



## Dramatic Publishing to Partner on AACTNewPlayFest Anthology

AACT and Dramatic Publishing Company are partnering to publish an anthology of the winning plays of AACTNewPlayFest. Dramatic Publishing will also include the plays in its catalog and license performance rights.

AACTNewPlayFest was launched last year to promote the development of new work. More than 200 scripts were entered in the nationwide new play contest. Six winning plays will be announced in June. AACT member theatres have been selected to stage the premiere productions of the winning plays in their local theatres. AACT will provide national promotion.

An anthology was part of the plan of the AACT task force that developed AACTNewPlayFest. Murray Chase, chair of the task force, is thrilled to see that dream come true



in the first cycle of the biennial project. Steve Lyons, a playwright and vice chair of the task force, worked closely in the negotiation of the AACT/Dramatic Publishing agreement. AACT will receive a small percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the anthology to help offset adjudication and promotional expenses. However, the authors' share of the performance royalties will belong exclusively to the playwrights.

Dramatic Publishing is one of the major licensors of plays and musicals in the United States and beyond. Publishing fine plays since 1885, Dramatic Publishing is committed to developing and serving the authors, artists, and educators who comprise the world of theatre.

For more information about AACTNewPlayFest, go to [www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org) or call 866-Our-AACT (687-2228). For information about Dramatic Publishing, go to [www.dramaticpublishing.com](http://www.dramaticpublishing.com) or call 800-448-7469. ♦

## AACTFest 2013 Comes to the Hoosier State

by Shannan Speicher, PR Director, AACTFest 2013

### Carmel Welcomes AACTFest 2013

When most people think of Indiana they think basketball, the Indianapolis 500, or corn. Indiana is about much more than that! This summer, Indiana will become the hub of excitement for community theatre nationwide as AACTFest 2013 - AACT's national festival – comes to Carmel, Indiana. Community theatres from across the United States and the U.S. Armed Services abroad will gather from June 17-23, 2013; more than 600 theatre enthusiasts are expected to attend this event.

### About Carmel

The City of Carmel is emerging onto the national stage in its own right after decades of just being a northern suburb of Indianapolis. Carmel is now recognized in her own right as "The Best Place to Live in the U.S. 2012" by *CNN Money Magazine*. In 2010, the City of Carmel opened the state-of-the-art Center for the Performing Arts, which will

*continued on page 10*

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Linda M. Lee  
AACT President  
2011-2013

Deadlines! My life is dictated by deadlines! The 990 is due, the program must go to press, the brochure has to be mailed, the costumes should be completed, the grant must be submitted . . . on and on it goes. Every day has a goal, every week a challenge. Mixed in with the deadlines is the frustration of collaboration when your ability to meet a deadline is dependent on someone else meeting theirs,

**I do set priorities but have been known to ignore them in favor of an opportunity to redline an item. It motivates me to take on the next task.**

thus providing you with the information or product you need. Stop the treadmill! I want to get . . .

Well, not off. Not really. I love my job. I enjoy my extracurricular activities. I relish a challenge well met. I just want to be . . . more organized and efficient? Less prone to procrastination? Yes, that is it, absolutely. And yet, when I have those rare times when there are no immediate deadlines, do I get a head start on the next project? No. I log onto Facebook and catch up on posts. I read the newspaper or a book. I sit and watch those “guilty pleasure” TV shows.

Some might call that a waste of time. I say it is necessary for me. That's when I let go of all the previous stresses in preparation for a whole new set. It can be as short as an hour or two, or as long as a week or two. Then, I make a list of all the deadlines coming up. I include some items that can be accomplished very quickly, like reply to an email or pay a bill, just so I can cross them off the list. It's the greatest feeling to run a red line through an item – a

task completed! I do set priorities but have been known to ignore them in favor of an opportunity to redline an item. It motivates me to take on the next task.

Those in theatre know all about priorities, goals, and deadlines. They know the importance of collaboration and the responsibilities that go with it. At AACTFest 2013 what we'll see is the result of deadlines met and goals very well achieved. But those of us in the audience will get to enjoy a little down time as well, while experiencing the result of someone else's efforts. It will be relaxing and inspiring, providing a respite before making the next to-do list.

OK, I'm crossing this off my deadline list – my article is written!



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Exterior of the Booth  
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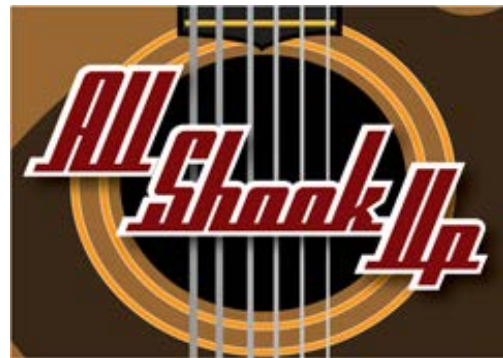
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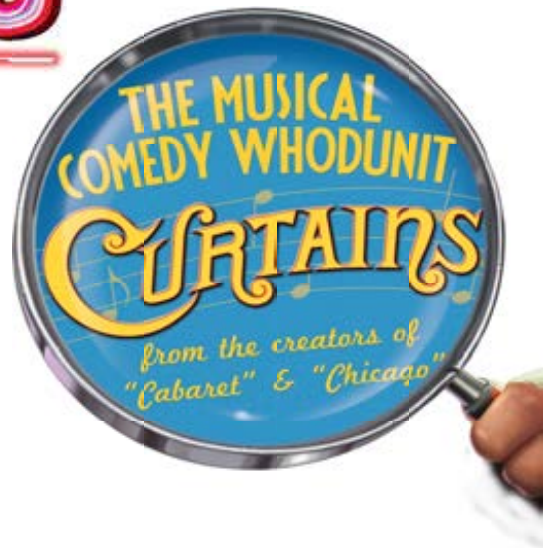


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## Upcoming AACT Meetings

### AACT Board and Committees

June 17-19, June 22

### AACT State Contacts Meeting

June 19

### Festival Commission

### Public Comment Meeting

June 20

### AACT Annual Membership Meeting

June 21

Carmel, IN

Hosted by Carmel Repertory Theatre

*Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.*

## Upcoming Conferences

### Community Theatre Management Conference

### Technical Theatre Conference

June 17-19, 2013

Carmel, IN

Hosted by Carmel Repertory Theatre

See page 17

## Did you know?

You can register to attend the national festival of AACTFest 2013 on the AACT website. Go to [www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org).

**Thanks** to Todd Hart and Theatre Arlington for hosting the AACT Winter Meetings.

## 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](mailto:darlene@aact.org) or at the phone numbers below.

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## AACT Insurance Program

AACT organizational members are eligible to participate in property, liability, and other coverages of the AACT Insurance Program.

For more information, contact:



800-749-5646  
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[kenneth.roberts@usi.biz](mailto:kenneth.roberts@usi.biz)  
or check out the program at  
[theatre.mysgp.com](http://theatre.mysgp.com)

# Volunteer Accident Insurance: *A Little Goes a Long Way*



by Ken Roberts

The field of insurance companies that are willing to write insurance for community theatres is extremely narrow. One of the biggest reasons is the general liability exposure. These companies worry not only about the hundreds of members of the general population who move through our facilities on a nightly basis, but also the volunteers who are climbing ladders, wielding power tools, and participating in all kinds of extraordinary activities both onstage and backstage. These volunteers are absolutely vital to our organizations, and they put themselves in harm's way all too often and, most of the

**Volunteers are absolutely vital to our organizations, and they put themselves in harm's way all too often, and most of the time without even realizing it.**

time, without even realizing it. Regardless of how much training our volunteers have and how many safety rules we have posted, accidents can and will happen and who is expected to pay for them? Many of us are fortunate enough to have our own health insurance, but what about the many students, uninsured employees, and retirees who grace our stages and don't have the financial means, or are in poor health, so they're not able to purchase coverage of their own? Are we to let them suffer financially because of something we asked them to do? Can we

do without their services? Can we afford even one lawsuit because a volunteer is injured? The answer to all questions is "NO!"

