

spotlight

July/August 2013 \$2.50

"Festival in Paradise"

Register Early and Save for AACTWorldFest 2014

Registration is now open for AACTWorldFest 2014, "Festival in Paradise." The event Web site has been updated for 2014, so all you need to do is go to www.aact.org/world, follow the prompts, and you'll be signed up for the event in no time. Register between June 17 and 23, 2013 to receive a \$40 discount! After June 23, you can still receive a \$15 discount as long as you register by February 1, 2014.

After a highly successful "Festival in Paradise" in 2010, Venice Theatre on Florida's Gulf Coast will again host this exciting international event. Mark your calendars for June 16-21, 2014.

AACTWorldFest is held every four years as a way for community/amateur theatres from around the globe to gather for a friendly festival. There's plenty of idea-sharing, networking, and socializing in addition to the opportunity to see shows from the world's best community theatres. Attendees will include members of the performing theatre troupes, workshop leaders, conference participants, and audience members from around the U.S. and the world. Also in attendance will be three adjudicators: Kathy J. Pingel, Director of Education and Youth Programming at The Des Moines Playhouse; Benny Sato Ambush of the Department of Performing Arts, Emerson College, Boston, MA; and Line Hauger from Black Box Pangea in Copenhagen, Denmark.

In addition to experiencing great theatre, festival participants will have the chance to explore a beautiful city known for its

Venice Theatre's Artistic Executive Director, Murray Chase, is excited to be hosting the festival for a second time, a decision that was made at the close of the 2010 international festival. "Venice Theatre is delighted to have been chosen again as the



Caio Stolai in Circo Poeira from Brazil - AACTWorldFest 2010

host of this marvelous event," Chase says. "It's an honor for our organization and a boon for the city of Venice. City officials, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce – they're all on board. They know from the success of the 2010 festival just how positive this is for our community during a time that's usually pretty quiet in southwest Florida."

AACTWorldFest 2014 organizers are currently accepting applications and recruiting productions from all countries. Companies interested in performing at the festival are encouraged to visit www.aact.org/world for guidelines and rules, and should then contact Festival Coordinator, Lori Chase at lorichase@venicetheatre.net. The theatre plans to host even more theatre troupes than it did in 2010. In addition to the MainStage auditorium, the black box theatre will be open for a mini-festival of more intimate performances.

Organizers are also actively recruiting event sponsors and workshop leaders to join them in paradise! Anyone with questions about any aspect of the festival should contact Ms. Chase at lorichase@venicetheatre.net. ♦



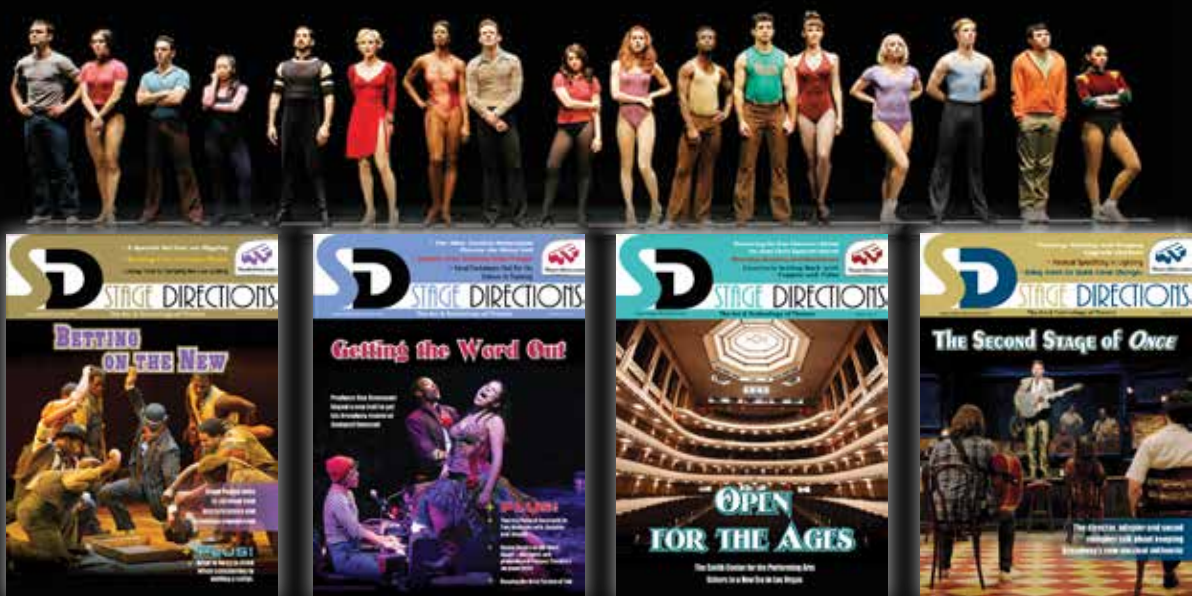
beaches, historic downtown, fishing, dining, shops, and cultural attractions. Located downtown on Venice Island, Venice Theatre is about a 15-minute walk to the beach, less than a two-minute walk to dozens of restaurants and boutique shops, and a five-minute drive to the nearest golf course. A constant sea breeze keeps the summer temperatures mild, and the evenings are balmy and peaceful - perfect for outdoor afterglow parties. Much more information can be found at www.aact.org/world.

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Linda M. Lee
AACT President
2011-2013

I'm thinking about transitions . . . changing from one state to another. No, I'm not contemplating moving out of Texas (though during the 100+ temperatures of summer it's tempting!), but I am transitioning to a new state of being - or of not being - as in no longer being the President of AACT.

That's right. I will no longer wield the gavel. I will join the august ranks of AACT Past Presidents; though I will still have the slightly elevated distinction of being the Immediate

Effective leadership requires a collection of people with a variety of talents.

Past President for the next two years. It's a nice segue into a lesser role - or so I thought until I remembered I will be chairman of the nominating committee for those two years. Yikes! There's nothing "lesser" about that! It is an awesome responsibility.

Effective leadership requires a collection of people with a variety of talents. You need the visionaries - the ones who dream in Technicolor on a wide screen. You need the practical - the ones who recognize when caution is prudent. You need the convivial ones who make you feel welcome and appreciated. You need those who question and challenge to shake up the status quo and make you evaluate decisions and directions. Most of all, you need the committed - the ones who will make their leadership role in AACT a priority.

As a result of such leadership, AACT has made significant strides - rebranding itself into **the** source for community theatre networking, resources, and support; creating education programs and opportunities; expanding membership benefits and savings; and developing a meaningful opportunity for the nation's playwrights.

The work continues and the need for the next generation of innovators is ongoing. For those interested in an active role with AACT, I urge you to fill out the AACT Committee Interest form, available on the AACT website under About AACT on the

menu bar. Gary Walker, our incoming president, will welcome the information as he moves to fill the committee rosters.

As I move into a new role, I thank Rod McCullough for his counsel and vigilance as our Immediate Past President. I applaud all current and past AACT Board and committee members for their dedication to the organization and their efforts to support community theatre as a whole. And I thank the AACT staff - Julie Crawford, Ron Ziegler, Susan Austin, Karen Matheny, Emmy Klein, Darlene DeLorenzo, and Jill Patchin - for their responsiveness to me, and for their day-to-day efforts to fulfill the mission of the American Association of Community Theatre.

Switching hats, I remain -



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Thanks to all who ran!

