

# spotlight

September/October 2013 \$2.50

## AACTNewPlayFest Spans the United States

One of the great things about AACT is it connects “theatre people” around the globe. Through festivals, committee meetings, and other events, AACT members have the opportunity to share, mix, and mingle with like-minded folks, often becoming friends, who live thousands of miles away. Thanks to online services such as AACTList and AACTivity, those newfound acquaintances are able to keep in touch, exchange ideas, and offer advice on a weekly, or even daily basis. AACT’s newest endeavor, AACTNewPlayFest, is succeeding in connecting people as well. In fact, AACTNewPlayFest has linked playwrights and theatres from the east coast to the west, and states in between.

For those not familiar, AACTNewPlayFest is an initiative taken by AACT to address the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe. Hundreds of scripts were submitted and read by several dozen volunteers. Through a strategic rating system, the scripts were culled down to the top 12. Those 12 were sent to six theatres around the country specially selected by AACT to produce the new plays. Each theatre provided their top picks, and the final six plays were selected.

A couple of things set AACTNewPlayFest apart from other playwriting competitions. One is that the winners are guaranteed a fully staged production and the theatres must offer at least three performances. The second facet that elevates AACT’s play festival is the exciting news that Dramatic Publishing Company has agreed to print an anthology of the winning plays. They will also include the plays in their catalogue and license the performance rights. Having your work published and receiving a full production at an established theatre are two things for which some playwrights work their entire lives.

More than two dozen theatres applied to be selected as producing theatres for the inaugural AACTNewPlayFest. They understood the value in producing a world premiere, award-winning script. Now that each of the six selected theatres have their plays, they have the unique opportunity to work one-on-one with the playwrights since each company will be bringing the respective author of their script in for a performance or rehearsal. It is not often that a theatre has the playwright of a production in attendance for a performance. One or two of the theatres may even bring the scriptwriter in for a rehearsal – truly a rare honor – and, for the playwright, a precious glimpse at the organic process of bringing their script to life on stage.

The extraordinary chance for the theatres to communicate on such an intimate level with the playwrights is one they are excitedly embracing. In fact, Ed Bassett with Phoenix Stage Company in Naugatuck, Connecticut has already welcomed Jim Henry (author of the winning script, *Jellofish*) through their doors, even though Jim’s play isn’t scheduled for production until the spring of 2014. The two had an enjoyable visit, and Ed looks forward to having Jim back to Phoenix Stage in the future.

Most of the theatres, like Phoenix Stage Company, have set their productions for 2014, however Springfield Little Theatre will be the



Springfield Little Theatre Springfield, MO	Paul Elliott Los Angeles, CA	<i>Exit Laughing</i> November 15 – 24, 2013
Hickory Community Theatre, Hickory, NC	Cece Dwyer Sarasota, FL	<i>The Seamstress</i> January 10 – 26, 2014
California Stage Company Sacramento, CA	Nedra Roberts Atlanta, GA	<i>The Vanishing Point</i> March 27 – April 28, 2014
Phoenix Stage Company Naugatuck, CT	Jim Henry Chicago, IL	<i>Jellofish</i> April 4 – 13, 2014
Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg Mechanicsburg, PA	Barry Weinberg Bethesda, MD	<i>End Papers</i> July 24 – 27, 2014
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre Grand Rapids, MI	Bo Wilson Richmond, VA	<i>The Boatwright</i> September 13 – 29, 2014

first company to stage a winning script from AACTNewPlayFest. Curtains will go up on their production of *Exit Laughing* by Paul Elliott in November of this year. Production dates for all of the plays in AACTNewPlayFest are listed in the accompanying chart, which corresponds with a map of the United States illustrating

continued on page 11



## A true story. A musical legend.

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**Gary Walker**  
AACT President  
2013-2015

Last weekend, I was at a party where games were being played. Midway through a word association game, I asked myself "What would I answer if the word was AACT?"

For me, the answer was easy – Fun! When I think of AACT, I think of the word "fun."

Having just returned from a great week at AACTFest 2013 in Carmel, Indiana, the word fits:

- I had the fun of watching twelve top quality performances by theatre companies from across the country.
- I saw friends from everywhere who are just as crazy about theatre and its power to enlighten, entertain, and stimulate as I am.
- I made many new friends. (My wife sighs sometimes about my theatre friends, but I have friends everywhere because of them).
- There was the fun of learning at the quality workshops and networking endlessly.
- And, of course, fun at the bar having a couple (!) of drinks with friends as we solved the problems of theatres today, and privately adjudicated the performances we just saw.

