

spotlight

May/June 2013 \$2.50



Networking Opportunities Abound at AACTFest 2013

There are many reasons to attend theatre festivals. There are the shows. The workshops. The food. And, of course, there is the opportunity to “confer, converse, and otherwise hob-nob with brother wizards” (to quote *The Wizard of Oz*).

Networking. Many times it's the best thing about attending a festival. The free exchange of ideas among community theatre peers can be informative, enlightening, and can remind attendees that they have kindred spirits all over the country.

At AACTFest 2013, networking opportunities abound. Three specific events at the gathering are tailor-made for the aforementioned “hob-nobbing.”

First, an “early bird” party, intended specifically as a “getting to know you” time, takes place Tuesday evening. Those attending will be able to eat, drink, and share with all who—by choice or by design—have arrived before the start of the festival. Wednesday evening features a similar event following the second performance session. This is considered the official “kick-off party” of AACTFest 2013. Then, on Thursday following the afternoon performance sessions, from 5 - 7 p.m., Steele Spring Theatrical Licensing is hosting a happy hour where appetizers and drinks will be provided.

On Thursday evening following the shows, a different type of event will occur. Music Theatre International will throw a party to introduce a new musical, *Dogfight*, by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul (see adjoining article). The two authors will host the event, which will feature a performance of songs from the show and insight into the authors' creative process. There will also be plenty of food and an open bar.

Of course, the “down time” between sessions provides a casual atmosphere for chatting and sharing as well.

So come for the shows. Come for the workshops. Come for the food.

But don't forget the networking! ♦

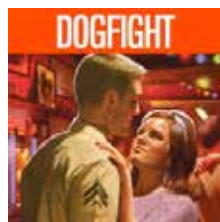


New Musical *Dogfight* to be Introduced at AACTFest 2013

Here is a little more information about the new musical *Dogfight*, licensed by Music Theatre International, which is being introduced at AACTFest 2013:

About the show

It's November 21, 1963. On the eve of their deployment to a small but growing conflict in Southeast Asia, three young Marines set out for one final boys' night of debauchery, partying, and maybe a little trouble. But when Corporal Eddie Birdlace meets Rose, an awkward and idealistic waitress he enlists to win a cruel bet with his fellow recruits, she rewrites the rules of the game and teaches him the power of compassion. *Dogfight* is based on the Warner Bros. film and screenplay by Bob Comfort and is the winner of the 2011 Richard Rodgers Studio Production Award, administered by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.



Artwork copyright
Second Stage Theatre
– world premiere of
Dogfight, New York City

About Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

Benj Pasek & Justin Paul wrote the music and lyrics for the Broadway musical *A Christmas Story*, which opened in November of 2012 and enjoyed a critically-acclaimed, record-breaking run at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre. Their original songs are featured on Season 2 of the hit NBC show *Smash*.

continued on page 10

The new
HOLIDAY hit for
2013 from the
creator of
The Taffetas!

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-Oregon Music News

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and consistently
entertaining!"

- Washington County
Review

"The conceit of this new holiday musical revue is
actually rather believable!"

"A quartet of would-be actors is snowed in at a
Broadway theater on Christmas Eve with only
costumes, props, and set pieces.

What to do but make the best of it by performing
seasonal standards from Broadway shows?"

- Portland Monthly Magazine



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Linda M. Lee
AACT President
2011-2013

My feet hurt, my eyes are bleary, and my office looks like a couple of two-year olds had a play date in it. I can't find anything – it's chaos!

But – I am rejuvenated! There's excitement in the air, energy in my steps, and electricity in my brain. I've just completed four days of AACTFest 2013 at the state level and I am filled with optimism and hope.

First, I am buoyed by the joy of seeing excellent, thought-provoking theatre done by talented, dedicated performers, directors, and technicians who participate for the love of it. And I am encouraged by the strong turnout for the myriad of workshops provided. It speaks of a desire to challenge oneself and continue

It is the interplay of minds and hearts revealed in eye contact and body language that transcends all other forms of communication.

growing, never allowing complacency to define the future. Third, I am heartened by the camaraderie in the halls, during lunches and meetings, and at every performance. What could be a cutthroat competition is elevated to festival level by the willingness of the participants to share, appreciate, and celebrate together. Of course we all know that only one or two shows can advance. But with the right attitude, the desire for winning can be tempered by the satisfaction of participating, learning, and moving on with new tools at our disposal.

What makes AACTFest so uplifting? Certainly everything listed above serves that purpose. But there is one very important element that really matters, and that is the coming together, in person, to work, learn, and play. Nothing else is so powerful.



When in the company of others, ideas are birthed, possibilities expanded, pathways constructed. Discussions, heated or calm, reveal problems and solutions. It is the interplay of minds and hearts revealed in eye contact and body language that transcends all other forms of communication.

That is what makes conferences so important. You get to step away from your everyday stresses and strains and really focus on the matter at hand – but in a communal way. Your ideas, fears, successes, and failures have a responsive wall off which to bounce. And when it's time to play – there are companions aplenty!

I am often asked to provide the handouts from a workshop or videotape the proceedings for those who can't or won't attend. That could be done – but a major element would be missing. I don't want anyone to miss what I feel is so important - the instant gratification of an engrossing discourse made face to face.

There is no true substitute.



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The HART drops were created for our productions and include:
 "Guys and Dolls," "Kiss Me, Kate," "The Producers,"
 "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,"
 "Ragtime: The Musical" and many more.

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- USA TODAY

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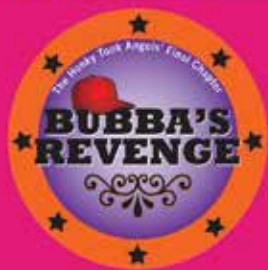
A Bible-Thumping Auntie Mame! Southern Storytelling at its Best!

This play with music weaves gothic tales of a grand Southern matriarch in a funny and touching play. In the style of A.R. Gurney's *Love Letters*, with the charm of *Driving Miss Daisy* and the poignancy of Tennessee Williams.



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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Board and Committees

June 17-19, June 22

AACT State Contacts Meeting

June 19, 10:30 a.m.

Festival Commission

Public Comment Meeting

June 20, 12 p.m.

AACT Annual Membership Meeting

June 21, 12 p.m.

Renaissance Indianapolis North Hotel

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?

Those attending AACTFest 2013, the Community Theatre Management Conference, or the Technical Theatre Conference can receive a 5% discount on airfare through American Airlines? The discount is valid June 13 – 26 for travel to Indianapolis. Use the promotion code: 1663DS.

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: Emmy Klein
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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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:



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General Liability or Volunteer Accident Coverage - *Either or Both?*



by Ken Roberts

There is often a great deal of confusion for community theatres when they're asked to provide proof of insurance to a venue they are preparing to lease, rent, or borrow. More often than not, the venue is asking for proof of general liability insurance, and to be named on the liability policy as an "additional insured." The confusion starts when the venue questions the fact that either the volunteers and participants are excluded from medical payments coverage, or the medical

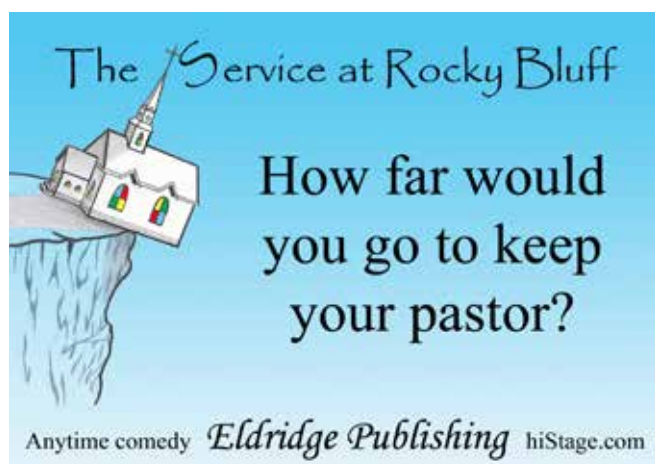
Insurance companies and some venues have figured out that the leading cause of claims in the community theatre world is injuries to volunteers.

payments coverage is excluded from the policy altogether. The quick remedy for this reduction in coverage is usually a volunteer accident policy, but some venues have doubted whether this is actually a fix. In fact, many smaller theatre organizations question the need and expense of purchasing both types of policies.

Insurance companies and some venues have figured out that the leading cause of claims in the community theatre world is injuries to volunteers. To keep premiums affordable, the insurance companies have excluded these volunteers from being able to make claims against the medical payments portion of the liability policy. Medical payments coverage is the only part of a liability policy that is "no-fault," so no

negligence has to be proven for a claim to be paid from this coverage. Anyone can make a claim, present their medical bills, and get reimbursed regardless of whether the theatre group has any responsibility for their injuries. That is largely why the medical payments limit is so much smaller than the other limits of a general liability policy - usually from \$1,000 to \$5,000, as opposed to the \$1,000,000 occurrence limit in most policies. This doesn't mean that there is no coverage for injuries to volunteers, but it does mean that a claimant has to prove that the theatre was somehow negligent, and that the theatre's negligence was the cause of their injury. If that's the case, then the full occurrence limit of \$1,000,000 (depending on the policy) is available to pay for the volunteer's injuries. Negligence is the issue that triggers coverage, and this is what most venues and volunteers, and indeed most of the insured theatre groups, are unable to comprehend.