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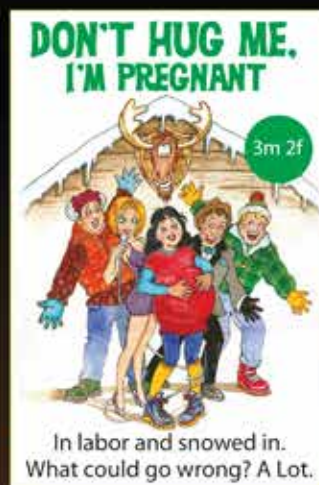
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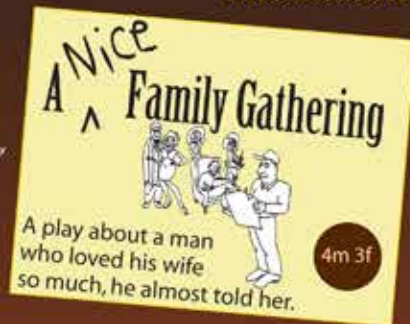
"Wonderful!" — Dick Clark

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— Los Angeles Times

"I laughed so hard my sides hurt!"
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J&G's VENUS IS A HIT – FROM THE AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR, RUTH K. BROWN



Ruth K. Brown,
Award Winning
Actor/Director

As a director I appreciated the fact that with my recent production of *Women are from Venus; Men are from Uranus*, J&G provided flexibility in casting, script usage and script changes to accommodate my vision and the limitations of the venue.

Royalty fees are on a sliding scale including the estimated audience size which is a key consideration for community venues. Royalty fees also include a CD with all of the music and sound effects required for the production. This is done using the

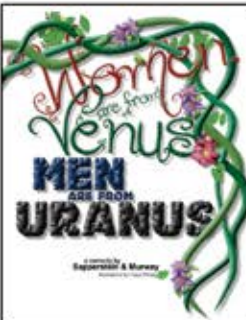
PRESS PLAY method developed by J&G. For any low budget community theatre, complex sets can also pose problems. J&G keep their sets simple, i.e., often a single room, to keep production costs down.

I found the J&G staff very accommodating. They reached out during the rehearsal period to make sure any problems were resolved easily and reasonably. Permission, royalty and photo usage forms were provided quickly and in an easy-to-use format. J&G wishes to build relationships with those who perform their works, and they have already sent me FREE perusal copies of three additional plays for my future consideration.

As part of my theatre work I also serve on the Board of Directors of the Delaware Theatre Association (DTA). DTA sponsors an annual short play festival showcasing work performed by community based theatres. Conversations with J&G have led to a commitment to re-write



Georgiana R. Staley and Wayne Meadows star as Woman and Man in The Everett Theatre's production of *WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS, MEN ARE FROM URANUS*.



"There is something for everyone in this show [Women are from Venus, Men are from Uranus], which is sure to have you laughing and perhaps sighing a little, as evidenced by opening night's audience."

– Stage Magazine, May 2013

Women are from Venus; Men are from Uranus to a shorter length allowing submission at the 2014 festival which I will be directing with great enthusiasm.

In summary, my experiences working with J&G Unlimited, Inc. were delightful; and I will continue to consider and to recommend their works to other directors!

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- **Flexibility** with casting and even script versioning
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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Executive Committee Meeting

November 22-24, 2013
Madison, WI
Hosted by the University of Wisconsin - Madison

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Conferences

National Community Theatre Directors Conference

November 23-26, 2013
Madison, WI

Thanks

to all of the readers for the inaugural AACTNewPlayFest! Your time and dedication is appreciated.

Did you know?

You can easily communicate with other AACT members through AACTList. Members are able to ask questions, compare solutions and strategies, and share successful ideas through this simple program. Go to www.aact2.org and find AACTList in the drop down menu under Programs/Resources.

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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Underwriting Information: What Are "Loss Runs"?



by Ken Roberts

Anyone who has ever shopped for theatre insurance, either for the first time or while looking for a better deal, has been asked to provide a printed history of their theatre's insurance claims, more commonly called "loss runs." Loss runs can be referred to as a loss report, a claims report, or even loss history, but no matter what you call it, it's important to understand the relevance and impact of this information in relation to obtaining a competitively priced insurance proposal.

A theatre with very few or no claims will pay less for the same insurance policy as a theatre with several claims, or even one severe claim.

Insurance companies measure the profitability of every account using the *loss ratio* of that account. The loss ratio is the percentage of claims paid by the company on behalf of an insured as compared to the amount of premium paid by that insured to the company. Typically, they divide the claims paid by the premium over a specified period of time, usually three to five years, to determine the loss ratio. For example, if a theatre paid \$1,000 for an annual policy, and made a \$300 claim during that year, the loss ratio for that year is .30, but if the theatre made a \$2,000 claim instead of \$300, the loss ratio would climb to 2.00. Anything over 1.00

is considered unprofitable, and will usually precipitate a premium increase if the loss ratio for a three or five-year period doesn't improve. When writing a new theatre policy, an underwriter will use the theatre's loss runs to see if there is a pattern of claims, and use that pattern to determine an appropriate premium to maintain profitability with the policy. So it stands to reason that a theatre with very few or no claims will pay less for the same insurance policy as a theatre with several claims, or even one severe claim.

Very few insurance companies will even consider providing a quote without at least two years of loss runs, so an agent must have access to companies that are not only willing to write a theatre's very first insurance policy, but who also understand that smaller nonprofit theatres can't afford to be penalized for not having previous coverage. In the theatre world, insurance is an expense that most theatres put off until they absolutely have to have it, because there are always much more important things to spend their precious funds on to create their art. The number of companies that are willing to take a chance on a theatre's first insurance policy are few. Even then, they may request a no-loss letter, which is a signed affidavit from the theatre, attesting to the fact that they've never had a claim. Providing the loss runs or a no-loss letter is integral to getting the best policy at the lowest price. ♦

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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.



Scarlett and Rhett Go Wilde!

Oscar Wilde's comic masterpiece is transplanted from Victorian England to the antebellum Old South. Blast those English accents! Drawl and lilt your way through these delicious words in the hoop-skirted wonder of this moonlight-and-magnolias adaptation!



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ASCAP Saves AACT Members Money

Those involved in theatre know so much goes into creating a solid and successful production. Not only do you want everything on stage to run smoothly and according to plan, but setting the appropriate mood in the theatre through the use of preshow music also aids in enhancing the overall experience for audience members. From the tunes played before the show to the intermission melodies, which assist in carrying the energy from one act to the next, the music is essential ... and costs money. ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) offers AACT members a discount on royalties for copyrighted music to help cut down on that cost.

ASCAP's Community Theatre license covers the theatre for the AACT membership year at all its venues. The license includes copyrighted pre-show, intermission, and post-show music played by means other than live performers. It is important to stress, the Community Theatre license does NOT cover recorded music during a play or music performed live, such as in a musical revue or string quartet performance.

The Community Theatre license year is September 1 – August 31. Theatres that sign up through the AACT office by September 1 will receive a **30% discount** on the ASCAP license fee. An AACT membership is required to receive the discounted rate. Both AACT membership and ASCAP fees



must be received in the AACT office by September 1 along with a signed ASCAP license. (If AACT already has an ASCAP license on file for you, there is no need to send a new one.) AACT member theatres that miss the AACT group deadline can sign up directly with ASCAP and receive a 10% discount.

You may wonder why you need an ASCAP license if you already purchased the CD or album. As artists, or people involved in the arts, we understand and respect the need for artists to be compensated for their craft. It is important to remember the only payment composers receive for a creative work is usually through royalties. The amount paid for the CD covers private listening – for you and a few friends – it does not cover a public presentation. Also, most of the amount paid for the CD goes to the record company and performer. Composers and songwriters rely on public performance royalties to earn a living. ASCAP makes that happen.

ASCAP is the oldest, largest, and foremost organization in the United States that licenses the right to publicly perform copyrighted musical compositions. It makes it easy to legally utilize music by providing an annual license at a reasonable flat fee and doesn't require submission of a list of songs to be played. ASCAP is also a membership organization of

more than 450,000 songwriters, composers, lyricists, and music publishers. The ASCAP membership list covers a vast spectrum of genres and musicians from Irving Berlin to Garth Brooks, from Duke Ellington and the Gershwins to Madonna. With such a plethora of artists, you will surely find just the right song to set the mood, style, and time period for any production. Licensees have unlimited access to the ASCAP repertory which spans millions of works such as "Purple Haze," "I Get A Kick Out of You," "Just the Way You Are," and "Born in the U.S.A." The complete repertoire is available on the ASCAP website (www.ascap.com).