**Not only do we provide an opportunity for creative artists to express themselves, but we also support more professional careers than Broadway.**

"Fun" doesn't just fit the annual week-long get-together at an AACTFest or AACTWorldFest (next year back in Venice, Florida) or convention in NYC. It's also the fun of knowing we are helping to support the art of theatre on so many levels. Yes, there are the discounts and monetary benefits that members receive. But you – the individual member – can know you're not in this alone. You have access to theatre experts all over the world, ready to help solve that thorny board issue, talk about the viability of a production you've never done, or celebrate your most recent success.

One more "fun" example: knowing this "hobby" that we all support has so much benefit to our communities. Not only do we provide an opportunity for creative artists to express themselves, but we also support more professional careers than

Broadway. We provide economic benefits to our communities. And we positively impact the lives of old and young in so many ways.

But fun doesn't just happen. It took a great team of volunteers to make AACTFest 2013 happen in Carmel. So thanks to the mayor and officials of Carmel for supporting the arts and AACTFest. Thanks to all the local volunteers who made our lives easier and more fun during our visit. Thanks to the great AACT Staff and volunteers who helped the process along. Thanks to all the theatre companies who competed and enriched our lives in the way only live theatre can. And particularly, thanks to John and June Clair for diving in and, delivering a great, fun time for all. They truly made us all feel back home again in Indiana.

As my term as Board President begins, one last thank you – to Linda M. Lee for leading the charge for the last two years. She'll be a tough act to follow but I think it will be fun. And now that I think about it – "fun" is quite a powerful little word.

*Gary Walker*



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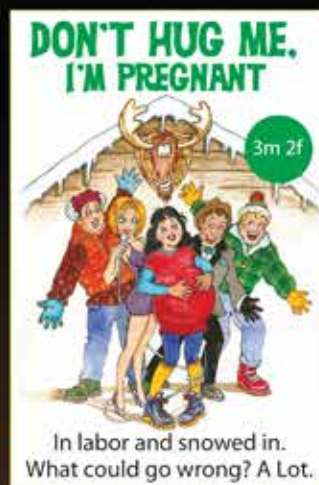
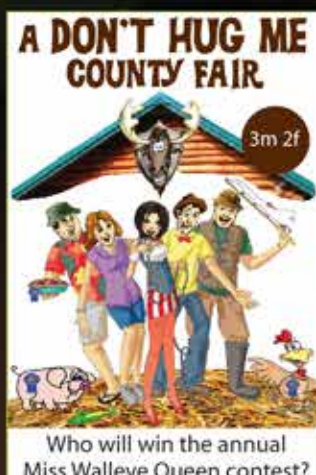


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## Upcoming AACT Meetings

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

## Upcoming Conferences

### National Community Theatre Directors Conference

November 23-26, 2013  
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For details: [www.DirectorsConference.org](http://www.DirectorsConference.org)

## National Arts and Humanities Month

October is National Arts and Humanities Month. Visit [www.americansforthearts.org](http://www.americansforthearts.org) to discover ways to celebrate the arts in your community.

## Did you know?

As an AACT Member, you have access to professionals and experts in various fields including Advocacy, Board Development, Human Resources, Volunteer Management, and much more! Simply visit the Resource Roster on the AACT website to view the list of professionals volunteering their time to answer your questions. Click on their name to contact them. The Resource Roster is found at [www.aact2.org](http://www.aact2.org) in the drop down menu under "Programs/Resources."

## Thanks

to June and John Clair, Carmel Repertory Theatre, and all their great volunteers for being such gracious hosts of AACTFest 2013. Their time and dedication resulted in a wonderfully successful national festival.

## 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.  
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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at [darlene@aact.org](mailto:darlene@aact.org) or at the phone numbers below.

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# Liability Insurance: Why COPE?

by Ken Roberts



In the November/December 2010 issue of *Spotlight*, the underwriting principles of the insurance acronym, "COPE" were explained in regards to applying for *property insurance*. However, those same principles are often utilized when a theatre is applying for general liability insurance as well, and the exact same information is used for two completely different reasons. This creates a lot of confusion when completing an insurance application as to what questions are relevant to getting a quote and why. The thing to remember here is this: in regards to general liability insurance, it's all about life safety issues.

