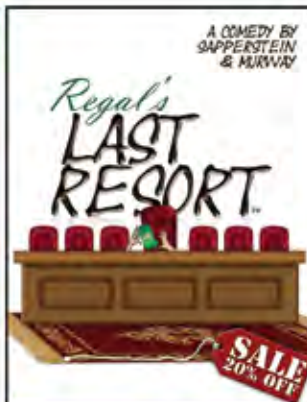
**MOTHER
TRUCKERS**

CAST SIZE:
5 On-stage Actors
1 Off-stage Actor

Maxine's husband has just died of a heart attack leaving her saddled with the payments for his brand new Peterbilt Truck and in serious financial trouble. Her sister, Charlotte, makes an off-hand comment about driving his route and the Mother Truckers are born!

"On The Road" will NEVER be the same again!

Performed in Oriental North Carolina, September 2011 at The Old Theatre Group to laughing, delighted audiences.



**REGAL'S
LAST
RESORT**

CAST SIZE:
8 On-stage Actors
2 in audience

It's 1996 and the town of Regal, South Carolina is going bankrupt. The town council is corrupt and Greed runs rampant while, going on in the background, is a secret lover's tryst and a 20% off rug sale.

Performed in Sheboygan Falls Wisconsin, December 2011 at the Final Approach Dinner Theatre to happy, laughing audiences ranging between 100 and 250 per evening for 4 performances. On stage there again this summer due to audience demand.



**SO THERE
WAS THIS
RAT**

CAST SIZE: 9

Myra Guthrie has lost her Mother. Her Father, Virgil, is completely heartbroken, and her husband insists that he come to live with them. Virgil makes a new friend, the mischief meter goes WAY up, and they get into all SORTS of trouble. They have both been hard working men all their lives, and now that they are in their 70's, they figure it's time for a little FUN!

To be performed in Port Washington Wisconsin, March 2012 at Memories Ballroom Dinner Theatre for 7 performances.

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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Summer Board & Committees

July 11-12 & July 14, 2012

Annual Membership Meeting

July 14, 2012

Millennium Broadway Hotel

New York City, NY

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Educational Conferences

Education Directors Conference

August 17-19, 2012

hosted by the Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre.

Artistic Directors Conference

November 11-13, 2012

hosted by Theatre Arlington (TX)

Did you know?

You can register for AACT events online? Select the type event under "Calendar." Registration is now open for the NYC Convention, the Education Directors Conference, and the Artistic Directors Conference. Just go to www.aact2.org.

AACT is a national co-sponsor of
National Arts Advocacy Day on April 17.

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



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*

The issue of a theatre's liability when serving alcohol is constantly at the forefront.

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!* ♦

Originally published in Spotlight, August 2005 issue.

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AACTFest 2013 National Adjudicators

The 2013 National AACTFest will be judged by three experienced and nationally known adjudicators, with an alternate in the wings, in case needed. Their comments on the shows will be a learning experience for all in the audience. The National Festival will be held June 17-23 2013 in Carmel, Indiana.



Tim Jebson has been the Executive Director of Midland (TX) Community Theatre (MCT) since 1997. At MCT, Tim helped the organization increase the size of its operating budget, purchase a 1929 downtown historic theatre, and raise \$3.6 million for renovations to the Cole Theatre prior to hosting the 2006 AACT International Theatre festival. Recent directing credits include *Red*

White and Tuna, *Guys and Dolls*, *Hairspray*, *White Christmas*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Les Misérables*, *The Producers*, *Proof*, *Ragtime*, *Art and Evita*. Tim has adjudicated AACT state festivals in Mississippi, Indiana and New Mexico, as well as adjudicating AACT Region I (2009) and Region X (2010). 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 (TNT) and the Midland-Odessa Area AIDS Support group, and currently serves as Treasurer of AACT.



Paul Nelson has been adjudicating in New York State for over 16 years. He served as a Responder for the Ohio, Delaware and Pennsylvania State Festivals and has also served as adjudicator for the New England - Region I festival and the Region III AACTFest. He is a lifelong member of Alpha Psi Omega and has won multiple awards for his

numerous theatre activities. Paul has been recognized by the Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) and the Eastern States Theatre Association (ESTA) for his work as an actor and director. He has been honored by TANYS for outstanding contributions to non-professional theatre. He has served as TANYS President and as a board member for ESTA. Paul is employed as a Mental Health Registered Nurse and obtained theatre and education degrees from SUNY Geneseo. Additionally he has earned an AAS in Nursing and is working on his Masters as an Adult Nurse Practitioner.



Kathy Pingel has been the Director of Education and Youth Programming at the Des Moines Community Playhouse for the past seven years. She also serves as Artistic Director of the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. She holds a BA in theatre from Eastern Michigan University where she studied with Virginia Koste and a MA from

Northwestern University in Performance Studies where she worked with Frank Galati. She also holds a MA in teaching from Northwestern. After graduation, she taught at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois and Southern Illinois University. She then worked as a free lance director and did a year-long stint as Outreach Coordinator for Orlando Repertory Theatre before settling in Iowa. Kathy has adjudicated at the state and regional levels for the American Association of Community Theatre, as well as the AACT International Festival in 2010. She facilitated AACT's Theatre Education Directors Conference in August 2010.

Alternate Adjudicator



Keith Martin is the John M. Blackburn Distinguished Professor of Theatre at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. His 35-year career in the not-for-profit sector includes producing, artistic direction, choreography, and management in professional theatre, dance, opera, symphony, film and television, for which he received a 2010

Emmy® award. Martin's 400-plus stage credits include direct work with such renowned artists as Academy award-winner Olympia Dukakis; Pulitzer Prize recipients Beth Henley and Tony Kushner; producer Joseph Papp and performers Dixie Carter, Faith Ford, Sharon Lawrence, Telly Savalas, Burt Reynolds, Tony Award-winners Bonnie Franklin and Beth Leavel, and Emmy Award-winner Doris Roberts. Previously, he served as managing director of Richmond Ballet, producer/managing director of Charlotte Repertory Theatre, Artistic Director of Theatre Charlotte and Executive Director of the Community Theatre of Greensboro. Martin has adjudicated theatre festivals on the state, regional and national level for over three decades, and co-chaired AACTFest '07 Charlotte. ♦



IT IS SOLVED BY WALKING by Catherine Banks

When Margaret learns of the death of her ex-husband, she recalls their earliest days together as Ph.D. candidates, beginning a journey through her past. Told through the sensations of Wallace Stevens's poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," the subject of her uncompleted thesis, Margaret evokes beautiful, ordinary, and painful sexual memories from before, after, and during their marriage. Bold and poetic, *It is Solved by Walking* is an intimate portrait of a writer making her way back to poetry one step at a time.



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NYC Convention Update: It's not too late to participate

AACT's New York City Convention 2012 is right around the corner, and it isn't too late to "be a part of it!" You can still register for the whole week or, if you live close to the city and would rather commute, it's possible to purchase activities a la carte. Check the event page of the AACT website at www.aact2.org/event/NYC and sign up now. We'd love to have you with us!

In case you haven't heard, here are a couple of fairly recent developments:

War Horse Tickets Secured

Thanks to the efforts of our friends at Manhattan Tour and Travel, we've secured tickets to the 2011 Tony Award-winning play, *War Horse* as one of your show choices.