The generous discount provided to AACT members by ASCAP is just one of the many benefits of an AACT membership. More information may be found at www.aact.org/ascap. ♦

A colorful advertisement for the play 'Leaving Iowa'. The title 'Leaving Iowa' is written in large, bold, black letters with a yellow outline at the top. Below it is a cartoon illustration of a family of five (father, mother, and three children) packed into a green car, with luggage on the roof. The car has an 'IOWA' license plate. The background is a bright yellow circle. Below the illustration, the words 'Newly Revised' are written in a red, stylized font. Underneath that, the text 'The Comedy About Family Vacations by Tim Clue & Spike Manton' is written in black. Several quotes from reviews are included: 'Simultaneously hilarious and touching.' by Hedy Weiss of the Chicago Sun-Times, 'Leaves you with a smile on your face and a desire to hug your kids.' by The Detroit News, and 'Quintessential family entertainment.' by Chelsea Standard. At the bottom, the website 'www.DramaticPublishing.com' is written in a yellow script font, followed by the phone numbers (800) 448-7469 and (815) 338-7170.

Leaving Iowa

Newly Revised

The Comedy About Family Vacations by Tim Clue & Spike Manton

"Simultaneously hilarious and touching."
—Hedy Weiss, *Chicago Sun-Times*

"Leaves you with a smile on your face and a desire to hug your kids."
—*The Detroit News*

"Quintessential family entertainment."
—*Chelsea Standard*

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Region X Show Cancels Carmel Trip

Difficulties with the Federal budget have caused a show cancellation for AACTFest 2013.

The show from Region X—*Controlling Interest* from Soldiers' Theatre in Vicenza, Italy—lost funding because of the budget cutting measure known as sequestration. Because productions from Region X are primarily funded through government allocation (and have difficulty with private fundraising), the cut forced the theatre to cancel its trip to Carmel.

"It is a real shame and disappointment we will not be represented," said Dane Winters, USA ARMY Europe Entertainment Director. "I don't plan on this being a trend, so plan on Region X being there in the future."

Replacing the Region X show in the national festival lineup is *Spring Awakening* from Ohlook Performing Arts Center in Grapevine, TX. ♦



AACTNewPlayFest

The first ever AACTNewPlayFest has proven to be a successful event and we look forward to continuing and improving it in the future. As this issue of *Spotlight* is in publication, the final twelve shows are being read by producing theatres and the winners will be announced soon.

You may find a list of the producing theatres and learn more about AACTNewPlayFest at www.aact2.org/?page=NewPlayFest. ♦



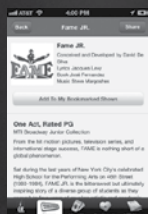
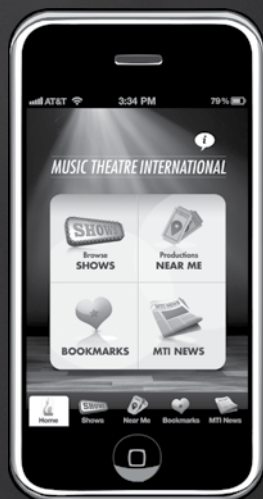
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Samuel French Discounts Continue

Ken Ludwig is undoubtedly one of the most popular playwrights living today. Recipient of two Laurence Olivier Awards, three Tony Award nominations, and two Helen Hayes Awards, his name is synonymous with success in the world of theatre. In fact, *all* of Ken's 19 published plays are produced each year; that is more than 500 productions in the United States alone of his revered plays and musicals. Popular titles include *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, and *The Three Musketeers*. Thanks to the generosity of Samuel French and the "Act Locally, AACT Nationally" program, AACT members producing select Ken Ludwig plays can save in a big way.

"Act Locally, AACT Nationally: Celebrating Ken Ludwig" is a joint program which kicked off in September of 2012. This incredible incentive program runs through August 31, 2014, so there is still time to take advantage of the terrific savings of:

- 10% off licensing fees for all plays offered in this promotion.
- 10% off all orders of cast copies of all plays offered in this promotion.

Some of the plays included in this deal are *Leading Ladies*, the aforementioned *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, and *Treasure Island*. The full list of shows is available at www.aact.org/ludwig



To be eligible for this promotion, theatres must:

- Be in good standing with AACT.
- Present six or more performances of the Ken Ludwig play.
- Have all script orders placed, and produce the shows before August 31, 2014.
- Indicate they are a member of AACT in the "comments" section of the Merchandise Order Form or Licensing Application.

Ken Ludwig was heavily involved in his local community theatre growing up and understands its importance. In his interview with AACT's own Ron Ziegler, Ken explains that he has always loved theatre and, "put it on a pedestal ... it makes me happy and it gives me courage, and so I tried to use theatre as a metaphor for all of life." Honoring Ken and his contributions to theatre through "Act Locally, AACT Nationally," is a great way to say thank you. You can join in the celebration by including a Ken Ludwig show in your season.

Samuel French also offers incredible discounts on select Agatha Christie and Thornton Wilder titles! These discounts include 10% off licensing fees and 10% off cast copies of the scripts. Learn more about each of these offers at www.aact.org/wilderchristie.

To take advantage of any of the special offers on plays by Ken Ludwig, Thornton Wilder, and Agatha Christie, you must be a current member of AACT. Renew your membership at www.aact2.org and don't miss out on any of these amazing deals!"



Read the entire interview with Ken Ludwig at www.aact2.org/?page=LudwigInterview



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AACTFest 2013 National Companies



Region II

Confetti Stage, Albany, NY

The Lesson by Eugene Ionesco, translation by Donald Allen
www.confettistage.org

Written in 1951, *The Lesson* illustrates Ionesco's comic genius, where insanity and farce collide as a professor becomes increasingly frustrated with his hapless student, and the student with her mad teacher. This potent "comic drama" has the power to frighten and delight as only Absurdist plays can.

Confetti Stage was incorporated in 2004. Its inaugural production, *'night, Mother* by Marsha Norman, was produced in January 2005. Since then, Confetti has produced more than 45 shows and has become an award-winning organization, performing in several



Capital Region communities and representing Albany's theatre community at State (TANYS) and Regional (ESTA) Theatre Festivals. Confetti Stage prides itself on bringing quality performances to its community, and allowing artists to expand their talents while collaborating to bring about a final product. The theatre offers the area's only truly local annual short play festival, Confetti Fest.



Region IIIa

Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

Cradle and All by Daniel Goldfarb
www.wrctheatre.org

Relationships aren't baby-proof. Annie and Nate have an 11-month old baby who won't sleep. This fresh and witty look at love, sex, commitment, and parenthood unfolds, and no one will rest until the truth between both parents is spoken.

The Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre (WRCT) was formed in 1975 with the purpose of bringing live theatre to the community



while showcasing local talent in all phases of production. Until 2007, the group performed in a rented facility. In October of 2007, WRCT moved into its long-awaited new home, and the theatre expanded programming to include four main season productions, two summer youth productions, and numerous studio theatre productions.



Region IIIb

Elkhart Civic Theatre, Bristol, IN

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Jeffrey Hatcher
www.elkhartcivictheatre.org

The streets of London are stalked by a macabre killer, but which is the real face of Edward Hyde? Even Dr. Henry Jekyll is uncertain. This new version of the classic tale offers several possibilities as the forces of good and evil struggle for supremacy and Hyde's hold over the good doctor becomes ever stronger.

Established in 1946 as the Elkhart Little Theatre, Elkhart Civic Theatre (ECT) incorporated in 1960 and bought its current home, The Bristol Opera House, in 1961. Built in 1897 as the town post



office/barbershop/gymnasium/theatre, the building now operates as a full-time community theatre seating 191 patrons. ECT produces a six-show season, mixed with musicals, comedies and dramas, and two youth theatre (ECTeam) productions, with concerts, classes, and cabarets rounding out the year. ECT is operated by volunteers and a dedicated board of directors, supervised by a full-time artistic director, and operates with an annual budget of \$198,000.



Region V

Dakota Fine Arts Consortium, Burnsville, MN

Leading Ladies by Ken Ludwig

Unemployed actors, Leo and Jack, hear of a wealthy widow from York, Pennsylvania who has died before finding her long-lost heirs, Max and Steve. To improve their cash flow, they decide to impersonate the nephews and claim the inheritance. But nothing in York is as they expect, resulting in chaos!