Since most insurance companies usually exclude volunteers from the medical payments portion of our general liability, and will sometimes exclude the medical payments coverage altogether, volunteer accident insurance is a way to replace the coverage lost by those exclusions. An extremely compelling reason to consider it is the goodwill it will create between volunteers and theatres when they know we care enough about them to pay for their injuries when they don't have insurance of their own.

Volunteer Accident insurance pays a specified limit for medical bills, dismemberment, and even accidental death. Policies can also include a per day cash disbursement during hospital stays, and all of these benefits can be provided with a low deductible, or even no deductible, for the theatres. For just a few dollars a year per volunteer, we can foster more of a spirit of partnership between our theatres and volunteers, as well as reduce the risk for both. When volunteers know their participation won't cost them anything but their time, they will be much more inclined to take part. Who among us has too many volunteers? A little investment to illustrate that we care can go a long way. ♦

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be the venue of AACTFest 2013. In addition, though many may not realize it, the local schools are the inspiration for the top hit TV series, "Glee."



*Cyclists on the Monon Trail, a walking and biking trail which connects the Center for the Performing Arts and the Arts and Design District in Carmel.*

Carmel offers a glimpse at the true Midwest with a European flair. Running through the heart of town is the Monon Trail. The Monon (as it is affectionately called) was a railroad line until it was converted to a walking and biking trail by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy starting in 1999. Visitors will enjoy a scenic stroll from the Center for the Performing Arts at City Center into the Arts and Design District of Carmel. In both City Center and the Arts and Design District there are fine shops, elegant bistros, fun diners, and many displays of public art for all to enjoy. In addition, just a short car ride away is Clay Terrace, a wonderful open air shopping center with eateries and many great stores.

The venues of AACTFest 2013 are worth exploring as well! This year's twelve performances will take place in the

**AACTFest  
2013**  
Carmel, IN  
June 17-23, 2013  
[www.aactfest.org](http://www.aactfest.org)

new, state-of-the-art Tarkington Theatre. Opened in 2011, this 500-seat proscenium theatre is primarily used for drama, musicals, dance, lectures, and variety presentations.

The Palladium concert hall rises high on the Carmel skyline with its domed European-style design. The four-fronted, symmetrical design with its limestone facades and columns offers a timeless elegance and an unparalleled setting for attending world-class entertainment.

Conceived as a flexible "black box" theatre, The Studio Theatre allows for multiple configurations which are ideal

for intimate performances. The theatre has four seating/stage configurations: cabaret, proscenium, round, and thrust.

### About the Surrounding Area

A mere twenty minutes south is Indianapolis, home to football's Colts and basketball's Pacers. For those wanting to explore beyond the festival, there will be trips organized to go to popular Indy sites.

Many will want to visit the world famous Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Hall of Fame Museum. At any one time there are approximately 75 cars on display, from the first car to win the 500 Race to rare Formula One cars. There is the thrill of seeing the Brickyard up close as well as a chance to watch a film showing historic footage of the 500 races.

The Indianapolis Children's Museum is considered to be the best in the nation and is a wonderful place to take the children to spend the day. Children approaching the museum will be shocked and surprised to see it crawling with life-sized dinosaurs that seem to have broken through from the inside!



*Gateway to Carmel's Arts and Design District, home to interior designers, art galleries, showrooms, restaurants, antique stores, and a variety of specialty retail shops.*

Adults seeking a museum experience may choose the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA), a world class institution with more than 50,000 works of art from many diverse cultures and periods. Nearby the IMA is the Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, 100 acres of art and walking paths alongside the White River – a lovely spot for a picnic. Just across the street from the IMA is the third largest, non-government cemetery in the nation, Crown Hill. Crown Hill is the resting place for notables such as President Benjamin Harrison, Col. Eli Lilly, and the notorious John Dillinger.

Further into Downtown Indianapolis, festival-goers may choose to catch a ballgame at Victory Field, home of the





AAA Indianapolis Indians baseball team. A walk along the canal and a paddleboat ride often attract families, while others may choose to visit the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art or the Indiana State Museum.

### Time to Party!

Every evening, festival participants are welcome to come together to eat, drink, and be merry! Whether at an Afterglow Party, Endowment Event, or AACTFest Awards there will be ample opportunity to enjoy the company of all of the festival-goers!

### How Do I get Involved?

For those looking to attend the festival as an observer, there are a variety of passes available for the shows and performance events. Registration for the festival has already opened and is available at the AACTFest website, [www.aactfest.org](http://www.aactfest.org).

AACTFest 2013 is going to be a tremendous event which will help to show the nation why Carmel, IN is the "Best Place to Live in the U.S.," and why its residents are so proud to call it home. ♦



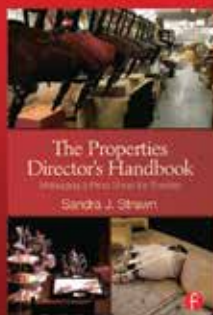
*Interior of the Booth Tarkington Theatre, home for AACTFest 2013 performances*

take the drama out of your theatre productions

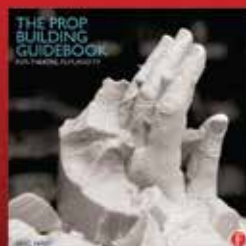
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# More AACTFest Workshops

Workshops are an important part of the national festival in Carmel, IN in June. The workshops below have been added since the last *Spotlight*. Find the complete list online at [www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org).

## Performing

### Acting Without Words

Drew Vidal, Assistant Professor of Acting, Voice & Movement, Ball State; Professional Actor and Fight Director

Explore how an actor's expressive and truthful physical instrument can communicate much by doing very little.

### Audition Technique

Drew Vidal, Assistant Professor of Acting, Voice & Movement, Ball State; Professional Actor and Fight Director

Improve at auditioning: choosing and delivering a monologue, cold reading, introductions, body language, and callbacks. Ideally, participants should come prepared with at least one age-specific, memorized monologue.

### Introduction to Stage Combat

Drew Vidal, Assistant Professor of Acting, Voice & Movement, Ball State; Professional Actor and Fight Director

A quick and exciting look at unarmed stage combat: falling, striking, grappling, and more. Participants should come prepared to move with athletic shoes and apparel.

### Contemporary Violence

Drew Vidal, Assistant Professor of Acting, Voice & Movement, Ball State; Professional Actor and Fight Director

Explore different modes of physical partnering, and a working method for creating actor-generated fight choreography. Participants should come prepared to move with athletic shoes and apparel.

### Winning Auditions - Get That Role!

Sandy Levitt

A New York City professional answers your questions about winning auditions so you can *Get That Role!* – preparing material, dealing with nerves, and fine tuning your work. Bring your best monologue, song, headshot, and resume.

## Artistic

### Propage - from Fake Food to Set Dressing to Recordkeeping

Tracy Alexander, Production Manager, Midland Community Theatre; past Prop Master, Sacramento Theatre Company and Props Designer, TheatreWorks, Palo Alto, CA

Get great “cooking” tips on foam and sawdust cuisine, plus tips on propping a show from weaponry to set dressing.