Based on the book of the same name by acclaimed children's writer Michael Morpurgo and adapted for stage by Nick Stafford, *War Horse* centers on the relationship between Albert, a teenager growing up on a farm in Devon, England, just before World War I, and his beloved half-thoroughbred horse, Joey. Albert's family is poor, and his father raises cash by selling Joey to the cavalry as the war begins in 1914. Too young to enlist, Albert craves news of his horse, which was shipped to the battlefield in France.

Three years later, Albert runs away to join the army, determined to find Joey and bring him home. Meanwhile, this smart and brave horse is pulled into service on both sides of the conflict before being left on his own in no-man's-land, surrounded by trenches and barbed wire.

War Horse is a thrillingly unique theatrical epic in which actors tell the story alongside (and sometimes astride) lifelike horse puppets. The vast stage at Lincoln Center Theater's Vivian Beaumont Theater is virtually bare, but the cast of 35 (including groups of three performers who control the horse puppets' "head, heart and hind") is constantly on the move in scenes that jump from the Devon countryside to the battlefields and forests of World War I-era France.

For more information about the production, visit www.warhorseonbroadway.com.

Workshop Schedule Taking Shape

We're in process of setting the precise schedule for workshops at the NYC Convention. So far, we have these great sessions lined up:



Subway Tour

Although Manhattan is filled with taxi cabs, it is a city for walkers. Walking and riding the subway is often faster than sitting in traffic in a cab. Participants will be guided through using the New York subway system through finding the subway station, buying a ticket, getting on the right train, and knowing where to get off.

Costume Collection Tour

Costumers will be awed by the TDF Costume Collection of more than 75,000 costumes and accessories from Broadway, Off-Broadway, opera and touring productions. (The Theatre Development Fund makes this huge inventory available for rent at low cost to nonprofit performing arts companies.)

Actor/Director Panel

Working actors and directors will answer your questions about the reality of making a living (or not) in theatre and share stories about their careers.

Theatre & the Law: A Legal Workshop for Community Theatre Professionals

The myriad legal and business issues facing the typical community theatre can be daunting. This interactive workshop will offer a practical, comprehensive overview of the critical legal issues arising in the business of community theatre. The workshop will be presented by Laura Magedoff, Esq. and Lisa Miller, Esq. of the Nissenbaum Law Group.

Showstopper! Workshop

Back by popular demand! Kick up your heels in the "Showstopper!" workshop. Here's the concept: We're out of town in rehearsal for a new Broadway musical. A joyous, new chorus number has to go into the show in two days!

Participants will actually learn a song, stage it, and knock everybody's socks off with our fantastic showstopper! Fulfill your fantasy of being a Broadway Gypsy (at least for a day!) while picking up great tips from a working New York choreographer and a Broadway music director on



The Showstopper! Workshop returns to AACT NYC by popular demand. Here, participants in the 2008 workshop immerse themselves in the process of creating a showstopping Broadway musical number.

how to work fast under pressure. Come to this workshop to have a ball and also get a taste of how the work gets done in New York City. (Thanks to Manhattan Tour & Travel for sponsoring "Showstopper!" and other great assistance with the convention.)

Royalty House Panel

Royalty house representatives will update you on new acquisitions and answer your questions from negotiating rights and royalties to getting the rights for new releases. This is a great way to put a face with the voice on the phone, and learn who to ask for when you call about shows.

Several other possibilities are in the works, including a musical director workshop, a hat maker workshop, and (hopefully) a session with *Sirius on Broadway* (For information on *Sirius on Broadway*, go to siriusbuzz.com/catch-sirius-xm-live-on-broadway.php.)

For more information and to register for AACT New York Convention 2012 visit our website at www.aact2.org/event/NYC. ♦

**AACT
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New York City
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"Reaper" is available from:
Playwrights Guild of Canada
www.playwrightsguild.ca

Help in Hard Times

The Cultural Data Project works to strengthen arts organizations

By Sarah Boghosian and Sarah Kowalski

Disclaimer: this is not another article about the challenges community theatres face in today's difficult economic climate. Lagging arts funding and budget constraints are a daily reality, one that theatres and the nonprofit world at large know only too well. Yet we also know that during times of hardship, creativity can flourish—after all, it was during the Great Depression of the 1930s that legends from Tennessee Williams to Noel Coward made their mark.

Artists tend to excel at coming up with creative solutions in tough times. But all of this trying to “do more with less,” as we in the nonprofit world are so often urged, can feel like a precarious balancing act. Should we try to trim our marketing budget, or will that only hurt ticket sales? Should we put on fewer performances this year, or more? And is there anything we can do to make the case for more public funding?

Across the country, more than 12,000 nonprofit arts and cultural groups are using the Cultural Data Project (CDP), a powerful online management system, to help sort through exactly these types of questions. To date, the CDP is operating in 11 states and Washington, DC, and it's continuing to expand. More than 1,100 theatre organizations are already participating nationwide.

At its core, the CDP is a Web-based data collection tool with a powerful reports feature and free support and training services. Supported by grantmakers in every participating state, the CDP is always free-of-charge for the arts and cultural organizations that use it.

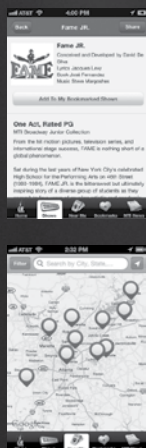
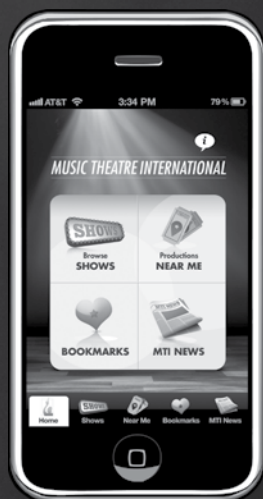
To take part, organizations complete the CDP's online Data Profile once a year. The Data Profile contains a variety of financial, programmatic, and operational information, and is based on year-end audits or financial statements. (Organizations of any size, including those that are fiscally sponsored or unaudited, can use the CDP—they complete only the sections that are relevant to them.) After submitting a Data Profile, organizations gain access to a wealth of reporting features. The CDP enables organizations to:

- instantly generate reports as part of an application to participating grantmakers;
- create professional annual reports with just three mouse-clicks;
- view a variety of trend reports to analyze their operations over time and inform strategic planning;
- compare key aspects of operations, such as marketing, fund raising, or board giving, to an anonymous pool of peer organizations — benchmarking by discipline, budget size, or other criteria.

continued on next page

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The CDP also enables the arts community as a whole to stand up and be counted: the information collected enables researchers and advocates to make the case for the cultural sector's assets and needs, as well as its important contributions to local economies. In fact, advocates have used the data to defeat a proposed "arts tax" on nonprofit ticket sales, and to defend public funding for state and local arts councils. ♦

To read more about the Cultural Data Project or access the many research reports that have used CDP data, visit www.cultural-data.org.

An Emerging National Model: The Cultural Data Project

205 grant programs using the CDP

12,100 arts and cultural organizations participating

50,000 reports generated by participating organizations



States currently using the CDP: Arizona, California, District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

States actively working towards a launch of the CDP: Minnesota, Texas

States in early stages of discussion: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico

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A Theatre's Journey After AACTFest11

By Len Matheo, Director of *Parallel Lives*,
Evergreen (CO) Players

We had just returned from the AACT 2011 National Festival in Rochester, New York, and we truly believed that our two-year journey with *Parallel Lives* was over... that our perfect performance in Rochester was to be our finest memory. We had destroyed the set and placed it in the dumpster behind the Geva Theater, and all that was left was a piece that we kept as a souvenir of this incredible journey.