## In regards to general liability insurance, it's all about *life safety issues*.

As previously explained, COPE is an acronym for the four main areas of concern for property insurance underwriters. As a reminder, those areas are: **Construction** - What is the building made of? (brick, wood, concrete, etc.); **Occupancy** - Who occupies the structure, and for what purpose?; **Protection** - How far to the nearest fire hydrant or fire department? Are there sprinklers, fire extinguishers, alarms, etc.?; and **Environment** - What other structures or potentially unsafe conditions exist around the immediate area of the building? While it's fairly easy to see how those issues would apply to property insurance, when

applying for only liability insurance it's not quite as clear why this information is needed. Liability underwriters use this because those very same areas help underwriters determine the safety of the audience inside a theatre venue.

Knowing what a building is constructed of and when it was built tells an underwriter about the integrity of the structure, and how long an audience might have to vacate the building in the event of a fire. The occupants of a building also tell a lot about fire safety. For instance, a restaurant with a deep fryer is at a much higher risk for fire than a theatre, but if that theatre is sharing the building with a restaurant, they're also sharing the fire risk, and the theatre is exposing their patrons to that risk as well. Along those same lines, the distance to the nearest fire hydrant, fire sprinklers, and alarm systems can help an underwriter determine how quickly those patrons would be made aware of an impending emergency, and how quickly it could be brought under control. The immediate area around the building will indicate what the risk would be for a fire or similar catastrophe to ultimately effect the building itself, and thus, its inhabitants.

In short, when asked to answer these questions when only needing liability insurance, it should be very clear why insurance company underwriters insist on having this information. They are truly looking out for the safety of the theatre and its patrons.

*Reprinted from Spotlight, June 2011.*

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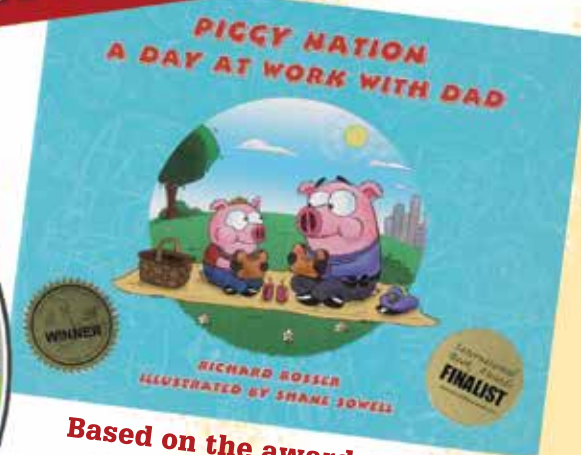


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how AACT's national play festival is joining people from around the country.

AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford is ecstatic at the success of the first-ever AACTNewPlayFest, the relationships it is building, and the buzz it is creating. "Offering support and resources to theatre artists and theatres throughout the United States is the mission of AACT," she explains, "and being able to create a program such as AACTNewPlayFest and watch it grow into something so positive is a tremendous joy. We're looking forward to seeing these shows performed at other theatres around the country and are confident these playwrights will go on to have prosperous careers. In fact, an exciting bit of news is one of the plays already has producers attached for a pre-Broadway workshop in the spring of 2014."

AACTNewPlayFest has been so successful, AACT is already preparing for the second round which will kick-off in September of 2014. Aspiring playwrights around the world, should have their pens at the ready.

### Leaving a Legacy

A special set of circumstances is contributing to the distinctiveness of this first cycle of AACTNewPlayFest. During the awards banquet at the recent National Festival (AACTFest 2013) held in Carmel, IN in June of this year, AACT's outgoing President made a touching announcement causing a collective gasp to flow throughout the banquet hall. Linda M. Lee announced that her late father's cousin, Mr. Jack K. Ayre of Sunnyvale, CA, had

recently passed and left a large estate. She and her siblings decided that it would be a fitting tribute to Jack to use a portion of the proceeds from the estate to help finance the new play productions of AACTNewPlayFest. Each company will be receiving \$4,000 to aid in producing and marketing these new theatrical works – a dramatic legacy indeed. ♦

To read more about each of the playwrights and learn more about the winning scripts, visit [www.aact2.org/?TheatresSelected](http://www.aact2.org/?TheatresSelected).