## Just for Fun!

### Let's Talk New York!

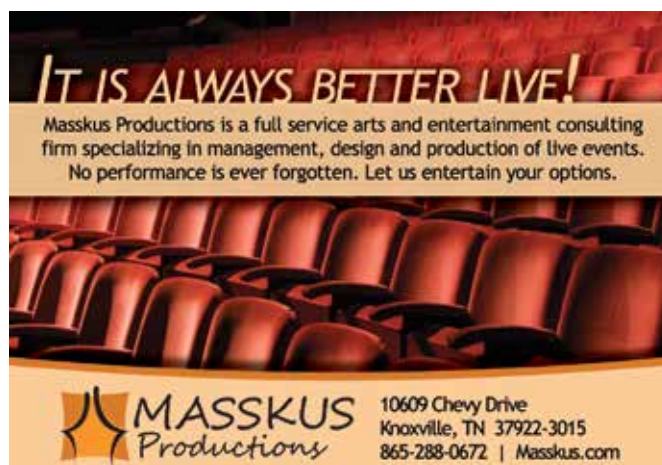
Sandy Levitt, founder and Co-President of Manhattan Tour & Travel & Ed Linderman, Broadway performer, composer and musical director

Share a wonderful memory you have about the greatest theatre city in the world and get the inside scoop on what's going on in New York City today. This workshop will be a party! ♦

# Another AACTFest Myth

## The Bigger and Splashier, The Better: That's What Gets the Adjudicators' Attention

That's a common misperception that discourages many theatres from participating in festivals. The truth is that small shows - “actor's pieces” - often do just as well, or better. The evidence is irrefutable. Shows that have captured top-three honors at recent national AACTFests include works such as *Dog Sees God*, *Scooter Thomas Makes It To The Top of the World*, *Intimate Apparel*, and *Three Viewings*. Truly, you don't have to spend your way to AACTFest. Well-acted, well-directed, well-realized simple productions garner just as much attention as a massive musical with lots of bells and whistles. ♦



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# AACT Adjudication Workshop

The National Festival offers an excellent laboratory for AACT's Adjudication Workshop. This intensive workshop will begin on Tuesday evening, June 18 and continue throughout the festival, culminating on Saturday, June 22. There is also an optional session over breakfast on Sunday to share your opinions of the awards presented. Participants will learn the skills of adjudicating and gain practical experience through observing and critiquing the festival shows. Sessions will be Tuesday evening and Wednesday through Saturday mornings (when other workshops are meeting). Then between the shows (when the audience is hearing from the national adjudicators) the workshop participants will practice adjudicating the shows and receive feedback in the workshop setting.

Conducting the Adjudication Workshop is Ron Cameron-Lewis from Ontario Canada. He is an experienced



Ron Cameron-Lewis

adjudicator trainer and has adjudicated more than 2,000 productions around Ontario; in the USA at state, regional, and national levels; and internationally. Ron taught acting for 37 years for the Music Theatre Department at Sheridan Institute and for the joint Theatre and Drama Studies program with the University of Toronto at Mississauga. He was named Professor Emeritus in 2010. Ron continues to freelance

as director, adjudicator, workshop leader, communications coach, and writer. His textbook *Acting Skills for Life* is in its third printing.

The AACT Adjudication Workshop is part of the national festival but requires an extra fee (\$160) to help cover the costs of the four plus days of intensive instruction. Register for the Workshop when you register for AACTFest. For more information contact the AACT office. ♦

## Artie's Advocacy Tip



Many states are having an Arts Advocacy Day when arts groups visit state legislators and network with other arts groups. Is yours? Check with your state arts agency or commission.

A promotional poster for the play 'Phallusies'. The title is in large, stylized red letters with a purple outline. Below the title, there is a photograph of a stage performance with several actors. Text on the poster includes a hook, a description of the play, contact information, and critical and audience reviews.

**Phallusies**

You thought you knew what it meant to have a penis? Guess again!

Starting with a baby's circumcision, six actors take the audience on a wild ride on what it means to be a man. A series of vignettes and monologues on a stage with nothing more than a small bench and a big screen video monitor, *Phallusies* is an entertaining evening for men and women alike.

**NOW AVAILABLE FOR PRODUCTION**

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[www.paul-atreides.com](http://www.paul-atreides.com)

**From the critics:**

"*Phallusies* is our "Pick of the Week"  
*Las Vegas City Life*

"Funny...a generous supply of laughs."  
*Las Vegas Review-Journal*

**From the audience:**

"Amazingly entertaining show... the "commercials" were hysterical."  
"...something special and unique... [an] important piece of theatre."

# Endowment Auction Supports Festival Travel

The twelve companies participating in the national AACTFest 2013 will each receive \$1,915 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.

AACT is now soliciting items for the Silent Auction to be held at AACTFest in Carmel, IN. 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 and costume items
- Subscriptions, gift certificates, play royalties, etc.
- Packages, including t-shirts, books, and 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 17 to:  
AACTFest 2013 - Silent Auction  
Carmel Repertory Theatre  
484 East Carmel Drive #162  
Carmel, IN 46032

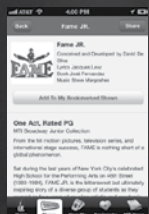
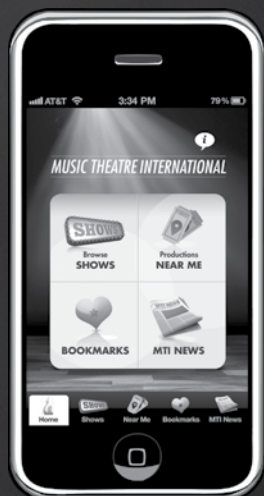
You may also bring items with you to the festival. Drop them off at the Festival Registration desk in the Renaissance Hotel on Tuesday.

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](http://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>.

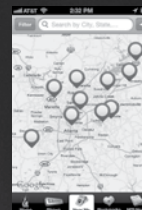
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# Spotlight Award Honors Joan Sammons

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.

**Joan Sammons** was presented with the AACT Spotlight Award by **Theatre Cedar Rapids** (IA) on August 20, 2012 before an audience of 250. Rod McCullough, AACT past president, made the presentation at Theatre Cedar Rapids' Ovarions Ceremony - an annual event to recognize its volunteers. Joan also received a Fed Hedges Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to the performing arts. Joan is 80 years young.

Joan recently retired from Theatre Cedar Rapids (TCR) after working for more than 33 years with the theatre. She was hired as an office manager in 1978,



AACT Past President Rod McCullough presents the Spotlight Award to Joan Sammons

and has worked in most administrative positions throughout the organization, from receptionist to box office manager to accountant. Through all of these years, Joan has shown a life-long commitment and passion for community theatre.

Joan has been the heart and soul of TCR. She has provided stability and focus through the theatre's many changes, growing from a small organization to one of the region's largest and longest operating community theatres. Joan has inspired countless staff, interns, and volunteers with her warm nature and devotion to the theatre.

At the award presentation, Rod McCullough commented, "Joan represents the highest level of commitment to the theatre she has served, and thus, the community she lives in. AACT is pleased to be able to recognize Joan and Theatre Cedar Rapids." ♦

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**Thanks to AACT Board and Committee members** who pay their own travel expenses to attend meetings and to those theatres that help with their travel expenses.

### **Thanks to all our contributors!**

Due to space, only contributions over \$25 are listed here. Visit the website for a complete list: [www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org).

***Your support of AACT benefits theatres all over the country.***

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# National Community Theatre Directors Conference

This is the year when full time community theatre directors will gather in Madison, WI for the biennial National Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference. The directors will share stories of challenges and solutions, learn about various theatre operations, and meet with colleagues from throughout the country. This intensive conference will be November 23-26, 2013 for individuals employed in a full-time administrative position in a community theatre organization. The conference is conducted by the University of Wisconsin - Madison and co-sponsored by AACT.

Each conference participant brings expertise to share. Topics (identified in advance from those attending) are developed in order of highest group need. The facilitator keeps discussions on track and adds details pertinent to the topic under discussion. All who wish to contribute may do so by asking questions, identifying specific problems, or providing useful input. ♦

## Registration and Housing

The Lowell Center on the UW-Madison campus serves as conference headquarters. The conference fee (\$375) includes instruction, multiple handouts, administrative support, conference leadership, morning and afternoon coffee/soda breaks, two noon lunches, Sunday group dinner, and incidental conference expenses. Lowell Center housing daily rates are \$89/single, \$101/double (no room tax). Parking (if needed) and daily breakfast are included.

For further information go to [www.DirectorsConference.org](http://www.DirectorsConference.org) or contact the AACT office.


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Indiana Repertory Theatre, Indianapolis, Ind., featuring (l-r) Anthony Prossyakov and Nicholas Hoffman. Photo: Julie Curry.





# Make Your Subscribers Raving Fans

By Michael Fox  
Director of Operations, Hale Centre Theatre, West Valley City, UT

"If you really want to 'own' a customer, if you want a booming business, you have to go beyond satisfied customers and create Raving Fans," teaches Ken Blanchard, "If you don't take care of your customers, someone else will."

**It seems** an easy misstep for arts organizations to ignore business advice because we think it doesn't apply to us either because we're dealing in *art* and not widgets, or because we are not-for-profit. What happens when we apply business principles from successful firms that don't deal in performance? We find new ways to look at our own challenges.