Within a month of returning home to Evergreen, Colorado, we received a call from Jim Sohre, Army Europe Entertainment Director. He wanted to know if we would be willing to fly out to Heidelberg, Germany and perform our show at their Festival of One-Act Plays to be held there at the Army's Roadside Theater in October, 2011. We ran through it: How much would it cost? How would we get our set, props, and costumes all the way over to Germany? Could our little theater company really afford to do this?

The "Can we afford this" question was answered by our hosts, our company, and our community. The festival in Heidelberg would cover our housing, and build our set. The Evergreen Players board of directors agreed that the company would cover airfares. They sent out word into the

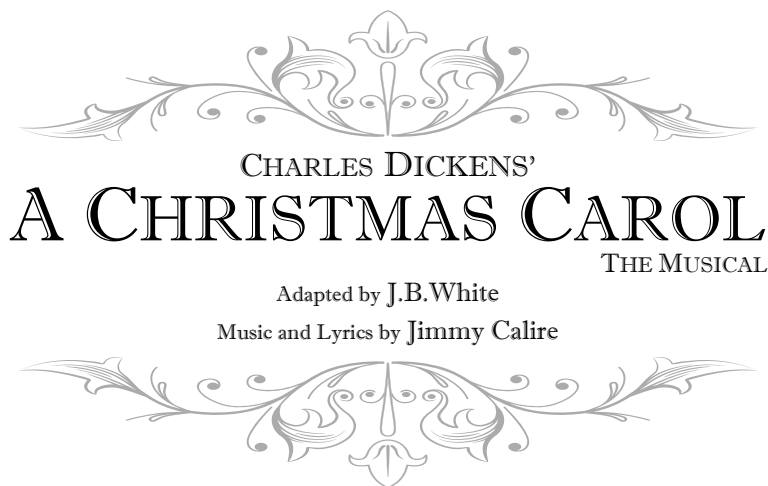


John Davis

The Evergreen Players' set in a box (which opens into two wardrobe stations) was recreated by Roadside Theater in Germany.

community - Evergreen's popular two-woman show was going to Germany. The donations started flooding in - with amazing generosity, our community raised everything we needed to get our cast, crew, costumes & props to Heidelberg.

Parallel Lives has a lot of costumes and props for a two-



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woman show, so we shipped it all to the Roadside Theater (which is located on a United States Army installation), seven weeks before the festival. Plenty of time, we thought.

There were six of us traveling: our two actresses, Lisa DeCaro and Gail Montgomery; our SM, Gary Sohrweid; our ASM and general man-for-all-seasons, John Davis; our lighting designer, Jennifer Hogue; and me (director).

John and Gary arrived in Heidelberg first, and they called me with good news, bad news, and just-plain-weird news. The good news was that Brian Rausch at Roadside was a construction rock star - he had built our set to be even better than the original, and it was ready to go.

The weird news? In one of the photos I had sent to the Roadside, to help them in constructing the set, was Evergreen Players VP (and former ASM for *Parallel Lives*) Brenda Worley Billings. Vic Phillipson, the T.D. for the festival, saw the picture, and said, "Hey! That's Brenda! I dated her in high school!" The world is so small...



Evergreen Players' stage manager, Gary Sohrweid, prepares for rehearsal in Heidelberg, Germany.

The bad news? Our box of costumes and props had not arrived. We held onto hope for three days, but when the day of our performance arrived, our box still had not. Everyone at the Roadside - Dane, Brian, Jim, Andy and Sandy - helped us pull together replacements. Dane found choir robes through a local church.



John Davis

Lisa DeCaro and Gail Montgomery perform *Parallel Lives* (with replacement costumes and props) for Army Europe Entertainment's Festival of One-Act Plays.

We bought bandanas from tourist shops in Heidelberg. We literally took the clothes off our friends' backs.

We saw many great shows that weekend in Heidelberg. We explored two quaint German towns (Heidelberg & Speyer) that were some of the few places not destroyed during WWII. We were charmed by the people of Heidelberg, and deeply impressed by the people who make up the theater community of the U.S. military in Europe.

At its best, theatre brings people together. In this case, our "little show" gave us the opportunity to meet the incredible theater professionals of the Roadside & Army Europe, to watch great shows from around the world, and to be a part of a world we had never seen. "Break a leg" indeed. ♦

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- BroadwayWorld.com

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GO! - LA WEEKLY

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- NoHoArtsdistrict.com

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- ReviewPlays.com

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- BroadwayWorld.com

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- Tucson Times

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- Actors Entertainment

PolyesterTheMusical.com

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- LA WEEKLY Pick of the Week

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- Daily Variety

"A surefire, laugh-a-minute hit!"

- The Toluca Times

"Hilarious!"

- American Eagle News

"Superb!"

- NoHo News



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Are You Up To Date on Accessibility?

New ADA – Americans with Disabilities – regulations were published in 2010 and took effect March 15, 2011. The 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, which take effect March 15, 2012, update and amend some of the provisions of the original 1991 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

What does this mean for your theatre?

ADA Title III applies to Places of Public Accommodation, which includes theatres, concert halls, arts and performing arts centers, as well as museums, lecture halls, parks, zoos, etc. not operated by a state or local government. (Non-federal government entities are covered by Title II.)

Even if you don't operate a facility, your theatre may need to adopt some policies or procedures, and train volunteers and staff to conform to the revised regulations when you utilize facilities. Theatres particularly need to be aware of the new ticketing regulations.



Service Animal = Dog

A "service animal" is now defined as any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks benefitting an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. (There is a limited exception for miniature horses.)

FIND IT IN THE REGULATIONS

Places of Public Accommodation: §36.104 definition and §36.302 (c) service animals
State and Local Governments: §35.104 definition and §35.136 service animals

Ask only two questions! If the service a dog is providing is not readily apparent, only two questions can be asked:

- 1 – Is the animal required because of a disability?
- 2 – What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

No other inquiries about an individual's disability or the dog are permitted. Documentation of the dog's training may not be requested. If a dog is out of control, and the handler does not take effective action, or the dog is not housebroken, the person may be asked to remove the dog. But the person with the disability must still be allowed to obtain goods, services, or accommodations.

Mobility Devices are more than wheelchairs

The definition of mobility devices has expanded

to include not only traditional devices, such as wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters, but also any other power-driven mobility devices used by a person with a mobility disability including, but not limited to, Segways. All such devices must be permitted in any area that pedestrians use unless it would result in a fundamental alteration, is a direct threat, or creates a safety hazard.

FIND IT IN THE REGULATIONS

State and Local Governments: : §35.104 definition and §35.137 mobility devices
Places of Public Accommodation: §36.104 definition and §36.311 mobility devices

Credible assurance that the mobility device is required because of the person's disability may be requested. The person with the mobility device may provide credible assurance by showing a state disability parking placard or other government issued proof of disability or may give verbal assurance that is not contradicted by observation. Remember, it is not permissible to ask an individual about the nature and extent of their disability.

Ticketing

The revised regulations include a new eight-part section on ticketing for wheelchair spaces and companion seats. Here are some of the highlights.