Volunteer accident policies can replace medical payments coverage as they don't require that negligence be proven. They are typically written for lower limits, usually from \$2,500 to \$100,000, which makes them more affordable than general liability policies. However, these policies don't protect the ticket-buying public. They only cover the volunteers of the organization named in the policy. Therefore, there is still the need for general liability coverage to make sure that everybody involved is insured. The most complete way to take care of everyone is to purchase both policies, but most venues won't require both. The best approach is to understand what they do require, and be prepared to negotiate for what the organization can afford. ♦



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Dogfight continued from page 1

The duo made their debut as songwriters with their widely-acclaimed song cycle, *Edges*. Other theatrical works include *James & the Giant Peach*, *Duck for President*, and *If You Give a Pig*

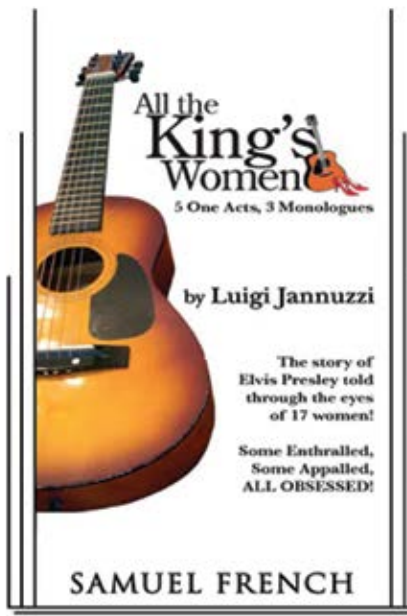


Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

a *Pancake* for Theatreworks USA. Their musical work for TV can also be seen on *Sesame Street* and *Johnny & the Sprites*.

Benj & Justin are the recipients of the 2011 Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theatre from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a 2011 Sundance Institute Fellowship, the 2011 ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award, the 2011 ASCAP Songwriters Fellowship Award, and a 2007-2008 Dramatists Guild Fellowship. They are the youngest recipients of the Jonathan Larson Award (2007) in the foundation's history. They have participated in ASCAP's Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project and were named one of Dramatist Magazine's "50 to Watch" in contemporary theatre. ♦

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AACTFest 2013 National Companies



Region I

The Burlington Players

Burlington, MA

Radium Girls by D.W. Gregory

Radium Girls tells the story of the dial painters in the 1920s and 30s. Inspired by a true story, the play traces the efforts of Grace Fryer, one of the painters, as she fights for her day in court. Her chief adversary is her former employer. As the case goes on however, Grace finds herself battling not just with the U.S. Radium Corporation, but with her own family and friends, who fear that her campaign for justice will backfire.



The Burlington Players have been in operation since 1965 and produce four main stage productions each year in an intimate black box theatre. The theatre also runs two youth programs serving children in grades 1 - 7 and 8 - 12. Youth groups produce three productions each year.



Region IVa

Theatre Winter Haven

Winter Haven, FL

Golda's Balcony by William Gibson

Golda's Balcony is a portrait of the indomitable Golda Meir, the Milwaukee schoolteacher who became Prime Minister of Israel in 1969. From the pogroms of Russia to the halls of the Knesset, Meir's life - and the play - encapsulates the dramatic story of the birth of Israel in the wake of the Holocaust and its subsequent, seemingly endless struggle for peace for much of the 20th Century. The show's message of humanity's yearning for peace continues to strike a resonant chord with respect to today's conflicts in the Middle East.



Founded in 1970, Theatre Winter Haven marks its fifth appearance at the National AACTFest. Located in central Florida and nestled among the orange groves and winter baseball, this community-based theatre is at home in a city-owned building consisting of a 332 seat proscenium theatre which houses a main-stage, children's, and summer series.



SEPARATE BEDS

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In celebration of their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary, Ernie and Twink set sail on a Caribbean cruise. Free of chores and children, they are wined, dined, and introduced to exciting people. When they meet the seductive Blake and Beth, who still seem to have a perfect life together, Twink becomes infatuated with the glamour of the younger couple's lives and seeks to reignite the spark in her own marriage. What follows is a hilarious and heartwarming voyage of rediscovery.



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Region IVb

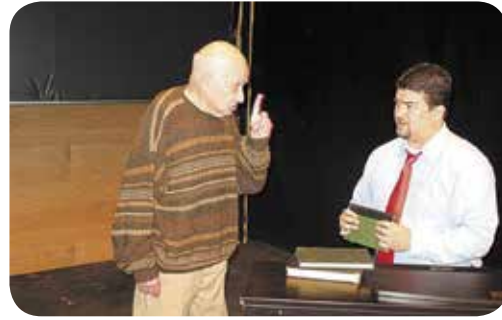
Actors Guild of Parkersburg

Parkersburg, WV

Tuesdays With Morrie by Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom

Tuesdays with Morrie is the autobiographical story of Mitch Albom, an accomplished journalist, and Morrie Schwartz, his former college professor. Sixteen years after graduation Mitch learns that his old college professor is battling ALS. Mitch reunites with Morrie, and weekly visits become a last class in the meaning of life.

Now in its 58th season, the Actors Guild of Parkersburg continues to be a mainstay of community theatre in the Mid Ohio Valley.



With a budget in excess of \$217,000, the AGP produces six main stage shows and one youth theatre show each year. The company's 260 seat auditorium is housed in a beautifully restored downtown vaudeville theatre. The theatre's programs are carried out by a large group of volunteers with the help of 1.5 paid staff.



Region VII

Aspen Stage

Aspen, CO

Unmarried in America by K.D. Carlson

Inspired by the Prop 8 Trial in California, *Unmarried in America* explores the personal ramifications of the national gay marriage debate. Beyond the halls of justice — in private homes and public spaces — raw emotions and deeply held convictions spark conflicts that prove difficult to settle.

Aspen Stage was founded in 1984 to give Roaring Fork Valley actors, directors, designers, and writers the opportunity to explore their craft. Festival productions include *The Water Engine*, *Mr. Bundy*,



The Diary of Adam and Eve, *Summertime*, *With Their Eyes*, *The Laramie Project*, and several others. Aspen Stage has produced more than 100 radio theatre pieces airing on KAJX, NPR Playhouse, and NPR's New Letters on the Air. The Aspen Stage production of *Krapp's Last Tape* toured to Edinburgh, Scotland as part of the International Festival Fringe.

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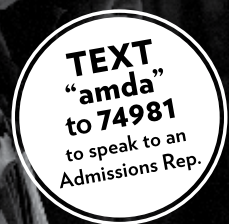
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Region IX

Lake City Playhouse

Coeur d'Alene, ID

K2 by Patrick Meyers

The recognition that human beings are free to choose whether they will live or die, and do so calmly and objectively, is explored as two climbers are stranded on an icy ledge on one of the world's highest mountains.

Located in Coeur d'Alene, ID, Lake City Playhouse is the only community theatre in Kootenai County. Founded in 1961, the theatre produces eight main season shows per year, as well as one



additional Stage Left (alternative) production, two concerts, and various other events. Lake City Playhouse is attended by nearly 18,000 patrons per year in its modest 170 seat auditorium.



Region X

Soldiers' Theatre

Vicenza, Italy

Controlling Interest by Wayne S. Rawley

Five corporate executives gather for a meeting to discuss a corporate merger. Two persuasive women arrive on the scene to negotiate the deal, however, they're all of 8 years old! The behavior of adults seen through the actions of children is hilarious and profound.

Located in Vicenza, Italy, Soldiers' Theatre is the official community theatre for the military community on Caserma Ederle offering a complete program of plays, musicals, concerts, dance



programs, classes, workshops, and performing arts events. For more than 50 years, the theatre has provided entertainment for US military personnel, their families, civilians, retirees, and their host nation community. The theatre is run by a small staff and a large group of community volunteers in an intimate 99 seat venue.

Excellent Together

Model Behavior by Benjamin Klingemann

Graveside Manners by Scott Icenhower

The Worst Possible Time for Writer's Block by John Shanahan

A Brief Pause by Greg Cummings

Coaster of Doom by Lisa Cestkowski

Fine Art by Abigail Taylor

Ginger by Robin Pond

Marriage...After Death by Roy Booth and Abbey Ferrier

The Reaper by Raegan Payne



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Sherwin-Williams Gives Back to AACT

Hopefully, all AACT members are aware of the incredible savings available to them through Sherwin-Williams.