"Who am I? Who am I? 2-4-6-0-1!" Who am I to speak to increasing season ticket holders at your theatre? Though we don't have 24,601 subscribers, we are blessed to have 23,150 individual "raving fans," (subscribers). Ten years ago that number was less than 13,000. Here's a few things we did, *and do*, to grow...

Our first philosophy in creating a "beyond satisfied" patron is to offer consistent, enjoyable, entertaining theatre. That might sound too basic, a little simplistic, but we maintain the *greatest* sales technique is consistency on stage. After all you can do in marketing, customer service, and perks, it is the theatrical experience that turns the patron into the fan. Focus on everything artistic before focusing on the rest. Our greatest compliment, and certainly our biggest word-of-mouth sales factor is when fans tell others in the community they don't know what \_\_\_\_\_ show is about, but they are *sure* they'll enjoy it. Your artistic reputation is your lifeblood.

**Before** achieving consistency, we must address one factor that many artists want to dismiss out of hand. The necessity of "knowing your audience." We needn't pander to them...but in return, we can't expect them to grace our doorways if we don't fill a need for them. What do they need? A classy night out? Wholesome entertainment? Thoughtful stretching of their boundaries? An alternative to movies? An incredible laugh? A traditional theatre experience? Understanding what *your* patrons want and then *giving it to them* creates fans. Consistently filling *their* needs makes them raving fans.

When we don't, they go elsewhere.

Once you've created a magical theatrical performance, you'll want people to see it! Perhaps a few more considerations for increasing a subscriber base include pricing, benefits, targeted discounting, and understanding the competition.

We can structure pricing in only one of two ways. We either find and charge the maximum ticket price the population will allow OR you price at an affordable level, below maximum value, to achieve more individual buyers. It really is that elementary. You can capture the maximum dollars per person, or capture the maximum people at fewer dollars. If we believe that word-of-mouth is our best

## Consider your subscriber benefits. Are they wonderful?

marketing tool, don't we want more mouths? If we price folks out of their ability, or beyond our true value, they will spend their entertainment dollars elsewhere.

Consider your subscriber benefits. Are they wonderful? Do they include things that make being a fan special? If not – change it. If so – *make sure they KNOW it!* What good is



a benefit not well understood? Discussion could be held for days regarding the best benefits. I propose those are unique to your area and your targeted crowd. Cheap booze in Utah probably won't increase business – but it might help you. The specific benefit isn't my point, the patron's understanding and *use of said benefit* is what counts. Make being a season ticket holder special. What is achieved if the patron doesn't feel wanted? They remain a patron instead of becoming a fanatic!

The best secret we know for making a subscriber feel our gratitude is the *surprise benefit*. When we have seats that aren't filled, especially for a hot-ticket production, we contact our subscriber base very first. We tell them thanks for being great to us. We tell them that they are our ambassadors. We acknowledge that they know people that don't attend, but that might become fans. We ask them, as a special member of the theatre, to *invite* someone to be their guest at the show as a thank you for

**The best secret we know for making a subscriber feel our gratitude is the *surprise benefit*.**

their loyalty. We kill three birds with one stone. We thank the most devoted fans with a surprise benefit, we bring in new fans on the arm of those that will already talk us up, and we fill seats! (Obviously we don't do this but *perhaps* once each year per subscriber and track very carefully how many offers are made and to whom, so we never over offer and devalue the fans' own ticket purchase.)

**It might** behoove us to be wary of discounting. The quickest way to lose fans is for them to find out they would have gotten a better deal if they had waited to buy/known something or someone/been on Facebook, etc. Remember, the subscriber should get the very best! I'm not saying *don't* discount, I'm saying don't let them catch you. How to do that might be a topic for another time, but I submit it *does* not include rackets like Groupon.

Lastly, let us remember that we are not really in competition with one another. We are in competition with other forms of entertainment. Many are perfectly content to see another mediocre movie, to attend another sporting event with their losing team, or to throw yet one more bird at a giggling pig. When considering how to acquire new/more audience, don't fight amongst yourselves. Instead, teach new/more people the joy of theatre!

"Good theatre begets good theatre," my co-founder and CEO, Mark Dietlein, always says. Learn from successful businesses of all kinds, create good theatre, share it *through* your fans and make sure they know you love them! Just maybe you can share a number with Jean Valjean! ♦



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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. Five Member at Large candidates are presented by the Nominating Committee this year to fill the three positions. (The notice sent to members in December included six, but one withdrew.) 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 on page 23 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: 2013-2016



**Ron Cameron-Lewis** (Ontario, Canada - International) is well known as an adjudicator, having judged more than 2,000 productions in hundreds of festivals throughout Ontario and for AACT state, regional, national, and international festivals. Professor Emeritus at Sheridan Institute, Oakville, Canada, Ron taught and coordinated the Music Theatre Department

for much of its 40 years. He brings experience on boards and committees with Sheridan and Theatre Ontario, where he served as Vice President Educational Theatre and Festival Chair. Ron has served on AACT's International Committee. An experienced dramaturge, author, playwright, and workshop leader, Ron's textbook, *Acting Skills for Life*, is in its third printing. Ron has worked for regional theatres in Ontario and the Maritime provinces, with Canadian TV networks, and currently teaches presentation skills to palliative care physicians world-wide. He will shortly be teaching his fourth adjudication training workshop, having trained 30 new adjudicators in Canada and the USA during the past two years. Ron has a degree from Western University, and trained in theatre at the Banff Centre, Guildhall School of Music and Drama in UK, and the University of London. Ron has received awards from Sheridan, Theatre Ontario, the Province of Ontario, and the National Institute for Staff & Organizational Development in Texas.



**Mary Jo DeNolf** (Grand Rapids, MI - Region III) has been the Director of Volunteers and Operations for Grand Rapids Civic Theatre for 15 years. In this position she not only works with the volunteers, she assists with the day to day operations of one of the largest community theatres. Mary Jo has lead workshops on the state and national level on Volunteer Management. In 2003,

she was honored to take her workshop on the road to AACT's Region X in Heidelberg, Germany. Mary served six years on the Community Theatre Association of Michigan's board as President, Vice President, and Secretary. This fall she will co-chair CTAM's fall conference. Starting a new adventure this year, Mary Jo has been asked to be one of Michigan's adjudicators for the State AACT Festival. In her spare time,

Mary Jo has been props mistress for local theatres including Mason Street Warehouse (Equity), Actor's Theatre, and Circle Theatre of Grand Rapids. Also involved in Boys Scouts with her husband and 14-year-old son, this adventure is Venture Scout leader which helps incubate the desire to be outdoors hiking and camping.



**Sara Phoenix** (Tulsa, OK - Region VI) serves as Artistic Director for Theatre Tulsa in Tulsa, OK. A child of community theatre, she has directed and choreographed more than 60 productions for various theatres and schools and holds a BFA in theatre from the University of Oklahoma. Sara is a certified drama teacher and co-founded Poteet Theatre

Arts Education in Oklahoma City. Sara has both performed in and directed award-winning productions at the national AACTFest, including *John and Jen* in 2009 and *Over the River and Through the Woods* in 2001. She has twice had the opportunity to travel to Germany to perform at the USAEF Festival. Since 2009, Sara has served on several committees for AACT, including Workshops, Education, and Festival Adjudication. Sara is also currently serving on AACT's Youth Initiatives Task Force. She also serves as docent council President at Philbrook Museum of Art, where she is an active docent. She has served on the boards of the Jewel Box Theatre and the Poteet Theatre in OKC. Sara is married and she and her husband, Jay, have two-year-old twins.



**Michael Spicer** (Salina, KS - Region V) has been the Executive Director of Salina Community Theatre (SCT), in Salina, KS for the past 16 years. During that time, SCT was the National Winner of AACTFest in 2001 with its production of *Wit*, and the recipient of the Governor's Arts Award for organizational excellence. SCT recently completed a \$3.8 million expansion,

almost doubling the size of its campus. Michael has his Master of Fine Arts from the University of Virginia. He has worked for theatres in South Dakota, Florida, Texas, Virginia, California, Wisconsin, and Washington, D.C. He has taught workshops in a variety of disciplines for the American Theatre Association, AACT, the Southeastern Theatre Conference, the Southwest Theatre Conference, and Texas Nonprofit Theatres. He adjudicated one-act plays in Texas, Iowa, Florida, California, and Oklahoma. He has been on the AACT



board, and has served on the boards of Texas Nonprofit Theatres and the Association of Kansas Theatres.