- 1 – Ticket Sales for accessible seating must be available at the same times and in the same ways as for other tickets, including online sales.
- 2 – Identification of Seating must be to the same level of specificity as other seats on seating charts, brochures, etc.
- 3 – Ticket Prices for accessible seating cannot be higher than other seats in the same section and tickets must be available at all price levels.

2010 ADA Standards Number of Wheelchair Spaces in Assembly Areas	
CAPACITY OF SEATING (# of seats)	MINIMUM NUMBER OF REQUIRED WHEELCHAIR SPACES
4 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 150	4
151 to 300	5
301 to 500	6
501 to 5,000	6, plus 1 for each 150, or fraction thereof, between 501 through 5,000
5,001 and over	36, plus 1 for each 200, or fraction thereof, over 5,000

4 – Purchasing Multiple Tickets procedures must recognize that individuals with a disability are entitled to purchase up to three additional tickets for each wheelchair space as companion seats, so long as the companion seats are contiguous and in the same row with the wheelchair space, provided that at the time of purchase there are three such seats available and ticket purchases are not limited to less than four tickets.

Number of ASL Receivers Required Based on Seating Capacity		
Capacity of Seating in Assembly Area	Minimum Number of Required Receivers	Minimum Number of Required Receivers Required to be Hearing Aid Compatible
50 or less	2	2
51 to 200	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats*	2
201 to 500	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats*	1 per 4 receivers*
501 to 1000	20, plus 1 per 33 seats over 500 seats*	1 per 4 receivers*
1001 to 2000	35, plus 1 per 50 seats over 1000 seats*	1 per 4 receivers*
2001 and over	55, plus 1 per 50 seats over 2000 seats*	1 per 4 receivers*
	* or fraction thereof	

5 – Release of accessible seating to other ticket purchasers may only happen when one of three conditions occurs – all seats in the venue are sold out, all seats in a price are sold out, all seats in a location are sold out.

6 – Ticket Transfers by persons with disabilities must be allowed under the same terms and conditions as other ticket holders.

7 – Secondary Ticket Market purchased tickets must be able to be used by an individual with a disability. This means reasonable modifications to policies, practices, or procedures must be made to allow the person to exchange an inaccessible seat for an accessible one in a comparable location if one is available when the ticket is presented.

8 – Prevention of Fraud can be addressed in two ways:

- asking if the person for whom the ticket is purchased has a disability that requires use of the accessible seating. If the purchase is for a series of events, such as season tickets, the purchaser may be required to attest to the disability in writing. Proof of the disability or what the disability is may not be requested.
- investigating the potential misuse of accessible seating.

Assisted Listening Systems

Revised regulations require assembly facilities to provide assistive listening systems (ALS) where audible communication is integral to use of the space, and that 25% of them are hearing aid compatible. They are not required where audio amplification is not provided.

Hearing aid compatible receivers have neckloops and headsets that can be worn as neckloops. There are other technical requirements for an ALS, including that receivers must have a 1/8 inch (3.2 mm) standard mono jack. See the chart for the number of receivers required.

FIND IT IN THE REGULATIONS

Sections 219 and 706 of the 2010 Standards

Wheelchair Spaces

Both the size of wheelchair spaces and the number needed are specified in the 2010 ADA Standards. (The number needed in some facilities has actually been reduced.)

A single wheelchair space must be 36 inches wide, while two



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wheelchair spaces adjacent to one another need only be 33 inches wide each. Access to a wheelchair space cannot be through another wheelchair space, nor can the wheelchair space stick out into the aisle. There are other requirements, such as wheelchair spaces must provide spectators with choices of seating locations and viewing angles that are substantially equivalent to, or better than, seating for other spectators. See the chart for the number of wheelchair spaces required.

FIND IT IN THE REGULATIONS
Sections 221 and 802 of the 2010 Standards

Safe Harbor – or Not

The 2010 regulations “safe harbor” provision exempts elements (which can be anything from a door knob to an entire room) that are currently in compliance with the 1991 ADA Standards from compliance or any immediate retrofit obligations under the 2010 Standards until the facility engages in a renovation, modification, alteration, or barrier removal.

If an element never complied with the 1991 ADA Standards, or was not included in the 1991 regulations, then there is no safe harbor for that element. Those elements must be modified to the extent readily achievable to comply with the requirements set forth in the 2010 Standards.

FIND IT IN THE REGULATIONS
State and Local Governments: §35.150 (b)(2)(i) safe harbor
Places of Public Accommodation: §36.304 (d)(2)(i) safe harbor ♦

Most of this article is excerpted from materials developed by the Accessibility Offices at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

DISCLAIMER: This article is not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the revised regulations nor does it address obligations of federal agencies or federal facilities. Information contained herein is for general guidance and is not intended to be a rendering of legal advice, opinion, or services.

Resources

The revised regulations are relatively new so there are few resources available at this time. You can find the regulations and other useful guidance at:

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

The DOJ maintains a site that contains numerous useful resources, publications, links, and technical assistance on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

General: www.ada.gov

FIND IT IN THE REGULATIONS

www.ada.gov/regs2010/ADAREgs2010.htm

2010 Standards: www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm

Technical Assistance: (800) 514-0301 (voice) or
(800) 514-0383 (TTY)

U.S. Access Board

The Access Board has posted the 2010 ADA Standards as well as all previous accessibility design standards along with guidance, explanations, and technical assistance.

General: www.access-board.gov

2010 Standards and Guidelines:

www.access-board.gov/ada/index.htm

Technical Assistance: (800) 872-2253 (voice),
(800) 993-2822 (TTY)

ADA National Network

This network is made up of 10 regional Disability Business and Technical Assistance Centers (DBTAC). They provide technical assistance and training in their regions.

General: www.adata.org/Static/Home.aspx

Technical Assistance: (800) 949-4232 (Voice/TTY)



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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 page 24 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: 2012-2015



Michael Fox, West Valley City, UT (Region VII)
Michael Fox is happy to be in his 10th year as Director of Operations at Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City. After spending his youth in high school and community theatre he received an acting scholarship to Southern Utah University and finished his education with a BS in business finance at University of Phoenix. He has served as President of Intermountain Ticketing Professionals

(Utah's branch of INTIX) and lead the group while hosting the international convention. He and wife Barbara love to be the 'rock star' aunt and uncle and frequently put in a movie, snuggle on the couch and wake up when the movie ends! Michael currently serves on the AACT Finance Committee.



Susan Harrington, Roslindale, MA (Region I)
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). She serves as liaison for EMACT to the New England Theatre Conference (NETC) and for AACT, 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.



Yvonne Johnson, Spokane, WA (Region IX)
Yvonne A.K. Johnson is in her seventh season at Spokane Civic Theatre as Executive Artistic Director. Previously, she was the Company Director and Producer of the national award-winning CLIMB Theatre, Inc. in Minnesota's Twin Cities. Regional awards include Best Local Musical - *The Pirates of Penzance*, Best Director- Musical for *The Pirates of Penzance* and Best Overall Production for *Metamorphoses*. She holds several advanced degrees including an MA in Contemporary Theatre Practice from the University of Essex, England, and an MFA in Directing from Minnesota State University. From 1996 until 2001, Yvonne served as the Artistic Director of Kassiopeia Theatre Company in London, England. Over the past 20 years, she has taught theatre classes and directed over 90 productions for various schools, universities, community, and professional theatres throughout the Midwest and UK. She currently serves as a Member at Large and Chair of Strategic Planning on the AACT Board and is an AACT Endowment Trustee.