AACT and Sherwin-Williams have an ongoing partnership which provides AACT affiliates a discount of at least 30% off list price on paints and paint related items. Other items like ProMar 400 Flat Black and ProMar 200 Zero VOC paints, brushes, rollers, and tape are discounted even more! These are terrific savings to help theatres stay within their budgets. The discount can even be utilized by theatre contractors purchasing supplies for various projects, including building construction and improvements.



AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford greets Pat Busch, National Accounts Manager for Sherwin-Williams

When you make a purchase, you can use a Sherwin-Williams charge account, pay by check, cash, or credit card. Remember to check if your state exempts sales tax for nonprofits. You can save even more money with your state tax-exemption certificate.

What makes this partnership even sweeter is, in addition to the 30% off for members, Sherwin-Williams donates 2 – 4 % of every purchase to AACT! Members can save money and help AACT all in one easy process.

Pat Busch, National Accounts Manager for Sherwin-Williams, recently stopped by the AACT offices

to present a check to Executive Director Julie Crawford. During his visit, he expressed his gratitude to AACT and enthusiasm about the future of the two organizations' relationship.

The next time you are purchasing your paint and paint supplies, remember Sherwin-Williams, and be sure to say "thank you" for their support of AACT and community theatre across the country. ♦

Taking advantage of the discounts is easy!

- Simply sign in at www.aact2.org. If you don't know your username and password, contact the AACT office.
- Hover over "Programs/Resources" in the top menu bar and click on "Sherwin-Williams."
- On the next page, click the Sherwin-Williams flyer link.
- Print the flyer to take to your local Sherwin-Williams store where you can set up your Sherwin-Williams account, if you don't already have one. It only takes a few minutes.

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MTI Continues Discount Program

AACT's partnership with Music Theatre International, allowing for discounts on rental packages, continues for the 2013 - 14 membership year.

Under the agreement, AACT organizational members receive substantial discounts on standard rental fees on MTI musicals through August, 2014.

The discount structure:

- For the first four MTI musicals produced during the year beginning September 1, 2013, paid member theatres will receive a 20% discount on standard rental fees.
- If a theatre produces 5 MTI musicals in a year, the fifth standard rental package is free.

The following stipulations apply:

1. To participate in the discount program, a theatre must be a current, paid AACT member for 2013 - 14.
2. AACT has created a group on MTI's website. All eligible

participants must sign up and join the AACT group at MTISHOWSPACE.com to be eligible for the discount.

3. A member organization will work directly with their MTI agent to receive the discount.
4. The discount will apply to any MTI shows produced between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014.
5. The agreement is retroactive for productions that have occurred during the period of this agreement (that is, occurring after August 31, 2013). If a member theatre has already paid rental fees for the period covered by the agreement, the cost difference will be refunded. Note: Request for discounts for prior years' productions will not be honored after August 31, 2013.
6. Organizations applying for the discount must indicate on their paperwork if they are requesting it even if they have received the discount for a prior show.
7. Rental discount applies to standard rental fees only. ♦

Tech Theatre Conference

June 17-19, 2013, Carmel, IN

If you want to improve your technical theatre skills, learn new techniques, and/or explore new areas, then you should be making plans to participate in the Technical Theatre Conference, June 17-19 in Carmel, IN. The conference begins Monday at noon and concludes by Wednesday noon.

The Technical Theatre Conference will help you find the resources, materials, and suppliers you need; ignite (or reignite) your excitement with the magic of technical theatre; and provide you with a nationwide network of fellow techies! And because the Technical Theatre Conference will be held immediately preceding the national festival in Carmel, you can attend two events in one trip.

Planned workshops during the conference include Stage Painting, Computer Design Programs, Stage Automation, Mics and Mixing, and Costume Research and Design. Many workshops will be hands-on, providing practical experience.

Registration Fee

\$235 AACT Member

\$300 non-member

\$25 early bird discount if register by May 31

Covers all sessions, materials, and breaks.

Hotel: Renaissance Indianapolis North

\$129 (plus tax) single/double

Registration information and more details available at www.aact2.org/event/tech13 or the AACT office (toll free) 866-Our-AACT (687-2228). ♦

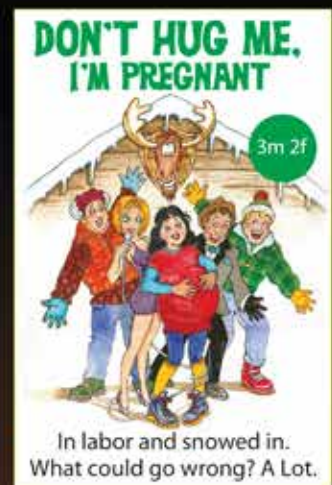
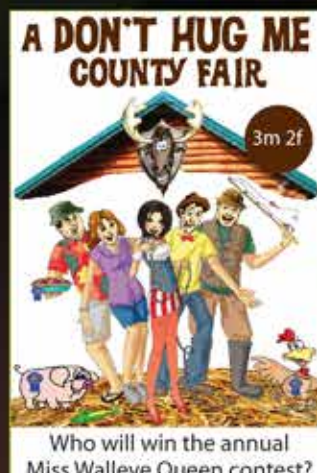


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AACT Hires Full Time Marketing Director

AACT is pleased to announce the addition of Emmy Klein as its Marketing/Communications Director.

Since the association's inception in 1986, marketing has been a shared responsibility among staff and volunteers. Now, after 27 years, AACT has a full-time staff person to formulate a marketing plan and handle many of the duties.



Emmy Klein

"We are excited to have Ms. Klein on board as our Marketing Director," begins Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director. "Our volunteers are wonderful and very dedicated but many of them have full-time jobs, several as directors of other theatres, and do not have the hours in the day it takes to truly market another organization."

Ms. Klein comes to AACT after working for more than six years as the Marketing Director/Volunteer Coordinator for Theatre

Arlington in Arlington, TX. "This is definitely a grander scale than I am accustomed to – moving from a community theatre to a national association," states Emmy, "but I am looking forward to being a part of this organization. I've already met so many passionate individuals and I'm determined to help AACT grow in membership and reputation."

Having been involved with theatre since being cast in her school's UIL One-Act Play in junior high, Emmy is very passionate about theatre. She believes theatre is not only valuable for local economies and as a respite from daily lives, but it is essential to human interaction and communication.

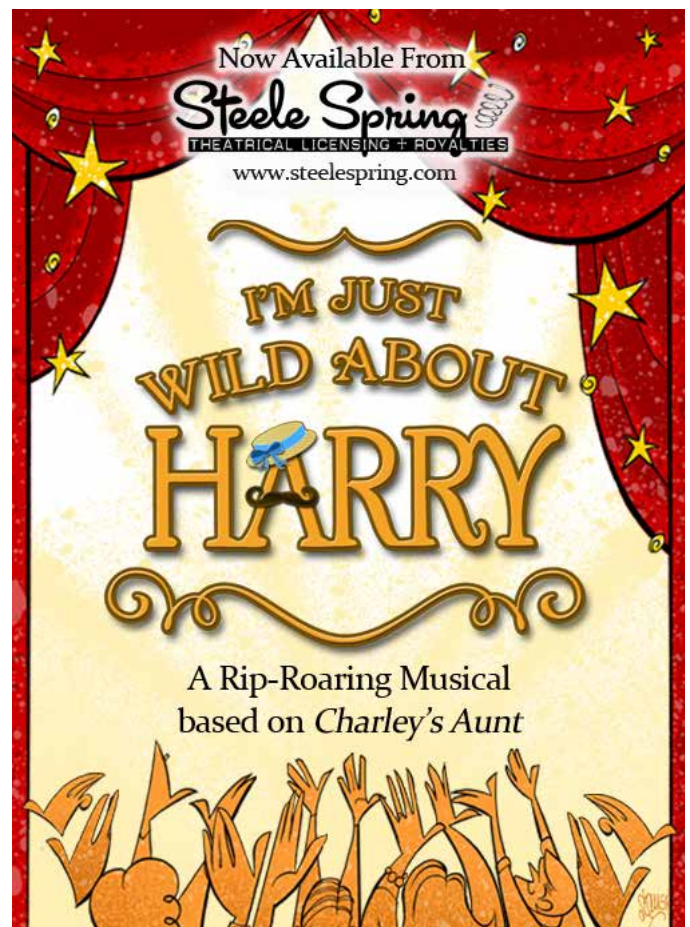
"Theatre is important because it offers commentary on an ever-changing world, yet it also enables us to remember where we come from. It teaches life lessons, broadens horizons, makes us laugh, makes us cry, and can weave a common thread between two people who, otherwise, would have nothing in common."