**Sharon A. Wilcox** (Torrington, CT - Region I) has been involved in professional and community theatre for 26 years. She has performed throughout CT and NY both on-stage and behind the scenes. Sharon is currently the Production Manager/ Executive In Charge of Production for the Warner Theatre in Torrington, CT, and was previously the Director of

Productions & Marketing and then Managing Director for the Thomaston (CT) Opera House. Sharon was instrumental in the development of the Thomaston Center School 6th Grade Drama Club program – having worked for almost 10 years with more than 600 students on a variety of musical productions ranging from *Once On This Island Jr.* to *The Pirates of Penzance Jr.* The program expanded in 2009 to include a Regional Drama Club for students in grades 6 - 12. She is currently on the boards of Naugatuck Teen Theater and Phoenix Stage Company and has also participated with TheatreWorks New Milford, Goshen Players, CT Dance Theatre, and Desultory Theatre Club. Director/choreographer credits include numerous musical and non-musical productions. Some of her favorites - *Runaways*, *Pippin*, *Hair*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Agnes of God*, *Forever Plaid*, *Ragtime*, *Over The River and Through The Woods*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Rent* and *One Night With Fanny Brice*.

## Officers

To serve two-year terms: 2013-2015



### President

**Gary Walker** (Grand Rapids, MI - Region III) 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 served as Treasurer of AACT for three terms before becoming Executive Vice President 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 presented workshops in board management and fundraising for nonprofits for state and local organizations. He and his wife, Jan, reside in a historic district in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



### Executive Vice President

**Murray Chase** (Venice, FL - Region IV) is the Executive/Artistic Director of Venice Theatre in Florida, a position he has held for 17-plus years. Chase is currently a Member at Large on the AACT Board, as well as a member of the Resource Roster, Festival Commission, and the Playwright Services Task Force. He

is also an AACT Endowment Trustee. He has served at various times as community theatre festival chair and division chair for Southeastern Theatre Conference. Honors include the Distinguished Career Award from Florida Theatre Conference, the Arts Leadership Award from Sarasota County Arts Council, eight Best Director awards at state and regional festivals, and induction as an AACT Fellow. Venice Theatre was honored with the Twink Lynch Award from AACT in 2009 and hosted the AACT International Festival in 2010. The theatre will host again in 2014. During Chase's tenure, Venice Theatre has grown from an annual budget of \$450,000 to \$2.6 million today. The theatre offers more than 500 performances annually, with 27 full productions, a concert season, and a full-time education/outreach program. Chase is also former president of Venice MainStreet. He and his wife, Lori, are happy empty-nesters. They live in the Cape Haze, FL area, south of Venice with two Shih Tzus.



### Vice President Public Relations

**Sue Ellen Gerrells** (Alabaster, AL - Region IV) is the current AACT VP for Public Relations, an adjudicator, and an AACT Festival Commissioner. She works as the Executive Director of the Alabama Conference of Theatre and serves as Artistic Director for The South City Theatre, Inc. in Alabaster, AL. She has served as

an arts administrator for more than twenty-five years. For ten years, she provided publicity and arts administration for Theatre USA (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 acted in or directed more than 100 productions in the past 40 years, several of which have won honors on the state, regional, or international levels of competition. She served as Alabama's AACTFest Chair for several years and says her work with AACT is one of her most rewarding theatrical experiences.



### Vice President Festivals

**Kay Armstrong** (Dallas, TX - Region VI) has been an AACT Board Member for 13 years. Kay currently serves on the Finance, Strategic Planning, and History Committees and Chairs the Festival Commission. She trained with Annette Procnier and has adjudicated in WI, MS, NE, MO, OH, TX, Southeastern Theatre Conference, and

Region IV. Kay has served as Festival Commissioner in KY, IN, ME, MO, NE, WY, Regions I, IV, and X. For 10 years, Kay coordinated festivals in OK: five state and two regional. She supervised creation of a playwriting competition, youth conference, and traveling board development seminar, and sat on the Oklahoma Arts Council's Grants Committees and Oklahoma Art Institute's Theatre Selection Panel. Kay was Vice President of Conferences for Southwest Theatre Association. She co-founded a community theatre in Glenview, IL and was Business Manager for Contemporary Theatre of Dallas for three years. She coordinated dance fests and performance events for the Dance Council of North Texas for two years. Kay has conducted numerous workshops for state, regional, and national organizations. She has loved theatre since age three and takes pride in her daughter who teaches middle school theatre. Kay also takes pride in her induction as an AACT Fellow in 2011.



#### Treasurer

**Tim Jebson** (Midland, TX - Region VI) has been the Executive Director of Midland (TX) Community Theatre (MCT) for the past sixteen 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 prior

to hosting the 2006 AACT International Theatre Festival. Recent directing credits include *Shrek the Musical*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Hairspray*, *Oklahoma*, *White Christmas*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Les Misérables*, *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 (TNT) and the Board of the Midland-Odessa Area AIDS Support (MAAS) board. Tim has been married to Lisa for the past twenty years, and they have an eleven-year-old son, Zach. In his spare time, Tim enjoys playing golf and managing his fantasy baseball and football teams - the StandingOs.

#### Nominating Committee

Two to be elected to serve two-year terms: 2013-2015



**Joanne Berry** (Bay City, MI - Region III) has been a volunteer with the Bay City Players for almost fifty years. She is a past president of the Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM) and served as vice-president of the Theatre Alliance of Michigan. She has served on AACT's Board as Region III Representative and as a Member at Large. She chaired AACT's

Advocacy Committee for many years and also serves on the Membership and Workshops Committees. Joanne has represented AACT at national advocacy events in Washington, DC and has written on advocacy for Spotlight. Joanne serves CTAM as chair of its Advocacy, Adjudication, and Education Committees and is active with ArtServe Michigan, an arts

advocacy group. In 2004 she was named Michigan's Arts Advocate of the Year. For her service to community theatre in Michigan, she received the Robert A. McKenna Award, CTAM's most prestigious award. The Bay City Players has also recognized Joanne for outstanding volunteer service. She was named an AACT Fellow in 2005. Joanne is a retired secondary teacher and former adjunct faculty member at Saginaw Valley State University. AACT membership and Bay City Players are family traditions for Joanne, husband Kerry and daughter, Caitlin.



**Lori Chase** (Venice, FL - Region IV) has worked in every aspect of theatre during the past 27 years: production, scenic and costume design, stage management, administration, and as an acclaimed actress. Her work spans both community and professional theatre. Currently, she works as Event Coordinator for Venice Theatre (FL), a position she has held

since 2009. Lori planned and executed almost all aspects of the heralded 2010 AACT international community theatre festival. She is fulfilling that same task for the upcoming 2014 festival. Lori is also the incoming festival chair for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. Eclectic past careers have included business management for a surgery center, as well as touring with an AmeriCorps acting troupe.



**Kathy Pingel** (Des Moines, IA - Region V) has been the Director of Education and Youth Programming at the Des Moines Community Playhouse for the past eight 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. She taught at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois and Southern Illinois University, worked as a free lance director, and as Outreach Coordinator for Orlando Repertory Theatre before settling in Iowa. Kathy has directed more than 50 productions. She has piloted many new programs including classes for students on the autism spectrum, a repertory company for senior radio performers, and workshops to teach creative problem-solving to corporate teams. She also created Spotlight: Literacy, a program designed to help teachers expand language arts activities with trips to the Goldman Theatre. Kathy has adjudicated at the state and regional levels for AACT, as well as the AACT International Festival in 2010. She facilitated AACT's Theatre Education Directors Conference in August 2010 and continues to serve on the Education Committee.