Elizabeth Nelson, Ketchikan, AK (Region IX)
Elizabeth Nelson is the Artistic Director of First City Players (FCP) in Ketchikan, Alaska, a small town on an island. In her 24-year tenure she has helped build FCP into an integral part of community life with full spectrum programming under very challenging conditions. FCP now stages a full main stage season, theatre camps, a dance festival, theatre for kids, a jazz & cabaret festival, and a summer melodrama, as well as contracting with the school district for theatre enrichment programs. Elizabeth holds a BA in Theater Arts from Northern Michigan University. She provides support to performing arts organizations in her region and teaches theatre for remote schools as a Teaching Artist through the Alaska State Council on the Arts. She is a past president the Alaska Community Theatre Festival Board, and served five years on the AACT Board. She enjoys her eight year old son, travel, and camping with her family.



Joline Powell, Germany (Region X)
Joline Powell has served as the Entertainment Director for the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center in Vilseck, Germany since its inception in 2008 and is pleased to call this theatre her home. Previously, she worked as a volunteer on various production crews and/or performed with Stable Theater, Terrace Playhouse, and Aviano Community Theater in Air Force & Army Europe. A few of her directing credits include *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Annie*, *Seussical: the Musical!*, *...And a Child Shall Lead*, *The Most Massive Woman Wins*, *WASP*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Most recently, USAG Grafenwoehr Family & MWR sent Ms. Powell on a temporary duty assignment where she fulfilled an 8-week contract working for a professional start up theatre company in Canada. She is pleased to be a member of AACT, Americans for the Arts, and the National Recreation and Parks Association.



Chris Serface, Tacoma, WA (Region IX)
Chris Serface was raised in the Pacific Northwest, where he discovered the theatre at an early age and became involved with the local community scene. At 17, he became 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 travelled throughout the West, working closely with many theatres 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 Musical Playhouse in Tacoma, WA. He is on the board of the Washington State Community Theatre Association as its Secretary and serves as chair of AACT's Workshops Committee. 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: 2012-2014



Vice President for Planning and Development
Eugene Irby, Artesia, NM (Region VI)
Eugene Irby holds Bachelor of Business Administration degrees from Angelo State University (General Business) and Eastern New Mexico University (Marketing/Marketing Education). Eugene served as President of the Artesia (NM) Community Theater for two terms and as Marketing Director for the Roswell (NM) Community Theatre. Eugene is

a past President of Theatre New Mexico and is currently serving as a board member. He has served as state representative to the Southwest Theatre Association and as State Contact to AACT. In addition he has served the Southwest Theatre and Film Association as Board member, VP of Communication, President Elect, and President. He served as AACT Region VI Representative for four years and is currently VP Planning and Development and on the Festival Commission. Eugene is the PTO President of his youngest child's school and serves on the Artesia School System's Parent Advisory Council. He coaches for the Youth Soccer League in Artesia.



Vice President for Membership
Scott Bloom, Silver Spring, MD (Region II)
Scott Bloom is finishing his first term as Vice President for Membership and has been on the AACT Board for ten years. He also serves on the Electronic Communications and Finance Committees, the Playwright Services Task Force, and is the State Contact for Maryland. Scott was a founding board member of the Maryland state association in 1986, and has

been on the Region II Board since 1990. Heading toward his 40th year in theatre, he has won awards as an actor, director, designer, and playwright, and continues to be associated with more than a dozen community and professional companies around the DC Metro area. By profession a Computer Systems Engineer, he uses his technical expertise running The Theatre Pages, a nonprofit that provides free domain and email hosting

and other services to more than 30 arts organizations and artists. He otherwise tries to live a quiet life in Silver Spring, MD with his wife, Jan.

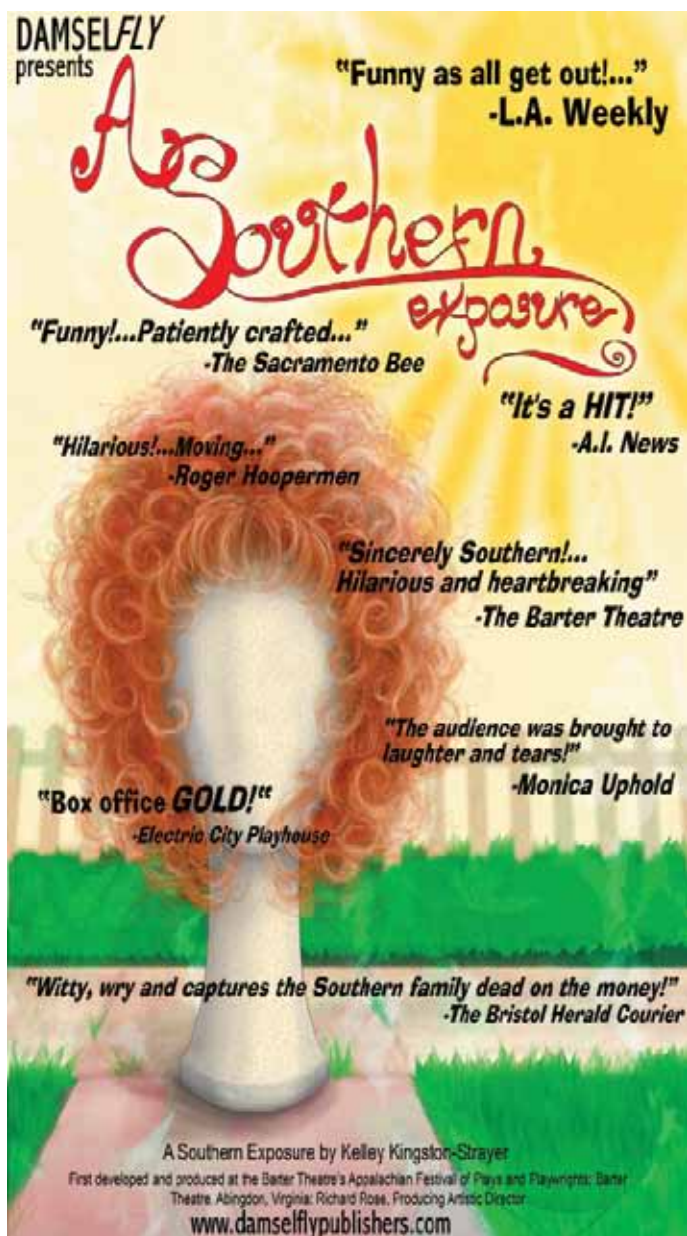


Vice President for Education

Penelope Notter, Grand Rapids, MI (Region III)
Penelope Notter began her community theatre career 30 years ago when she joined a volunteer organization in Terre Haute, Indiana. Today she is a 17-year-veteran of Grand Rapids Civic Theatre (GRCT). The theatre's Associate Director, Penelope has more than 50 main stage and children's directorial credits. As the theatre's Education Director,

Penelope manages a year-round, full-curriculum for ages four and up. She has served as board member and workshop leader for both the Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM) and AACT, and served as AACT's Workshops Committee Chairperson

continued on next page



for five national AACTFests (1999-2008). She has both facilitated and chaired AACT's Education Directors Conference. Penelope's talent has been recognized throughout her career and includes two GRCT Grand Awards: Best Director for a Musical and Best Supporting Actress. In 2009, CTAM honored Penelope with the Robert A. McKenna Community Theatre Achievement Award for her outstanding contribution to state and local theatre.