Established in 1996, Dakota Fine Arts Consortium (DFAC) is based in three suburban counties south of Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. As a collaboration among local representatives of all



arts disciplines, its purpose is to both promote overall arts access in communities, and to provide advocacy and guidance as a trusted advisor to communities building or converting buildings to arts facilities. Additionally, DFAC serves as a fiscal agent for several arts groups. It also sponsors arts projects such as this production of *Leading Ladies*. Ironically, DFAC itself is homeless and exists on a very small budget.



Region VIa

Baytown Little Theatre, Baytown, TX

God of Carnage by Yazmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton
www.baytown.littletheater.org

What begins as a civilized council of four upscale adults soon descends into a train wreck of confrontation as these parents of two 11-year-old boys, who had a playground tussle, spout, spar, and spew their way through a harried hour that unravels their civilized veneer.

Baytown Little Theater, celebrating its fifty-second season, ushers in its second half century with renewed energy born of a keen



sense of mission and vision as a leading regional arts organization. The theatre is in the midst of a multi-million dollar capital campaign and is restoring a historic landmark building as its new performing arts venue. The new space will consist of two performance spaces, classrooms for a burgeoning educational program, and other support spaces for ambitious productions that will inspire artists and patrons throughout the Houston area.

more companies on next page

"This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last."
Oscar Wilde

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Region VIb

Ohlook Performing Arts Center, Grapevine, TX

Spring Awakening Book & Lyrics by Steven Sater, Music by Duncan Sheik
www.ohlookcreative.com

Spring Awakening is a rock musical adaptation of Frank Wedekind's 1891 expressionist play about the trials, tribulations, and exhilaration of the unforgettable journey from youth to adulthood. It explores the confusion and desperation that ensue when the on-rushing tide of hormones meets the ignorance of children.

Ohlook Performing Arts Center was founded in 2002, and was originally organized to introduce, teach, and mentor children and



young adults, from ages 3 to 18, to the joy of live theatre. By 2007 so many graduates wanted to continue to perform with the theatre that it grew to incorporate an Adult Performing Company. The theatre now produces approximately 20 productions each year between the two companies. The Adult Performing Company prides itself on producing out of the ordinary pieces, musicals, straight plays, and works that often "push the envelope." In 2011, the adult company advanced to and won the National AACTFest with *Dog Sees God*, and then won the International Festival in Nova Scotia, Canada.



Region VIII

OnStage Playhouse, Chula Vista, CA

To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday by Michael Brady
www.onstageplayhouse.org

David's wife, Gillian, died in a boating accident on her birthday. Two years later, he is still in mourning, living a solitary life and ignoring his daughter. Gillian's sister and her husband, David's best friend, come to comfort him, bringing with them someone they want him to meet.

OnStage Playhouse is located just south of San Diego. Established in 1985, it has been producing six or more quality plays



every year since, making it one of the longest continually running community theatres in southern California. OnStage has been a member of AACT and the San Diego Association of Community Theatres for most of its existence. The theatre group is appearing in a national competition for the first time.

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.

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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."

2013 Arts Advocacy Day

by Joanne Berry, AACT Advocacy Committee

More than 500 arts and arts education advocates from 40 states gathered in Washington, DC, April 8-9 to celebrate National Arts Advocacy Day and "to underscore the importance of developing strong public policies and appropriating increased public funding for the arts and arts education." AACT was a national co-sponsor of Advocacy Day. Following are some points of interest concerning major issues that impact community theatres.

The past couple of years have been a time when negotiating funding for arts and cultural agencies has been especially difficult. There are some members of Congress who want to eliminate arts funding and others who want to drastically reduce it. On April 10th President Obama released his budget proposal for FY 2014 which slightly raises the amount for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to \$154,466 million, well below the high point in 1992 of \$176 million. Last year's appropriation to the NEA was \$146 million. That meant decreased funding to state arts agencies and more than 175 direct cuts to arts organizations. Restoring the NEA to \$155 million will help maintain grant support to arts organizations across the country. It is important to remember that 40% of all NEA program funds are distributed to the states and re-granted to arts agencies in each state. Community theatres often receive funds through this re-granting process.

An important point that arts organizations need to stress with Members of Congress is that the arts are crucial to our country's well-being and economic vitality. More than 905,000 businesses in this country are involved in a variety of arts-related trades and professions that employ 3.35 million people. These jobs pay taxes, pay mortgages, send children to college, and allow people to purchase goods and services.

Community theatres rely heavily on individual donors to maintain their programs. As our federal budget issues continue to grow, there have been many proposals to eliminate or reduce income tax deductions for donations to 501(c)(3) organizations. These would lead to decreased giving and impose a terrible burden on nonprofit groups that provide valuable services to their communities. Some of these groups would be forced to reduce their offerings or even close their doors. The last-minute fiscal cliff compromise resolved some tax issues but not all. It is important to note the bargain did not include caps on itemized deductions which some lawmakers favored. We have a breather on that issue, but it's not going to go away. Make sure that you keep in touch with your Member of Congress on this issue, using specific examples of how capping itemized deductions could affect his/her Congressional district.

Community theatres also have an interest in the IRA Rollover provision that "permits donors age 70½ and older to make tax-free charitable gifts directly from their IRAs, up to an annual ceiling of \$100,000." Once again this provision is set to expire at the end of the year. We have gotten used to the deadline being extended, but this is not a secure position from which to solicit such donations. "Congress will be considering proposals to make the IRA Rollover permanent, lift the \$100,000 limit, and reduce the eligibility to 59 ½." Make sure you let your legislators know how this proposal would impact the nonprofits in your community.

There are other issues that affect AACT members directly or indirectly. Find out about them by going to the Americans for the Arts web site (www.artsusa.org) and click on Advocacy.

On the evening preceding Advocacy Day, the Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on the Arts and Public Policy was delivered by world-renowned cellist and arts advocate/educator Yo-Yo Ma. His lecture, "Arts for Life's Sake: A Roadmap from the Citizen Musician" was delivered to a full house at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. His main focus was that the core of education, healing, and better collaboration in society is stimulated by the arts. Among the special guest performers Mr. Ma included in his presentation were members of Musicorps, a group of wounded warriors, who delivered moving performances of several songs. For more on Mr. Ma's lecture go to the Americans for the Arts web site. ♦



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Developing a Marketing Communications Strategy

By Jarrod Kopp

For people outside the communications business, the work we do in advertising, marketing, and PR seems pretty easy. Be creative, clever, and always schmoozing.

Although I will admit there's a lot of that, the truth is actually not that simple.

Marketing Communications is a discipline that requires a lot of thought and planning before you write a single word.

Here are some ways to help you think about your promotional activities strategically, which will help make your decisions much easier when you get down to copywriting, design, and layout. If you can clearly answer these questions, you will have a well-defined and highly-effective marketing campaign.

What are you promising?

Most people think of a brand as a name or logo, but a brand is much bigger than that. A brand is your organization's PROMISE to EVERYONE who interacts with it. In a business,

Find the promise that defines your theatre.

that may be vendors, suppliers, employees, etc. In a theatre, your interactions will mostly be with audience members, performers, technical staff, and media.

Wal-Mart promises low prices. Lexus promises luxury. Apple promises sexy simplicity.

What is the promise that defines your theatre's brand? Some theatres are totally mainstream, others build a reputation for challenging and edgy productions. Others focus mainly on children's theatre or musicals. Some have high production values, others rely on great acting. Think about the experience that you can consistently provide and focus on that.

Also, how are you defined by your competition? If you are one of several theatres in your community, what do you offer that is truly unique or better than the others? If you are the only theatre in town, your competition will be other entertainment options – so what can you offer over movies, TV, and the Internet?

Your organization's brand is an identity that covers every

other part of your campaign. In fact, the most effective companies use it to drive decisions about all activities throughout their organization.

What is your objective?