**David Sheppard** (Maynard, MA - Region I) is Executive Director of Acme Theater Productions. He has been active in community theatre for more than 44 years, having performed, directed, designed, and produced for groups all over New England. In 1976 he helped form Bolton Backstage. He earned a BA in Theater Management at the University of Massachusetts. In 1992

Dave started Acme Theater Productions, one of the highest award winning community theatres in New England. It has participated in 11 preliminary level festivals, winning three times. Acme has won the New England Regional Festival, advancing to perform in the National Festival twice, and has represented the USA in two international festivals. Dave has been named Best Director for Massachusetts three times and for New England three times. Dave has served on the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres (EMACT) Board and was instrumental in spearheading initiatives designed to encourage and promote new theatres in Massachusetts. Dave served on the AACT Board eight years. He has served on AACT's Awards Committee, the Festival Commission as Chairman and as a Technical Rep, as an Endowment Trustee, and on the Music Rights Task Force. Dave is dedicated to fostering and helping new and small theatres grow and succeed.

---

### Board Members by Regions

These persons' terms end in 2014 and 2015, so they will serve with those elected this year.

#### Region I

Bevie Lord, MA, Region Rep

#### Region II

Scott Bloom, MD, VP Membership  
Susanne Caviness, MD, Region Rep

#### Region III

Penelope Notter, MI, VP Education  
Frank Peot, WI, Secretary  
Lynn Ruhl, WI, Region Rep

#### Region IV

Rick Kerby, FL, Member at Large  
Lynn Nelson, MS, Region Rep

#### Region V

Nancy Eppert, MO, Member at Large  
Jim Walker, SD, Region Rep

#### Region VI

Tracy Alexander, TX, Region Rep  
Eugene Irby, NM, VP Planning/Development  
Linda M. Lee, TX, Past President

#### Region VII

Donna Fisher, WY, Region Rep  
Michael Fox, UT, Member at Large

#### Region VIII

Gil Savage, CA, Region Rep

#### Region IX

Yvonne Johnson, WA, Member at Large  
Jon Douglas Rake, WA, Region Rep  
Chris Serface, WA, Member at Large

#### Region X

Vikki Hanrahan, Germany, Region Rep  
Joline Powell, Germany, Member at Large

#### Nominating Committee

Tom Cowley, OK, Region VI  
Dennis Gilmore, TX, Region VI  
Linda M. Lee, TX, Chair, Region VI

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Eugene Irby

AACT Vice President for Planning and Development Eugene Irby waits in the lobby between rehearsals at the Tennessee Community Theatre Festival in Maryville, TN, October 25-28, 2012. Eugene served as AACT Festival Commission Representative for the festival.



Sue Ellen Gerrells

Festival Commission Representative Thomas La Foe (right) grabs a quick bite with (left to right) Sam Wallace (adjudicator), Lynn Nelson (adjudicator and AACT Region IV Representative) and Gary Weatherly (Alabama Conference of Theatre Vice President) while on a break from the Alabama Community Theatre Festival. The festival was held October 26-28, 2012, in Wetumpka, AL.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Festival Commission Representative John Eppert talks over the upcoming festival session with South Carolina Festival Chair and AACT State Contact Susan Smith. The festival was held in Newberry, SC, November 2-3, 2012.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Membership Specialist Jill Patchin examines a season brochure with Grand Rapids Civic Theatre Executive Director Bruce Tinker (right) at Community Theatre Association of Michigan's Theatre Leadership Conference, held in Traverse City, MI, November 9-11, 2012. Vincent Weiler looks on.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Festival Commission Chair Kay Armstrong (at front) leaves the hotel on the way to a performance session, flanked by adjudicator Morrie Enders and former Region X Representative and Festival Chair Jim Sohre. Kay was serving as Festival Commission representative at the Region X festival, held in Kaiserslautern Germany, January 18-20. At left is the group's driver, Mike Tietze.



David Sokolowski

Festival Chair Cindy Johnson (left) and Susanne Caviness, AACT Region II Representative, do a bit of prep work before the Maryland Community Theatre Festival, held in Wye Mills, January 18-20.



Lori Chase

AACT Vice President for Public Relations Sue Ellen Gerrells goes over her notes following a performance at the Mississippi Community Theatre Festival, held in Columbus, MS, January 17-20. Sue Ellen served as an adjudicator for the festival.



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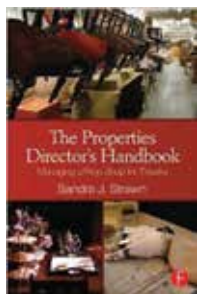
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**National Arts Advocacy Day**  
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April 8-9, 2013

The 2012 election has made a dramatic impact on Congress with more than 80 new members of Congress taking office in early January. The next Congress will renew the focus on reducing the federal deficit and creating jobs, and it is imperative that arts advocates work together to craft a policy agenda that supports our nonprofit arts sector and arts education.

Network with your fellow arts advocates from across the country. Strategize with experienced advocates during an interactive role play session on how to make the case for the arts and arts education to your members of Congress.

Details and registration:  
[www.artsusa.org/events/2013/aad/register.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/events/2013/aad/register.asp)

Americans for the Arts  
c/o Meetings & Events  
P.O. Box 91261  
Washington, DC 20090-1261

**New England Theatre Conference  
Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award**

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Aurand Harris Playwriting Award  
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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.

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Deadline: May 1, 2013 (postmark)

Details: [www.netconline.org/aurand-harris-award.php](http://www.netconline.org/aurand-harris-award.php)

**Stage West Southwest Playwriting Competition**

Stage West  
821 W Vickery Blvd  
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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, 2013

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[www.stagewest.org/annual-southwest-playwriting-competition](http://www.stagewest.org/annual-southwest-playwriting-competition)



# Moving On

## Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest 2013

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

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
II	MD	Montgomery Playhouse	Gaithersburg	<i>Saves the Day</i>
II	MD	Silver Spring Stage	Silver Spring	<i>Spoken For</i>
III	OH	The Drama Workshop	Cincinnati	<i>Jerry Finnegan's Sister</i>
IV	MS	Company of Angels	Meridian	<i>The Boys in Autumn</i>
IV	MS	Tupelo Community Theatre	Tupelo	<i>The 25th Annual Putman County Spelling Bee</i>
VI	AR	Ouachita Little Theatre	Mena	<i>The Madwoman of Chaillot</i>
VI	AR	South Arkansas Arts Center	El Dorado	<i>Graceland</i>
IX	OR	Beaverton Civic Theatre	Beaverton	<i>The Miracle Worker</i>
IX	OR	Lumiere Players	Tualatin	<i>The Legend of Jimmy Blue Eyes</i>
<b>X</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Soldiers' Theatre</b>	<b>Vicenza</b>	<b><i>Controlling Interest</i></b>

Boldface indicates productions advancing to the National Festival

This list includes productions selected since the previous issue of *Spotlight*. Full listing is available on the website, [www.aact.org](http://www.aact.org)

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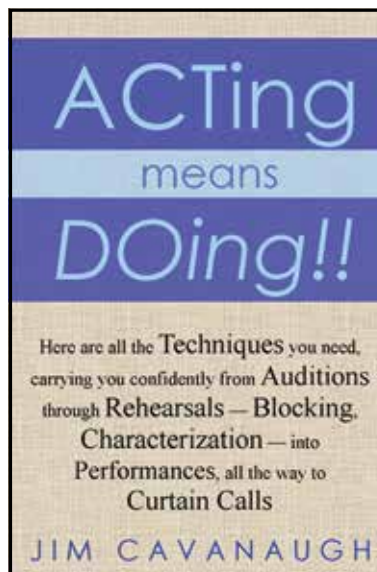
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Jim Cavanaugh began as a teen in  
community theatre as the front end of  
Old Cow in "Jack and the Beanstalk"  
with the Augusta (GA) Players, and at  
21 he was in the army, directing the  
Heidelberg Little Theatre. Back in the  
States, he earned his B.F.A. with high  
honors at the Goodman Theatre School  
of Drama, stage managed two Broadway  
musicals and directed two off-Broadway  
plays - but then went back to his roots  
in community theatre, as Managing  
Director of the Rochester (MN) Civic  
Theatre, and Executive Director of the  
Omaha Playhouse.