Secretary

Frank Peot, Sun Prairie, WI (Region III)
Frank has been involved with AACT since its beginning twenty-six years ago. He has served on numerous committees including: Membership, Convention Planning, Festival Commission, International, History, Elections, and Archives. He currently serves as Secretary to the Board of Directors and Endowment Trustees as well as being

Adjudication Committee Vice Chair. Frank has represented AACT at the International Amateur Theatre Association Congress and Festivals. He has served on the boards of his local, state, and regional community theatre associations. He is currently the president of Sun Prairie (WI) Civic Theatre. Frank has extensive experience as an adjudicator, director, writer, and designer. AACT has honored Frank with the Special Recognition Award, the Art Cole Award, and has designated him a Fellow. Frank is a retired elementary school teacher from Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

Nominating Committee

Two to be elected to serve two-year terms: 2012-2014



Tom Cowley, Ponca City, OK (Region VI)

Tom Cowley has been passionately active in community theatre for over 50 years. He has acted, directed and done technical work in various theatres for over 200 productions. Recently, he started a new theatre dedicated to teaching all aspects of the community theatre experience. Tom has extensive experience in community theatre governance. He has served on the boards of his local

theatres, his state association, his regional association, and on the AACT Board. Tom was the AACT Region VI Representative, serves on several committees, and served two terms as Vice President for Planning and Development. In his non-theatre life, Dr. Cowley worked as a research manager for a Fortune 100 company. Among other duties, he was charged with finding and recruiting new personnel. Here he developed skills he still uses in encouraging people to participate in theatre. Tom is retired and lives with his wife Linda in Ponca City, OK.



John Davis, Evergreen, CO (Region VII)

John Davis has been involved in theatre since a high school drama teacher changed his life. Theatre didn't offer the most stable of occupations, so in 1964 John became a commercial pilot. In 1966, John and his wife joined the Evergreen Players in Colorado and he has served in every position on the Board. This is the 62nd season for the Evergreen Players, with a budget of \$140,000. John

presently is an AACT Festival Commission Representative and a Member at Large on the AACT Board. John is President of the Board of the Colorado Community Theater Coalition, and has also served on the Board of the Evergreen Arts Council including two terms as treasurer. He was awarded Arts Person of the Year for his many contributions to the Evergreen community. Now retired as a pilot, John is a part time flight instructor with Boeing working on the new B-787 Dreamliner.



Dennis Gilmore, Athens, TX (Region VI)

Dennis has been involved with theatre since 1982, starting his career as a producer for professional theatre in Chicago. After moving to Athens, Texas in 1989, he became the first Executive Director of the Henderson County Performing Arts Center (HCPAC). He received his Master of Arts degree in directing from Stephen F. Austin State University. At HCPAC, he has directed over 200 plays and over

175 children's productions. Dennis has a strong commitment to youth theatre training, working as a state UIL one-act play adjudicator since 1991. As a board member of Texas Nonprofit Theatres (TNT), he was instrumental in the development of the state youth conference and was its chairman for the first ten years. Dennis serves on the Resource Roster for AACT and has worked with several theatres on fundraising opportunities and youth programs. He has chaired AACT's Education Committee and is completing his second term as VP Education.



Joan E. Kole, PhD, Rockford, IL (Region III)

Acting, directing, and producing in six states plus academic training constitute the basis of Joan's theatre experiences. She has been both a board member and president of a community theatre. She has chaired her state festival. AACT appointments include chair of the Workshops Committee, and member of the Education Committee and Festival Commission. Currently Joan is chair of AACT's

Leadership Development Committee. She is an adjudicator (completed national AACT workshops in 2005 and in 2011). She was awarded her doctorate in 2009. Specific theatre interests include aging performers – AgeQuake Theatre – and DD (Developmentally Disabled) adults – The Arc's Shining Stars. Her goal is to continue identifying new AACT leaders by working within AACT and by participating in as many AACT and regional association events as possible. On a personal note, Joan loves to wear jewelry, scarves, and high heels and lives with her husband of 30+ years, Carl, and their three dogs.

Board Members by Regions

These persons' terms end in 2013 and 2014, so they will serve with those elected this year.

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Nominating Committee

Mary Doveton, Lawrence, KS (Region V)
Morrie Enders, Lincoln, NE (Region V)
Rod McCullough, IA, Chair, Region V

Popular AACTFest Plays

So you're thinking about entering a show in your state festival for the upcoming AACTFest 2013 cycle, but don't know what type of show to consider. Well, AACTFest entries can be pretty much anything of a theatrical nature. In other words, "variety is the spice of (theatrical) life" at AACTFest.

During the 2011 AACTFest cycle several shows rose to the top in terms of popularity. We've compiled a list of the shows that had at least two productions. Have a look; you may get a few ideas for 2013!

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee by Sheinkin & Finn 3 productions Publisher – Music Theatre International www.mtishows.com

A Betrothal by Lanford Wilson 2 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Almost, Maine by John Cariani 5 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

The Dixie Swim Club by Jones, Hope & Wooten 5 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Doubt: A Parable by John Patrick Shanley 2 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Driving Miss Daisy by Alfred Uhry 2 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Heights by Amy Fox 2 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Leaving Iowa by Tim Clue & Spike Manton 2 productions Publisher – Dramatic Publishing www.dramaticpublishing.com

The Lottery by Shirley Jackson 2 productions Publisher – Dramatic Publishing www.dramaticpublishing.com

Parallel Lives by Mo Gaffney and Kathy Najimy 2 productions Publisher – Dramatic Publishing www.dramaticpublishing.com

The Pillowman by Martin McDonagh 4 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Proof by David Auburn 3 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Tuesdays with Morrie by Jeffery Hatcher & Mitch Albom 2 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

Wildwood Park by Doug Wright 3 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

The Zoo Story by Edward Albee 2 productions Publisher – Dramatists Play Service www.dramatists.com

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What has your theatre done to make persons with disabilities feel welcome at your theatre?

Responded on Facebook

Chris Williams (ReACT in Tonkawa, OK) People with special needs are still people. I have fostered a wonderful relationship with Tom Davis a local special needs gentleman. We include him on trips to area shows and have even given him some stage time in a recent production of *Becky's New Car*. Tom is our resident door greeter and goodwill ambassador. He once told me that "being involved in theatre warms his heart and makes him feel needed." If you are willing to reach out a hand to a person with special needs you'll be met with a hug...

Huron Area Community Theatre (in SD)
For our third year now, we will be putting on a play that has actors with and without disabilities. Each play has dealt with issues with accepting people with disabilities. This year's show involves a young lady who in real life has autism, and decides to run for Congress. All of our plays have included volunteers with disabilities.

KarlaRae Nathan Ellis (Spotlight Players in Puyallup, WA) For the first time in our history we will have an ASL person signing for one of our performances in April for "Arsenic and Old Lace." This is a very exciting step for our theatre troupe!



Responded on AACTList

joan kole, PhD (AgeQuake Theatre, Rockford, IL)
Developmentally Disabled adults are very creative individuals who have incredible stories to tell. When i work with them, they decide what our play will be about; they provide the situations, the dialogue, the conflicts and resolutions. All i do is write down what they say; script it-in a large font-and then we rehearse and perform it. Audiences learn to appreciate how like us these very special people are.