Once you have a brand promise determined, you need to think about what you are trying to achieve with your campaign. Obviously, for a show, you want to sell tickets, but that's too broad to be effective. A better question for that type of campaign is: HOW will this campaign generate revenue? Can your next event (whether or not it's a show) be used to sell season subscriptions? Or create interest in educational programs? Or generate donations?

Determining your objectives will help you focus on which activities are essential for your marketing activity and which are not as necessary. If it doesn't support your objectives, don't spend time on it.

Most communications projects have more than one objective, especially if it is aimed at more than one audience. Three to five well-defined objectives is typical, depending on the size of the project.

Who is your audience?

This also may seem obvious: theatre fans, DUH! But theatre audiences are not monolithic. They don't have the same tastes across the board. Your audience may want very traditional

Keep looking beyond your core audience.

shows, or they may be more daring. You may do great business with old-fashioned musicals, but not with classic dramas.

Do you know who your most supportive core audience is – in terms of demographics (such as age, gender, education, income range) or psychographics (core values or perspectives)? If not, at the very least you need to survey them.

You should also constantly be looking beyond your core audience, which is typically defined by a love of live theatre. If you are producing a show that has an appeal outside of "theatre people," consider how to identify and reach them.

For instance, if you were doing a show about Jackie Robinson, you would want to think about outreach to sports fans and African-Americans. If your show's themes will resonate with middle-aged parents, or Catholics, or your local gay community – target them and market to them.

What is your message?

Once you have your audience(s) defined, you can start thinking about key messages. Keep in mind, this still isn't copywriting or design. This is identifying the messages that will resonate with your target audiences and influence their behavior. Think about what would cause your campaign to 'link' into your audiences minds – what's in it for them? You can have more than one key message, but fewer generally gives your communications a tighter focus.

Match your messages to your audiences.

The theatre I volunteer with recently did a benefit reading of "8," which is based on the transcripts of California's Proposition 8 trial that went before the Supreme Court this year. When marketing to the local gay community, we played up the fact that this show was about marriage equality and the proceeds would go to the Oklahoma Center for Equality. However, since this was being performed in the reddest state in the country, we downplayed the pro-equality bias of the show and instead focused on the ways we were: 1) using theatre to open a dialogue about a major national issue being hotly debated, 2) creating relevant art about a moment of living history, and 3) hosting talkbacks after each show featuring the performers along with a law professor and a local clergyman to give different perspectives on the issue.

What is the call to action?

Once you have identified your audience and your message, you should have a direct path to influence their behavior. Once they are ready to act, what do you want them to do? Depending on your campaign, you may want them to buy a season subscription, or motivate them to reserve tickets for a single show, RSVP for an event, or sign up for your newsletter.

Remember: you have to pick one clear call to action for your campaign. You can provide multiple ways to respond (such as by phone as well as through your website), but it all has to support a single action.

The reason your call to action has to be simple and clear is obviously to make the decision to act as simple as possible. But it also gives you a cleaner measurement of the effectiveness of your campaign.

NOW you can get creative

Once you have built a strategy that connects your brand, objectives, audience, messages, and desired response, you are ready to make decisions about the details – copywriting, images, and layout. If you've done the planning in advance, you should have a clear framework that will guide the creative work.

Build the strategy first, and those final decisions will fall into place quickly. ♦

Jarrod Kopp's workshop, Marketing Communications for Theatre, was one of the many educational workshops selected to present at AACTFest 2013 in Carmel, IN.

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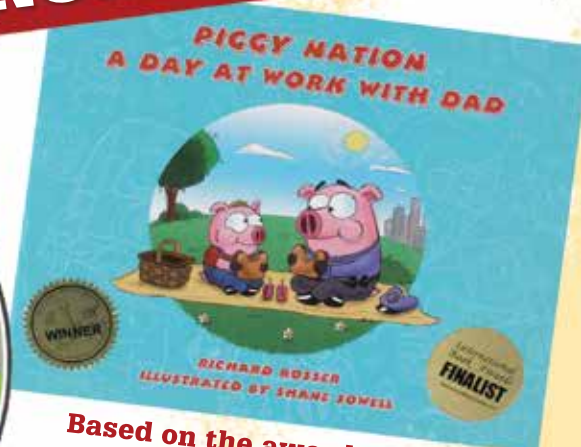


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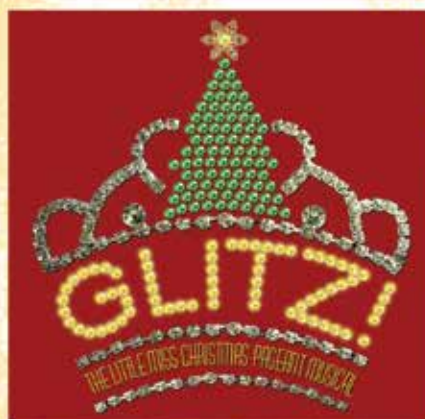
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Thanks to Festival Hosts and Chairs

Thank You National Festival Host and Chair

AACTFest 2013

Carmel Repertory Theatre
Tarkington Theatre
Carmel, IN
Chair: June Clair

Thank You to AACTFest 2013 Regional Festival Hosts and Chairs

Region I

New England Theatre Conference/Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre
Chelmsford High School Center for the Performing Arts
Chelmsford, MA
Chair: Celia Couture

Region II

Eastern States Theatre Conference
Rome Community Theater
Rome, NY
Chair: Arnold Galin

Region III

Association of Region III
Schauer Arts Center
Hartford, WI
Chairs: Robert J. Kafka and John Brandl

Region IV

Southeastern Theatre Conference
Youth Performing Arts School
Louisville, KY
Chairs: Lyle Tate and Lori C. Chase

Region V

Region V Association
Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre
Fargo, ND
Chair: Scott Brusven

Region VI

Region VI Theatres
Acadiana Center for the Arts
Lafayette, LA
Chair: Gerd Wuestermann

Region IX

Washington State Community Theatre Association
Richland Players
Richland, WA
Chair: Ted Miller

Region X

Installation Management Command - Europe Region
KMC Onstage
Kaiserslautern, Germany
Chair: Victoria L. Hanrahan

Thank You to State Festival Hosts and Chairs

Region I

Maine

Maine Association of Community Theatre
Lucid Stage
Portland, ME
Chair: Foner Curtis

Massachusetts

Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres
Chelmsford High School Center for the Performing Arts
Chelmsford, MA
Chair: Celia Couture

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Community Theatre Association
Amato Center for the Performing Arts
Milford, NH
Chair: Chuck Emmons

Region II

Delaware

Delaware Theatre Association
Possum Point Players
Georgetown, DE
Chairs: Ruth K. Brown and Kenney Workman

Maryland

Maryland Community Theatre Festival Association
Todd Performing Arts Center
Wye Mills, MD
Chair: Cynthia Johnson

New York

Genesee Community College
Theatre Association of New York State
Batavia, NY
Chair: Robert Sharman

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres
Barnstormers Theater
Ridley Park, PA
Chair: Marsha Amato-Greenspan

Region III

Indiana

Indiana Community Theatre League
Kokomo Civic Theatre
Kokomo, IN
Chair: Steve Hughes

Michigan

Community Theatre Association of Michigan
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre
Kalamazoo, MI
Chair: Arthur E. Nemitz, Jr.