He served several stints on the Board  
of ACTA, was named one of its earliest  
Fellows, and was a frequent adjudicator  
at state and regional festivals.

This experience formed the basis for  
his 23 years as Professor of Theatre Arts  
at Mount Holyoke College, while those  
years of teaching, and the many plays  
he directed with amateur and student  
actors, form the basis for this excellent  
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## What does your theatre do to make season ticket holders feel special?

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We offer subscribers discounts to our special events (Ladies Night Out, organ concerts, etc), an e-newsletter, free ticket exchange, and more recently, our TAGALONG offer. If the house is less than 50% sold 4 days prior to the performance, we offer subscribers the opportunity to bring a friend along for a \$10 ticket. (We call the program Tagalong for \$10). We try to seat the friend either next to or near the subscriber but we don't guarantee seating. We've also started going up to subscribers prior to the show and thanking them for their continued support.

Colleen Muench, Marketing Manager  
Stagecrafters Baldwin Theatre, Royal Oak, MI  
[www.stagecrafters.org](http://www.stagecrafters.org)

What we have found to be successful so far is to  
1) Allow our subscribers to reserve seats for a show before it goes on sale to the public. 2) Offer them, when they check in, a concession card for \$5 that will give them \$10 at the concession stand. 3) Allow them to come in five minutes before the doors open to the general public. 4) Our awards show is included in the season package at the same price as a production. At the door, the awards performance is more than a regular play production.

Pat Woodfin, President  
The Actors Conservatory Theatre, Lewisville, TX  
[www.getintotheact.org](http://www.getintotheact.org)

We have a Sneak Peek just for subscribers...a season announcement reception for our donors at a private club, and replicated the next night for our subscribers. It is held early evening (at 6PM). They get a light snack (like a bag of chips and a drink) and we present our season with the Artistic Director as emcee and [previewing] each show. Subscribers can renew that evening.

Deena Dray, Executive Director  
Diamond Head Theatre, Honolulu, HI  
[www.diamondheadtheatre.com](http://www.diamondheadtheatre.com)

Posted on Facebook

We have various levels of "partners." Depending on the contribution and season membership held... they receive concession vouchers, bring a friend vouchers and a theatre pin (our logo on a silver pin).

George Green, Lake City Playhouse  
Coeur d'Alene, ID,  
[www.lakecityplayhouse.org](http://www.lakecityplayhouse.org)

We print all the patrons' names (those who donate an amount above the regular season ticket price) in every program. But this post has really gotten me to think... we need to do more to recognize them. After all, they're the reason we exist!

Lynn Harper Nelson  
Tupelo Community Theatre, MS  
[www.tct.ms](http://www.tct.ms)

## New Roles

**Eric Shephard** has been hired as Executive Director for **Waco Civic Theatre**, Waco, TX after serving for 13 years as Artistic Director of Vive Les Arts Theatre, Killeen, TX. He succeeds former WCT board president Beth Richards, who held the position since April when she replaced Pat Mears as interim Executive Director. Eric's background includes acting at the Zachary Scott Theatre, Austin Playhouse, and Hyde Park Theatre, all in Austin, TX and Actors' Theatre in Louisville, KY. He also has directed shows in Indiana and taught at Central Texas College in Killeen, TX and the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor in Belton, TX. He began his new duties in January 2013.

**Dane Winters** is the new USA Army Europe Entertainment Director and Entertainment Director for **United States Army Garrison-Kaiserslautern** in Kaiserslautern, Germany. He succeeds **Jim Sohre**, who has retired. Dane has been working with US Army Europe Entertainment for 26 years. He served previously as Music Specialist in Bamberg, Germany, Theater Center Director in Stuttgart, Germany, Entertainment Branch Director, also at Stuttgart, and for the past twelve years as Entertainment Branch Director for the Roadside Theater in Heidelberg, Germany. Dane holds an MFA in Acting and Directing from Trinity University through the Dallas Theater Center, Dallas, TX. He received AACT's David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award in 1999. Dane began work in his new position in October 2012. ♦

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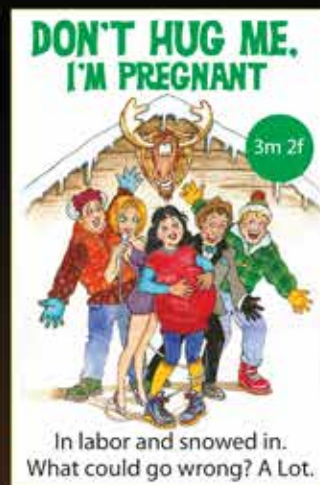
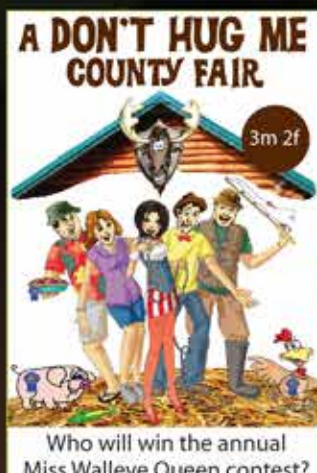


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## What We Do for Love

by Twink Lynch

Community theatre people are known and admired for their passion – passion for the art of theatre, passion for our own theatre organization, passion for the show we're in, and passion for the role we play in changing and even saving lives.

It is an awesome thing, this passion. It leads to an incredible commitment of time, talent, and energy to a show. It leads people to soldier on even when their mother has just died, or they have pneumonia, or have fallen and broken their back, or have been throwing up backstage (and thus have buckets stationed at strategic

**I wonder if our passion for the magic of theatre sometimes leads us to believe we can *always* accomplish miracles.**

spots around the set). It leads people to make leadership gifts to the theatre, even when they have already given sustaining gifts each year. Over time, it gives our lives meaning, a feeling of being part of something bigger than ourselves, a feeling of pride in how we, in the face of all odds, have accomplished the "impossible dream."

And yet I wonder if we can be too passionate. I wonder if this glorious passion doesn't sometimes lead us to ignore some of the harsh realities chipping away at our dream. For a chief staff person, those realities might be a "board from hell" that doesn't know their job, doesn't fundraise, and doesn't care. Or it might be a single person with an agenda to get rid of the chief executive. Or it might be a job opportunity in a theatre that has "descended to the lowest level of the feeding chain of community theatres."

I wonder if our passion for the magic of theatre sometimes leads us to believe we can *always* accomplish miracles - that our passion alone will ignite passion in

others, will inspire people to support our theatre, will get us through what to others looks like an absolutely lose-lose situation.

I once knew a guy who dreamed of building a real community theatre from the broken dreams of a previous effort in his city. He admits it was a real gamble, but he dedicated his life to it because it was "a chance to put together a theatre in just the right way" so it could be phenomenally successful. He knew it would be "slave labor" for him but was willing to contribute anything he had so the group would succeed and be a modern example of what he thought a community theatre should be. That's a powerful and seductive dream.

During his tenure, the group grew from a shoestring operation doing three shows a year to six shows plus two children's shows and a summer musical. They were able to find a larger space, thus increasing their audience from 2,500 to 15,000 each year. Their budget grew as well. They re-wrote their bylaws and secured their nonprofit status from the IRS. Policies and procedures were developed.

But – here's the harsh reality - there apparently was some ongoing difficulty recruiting leaders for the board. A kind of power struggle emerged as my friend offered suggestions to the nominating committee. His assistance was seen as intrusive and as an inappropriate attempt to pick his own bosses. There were a couple of presidents who seemed to be less than effective, but when my friend tried to help those presidents get the board more actively engaged, they felt he was overstepping his bounds and they were offended. Committees didn't meet, and no fundraising was done by this board, even though they had approved a rehab project for the facility. In order to pay the bills for the project, my friend took out a personal loan at the bank, expecting, of course, to be paid back. (Yikes!) As time went on, the board began to meet without him and ultimately asked for his resignation.