She believes in the vitality of AACT because it helps to strengthen the bond between theatre communities and individuals and motivates them to increase the number of people they serve. In fact, AACT's goal is to increase organizational membership by 50% by the year 2015. Emmy is ready and up to the challenge. ♦

New Roles

Kathryn McEnery is the new Executive Director of the **Whitefish Theatre Company**, Whitefish, MT, assuming the position previously held by Carolyn Pitman, who has retired. Originally from Oak Park, Illinois, Kathryn worked at the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle Children's Museum, and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center before moving to Montana. In 2007, she moved temporarily to the Chicago area to attend law school at Valparaiso University in Indiana, graduating in 2010 magna cum laude. In addition to her work with Whitefish Theatre Company, Kathryn serves on the board of the Flathead Community Foundation and the Kalispell Ski Club. She began work in her position in January, 2013.

Coaster Theatre, Cannon Beach, OR, announces the promotion of **Patrick Lathrop** to the position of Executive Director. Patrick, who has been employed by the theatre since 2009, previously served as Box Office Manager and Education Director. He holds master's degrees in costume history and in musical theatre from California State University San Diego and a bachelor's degree in theatre performance from California State University Long Beach. In 2011, Patrick won an artist's grant from the Cannon Beach Arts Association to produce a children's musical about Cannon Beach. He also directed several musicals and children's productions for the Coaster Theatre. He began his new position in February, 2013. ♦





Creating an Ensemble for a Theatre Production

By Gai Jones

In my years of directing productions and teaching theatre education, I have developed some tips for creating ensembles which can be utilized when you approach a diverse group of actors and technicians who, for the most part, are donating their time and talent for community theatre. The purpose of the ensemble experience is to form a collaborative relationship in a win-win situation: a safe and free place for each participant to become a creative risk taker who makes bold choices.

In her column for "Back Stage West," Jean Schiffman explains that superior ensemble acting is, "when all actors are working at the top of their game" and each actor understands that not one role is more valuable than any other. When actors are in tune and sensitive to their fellow cast members on that stage, everyone is able to react quickly if something unplanned happens. Because the sense of family is so important to having a strong ensemble, Schiffman states that, "a good actor giving a good reading is not necessarily the best actor for the ensemble." Instead you want to cast someone who works to elevate the show and not just an individual performance. When the entire cast focuses on the show and those around them, "a sense of joy comes from actors working together in harmony and trust."

There are many objectives to consider when you are working with an ensemble. They include, but are not limited to: accountability, appreciation of self/others, collaboration, communication, improvisation, leadership, observation, trust, and team building.

If you notice, I will not call these experiences games. In a competition or game, someone usually wins and someone loses. In the ensemble experience, one of the key aspects is to provide a place in which each participant feels good. There are no winners and no losers. Everyone is equal.

So how does a director create an ensemble with a diversity of ages, occupations, and walks of life?

One suggestion is to remember that many of the adult actors in a cast are coming straight from work, and students are coming from school or sporting events. (In just one cast I once had the following occupations: retired dentist turned playwright

"a good actor giving a good reading is not necessarily the best actor for the ensemble."

and scenery constructor, a trial lawyer, senior adult education teacher, media host, graphic designer, art coordinator, a weaver, massage therapist, photojournalist, toymaker, and the list goes on.) The goal at the beginning of rehearsal is to help them forget about their day jobs so they can become relaxed and focused and come together as a collaborative, cooperative, and celebratory group.

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.

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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."

One way to accomplish this is to conduct an exercise I like to call, "Meet, Greet, and Find a Seat in the Theatre Arrival." Invite each person to find a variety of seat partners based on an assortment of prompts. For example, instruct them to find someone with the same first initial; someone who, when you add your ages together, totals 60 to 70; someone with the same color of hair; someone with the same birthday month. The options are endless. After each has found partners, guide them through a

Periodically, you may need to suspend rehearsal tension with a group ensemble experience.

three-minute conversation so each makes him/herself known to a new show buddy. You might ask them to brainstorm on a technical challenge that is facing the current production. Some of the best ideas are generated through these collaborations. Yes, there may be a bit of resistance to this communicative icebreaker at first, but once the atmosphere of communicating is demonstrated, the resistance usually diminishes.

Rehearsals should consist of the usual: staging, character work, memorization, technical integration, polishing, and production. Periodically, you may need to suspend rehearsal tension with a group ensemble experience, which addresses a weak acting technique that needs strengthening. During rehearsals actors become accustomed to hearing the lines which are given to him or her and begin to anticipate what is said next. I recommend stopping periodically and having them "Switch Roles." For example, in a rehearsal for *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy

Partners are chosen and one becomes the news reporter while the other is the interviewee.

can play the Scarecrow and the Scarecrow can play Dorothy in a specified scene. By switching roles, heightened listening happens and a freshness of reaction and staging occurs.

During the rehearsal process, actors develop their characters' backstories. One way to encourage this process is to hold a "News Interview." Partners are chosen and one becomes the news reporter while the other is the interviewee. The interviewed actor answers questions in character, taking cues from the text and inventing answers based on the actor's character development. The answers to the questions can change as the character development continues. Some examples of "News Interview" questions can include: What is your full name? Who were you named after? Where were you born? How old are you? What is your best quality? And any question that makes them delve deeper into their characters.

At the end of some rehearsals, have all of the actors seated during the final few minutes of the rehearsal period to allow time for compliments; acknowledgements when someone donates a prop, new idea, helpfulness, or a laugh; or celebration when a

technician achieves that special light/sound cue. It is also great to rejoice by notes via emails, secret show buddies, or Call Board congratulations.

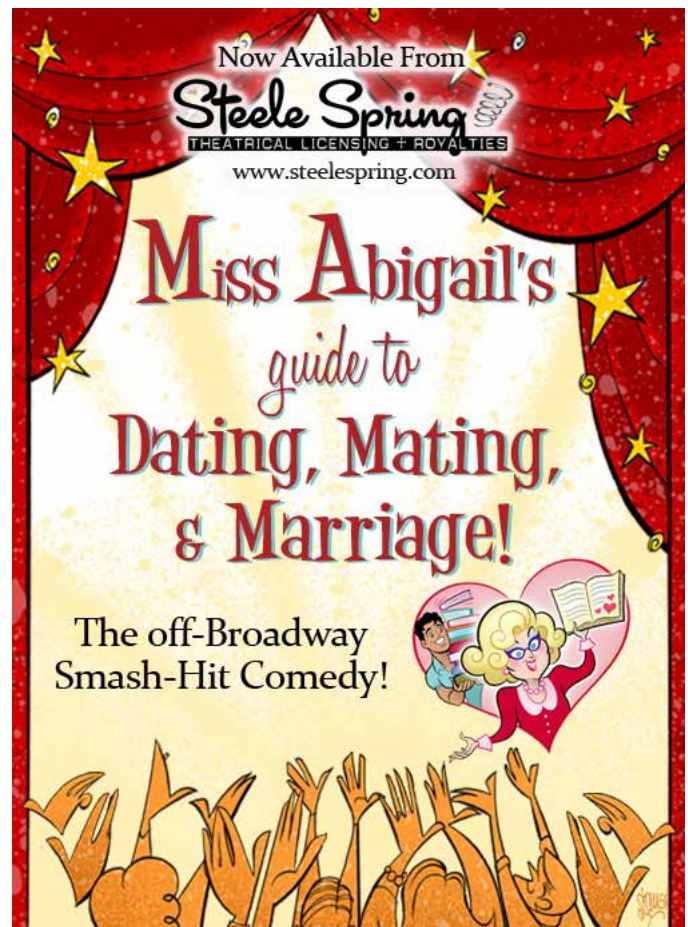
There are many ways to encourage the presence of a true ensemble. Holding a warm-up for the entire cast and crew, which involves physical and vocal games is an effective tool. Taking a few minutes out of the process of staging to conduct a "News Interview" or "Switch Roles" will strengthen the idea that the collaborative process is part of strengthening your ensemble. Concluding rehearsals with a closure carries through the cooperative nature of the rehearsal.

Remember, the goal is to make everyone feel equal and valuable. Through utilizing these team-building exercises, you will entice the actors, technicians, and all involved in the production to create the unity of an ensemble, which enhances any production.



*Gai Jones can be contacted at www.gaijones.com. She is a working commercial actress, a member of SAG/AFTRA, an Educational Theatre Association national board member, director, producer, and theatre educator. She is the author of the books, *Raising the Curtain* and *Break a Leg*, *A Love Letter to Theatre Teachers* and is working on a new book, entitled *Curtain Goin' Up*, *Tips and Truisms for Community Theatre Participants*.*

Catch Gai Jones' workshop, "Creating an Ensemble in Rehearsals for Engagement and Collaboration," at AACTFest 2013 in June in Carmel, IN.



AACT Announces National Awards 2013

AACT is proud to recognize the 2013 recipients of AACT National Awards, which will be presented in June during the national festival of AACTFest 2013 in Carmel, IN.

AACT Fellow Award

The honorable designation FELLOW is bestowed for life upon those members of AACT who over a period of years have contributed significantly to the idea and ideal of community theatre.