John Rich (Regional Theatre Of the Palouse, Pullman, WA)
We have a brochure in our lobby that features service dogs and organizations that provide this service. The dog that played Sandy in our production of *Annie* was a service dog in training. Owners and trainers along with their service dogs attended the show.

Victor Werner (The Maumelle Players, AR)

We have an actress who has MS and while she can walk, it is very difficult. We were able to cast her in a part in our last show (first time on stage) and she did a great job. We built a ramp to make it more accessible. ♦

New England Theatre Conference Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award

The New England Theatre Conference, Inc.
Aurand Harris Playwriting Award
215 Knob Hill Drive
Hamden, CT 06518-243

Created in 1997 to honor the late Aurand Harris (1915-1996) for his lifetime dedication to all aspects of professional theatre for young audiences, this contest is open to full length plays for young audiences. No musicals or plays targeted for an adult audience. Plays must be unpublished and not have been professionally produced.

\$1,000 first prize, \$500 second prize.

\$10 handling fee.

Deadline: May 1, 2011 (postmark)

Details: www.netconline.org/docs/2012/2012_Aurand_Harris_Award.pdf

Stage West Southwest Playwriting Competition

Stage West
821 W Vickery Blvd
Fort Worth, TX 76104-1144

For playwrights who have lived in Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana or Oklahoma for at least two years. Current residency not required. No restrictions on subject matter, format, cast size or style, although plays with a cast size of six or less will have a better chance of full production by Stage West.

One submission per playwright or writing team. Plays should not have been professionally produced.

Winning playwright receives \$500 prize, plus a reading at Stage West. Runner-up also receives a reading.

\$10 entry fee.

Deadline: April 15, 2012

See the website for details and application form:
www.stagewest.org/sixth-annual-southwest-playwriting-competition

Spotlight Award Goes to Don Mansfield

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.

Don Mansfield has done so much for **Center Stage Jackson** (MI) the organization had run out of ways to recognize him locally. That's why Center Stage Jackson (CSJ) board members decided to nominate Don for the AACT Spotlight Award, so that AACT could partner with CSJ in paying tribute to Don for his special service.

Don was elected to serve on the CSJ board of directors in August of 2005. While serving on the board, he proposed the formation of a youth theatre program. There was no such program available to the youth of Jackson County at that time. The board approved the concept, and Don was appointed as the first chair of the Youth Theater Committee.

In June of 2007 a two-production season was created for the 2007-2008 school year, and Don secured a venue at Jackson's First Presbyterian Church. Since that first season, CSJ's Youth Theater has successfully produced a play and a musical each school year. Don has actively and enthusiastically participated in every production, routinely handling publicity, box office and program production, as well as a variety of other duties including directing and producing.



Joanne Berry, past AACT board member, presents the Spotlight Award to Don Mansfield.

The Youth Theater program under Don's guiding service, has been recognized by the CSJ board of directors as one of the organizations biggest successes. Its productions have transitioned to main stage productions. Youth Theater has expanded the number of families associated with CSJ, increased membership in and community awareness of CSJ through grants and box office receipts, modestly contributing to the ongoing financial stability of the theatre.

Don Mansfield was presented with the AACT Spotlight Award by Joanne Berry, past AACT board member and longtime committee member, at the annual Center Stage awards night, August 24, 2011. The event was held at the Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History in Jackson. Don's service to CSJ has certainly been an example of "Improving Communities One Theatre at a Time." By the way, Don is presently 81 years old! ♦

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The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical

Edited by Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris and Stacy Wolf

Oxford University Press

Taking into account issues of composition, performance, and reception, the book's contributors bring a wide range of practical and theoretical perspectives to bear on their considerations of one of America's most lively, enduring artistic traditions. The Oxford Handbook of The American Musical will engage all readers interested in the form, from students to scholars to fans and aficionados, as it analyses the complex relationships among the creators, performers, and audiences who sustain the genre.

Taking the form of a "keywords" book, it introduces readers to the concepts and terms that define the history of the musical as a genre and that offer ways to reflect on the specific creative choices that shape musicals and their performance on stage and screen.

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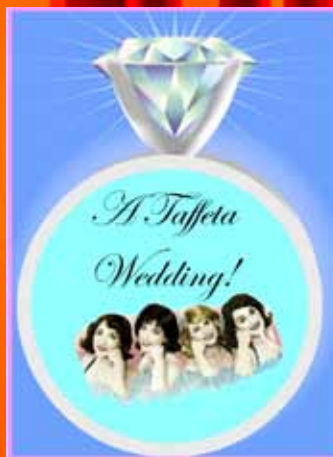
La Crosse Community Theatre, La Crosse, WI, is pleased to announce that **Andrew Brackett** has been named its new technical director. Andrew moved to La Crosse from Janesville, WI, where he worked as a freelance lighting designer. He has previously worked with Bower City Theatre Company, Wisconsin Theatreworks, Broadway Dinner Theatre, and Theater Unlimited, Inc. He graduated from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities in 2008 with a degree in technical theater and architecture. Andrew started his new position last December.

Jesse DeVine has been hired as Artistic Director for **Whitefish Theatre Company** in Whitefish, MT. She replaces **Nancy Nei** who is stepping down after serving 10 years in that role. Jesse is an actress, director and educator who has lived in Whitefish for four years. She holds a bachelor's degree in musical theatre, and a master's in theatre and directing. Jesse had a theatre career in New York, and taught at the University of Maine, the Lyndon Institute in Vermont, and Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell. She currently serves as the Montana State Representative for American Alliance for Theatre Education and is also a 9-year member of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. The change of artistic direction at the theatre will be gradual, with Nancy Nei mentoring Jesse during the 2011-2012 Season.

Raleigh Little Theatre, Raleigh, NC announces the hiring of **Charles Phaneuf** as Executive Director. He succeeds Managing Director **Ellen Landau**, who has retired. Prior to his appointment, Charles served as Managing Director of Joe's Movement Emporium, a multidisciplinary community performing arts center, located just outside of Washington, D.C. While there, Charles led a business-planning process that doubled attendance for adult education programs, developed a three-fold increase in individual donations and created a dynamic social media presence to engage the community in Joe's performances, classes and workshops. He also served for a time as Associate Managing Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. He began his new position in late January.

Lake City Playhouse, Coeur d'Alene, ID has hired **Dustin Sorrell** as Playhouse Prep (Academic) Director. Dustin studied theater at Ball State University in Indiana. He comes to his new position from Iowa City Community Theatre, Iowa City, IA, where he served as Children's Theater Specialist. Dustin spent 4 years working closely with Stage One Youth Theatre in Richmond, IN, serving on the board as Director of Programing as well as performing duties as an instructor, director and choreographer. He has also worked as an instructor at Dance Techniques Performing Arts Studio, in Richmond and National Trail Middle School, New Paris, OH. He began work in his new position in January. ♦

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Ginger Heath
Eugene, Susan &
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Lynn Nelson
Sara Phoenix
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Lance Babbitt
David Baker
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Sandy Berenson
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Lacey Bohnet
Beth Carey
Jim & Nancy Carver
Martha Cherbini
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You Must Remember This

by Twink Lynch

Recently I wrote a very brief history of the Community Theatre Movement in the United States (*Spotlight*, December 2003). That history is rich in ideals, triumphs and tragedies of a much greater magnitude than I was able to explore, partly because so much was unrecorded or uncommunicated at the time it was happening.