Could this "marriage" have been saved? Probably not. Probably shouldn't have occurred in the first place. My friend probably should have quit this job the minute he



had to take out the loan. And yet, dreams are hard to give up. That character trait of being willing to do whatever it takes to get the show up, manage the business, make the audience more comfortable, pick up the tasks the board doesn't get done – in short to pull off a miracle – is sometimes just too ingrained in us passionate theatre folk. One managing director put it this way: “I’ve often thought of our positions like the vaudeville act with the spinning plates. I don’t think a lot of theatre boards know the physical, mental, and emotional commitment it takes to keep every plate spinning and do it [year after year after year].”

Sometimes I think what we need is a little less passion and a little more practical training on how to work with boards. So many of our chief staff officers in community theatre have evolved into those jobs from other positions – artistic directors, mostly, but former members of the board or other volunteers have also been hired to run our theatres. The problem is – the love is there, the artistic skill is usually there (sometimes it’s business skill), but the “savvy” in working with boards is not.

Douglas Eadie in his book *The Board – Savvy CEO* (BoardSource, 2001) says it’s important for CEOs (Managing Directors, Artistic Directors, etc.) to become board-savvy because:

- 1) It is critical to building a close, positive, working relationship with your board and to their realizing their full potential as a high impact governing body.
- 2) Your theatre’s long-term stability, effectiveness, image, and reputation are heavily dependent on your working partnership with your board and on your board’s capacity to produce high impact governance.
- 3) Your professional and career advancement – not to mention your tenure as chief staff person – are at

stake, since boards have a tendency to blame the chief staff person when things go wrong.

It is regrettably true that many boards do not know how to be a group employer, or how to govern with a staff partner, or how to fundraise to support additional overhead that comes with paid staff. Sometimes they not only don’t know how, they are unwilling to learn. I know of at least three groups right this minute that are suffering from this kind of board ignorance and arrogance. There may be others - I don’t hear from everybody.

But even if we have the best board members in the world - they are learners, doers, donors, and cheerleaders; they attend meetings, see the shows, fundraise, and advocate for our theatres – we still have the responsibility to train ourselves to partner with them. Partnering involves learning what makes good boards work and helping our boards learn how. We need to see our boards as a precious resource rather than as “them” (and vice versa!) We need to excite them about our work, but we also have to guide them to do their job of governance as effectively as possible. There are principles of Boardsmanship that can be learned. However, if our board won’t learn them, we may have to consider moving on.

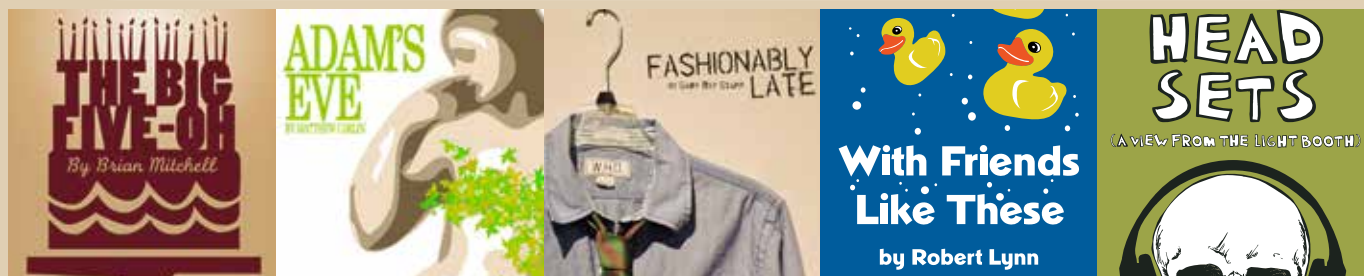
“What We Do for Love” isn’t just a song, it’s a way of life for us in community theatre. But let’s not be blinded by it. Let’s try to be realistic about the challenges we face every day and prepare ourselves and our boards to be partners in this most passionate of enterprises. ♦

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, April 2005

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardsmanship for *Spotlight* for many years. Her early articles are compiled in a still-relevant book for boards: *Boards in the Spotlight*. See ad on the next page for ordering information.

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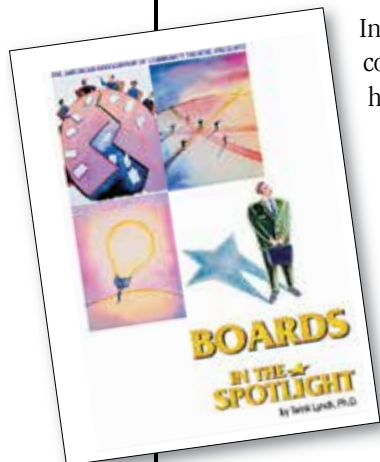


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Contact Darlene Delorenzo [darlene@aact.org](mailto:darlene@aact.org) 866-Our-AACT

When	Who/What	Where	Information
<b>Mar 2</b>	<b>Delaware Theatre Association</b> ★State Festival 2013	<b>DE</b> Georgetown	410-398-3564 www.dtafest.org
<b>Mar 6-10</b>	<b>Southeastern Theatre Conference</b> ★Region IV AACTFest	<b>KY</b> Louisville <b>Region IV</b>	662-325-2559 www.setc.org
<b>Mar 13-17</b>	<b>Minnesota Assn of Community Theatres</b> ★MACTFest 2013	<b>MN</b> Brooklyn Park	507-451-9022 www.mact.net
<b>Mar 13-16</b>	<b>Texas Nonprofit Theatres</b> ★Texas State AACTFest 2013	<b>TX</b> Lewisville	817-731-2238 www.texas theatres.org
<b>Mar 14-16</b>	<b>Jackson Community Theatre</b> ★Wyoming AACTFest 2013	<b>WY</b> Jackson	307-699-5794 www.jhcenterforthearts.org
<b>Mar 21-24</b>	<b>Nebraska Assn of Community Theatres</b> ★Nebraska/Kansas AACTFest 2013	<b>NE</b> Minden	402-710-1485 www.Nebact.org
<b>Mar 21-24</b>	<b>Theatre New Mexico</b> ★New Mexico State AACTFest 2013	<b>NM</b> Los Alamos	505-662-5493 www.theatrenm.org
<b>Mar 21-24</b>	<b>Pennsylvania Assn of Community Theatres</b> ★PACTFest 2013	<b>PA</b> Ridley Park	302-984-1278 www.pactheatres.org
<b>Mar 22-23</b>	<b>Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre</b> ★North Dakota/South Dakota AACTFest 2013	<b>ND</b> Fargo	701-235-1901 www.fmct.org
<b>Mar 22-24</b>	<b>Indiana Community Theatre League</b> ★Indiana State Festival 2013	<b>IN</b> Kokomo	765-453-2439 www.region3aact.org/Indiana.htm
<b>Mar 29-30</b>	<b>Washington State Community Theatre Assn</b> ★Region IX AACTFest 2013	<b>WA</b> Richland <b>Region IX</b>	509-521-3449 www.wscta.org
<b>Apr 4-7</b>	<b>Iowa Community Theatre Association</b> ★State AACTFest 13	<b>IA</b> Newton	641-792-0690 www.iowacommunitytheatres.org
<b>Apr 5-7</b>	<b>Jackson Community Theatre</b> ★Region VII AACTFest 2013	<b>WY</b> Jackson <b>Region VII</b>	307-699-5794 www.jhcenterforthearts.org
<b>Apr 17-20</b>	<b>Region VI Theatres</b> ★Region VI AACTFest 2013	<b>LA</b> Lafayette <b>Region VI</b>	337-233-7060 ex 226 www.acadianacenterforthearts.org
<b>Apr 18-21</b>	<b>Association of Region III</b> ★Region III AACTFest 2013	<b>WI</b> Hartford	414-774-4768 www.region3aact.org
<b>Apr 19-21</b>	<b>Eastern States Theatre Association</b> ★Region II AACTFest 2013	<b>NY</b> Rome <b>Region III</b>	315-339-2545 www.estafest.org
<b>Apr 26-28</b>	<b>Region V Association</b> ★Region V AACTFest 2013	<b>ND</b> Fargo <b>Region V</b>	701-235-1901 www.fmct.org

★ Indicates festival in the 2013 Cycle

For dates farther ahead, check the website: [www.aact2.org](http://www.aact2.org)

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**workshops**: page 12. **adjudication workshop**: page 13

Register now at **[www.aactfest.org](http://www.aactfest.org)**!