Tom Cowley has been passionately active in community theatre for more than 50 years. He has acted, directed, and done technical work in various theatres for more than 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 has served 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.



Penelope Notter began her community theatre career 40 years ago when she joined a volunteer organization in Terre Haute, Indiana. Today she is a 26-year-veteran of Grand Rapids Civic Theatre (GRCT). As the theatre's Associate Director/Education Director Penelope has more than 150 main stage and children's directorial credits and she 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 for five national AACTFests. She has facilitated and chaired AACT's Education Directors Conference. She currently serves AACT as VP Education. In 2009, CTAM honored Penelope with the Robert A. McKenna Community Theatre Achievement Award for her outstanding contribution to state and local theatre. She received AACT's Distinguished Merit Award in 2010 for her contributions to promote and develop the highest standards for community theatre.



Kristi Quinn has been active in community theatre for more than twenty years. Currently AACT's VP Festivals, Kristi served six years as the Region V Representative on the AACT Board. She has served on the Finance, Workshops, Marketing, History, and Membership Committees, and the Fund Development Task Force. She serves as Artistic Director for the Pioneer Valley Players

in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa and leads the theatre program at the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community Schools. She is on the Board of the Nebraska Association of Community Theatres. Kristi has chaired state and regional festivals and has adjudicated festivals. Her theatre experience includes acting, directing, set decoration, and costume design as well as public relations, grant writing, and development. She has been Executive Director of the Sioux City (IA) Community Theatre and Development Director of the Sioux City Art Center. Kristi resides in Dakota City, Nebraska and is the Director of Community Development for the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council.



Gary Walker received his BS Chemistry from the University of Louisville, 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. 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, and President of Grandville Arts & Humanities. Gary

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James Still's
The Heavens Are Hung in Black

Commissioned by and premiered at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.

Focusing on the theatricality and humanity of Lincoln's second year in the White House (1862), *The Heavens Are Hung in Black* is a fevered, emotional epic about a U.S. president who read the Book of Job and the plays of Shakespeare, had the saddest face ever painted, openly wept in public, and led this country in a war that we're still fighting today."

Other titles by James Still

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

served as Treasurer of AACT for three terms before becoming Executive Vice President and has served on a number of committees and task forces. He was 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.



Patricia White holds a BA in speech and drama. She has performed, directed, produced, stage managed, and developed children's programs. She has served as President of Nashua Theatre Guild (NTG) and the New Hampshire Community Theatre Association (NHCTA). She co-chaired a New England Regional Festival and chaired NHCTA's Adjudicator Search and Workshop Committees. After serving as Region Rep for two years, then as NH State Contact, Pat was appointed again in 1994 as AACT Region I Rep and served for 13 years. Pat is an AACT Ambassador and serves on multiple AACT Committees. She is on the New England Theatre Conference (NETC) Board and serves on the NETC Regional Festival Committee and as a reviewer for the Moss Hart Award. She sings and tours with Symphony NH, a professional Orchestra. Pat has received AACT's Distinguished Merit Award and was inducted into the NETC College of Fellows.

Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award

Honors a lifetime of leadership in community theatre by members of AACT who have provided leadership at the national level, in addition to local and/or regional levels.



Mary Britt was 14 when hearing the "Impossible Dream" ignited a love of theatre. After college, Mary worked as a graphic artist and volunteered for Ocala (FL) Civic Theatre. She served on the board, including three years as president, while the organization built a new performing arts facility. She was hired to be Theatre Manager in 1987 and was later promoted to Executive

Director. Mary has advocated for community theatre on state and national levels. She serves on the board of the Florida Theatre Conference (FTC) and is a past president of AACT. She has served on grant review panels for the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. She has adjudicated state and regional festivals, AACT's national festival, and four times for the US Army's Festival in Germany. Mary received a Distinguished Career Award from FTC. At age 14, Mary never thought she'd have a career in theatre. It's the Impossible Dream come true.

David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

Recognizes members of AACT for significant, valuable, and lasting service to community theatre.



Christi Thomas first appeared on stage at age six and had her first taste of community theatre in Sidney, OH as a Villager in *Fiddler on the Roof* for Sock & Buskin Players (now Community Theatre) in 1980. She is now Business Manager, but is also known for her backstage work as producer, director, musical coordinator, publicity chairman, light operator, etc. for more

than 80 shows. This love of theatre took her to three other

community groups and then to her first Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA) Conference in 1993. Christi has served on the OCTA Board in many positions including President. She is the 2013 Conference Co-chair. Christi has earned awards from OCTA as a vocalist, lighting designer, webmaster, and newsletter editor, and received the President's Award and Outstanding Regional Rep Award. In her spare time, she is a 40-year employee of the City of Sidney, Ohio, currently as the Administrative Assistant in the Fire Department.

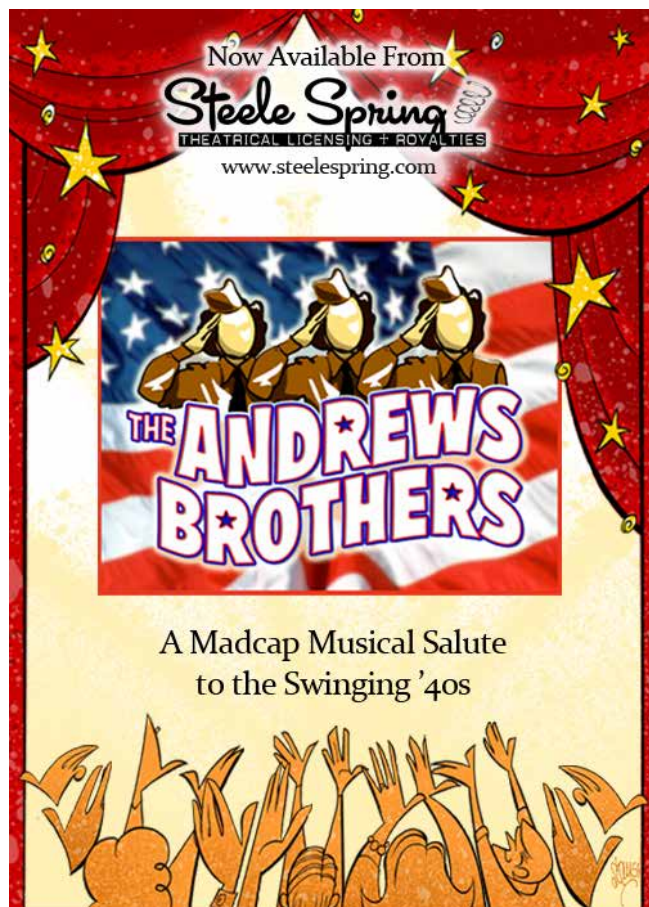
Distinguished Merit Award

Presented to individuals and organizations in recognition of contributions made to promote and develop the highest standards for community theatre.



Anthony Del Rosso auditioned for an interactive dinner show at the SHAPE Performing Arts Centre community theatre on the NATO base in Belgium on a whim in 2007 and was hooked. Over the next five years, he was cast in roles ranging from Bob Cratchit and the Cowardly Lion, to *Cabaret's* Emcee, Benjamin Franklin, and the Father in Pirandello's *Six Characters*. All

told, he acted in 15 plays: dramas, comedies, musicals, and one-acts; contributed on sets, lights, costumes, properties, design, and marketing across 30 shows; as well as directing two existing plays and one original adaptation of his own, all to great critical and financial success. From 2009-2012, he was responsible for nearly all of the theatre's graphic design and print advertising, as well. He feels fortunate to have worked with amazingly talented actors and designers, as well as learn from an immensely talented director, many of whom became close friends.





Carolyn Pitman has been Whitefish (MT) Theatre Company's (WTC) heart and soul, and its compass for 34 years. As its Executive Director, she transformed an unknown community theatre into a distinguished premier cultural arts center for rural northwestern Montana. Carolyn steadily expanded the theatre from two annual productions, a budget of

\$10,000, and no full-time employees, to a theatre with a budget of more than \$500,000, nine employees, and more than 500 volunteers. Due to Carolyn's far-reaching vision and unwavering faith in community theatre, WTC now produces nine theatre productions, six music events, and yearly education outreach engaging over 2,000 students and 400 senior citizens. Carolyn has also prepared WTC for future success by developing healthy endowment and foundation funds. Her unparalleled dedication and professionalism is matched by her belief in teamwork. She humbly attributes WTC's accomplishments to the shared efforts of community volunteers, sponsors, donors, and staff. Carolyn skillfully mentors with unmatched thoughtfulness, patience, and unwavering support.