Ohio

Ohio Community Theatre Association
 Seton High School
 Cincinnati, OH
 Chair: Peggy Kenney

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre
 River Arts Center
 Prairie du Sac, WI
 Chair: Dee Baldock

*Region IV***Alabama**

Alabama Conference of Theatre
 Wetumpka Depot Players
 Wetumpka, AL
 Chair: John Chain

Florida

Florida Theatre Conference
 Santa Fe Community College
 Gainesville, FL
 Chair: Tammy Serebrin

Georgia

Georgia Theatre Conference
 Georgia Southwestern State University
 Americus, GA
 Chair: Tim Chapman

Kentucky

Kentucky Theatre Association
 University of Kentucky Briggs Theatre
 Lexington, KY
 Chair: Ryan Briggs

Mississippi

Mississippi Theatre Association
 University of Mississippi for Women
 Columbus, MS
 Chair: Thomas La Foe

South Carolina

South Carolina Theatre Association
 Wiles Chapel Theatre, Newberry College
 Newberry, SC
 Chair: Susan L. D. Smith

Tennessee

Tennessee Theatre Association
 Clayton Center for the Arts
 Maryville, TN
 Chair: Barry Wallace

Virginia

Virginia Theatre Association
 Eastern View High School Theatre
 Culpepper, VA
 Chair: Matthew Armentrout and Kimberly Kemp

West Virginia

West Virginia Theatre Conference
 Glenville State College
 Glenville, WV
 Chair: Dennis Wemm

*Region V***Iowa**

Iowa Community Theatre Association
 Newton Community Theatre
 Newton, IA
 Chair: Sue Beukema

Minnesota

Minnesota Association of Community Theatres
 North Hennepin Community College
 Brooklyn Park, MN
 Chair: Julianna Skluzacek

North Dakota/South Dakota

Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre
 Fargo, ND
 Chair: Scott M. Brusven

Nebraska

Nebraska Association of Community Theatres
 Minden Community Players
 Minden, NE
 Chairs: Karla Ott and Steve Crooks

*Region VI***Arkansas**

Arkansas Community Theatre Association
 South Arkansas Arts Center
 El Dorado, AR
 Chairs: Jack Wilson and Kelly Phelps

New Mexico

Theatre New Mexico
 Los Alamos Little Theatre
 Los Alamos, NM
 Chair: Eric Bjorklund

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Community Theatre Association
 Regional Actors Community Theatre
 Tonkawa, OK
 Chair: Chris Williams

Texas

Texas Nonprofit Theatres
 Medical Center of Lewisville Grand Theater
 Lewisville, TX
 Chair: Linda M. Lee

Region VII

Colorado

Colorado Community Theatre Coalition
Steam Plant Theatre
Salida, CO

Chairs: John Davis, Jan Justis and Michael Varnum

Wyoming

Jackson Community Theater
Jackson, WY
Chair: James Brennan

Thank you to these AACT volunteers for serving as Festival Commission Representatives, providing support to 32 state festivals and 8 regional festivals.

Marsha Amato-Greenspan, Kay Armstrong, Murray Chase, Lori Chase, Thomas Cowley, John Davis, John Eppert, Sue Ellen Gerrells, Ginger Heath, Eugene Irby, Rick Kerby, Stephen Krempasky, Thomas La Foe, Patty Loftis, Joan Luther, Liz Lydic, Kathleen Maldonado, Norman McPhee, Arthur Nemitz, JoAnne Nissen, Frank Peot, Kristi Quinn, Wanda Schenk, Dave Sheppard, Jon Skaalen, James Walker

Region IX

Oregon

Oregon Community Theatre Alliance
Theatre in the Grove
Forest Grove, OR
Chair: Jeff Zimmerman

Washington

Washington State Community Theatre Association
Bremerton Community Theatre
Bremerton, WA
Chair: Rana Tan



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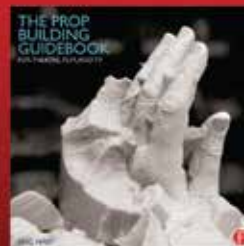
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New Regional Reps

The AACT Board of Directors welcomes two new Regional Representatives.



Joanne Berry is the new Region III Representative. She 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 previously 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.



Nancy Eppert is the new Region V Representative. She has served, most recently, as a Board Member at Large and chairs the Education Committee and is a member of the Workshops Committee. She has chaired Artistic Directors and Education Directors conferences, and served on state/regional AACTFest committees. Nancy provides training and program consultation for the University of

Kansas Standardized Patient program; has created training presentations in support of Arts-In-Education programs; board development consultation for theatre companies in Louisiana, Missouri, and Kansas; and developed training programs for the Kansas City Coalition for Community Collaboration. She is the Artistic Director of the "Enchanted Forest," an annual Halloween event for the City of Independence, MO. Nancy serves as a Media Specialist for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She has served as: President, Missouri Association of Community Theatres (MoACT); President, City Theatre of Independence; Board Member, Slidell, (LA) Little Theatre; Steering Committee, American Association of Suicidology, National Convention. Awards: MoACT best director & show-2003 *Taking Sides*, show-2009 *Fat*; KC Stage best show-2005 *Hello, Dolly*; Best actress CTI-2008 *Funny Money*. She has adjudicated: 2007-Nebraska and Iowa State Festivals; 2009-Wyoming State Festival; 2011-Iowa, Wisconsin, New Mexico, and Texas State Festivals; and 2013- New Mexico and Iowa State Festivals, and Region III Festival. Nancy and her husband, John, live in the Truman Historic District of Independence, MO. ♦

New Roles

Norman Ussery has been hired as Executive Director for **Theatre Arlington**, Arlington, TX. He comes to Texas from Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, NC, where he served as Executive Director since 2006. He takes the helm at the theatre from Executive Producer Todd Hart who left at the end of April. Norman holds a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in theatre from Duke University in North Carolina. Prior to his time in Winston-Salem, he worked with theatres in Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Norman was hired in February and began his tenure in Arlington in mid-May.

Salina Community Theatre, Salina, KS, announces the hiring of **Shannon Ramos** as its Education Director. She replaced Jordan Martens who left in January. Shannon holds a Master of Arts in theatre from Kansas State University and is a registered drama therapist. She is also a cum laude Bachelor of Arts 2003 graduate of Kansas Wesleyan University. Shannon has extensive experience in working with both children's theatre and drama therapy throughout eastern and central Kansas, and has taught classes for Salina Civic Theatre in the past. She began her new duties March 1. ♦



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Moving On

Theatres advancing in the 2013 AACTFest Cycle
Some states qualified to send two shows to the regional festival.

I	MA	Burlington Players	Burlington	<i>Radium Girls</i>
I	MA	Harvard Community Theatre	Harvard	<i>Crossing Brooklyn</i>
I	NH	Milford Area Players	Milford	<i>Cabin 12</i>
I	NH	Nashua Theatre Guild	Nashua	<i>City of Bones</i>
II	DE	Wilmington Drama League	Wilmington	<i>For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls</i>
II	MD	Montgomery Playhouse	Gaithersburg	<i>Saves the Day</i>
II	MD	Silver Spring Stage	Silver Spring	<i>Spoken For</i>
II	NY	Auburn Players Community Theatre	Auburn	<i>'night, Mother</i>
II	NY	Confetti Stage	Albany	<i>The Lesson</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 Thing You Need To Know Before the World Ends</i>
III	OH	The Drama Workshop	Cincinnati	<i>Jerry Finnegan's Sister</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	AL	South City Theatre	Alabaster	<i>Sylvia</i>
IV	AL	Theatre Downtown	Birmingham	<i>Living Together</i>
IV	FL	Theatre Winter Haven	Winter Haven	<i>Golda's Balcony</i>
IV	GA	Sumter Players	Americus	<i>Exits and Entrances</i>
IV	SC	Greenwood Community Theatre	Greenwood	<i>Stitches</i>
IV	VA	Stage Door Productions	Fredericksburg	<i>A Trilogy: The Lilac Ticket, Assisted Living, The Reaper</i>
IV	WV	Actors Guild of Parkersburg, Inc.	Parkersburg	<i>Tuesdays With Morrie</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>
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: a Parable</i>
V	NE	Way Out West Commuity 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	AR	South Arkansas Arts Center	El Dorado	<i>Graceland</i>
VI	LA	Acting Unlimited	Lafayette	<i>Shotgun</i>
VI	NM	The Community Players of Hobbs	Hobbs	<i>A Doll's House</i>

continued on next page

Moving On continued from previous page

VI	OK	Duncan Little Theatre	Duncan	<i>The Dixie Swim Club</i>
VI	OK	Heller Theatre	Tulsa	<i>Shooting Star</i>
VI	TX	Baytown Little Theater	Baytown	<i>God of Carnage</i>
VI	TX	Ohlook Performing Art Center	Grapevine	<i>Spring Awakening</i>
VII	CO	Aspen Stage	Aspen	<i>Unmarried in America</i>
VII	WY	Jackson Community Theater	Jackson	<i>The Actor's Nightmare</i>
VIII	CA	OnStage Playhouse	Chula Vista	<i>To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday</i>
IX	ID	Lake City Playhouse	Coeur d'Alene	<i>K2</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>
IX	WA	Bremerton Community Theatre	Bremerton	<i>The Thread Men</i>
IX	WA	Spokane Civic Theatre	Spokane	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>
X*	Italy	Soldiers' Theatre	Vicenza	<i>Controlling Interest</i>

Boldface indicates productions advancing to the National Festival

*The Region X representative was unable to advance to the national festival due to budget cuts in US military programs.