My chief sources of information were a dozen books about the amateur theatre movement from the early 1900's to the 1960's written by theatre professionals, and twenty-some doctoral dissertations which dealt with individual theatre programs like Tulsa Little Theatre, Omaha Community Playhouse, Le Petit Theatre Du Vieux Carre (New Orleans) and the Kalamazoo Civic Players. Keep in mind, in the beginning of the Movement we had no recording devices, travel was not widespread among amateur thespians; therefore, communication among groups was limited, and, as always, community theatre work was done in "leisure" time beyond whatever people did in their "real" lives, so there wasn't much time left over to make sure they recorded all major undertakings.

What was recorded tended to be major productions, social events, the hiring of a director, attendance, financials, and minutes of board meetings and/or membership meetings. Many of our community theatres are now more than 50 years old and some have passed their diamond anniversary. Some of them have published memory books of their theatrical journeys, many have pictures (with dates and names!), most have all their playbills, and some have articles actually written at the time about milestones they had reached.

But almost overlooked in the archives of our theatre organizations is information about the participants who make it all possible. While most theatres try to give a brief bio about each actor in a given play and sometimes that includes directors and stage managers, the backstage and front-of-house volunteers are not usually so acknowledged, so we know very little about them.

My own theatre will be 70 years old in September 2006, and we have saved lots of memorabilia since 1974 when, at the age of 38, we finally owned our own facility. Earlier records, except for playbills which were faithfully saved and bound by a beloved charter member, are scanty. There are boxes of photographs no one can identify now that the founders have all died. Heaven only knows where board minutes and box office reports from those early years have been stowed, but fortunately most of that information was recorded in a master's thesis in 1971.

All of which is to say, especially to the younger theatre groups, I hope you have been recording your history and are saving

facts, documents, printed materials, annotated photographs, board minutes, financial reports, box office figures, etc. in a safe place. I think every theatre should have an "Archives Committee" or at least a theatre historian. At a minimum, take pictures of all productions. Some theatre groups have production company pictures hanging in their lobbies, a great way to recognize the contributions of all the volunteers on the show. What would add more value would be to list the names of all participants on the back of the photo, not to mention the name of the production and the date.

Besides creating opportunities for volunteer recognition, sooner or later you're going to want to tell the complete story of your theatre. Some graduate student may want to write a thesis or dissertation about your theatre. Or on a major anniversary the newspaper might want to do a feature, going back to the beginnings of your program. Will you be able to supply correct information? Easily?

There is another reason to collect these materials in a safe place. Almost every theatre group I know of has to fundraise each year to make budget. Sometimes as much as 35-40% of their operating funds comes from contributed income. Arts funding can be hard to come by, especially in a tough economy.

I think every theatre should have an "Archives Committee" or at least a theatre historian

That is partly due to the prevailing feeling that the arts are either "fluff," a diversion to be sought when there's enough money left after basic needs have been met, or "elitist," only for the wealthy who should thus fund the arts themselves.

We need to change that attitude. I think we could help ourselves a great deal by sharing the inner life of our theatres with our season members, donors, occasional ticket buyers and new friends we haven't met yet. That inner life is more easily discovered in the process of getting a show up than in the performance, which we may admire greatly, but it doesn't tell us much about the people behind the masks except that they have talent. Where we find it is in the passion felt by our volunteers and staff about their work at our theatre. But who knows about that? Unless our audience members are friends of cast or crew,

continued on next page

they usually don't get to know much about the feelings, needs or motivations of our volunteers.

I think it is time we shared our biggest secret – we not only produce good and sometimes great theatre, we also change and sometimes save lives. I believe if our communities understood what a difference we make in the lives of the children who attend our classes and perform on our stage – how they grow and develop self-esteem, learn to be part of a team and have a real sense of achievement because they are part of something bigger than themselves, support for our programs would grow.

Our communities need to realize that our adult volunteers' lives are changed, too, by being welcomed and accepted no matter who they are or where they come from, and by working in a place where they are coached and nurtured into levels of accomplishment they may never have dreamed possible on or off stage. In the worst of circumstances such as clinical depression, drug dependency, loss of a job or a loved one, the theatre is a respite, a place where burdens can be lightened, a place that strengthens and heals, a place where life can be fun again.

Some theatre groups are starting to capture the stories of their volunteers, past and present. These stories are often about people who've gone on to work in professional theatre but there are lots of other amazing stories that may never be told if we don't establish an intentional program to solicit them. My own theatre is now creating a video which will include volunteers giving short testimonials about why they love our theatre. Of course we have much more recorded tape than we could ever show an audience, but all of the material will go into our archives to use for future videos or to be a pool of information

when we celebrate our 75th anniversary. The material reveals the real heart of our theatre. It places it on a level with our public library and area hospitals and churches in terms of meeting fundamental needs in our community. It thus makes a compelling case for community support.

I can't emphasize enough the value of not only documenting your productions but also recording the stories of your cherished volunteers. The Community Theatre Movement in America is now over a hundred years old. It is exciting to think that by recording these stories of our programs and our people we are collectively writing the history of the next hundred years of our field, as told by the passionate and creative people who lived it. ♦

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, April 2004

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 ad on page 34 for ordering information.

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AACtivity Tidbits

How does your theatre compare to others in number of productions and average number of performances per production? Below is what AACT member theatres have reported on AACtivity on the AACT website. To post your theatre's status and discover more about other theatres, go to www.aact2.org, "Programs/Resources," "AACtivity."

Productions Per Season	Theatres Reporting	Performances per Production	Theatres Reporting
2	3%	3	3%
3	4.2%	4	3.6%
4	14.3%	5	5.5%
5	16.1%	6	12.1%
6	14.3%	7	7.3%
7	13.7%	8	16.4%
8	8.3%	9	10.3%
9	4.8%	10	7.3%
10	7.7%	11	7.3%
11	2.4%	12	8.5%
12	4.2%	13	3%
13	.6%	14	1.2%
14	.6%	15	3%
15	2.4%	16	3%
16	1.8%	17	1.2%
20	.6%	18	1.2%
21	.6%	19	1.8%
27	.6%	20	1.2%
		22	.6%
		25	1.2%
		40+	1.2%

data as of 3/12/2010

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
Continuing through Apr 1	IMA – Europe Entertainment Tournament of Plays	Eur Various	011-49-631-411-6252 www.MWR-Europe.com
March 7 -11	Southeastern Theatre Conference Annual Convention	IV Chattanooga TN	336-272-3645 www.setc.org
March 16-18	Pennsylvania Assn of Community Theatres PACTFest 2012	PA Wellsboro	302-984-1278 www.pactheatres.org
March 16-18	Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc. Annual Conference	TX Tyler	817-731-2238 www.texas theatres.org
March 23	Indiana Community Theatre League State Festival 2012	IN Indianapolis	317-862-4955 www.region3aact.org/Indiana.htm
March 23-25	Theatre New Mexico 2012 Annual Conference	NM Las Vegas	505-454-9707 www.estafest.org
April 19-22	Eastern States Theatre Association ESTAFest/Original Works Festival	IL Wilkes-Barre PA	302-547-5998 www.theatrenm.org
April 21	Maine Association of Community Theatre ★ 2012 Festival	ME Portland	207-594-4982 meact.weebly.com/
April 21	IMA – Europe Entertainment Topper Awards	Heidelberg, Germany	011-49-631-411-6252 www.MWR-Europe.com

* Indicates festival in the 2013 Cycle

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