Gwendolyn Whitney has been an invaluable volunteer since 2004 for the SHAPE Performing Arts Centre on the NATO base in Belgium, holding a multitude of theatre production positions, organizing events, coordinating parent/child production schedules, and assisting in front of house and concession duties. She is generous with her time, energy and spirit. She has taken

on design positions in costumes, properties, wig and hair, make-up, set dressing, and stage managing. She has recruited and inspired many new volunteers to join production teams, take on production designs, and support technical crews. Her curiosity to understand a new task or duty, then teach what she has learned, and, finally, to mentor has been a colossal gift to other volunteers. She volunteers rather than waits to be asked and is eager to take on new and challenging tasks. She is a leader with compassion, knowledgeable skills, and a willingness to learn and grow.

Special Recognition Award

Presented to persons or organizations whose contributions to community theatre are far reaching and of a special nature.



Michael Fenlason is the Artistic Director of Tucson's Beowulf Alley Theatre Company. A winner of the Arizona Playwriting Award, Michael's plays and productions have been seen in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Edinburgh, Scotland, London, and Phoenix. After the tragic shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Michael created a show with

volunteers to tell the story of how a community can come together. Michael founded the Phoenix-area Unlikely Theater Company, which produced plays while raising money for other socially committed nonprofits. It raised tens of thousands of dollars for more than forty organizations. Michael recently received, for the Beowulf Alley Theatre, a grant to develop new work, as well as develop a full season of plays chosen from suggestions by the community. Michael's Next Theatre at Beowulf Alley develops new theatre performance models. Michael emphasizes the community in community theatre and has created a model for engagement and activism through theatre that builds community.



Jan Mitchell developed a love for theatre attending productions at the Cumberland County Playhouse as a young girl in Tennessee. During her 28 years in the education field, she worked in different capacities on school drama projects. In 2010 she helped to implement a Community/Parent Engagement Grant to organize the Menifee Community Theatre Group,

bringing theatre to an area of Kentucky far removed from the art. With the endorsement of the Menifee Chamber of Commerce, the group began working on its first production, *The Wizard of Oz*. Members of the group wanted to explore the possibility of a production that would celebrate local culture. Group members attended workshops learning to develop a performance into a community-building tool. The group collaborated with community members to gather oral histories and worked together to write a play based on the lives of local residents. From this effort, *Mountain Memories – The Story of Us* was created.



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Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award

Presented to individuals above the age of 65 who have faithfully served community theatre on a non-paid basis for over 25 years.



John W. Lynn became interested in theatre when a friend talked him into playing character parts in Chicago's McDowell Players' show, *Kiss and Tell*. After the lead in his senior class play, two years with the McDowell Players, four years in the Air Force as Entertainment Specialist, and two years with the Globe Players of Chicago, summer stock seasons in Rhinelander, WI and Nashville, TN, John spent a year at DePaul University and four years at the Goodman Theatre. After four years working in New York, John moved his family back to Chicago and then Mundelein, IL, where he founded the Kirk Players. This all-volunteer troupe is now in its 47th year of community service through the arts. During his 35 years as its leader, John produced 166 main stage shows, directing more than 130 of them, and appearing in many. He currently serves as a Board Member Emeritus.



Charla Rowe is Founder and Artistic Director of the Tantallon Community Players (TCP) of Fort Washington, Maryland. She came to community theatre after 15 years with NBC broadcast affiliates in North Carolina and Kentucky. Since 1982, she has worked tirelessly serving as director, actor, producer, author, lyricist, or musical director in 100 productions spanning more than 30 years. Most recently she directed the first Washington metro area production of *The Color Purple*, which won two Washington Area Community Theater Honor (WATCH) Awards. She authored and produced six original musicals. Her favorite acting credits include Mama Rose in *Gypsy*, the title role in *Mame*, Golda in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and Katisha in *The Mikado*. She was Prince George's County Volunteer of the Year in 2000. Charla teaches voice and piano. Her students have formed the backbone of TCP as they grow up in the theatre and add their talents to the group.



Richard Sherwin joined Tallahassee Little Theatre in 1965 as an actor. During the next 48 seasons, Dick served as light board operator, stage manager, director, usher, house manager, and every board officer at least once, including twice as President. Currently, he serves as theatre historian and script librarian. Over the past half-century, he has witnessed many changes in community theatre, ranging from the diversity of audiences to the type of plays presented. A special memory is of the season when the advertised production of *Cactus Flower* was not available and a board member suggested substituting *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* That led to replacing the annual British mystery with contemporary dramas. Expensive musicals then broke into the schedules and attracted new and younger audiences. Richard has been called the most valuable resource of TLT history.

Twink Lynch Award

Recognizes AACT member theatres for successfully completing major steps in new directions, expanding services to their community, or moving to the next level of organizational development.



Salina Community Theatre (SCT) was created in 1960 by a dedicated group in Salina, KS who realized that live theatre is critical to the quality of life. The group hired Charles Kephart as the first director and mounted a season of four shows. Following a capital campaign in 1972, SCT began productions in its own home. With the addition of the Lesta K. Vanier wing in 1992, SCT added a scene shop, rehearsal room, and costume shop. In 2011, SCT opened its Theatre Education Wing, adding a new lobby, the 150-seat Sunflower Financial Theatre, two additional teaching studios, storage, a new box office, a conference room, and office space. SCT's production and educational offerings have exploded to 14 productions for

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adults and children, including the newly formed Iron Street Dance Company. SCT has become the regional theatre for central, western, and north central Kansas, serving more than 28,000 patrons from 135 cities and towns in Kansas and surrounding states.

Mort Clark International Achievement Award

Recognizes an individual who, or an organization that, has accomplished significant achievement in the promotion of excellence in international community theatre.



L. Ross Rowland holds degrees in theatre and law and is a practicing trial attorney. He served as President of Theatre USA, the national center of the International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA) for twelve years. He was the first Chair of AACT's International Committee. During his AACT Presidency, AACT sponsored its first International Festival. He is

also a past president of the Indiana Community Theatre League, the Indiana Theatre Association (ITA), Muncie Civic Theatre, and Heartland Stage Company. Ross served as chair of the Indiana Arts Commission's Theatre Advisory Council. He has adjudicated festivals in the states, and in Korea, Japan, Germany, Ireland, and an AACT International Festival. He was named Honorary Friendly Ambassador in Japan. Ross chaired the IATA Congress six times in Monaco, Morocco, Turkey, and Korea. ITA has recognized him as Theatre Person of the Year. Ross is an AACT Fellow and recipient of the Art Cole and Special Recognition Awards.

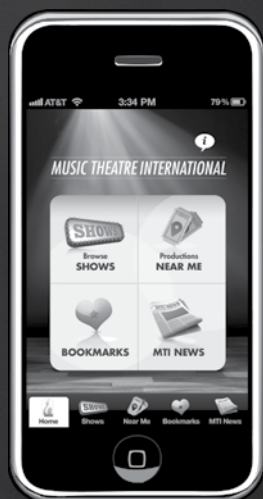


John Viars and the Des Moines Community Playhouse have changed lives through international theatre. In 1987, the Des Moines Community Playhouse, under the leadership of Executive Director John Viars, and with help from Mort Clark and the International Amateur Theatre

Association (IATA), invited young people from six European countries, four of which were still under Soviet control, to produce a play called *Peace Child*, pairing with a local cast of 100 to create one of the Playhouse's most successful productions. *Peace Child* was repeated in 1989 with 15 young people from Moscow, in a production that toured the state of Iowa. In 1990, the Playhouse created the first-ever International Community Theatre Festival sponsored by AACT, hosting 17 theatre companies. Governor Terry and Chris Branstad hosted all festival participants for a gala dinner at the governor's mansion. The late Susan Strasberg was the keynote speaker, and Mort Clark was one of three international adjudicators. The strength of the reaction to these events helped the Playhouse understand the life-changing transformative power of community theatre, and the effect it could have on young people. It was a major force in its decision to build a children's theatre and concentrate its efforts on becoming a national leader in arts in education. ♦

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Ron Ziegler

Oregon State Contact Carolyn McCloskey addresses the gathered audience at the opening of the Oregon Community Theatre Festival, held February 2, 2013 at Theatre in the Grove in Forest Grove, OR.



Ron Ziegler

AACT committee members and members of AACT's Board of Directors tour backstage at Theatre Arlington, Arlington, TX. The group was assembled for AACT's Winter Meetings, February 7-9, 2013.



Bevie Lord

Vermont State Contact Roger Strauss discusses schedule details with AACT Region I Representative Bevie Lord at the New England Theatre Conference Community Theatre Festival, held in Chelmsford, MA, February 22-23, 2013.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Region IV Representative Lynn Nelson enjoys dinner conversation with playwright Ken Ludwig at the awards banquet for the Southeastern Theatre Conference convention, March 6-10, 2013 in Louisville, KY.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Festival Commission member (and festival chair) Art Nemitz addresses the crowd at the opening of the Michigan AACTFest, held at Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, February 22-24, 2013.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Vice President for Public Relations Sue Ellen Gerrells watches an adjudication at the Community Theatre Association of Michigan AACTFest, held at Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, February 22-24, 2013. Sue Ellen attended the festival as Festival Commission Representative.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford (center) chats with North Carolina Theatre Coalition Executive Director Angie Hayes (left) and Educational Theatre Association Director of Chapter Relations Diane Carr during a meeting break at the Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention. The event took place March 6-10, 2013, in Louisville, KY.