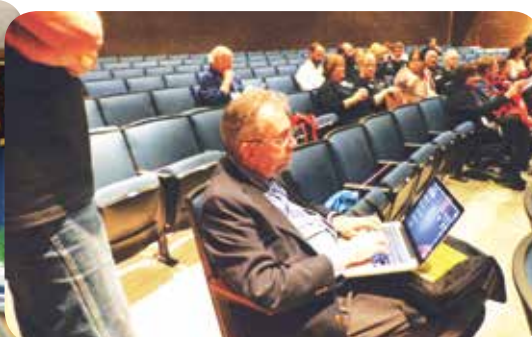
photos by Ron Ziegler

Festival chair and AACT Washington State Contact Ted Miller addresses the crowd before a session of the Region IX AACTFest, held March 29 & 30, 2013 in Richland, WA.



Region IX Rep Jon Douglas Rake, Festival Chair Ted Miller, AACT Board Member at Large Chris Serface and Festival Commission Representative Liz Lydec prepare certificates for the awards ceremony for the Region IX AACTFest. The festival took place in Richland, WA, March 29 and 30, 2013.

Festival Commission Representative JoAnne Nissen (right) prepares to present participation certificates at the Iowa State Festival, April 5 and 6, 2013 in Newton, Iowa. Festival Chair Sue Buekema is at JoAnne's right



AACT Endowment Trustee and former President John Viars prepares to take notes during a session of the Iowa AACTFest, April 5 and 6 in Newton Iowa. John was serving as an adjudicator for the festival.

On the Road continues on page 34

Spotlight Award Honors Jim Buckingham

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.

Jim Buckingham has never wanted to be in the spotlight while serving **Lincoln County Community Theater (LCCT)**, located in Damariscotta, ME, over the years. He will do anything for the theatre, as long as his contributions are behind the scenes. But to Jim's surprise, he found himself center stage, January 5th, 2013, as he was presented with the AACT Spotlight Award!

Jim has only said "no" once to a request from LCCT. He was asked to do a curtain speech when a board member bowed out at the last minute. Jim politely but simply reminded them that being in the public eye was, "not his thing." He is happy to perform the



Jim Buckingham with Bourge Hathaway, volunteer scenic artist and former board member at Lincoln County Community Theatre.
Photo: The Lincoln County News

duties of a technical director, lighting designer, master electrician, scenic painter, janitor, etc. provided that his name is not listed in the program.

Jim owns and operates a computer programming business, but he always manages to find the hours to get a production up and running. He is a master at solving technical problems, and it is not surprising to find him at the theatre at 5 a.m., working on programming light cues, trying to solve a difficult mechanical issue with scenery, or simply doing last minute painting tasks.

Jim was very modest in receiving the Spotlight Award, refraining from comment. Andrew Fenniman, an LCCT board member writes, "So while slightly embarrassed, Jim was touched to be the recipient of a well deserved honor. Thank you, AACT and the Awards Committee, for making this happen. It was wonderful." ♦

Another AACTFest Myth

By Murray Chase

AACTFest nationals are for the 12 top companies. It's not worth the time or money to attend just for the sake of it.

That's the biggest myth of all. AACTFest is an incredible opportunity to view top-notch productions from around the country, steal good ideas, discover new plays, meet new people, and network. And while it's really exciting to advance to AACTFest with your show, you feel that pressure of performance all through the week. Why not just go and enjoy? We make a point whenever possible to see Broadway shows, national tours, and the work of other theatres in our respective areas. AACTFest is a tremendous opportunity to soak up good work from all over the country...at a reasonable price. With the production and script ideas you'll garner, info from the workshops, and possible deals made through networking, you'll more than pay for your trip. It's definitely worth the time and money. Don't search for excuses not to go; just go. I'll see you there. ♦

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Community Theatre Advocacy begins with YOU!

Wear your theatre company's T-shirt proudly and, when people ask you about it, tell them what those of us involved in community theatre already know: We are America's national theatre and, if they haven't attended a community theatre production, they need to do so as soon as possible!

Victoria's Jewelry Box

A photograph of four women wearing elaborate Victorian-style hats and dresses, standing behind a decorative railing. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

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The Service at Rocky Bluff

A cartoon illustration of a small white church with a steeple, perched on the edge of a steep, rocky cliff. The church has a rainbow flag on its side.

How far would you go to keep your pastor?

Anytime comedy *Eldridge Publishing* hiStage.com

What has been your most successful social media strategy?

Responses on AACTList

To sign up for AACTList go to www.aact2.org/default.asp?page=aactlist

We use Twitter, YouTube and FaceBook all the time. One very successful campaign... We were producing *Knuffle Bunny, A Cautionary Musical*. For two weeks we had a two-foot tall stuffed Knuffle Bunny posed in various locations around the theatre, shop, rehearsal space, etc, doing various activities prepping for the show. We would tweet the photos every few days. The show went from light sales to almost sold-out within a week of starting the campaign, and it was just a lot of fun.

Steven Koehler, Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette, Inc., LA
www.lafayetteticivic.com

The students organized a flash mob in the student union where they presented "You're the One That I Want" from *Grease*. This got coverage from the local television station and the story ran at 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m. It took off on Facebook and Twitter. The box office phone was more than busy the next day.

Scott Richard Klein, Cameron University Theatre Arts
Lawton, OK

Facebook... wasn't quite doing the job. I stepped in and created a website celebrating our past and showcasing our current and future activities. Our problem has been getting people excited about theater again. The best thing to energize the public has been displaying our production lists and cast photos online. The photos from past productions have gone viral on Facebook. I think it has helped us immensely.

Jason Cable, Warren Players, PA
www.warrenplayers.com

Web site showcases us - past, present, and future. We also have a deal with a local advertiser to post our information on their web newspaper and Youtube. Facebook is sooo GREAT for us! We use Facebook by having a page and a group for upcoming auditions and productions. We also have a group for each show because

we have found it is easier and faster to get rehearsal changes out using this method. Our Board has their own group page to notify of meetings and anything else we might like to share.

Lee Ann DePew, Gaslight Playhouse, Inc., Kendallville, IN
www.gaslightplayhouse75.com

Responses on Facebook

(www.facebook.com/AACT.org)

Tim Mitchiner, Lindale Community Theater, Mineola, TX
www.lindalecommunitytheater.org

While I'm not sure it increased attendance, we advertised and promoted on Facebook for our last show and auditions for another. For \$115, we increased our 'Reach' tenfold and increased our 'Likes' almost 30%. I can't say FB makes it easy - in fact, you'll use some colorful language as you try to figure out the byzantine dos & don'ts - but it seemed to have an impact.

Venice Theatre, FL
www.venicestage.com

Any time we post a photo it gets more feedback than anything else we do -especially if the individuals in the picture are tagged. People just don't take time to read the words when they're scrolling. We plan to start using more photos with embedded text (Memes, if you will) and less words. Real quotes from happy patrons do get quite a bit of feedback.

Pierre Players Community Theatre, SD
www.pierreplayers.com

Facebook ads have increased the number of fans of our page, and promoting individual posts helps ensure that fans see our content. We've been lucky enough to have a local professional photographer shoot our last few productions and the rehearsal process. Fans seem to really enjoy behind-the-scenes and process photos just as much as the polished production shots. (We base this on the number of views, "likes," and shares.) Mostly, we've just been trying to post regularly and to make the content as interesting as possible, especially in the run-up to a show - our view is that Facebook isn't supposed to be a platform for a sales pitch, but rather an invitation to our audience to experience theater in their community.