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Spotlight Award Goes to Vivian Humphrey

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.

Vivian Humphrey, Founder and Executive Director, **Triboro Youth Theatre** (TYT), was awarded the AACT Spotlight Award for her endless devotion to youth theatre. Beverley Lord, AACT Region I Representative, was on board to help present the award on June 20, 2012.

Vivian has been the face, voice, hope, and heart of TYT since she created it. From designing and building sets and overseeing all of the day-to-day operations, to directing up to 10 productions a year, Vivian has truly been in many cases a "one-woman show." She would be the first to explain that she has not done all of this alone, but none of TYT's success would have been possible without her.



Vivian Humphrey receives the Spotlight Award from Region I Representative Beverley Lord

TYT has given children a chance to "discover" their own talents. Parents routinely comment that their children have not only become more creative through their involvement with the theatre, but also more confident and courageous.

In establishing Triboro Youth Theatre, Vivian has created and cultivated much more than a youth theatre. TYT is also a place where young people feel valued, respected, challenged, and supported. Vivian finds a part and a role, a place and a home, for every young person.

So many of Vivian's former "students" agree that they would not have become the people they are today without the guidance, direction, care, and love of Vivian Humphrey and Triboro Youth Theatre. ♦

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Other than performing, what are the best reasons for attending the national AACTFest?

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Seeing 12 different shows by 12 different companies in 1 week! We've produced several shows because we saw them at AACTfest and knew they would work well at our theatre.

Linda Miller, Prescott, Arizona

Meet folks with similar interests.

John Davis, Evergreen, CO

Avoid having to reinvent the wheel. Someone else has probably solved your problem.

David R. Kilpatrick, Executive Director
La Crosse (WI) Community Theatre

The entire experience is an adventure you will never forget. A smorgasbord of delights! By far, the education entree is priceless. The workshops are the best you can get, given by the best in the nation. Add the networking, friendships, and plays as veggies and dessert with frosting and sprinkles, and top with the adjudications as the cherries on top! A complete well balanced meal of why not to stay home. YUM!

Donna Fisher, Casper, WY

Spending a few days in the company of hundreds of other theatre nerds. It's like you've been living in a foreign country and suddenly arrive in a land where everyone speaks your language.

– Martha J. Cherbini, Muskogee, OK

Responses on Facebook

(www.facebook.com/AACT.org)

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Joline Powell, Germany

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Lynn Harper Nelson, Tupelo, MS

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Craig Howard, North Billerica, MA

Southeastern Theatre Conference, Inc. Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest/Award

Submissions (email attachment only) to:

Todd W. Ristau, Chair

SETC Playwriting Committee

tristau@hollins.edu

The Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest is dedicated to the discovery, development, and publicizing of worthy new plays and playwrights. The contest will select one "winning script," present a staged reading of that script at the annual Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention in collaboration with the playwright, and conduct an adjudication of the play by a select panel of judges.

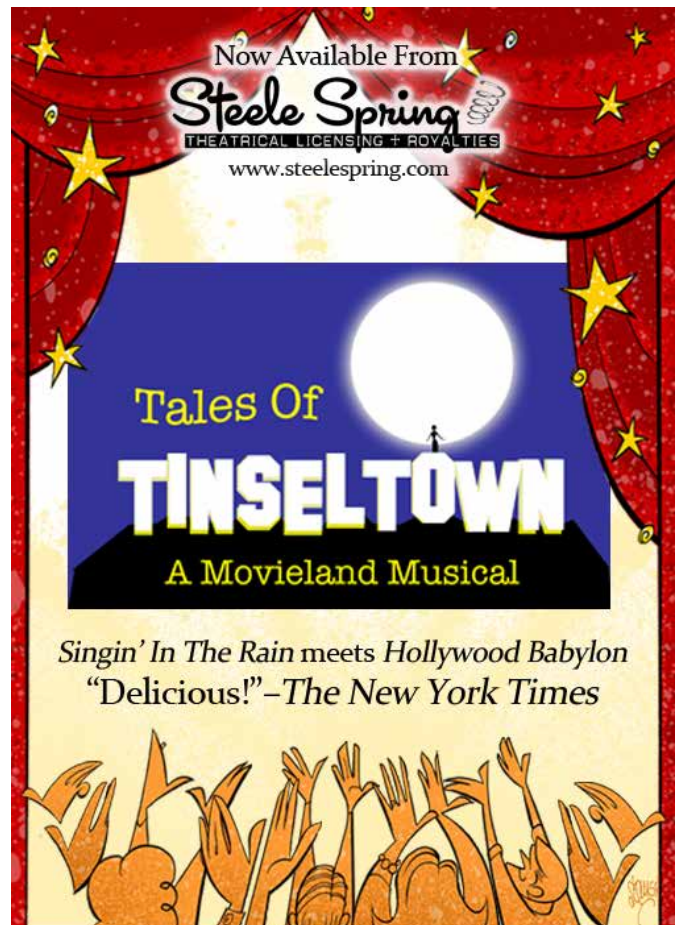
Playwrights who reside in the SETC region or who are enrolled in a regionally accredited educational institution in the SETC region, or who reside outside the region but are SETC members are eligible for consideration. SETC Region states include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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

Winning playwright receives \$1,000 prize, plus travel expenses and a reading at SETC Convention.

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Details: www.setc.org/new-play-contest-awards



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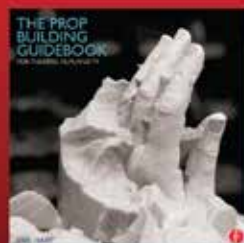
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by Jon Lonoff

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Dozens of college, community, small professional and dinner theatres all over the world have presented "Skin Deep" since its publication by Samuel French in 2009. For more information and a listing of current productions, visit: http://www.samuel french.com/store/product_info.php/products_id/7961





Beyond Experience, Expertise, & Interest

by Twink Lynch

Many of our community theatres are in or about to be in the nominating process for members of their Boards of Directors. In the best of all possible worlds, we would identify good candidates, interview them about the position, they would say “yes,” and we would elect them at the Annual Meeting – and they would turn out to be model board members. I know many of you are already rolling your eyes. So often it just doesn’t turn out that way.

Well, why not? For those of us who’ve done our homework, cultivated potential candidates over the past year or so, provided them with appropriate information ahead of the interview, answered their questions honestly, told them our expectations – what happens between their “yes” and their first board meeting? They seemed honored and even enthusiastic. But –

There is always a “but.” *But* they go out of town a lot. *But* they’re going to night school on top of a day job. *But* their kids are into sports. *But* whatever...

In my constant search for ideas for developing better boards, I read an article a few months ago (*Contributions*, December 2004) which may shed some light on this problem for us. Kay Sprinkel Grace, author of “Ten Things You Should Know About... What to Ask Every Prospective Board Member,” wrote that in our candidate interviews we “don’t dig deep enough into areas that are better indicators of successful board service” than the typical “experience, expertise and interest.” She lists ten questions we may not have thought to ask in our interviews that may give us better information about our candidates.

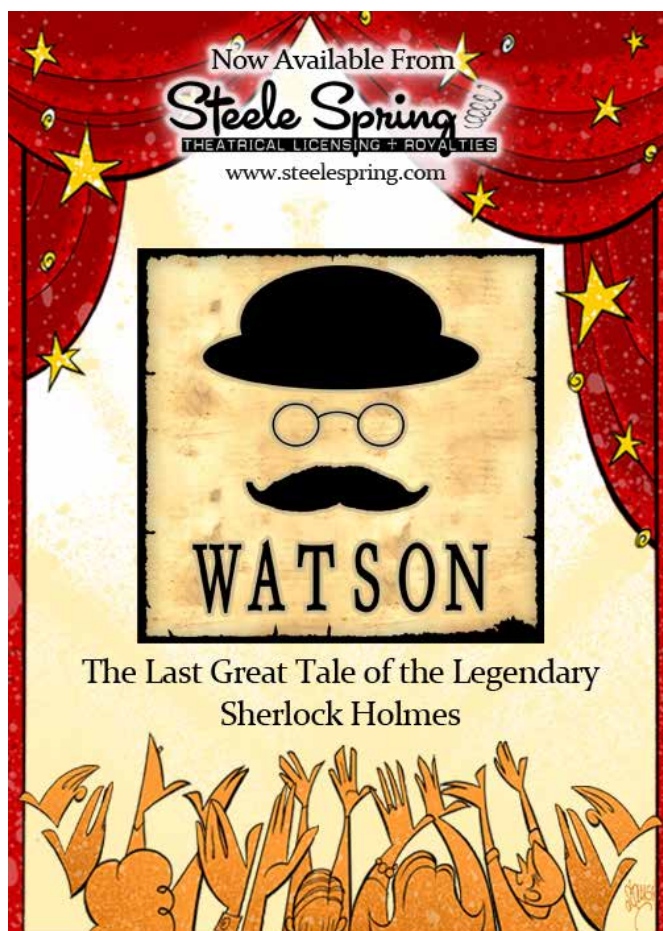
First, Ms. Grace would want to know “How passionate are you about our [theatre]?” She believes passion is the key quality that enables board members to ask for money, to be ambassadors for the organization in the community, or to be effective advocates for our mission, vision, and values. We sometimes go after corporate “super-stars” for their name value, only to find they don’t come to shows, won’t fundraise, and miss meetings often enough that the theatre is deprived of all the expertise we thought they would bring to the table.

The second question she would ask is “How much time can you give to us?” Serving requires time, and it’s a mistake to think people will clear their calendars after being elected if we haven’t explained our need for their time beforehand. We want to be sure board candidates really believe that our theatre is important enough for them to make it a priority in their busy lives.

We should also ask candidates about what they liked or disliked about previous volunteer experience, especially board service. We want to be sure we’ve got an environment in which they will feel motivated to participate. Remember, we can’t “motivate” anyone. What we need to do is create an opportunity such that people, of their own free will, will want to be involved, to dig in, to make good things happen.

If we have paid staff, we need to know what expectations our candidates have of the staff of the theatre. Do they expect board materials to be sent a week ahead of time? Do they expect the staff to do all the fundraising? Are they willing to be available to the staff or other volunteers by phone during the day? What about in the evening or on weekends? They may have further expectations of the theatre group: will they only serve organizations that have 3-6 months’ reserve funds to protect the group financially? What about Directors and Officers insurance – is that a requirement for them? What about their personal dreams or aspirations? Will serving the theatre help make those come true? Are they hoping to learn new skills? Are they considering making a career change, perhaps looking to work in the nonprofit sector? If we know this ahead of time, we can more successfully match that board member with tasks and responsibilities that will foster those dreams and fulfill those aspirations (always assuring the primary needs of the theatre are also being met through such matchmaking).

Especially in smaller cities and towns, many of our board candidates may already serve on other arts (or social service)



boards. Where does our theatre fit in their list of priorities? Can they fundraise for our theatre without a conflict of interest with another group on whose board they serve? Are they likely to make time for our projects? The interview is the time to discuss this issue.

Are they willing to make a financial commitment to the theatre that is a "stretch" gift? Most people can't do this for multiple organizations, so it's good to know how many other boards our candidates serve on. This expectation isn't that "every board member must give at least \$100 (or more)." It is that "100% of board members contribute as much as they possibly can to the theatre while serving on the board."

Board candidates have different needs regarding social interaction with other board members. Some believe social events sponsored by the theatre are command performances for all board members and may shut out board members who don't attend. The problem is, not all candidates have these social needs and some cannot give all that extra time to the theatre. It is important to find out how candidates feel about this issue and assess how they will fit in to the board culture in this regard.

Another tricky issue may be board self-evaluation. Many of us dread performance evaluations at our real jobs or in school, and we carry that feeling into board service. However, boards that want to make a difference are not afraid to conduct such evaluations as part of the evaluation process of the whole organization – a "how are we doing compared to our goals and objectives" kind of thing.

And lastly, it's important to ask candidates which role(s) most intrigue them – do they want to be most active as an ambassador, advocate, and/or asker? For smaller theatres, we would certainly want to know if our candidates want to work on produc-

tion or business tasks and responsibilities. (Keep in mind these are operational tasks and must be carried out in addition to governance responsibilities.)

After we have this conversation, our next job, assuming our candidates say "yes," is to orient, train, coach, engage, and reward them. This is a big responsibility and why so many boards have created a "Board Development Committee" rather than just a "Nominating Committee." There is much more to having a successful, effective board than just finding people to serve.

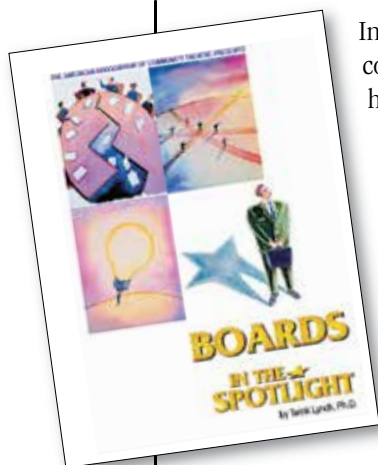
It's possible some people will not be asked, or will decline the invitation, as a result of such an in-depth interview. Yay! As I have said before, it's better to have a vacancy on the board than the wrong person in the chair.

If we could ever get that magical combination of brains, heart, and time, our theatres would grow exponentially. Just imagine what having the most talented, disciplined, and experienced actors in every production would do for the quality of our shows – that's what having "the best and the brightest" board members and their moral and financial support would do for our organizations. Isn't it worth the time spent in in-depth interviews to find them? Isn't it worth the time and effort to orient and engage them? Isn't it worth finding ways to recognize and reward them? Then let's do it! ♦

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, June 2005

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

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Artie's Advocacy Tip

Community theatre is a major player in the cultural welfare of our communities. However, we must never forget that community theatre is also an economic driver. To calculate the economic impact your community theatre has in your community, go to the economic impact calculator provided by Americans for the Arts at www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/iv/calculator.html.

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
June 12-16	Texas Nonprofit Theatres Youth Theatre Conference	TX Odessa	817-731-2238 www.texas theatres.org
June 17-19	AACT Community Theatre Management Conference	IN Carmel	866-687-2228 www.aact2.org
June 17-19	AACT Technical Theatre Conference	IN Carmel	866-687-2228 www.aact2.org
June 17-23	AACT ★ AACTFest 2013	IN Carmel	866-687-2228 www.aactfest.org

★ Indicates festival in the 2013 Cycle

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

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
I	MA	Burlington Players	Burlington	Radium Girls
II	DE	Wilmington Drama League	Wilmington	<i>For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls</i>
II	PA	Altoona Community Theatre	Altoona	<i>Elephant's Graveyard</i>
II	PA	Hamilton-Gibson Productions	Wellsboro	<i>Rounding Third</i>
III	IL	Stagecoach Players	DeKalb	<i>The Dining Room</i>
III	IN	Elkhart Civic Theatre	Bristol	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>
III	IN	Kokomo Civic Theatre	Kokomo	<i>The Gifts of the Magi</i>
III	MI	Ann Arbor Civic Theatre	Ann Arbor	<i>Leaving Iowa</i>
III	MI	Players de Noc	Escanaba	<i>Some Things You Need To Know Before the World Ends</i>
III	WI	La Crosse Community Theatre	La Crosse	<i>Macbeth</i>
III	WI	Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre	Wisconsin Rapids	<i>Cradle and All</i>
IV	FL	Theatre Winter Haven	Winter Haven	Golda's Balcony
IV	WV	Actors Guild of Parkersburg	Parkersburg	Tuesdays with Morrie
V	IA	Newton Community Theatre	Newton	<i>Lone Star</i>
V	IA	Sioux City Community Theatre	Sioux City	<i>Almost Maine</i>
V	MN	Dakota Fine Arts Consortium	Burnsville	<i>Leading Ladies</i>
V	MN	Fungus Amongus Players	Dassel-Cokato	<i>The Diviners</i>
V	NE	Lincoln Community Playhouse	Lincoln	<i>Doubt</i>
V	NE	Way Out West Community Theatre	Sidney	<i>Desire, Desire, Desire</i>
V	SD	Aberdeen Community Theatre	Aberdeen	<i>The Top Job!</i>
VI	AR	The Little Theatre of Crittenden County	West Memphis	<i>Tell Me Another Story, Sing Me a Song</i>
VI	LA	Acting Unlimited	Lafayette	<i>Shotgun</i>
VI	NM	The Community Players of Hobbs	Hobbs	<i>A Doll's House</i>
VI	TX	Baytown Little Theatre	Baytown	<i>God of Carnage</i>
VI	TX	Ohlook Performing Art Center	Grapevine	<i>Spring Awakening</i>
VII	CO	Aspen Stage	Aspen	Unmarried in America
VII	WY	Jackson Community Theater	Jackson	<i>The Actor's Nightmare</i>
IX	ID	Lake City Playhouse	Coeur d'Alene	K2
IX	WA	Bremerton Community Theatre	Bremerton	<i>The Thread Men</i>
IX	WA	Spokane Civic Theatre	Spokane	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>

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

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June 17-19, 2013

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- For anyone interested in expanding their technical theatre skills & knowledge
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Registration and details: www.aact2.org, "Calendar" -> "Educational Events" or the AACT office (toll free) 866-Our-AACT (687-2228)