Yale Drama Series David C. Horn Prize

Yale Drama Series

PO Box 209040
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The Yale Drama Series is intended to support emerging playwrights. Submissions must be original, unpublished full-length plays written in English. No musicals, children's plays or translations. Plays must not have been professionally produced.

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

- Portland Monthly Magazine



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Would You Like to Swing on a Star?

by Twink Lynch

I missed AACTFest this year [2005], much to my great regret, especially since it was the 40th anniversary of the first time a U.S. community theatre participated in the Quadrennial World Festival of Amateur Theatre in Monaco. Art Cole's decision to accept the invitation of Princess Grace back in 1965 had a far-reaching impact on lots of lives, including mine, even though I wasn't there and I didn't know Art Cole until years later. But because Art said yes and raised the money to go to Monaco with his Midland Community Theatre troupe, ACTA (now AACT) developed the biennial Festival of American Community Theatre, and that definitely changed my life.

I didn't learn about FACT (now AACTFest) until 1973. Topeka Civic Theatre's new resident director had interned at Midland under Art Cole and knew that a national festival was going to be held that year in Lincoln, NE. He wanted us to enter but wasn't able to persuade our board (on which I served, I'm embarrassed to say) that it would be a valuable experience for us and it didn't happen.

In 1975, after much argumentation and persuasion, we were able to persuade our board to let us enter the state festival if we paid our own expenses. Much to our surprise, we won and advanced to the regional festival in Omaha. We didn't win there, but Oklahoma City wasn't very far away, so I decided to go see what the national festival was all about. It was a little scary to go by myself when the only person I knew was the Region V Representative I had just met in Omaha. But everyone was very welcoming and I soon discovered I was among my kind of people – who loved theatre as much as I did and who quickly became my most treasured colleagues, mentors, and friends.

I was blown away by the quality of work presented there – I had no idea community theatre work could be so “professional” and elegant. I learned so much from the insightful comments of the three adjudicators (Jerome Lawrence, Lloyd Richards, and Professor Ed Wright), and I was caught up in the fun and the outright joy of the people attending. I met the legendary Jeanne Adams Wray and Art Cole, as well as others who later became the leaders of ACTA/AACT. Since then, I have attended 12 of the 15 national festivals as well as many state and regional festivals along the way. Over the past 30 years, the quality of the shows has gotten even better, and the overall learning experience, from the adjudications to adjudication training, and other workshops, has become outstanding.

I share all this with you because I'm aware there are many community theatre people around the country who have never attended a state, regional, and especially a national AACTFest. This concerns me because having benefited from the many blessings of Festival attendance myself, I want everybody out there to have the same good fortune I have had.

I consulted with some people who've attended a national festival, and each of them raved about the experience, even when they didn't have a show to root for. One of the participants told me it was better without a show, because the stress was less and she could participate in all the workshops and ad lib gatherings without having to worry about getting to a rehearsal or team meeting.

I really believe the Festival is the most important program AACT offers in terms of breaking down the insularity so many of our theatre groups experience.

Everyone agreed one of the great values of the Festival is meeting people from all over the country who love doing what they love to do, and who, in many cases, are facing similar problems. Solutions are suggested, email addresses are exchanged, and laughter is heard late into the night as war stories and a beverage or two are shared.

Another value was seeing the shows they weren't familiar with. Not every theatre can do every show that is presented at the Festival – there are often new and cutting edge scripts that might not be appropriate for every venue. But in watching new material and even in getting reacquainted with familiar material, and especially hearing the feedback, not only from the formal adjudications but from colleagues in the halls, they all felt they were developing greater skills of discernment regarding what was really good theatre.

The chance to measure the work of their own theatres against productions brought to the Festival was of great importance to my interviewees. Theatres that bring a show to Festival get direct feedback from the adjudicators. But even the people without a show learn a great deal about how the quality of their work at home compares to what they see on the Festival stage. Sometimes people go home saying, “We could have won if only we'd entered.”

Sometimes they go home and say, "We can be better than we are," which is what I said after attending FACT '75 in Oklahoma City. And I really believe all of us can get better. No matter how good we currently are, there's always more to learn, a higher level of achievement to attain, another star to reach for.

With all the potential benefit of attending AACTFest, why do so many theatre groups just stay home? It baffles me that this opportunity wouldn't be placed on every theatre's long-range calendar and budgeted for over a two-year period. Theatres don't have to enter a show, but why don't they plan to send a group of volunteers (and staff, if appropriate) to learn as much as they can and come back with their batteries re-charged and great ideas to share?

I imagine the cost may deter some groups. I think every board should build it into the theatre budget – let's say enough money over two budget cycles to support at least two people to attend the next National Festival. How exciting would it be if boards and individuals would make the commitment right now to save the money and plan to attend! I really believe the Festival is the most important program AACT offers in terms of breaking down the insularity so many of our theatre groups experience. We are so limited by what we don't know, and further limited by

not knowing that we don't know. The song says, "You can be better than you are – you can be swinging on a star." But how can we swing on a star if we don't know there's a star out there to swing on?

All you board members out there – I'm challenging you to plan ahead and see to it that some of your members attend the next AACTFest, not to mention your state and/or regional festivals. It will show your volunteers and staff how much you value them if you can pay for at least half – or more! – the cost and make time for them (especially staff) to be gone for several days. It will benefit your theatre by providing renewed energy, new commitment to excellence, new ideas, a vast network of problem-solvers, and may provide some of your people with new opportunities for service and leadership, not to mention lifelong friendships.

Our Kansas state motto is "Ad astra per aspera" – "to the stars through difficulty." Don't you think that's a perfect motto for community theatre as well? ♦

Reprinted from August 2005

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

Listings do not imply AACT endorsement



Now You Tell Me: 12 Actors Give the Best Advice They Never Got

by Sheridan Scott & Chris Willman

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One Life to Live); Michael McKean (*This is Spinal Tap, Laverne & Shirley*); Brian Stokes-Mitchell (*Ragtime, Man of La Mancha*); Julia Motyka (*The Kindergarten Shuffle, In the Family*); Alexandra Neil (*As the World Turns, Rock 'n' Roll*); Michael O'Neill (*The West Wing, Grey's Anatomy*); Eden Sher (*The Middle, Weeds*); Sam Waterston (*Law & Order, King Lear*); the last major interview with Lynn Redgrave and a bonus interview with director Kent Paul.

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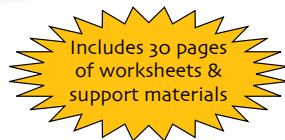
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July 26-27	Oklahoma Community Theatre Association Summer Conference 2013	OK Tulsa	405-840-0788 www.oktheatre.org
August 7-10	Colorado Community Theatre Coalition 2013 Colorado Theatre Festival	CO Denver	303-674-5037 www.cctcfestival.com
Aug 30 - Sept 2	Ohio Community Theatre Association 2013 OCTA State Conference	OH Miamisburg	740-403-8969 www.ohiocommunitytheatre.org

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

continued from page 26

Ron Ziegler



Region VI Representative Tracy Alexander (left) shares a story with AACT Program Services Manager Susan Austin and Louisiana State Contact Wanda Schenk at the Region VI festival, held in Lafayette, LA, April 18-20, 2013.



Ron Ziegler

Festival participants gather in the lobby of the Acadiana Center for the Arts in Lafayette, LA, for the Festival Awards Brunch. The festival took place April 18-20, 2013.

Minnesota State Contact Jon Skaalen awaits the beginning of a performance session at the Region V AACTFest, held in Fargo, ND, April 26-28, 2013.



Ron Ziegler



Kelly W. Peavey

Region V Representative Jim Walker (right) addresses the assembly during the awards ceremony of the Region V AACTFest, held in Fargo, ND, April 26-28, 2013. At left are Festival Commission Representative (and Louisiana State Contact) Wanda Schenk and AACT Field Services Director Ron Ziegler.

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