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# AACTFest 2013 - A Photographic Journey

The country's community theatres converged on Carmel, IN June 17-22 for AACTFest 2013. The national community theatre festival, planned for more than two years, brought together theatres and theatre people from every corner of the country to celebrate the art and to learn from the experts—and from one another.

AACTFest 2013 was hosted by Carmel Repertory Theatre. Co-chairs June and John Clair and the numerous festival volunteers graciously welcomed their guests, and ran a truly magnificent festival. Performances were held in the beautiful Tarkington Theatre in the Carmel Performing Arts Center and most other activities and meetings occurred at the host hotel, the Renaissance Indianapolis North.

The twelve shows proved why they were selected to perform at the National Festival. From uproarious comedies to heart-wrench-

ing dramas, and an impressive musical, the national companies made the adjudicator's jobs extremely difficult. Ultimately, the production representing Region I - *Radium Girls* from the Burlington Players in Burlington, MA - took top honors, with *God of Carnage* from Baytown Little Theater in Baytown, TX (Region VI) in the runner up position. In third place was Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre's production of *Cradle and All*, which represented Region III. For a complete list of awards see page 16.

Following is a photo essay, which chronicles some of the events of the festival. Photos are by the official AACTFest photographer, Stephen Bird from Oklahoma City, OK. More photos may be found at [www.aact.org/aactfest13](http://www.aact.org/aactfest13).

Afterglow parties were held every evening. Festival attendees enjoyed a story from Carmel City Commission President Rick Sharp at the Early Bird Afterglow Party on Tuesday evening, June 18. The Indiana Community Theatre Association sponsored this event, which featured entertainment from a handsome quartet.



Audience members had the chance to peruse the AACT Endowment Silent Auction before, between, and after shows.

AACT Vice President for Festivals Kristi Quinn (left) and Festival Chair June Clair served as emcees for the festival performance sessions.



Wednesday's opening night dinner was a picnic held at the Carmel Repertory Theatre's warehouse near the performance center complex.







The crowd gathered excitedly in the Tarkington Theatre for the first performance session Wednesday afternoon June 19.



The crowd begins arriving at the Tarkington for the Thursday afternoon performances.



Workshops took place Thursday, Friday, and Saturday giving attendees opportunities to expand their knowledge in topics such as Prop Making, Marketing Communications, Improvisation, Creating Ensembles, and more! In the photo above, Ed Linderman allows folks to fully experience the "Joy of Singing."



AACT's Vice President for Membership Scott Bloom conducted a Thursday morning workshop about recycling old computers for use in building a theatre sound system.



Thursdays Afterglow featured Broadway composers Justin Paul (at the piano) and Benj Pasek (right) with guest, Barrett Wilbert Weed (Lysistrata Jones on Broadway and Bare Off-Broadway). The Tony Award nominated composers presented music from their musical, Dogfight. This memorable event was sponsored by Music Theatre International



Friday afternoon's performance session was followed by an open-air concert at the amphitheater on the green near the Tarkington Theatre, featuring some of Carmel's finest youth performers as well as a lovely belly-dancer.



## SEPARATE BEDS

### MJ CRUISE

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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The adjudicators (clockwise) Tim Jebesen, Paul Nelson, Kathy Pingel, and alternate Keith Martin enjoyed the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening which featured a delicious five-star meal before the much-anticipated Awards Ceremony later that evening.



Hosts John and June Clare, AACT outgoing president Linda M. Lee, VP Festivals Kristi Quinn, and AACT Incoming President Gary Walker celebrate a successful festival.



AACT International Committee Chair Jim Sohre served as host for the Awards Ceremony on Saturday evening. Jim arranged the music and led a nine-piece band, assembled by Carmel Repertory Theatre's Music Director, Larry BoneBright.



The AACTFest Singers perform a group number during the Awards Ceremony.



The Radium Girls company poses for a group photo following their award for Best Production.



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# AACTFest 2013 Companies



Region I  
The Burlington Players  
Burlington, MA  
*Radium Girls*



Region II  
Confetti Stage  
Albany, NY  
*The Lesson*



Region IIIa  
Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
*Cradle and All*



Region IIIb  
Elkhart Civic Theatre  
Bristol, IN  
*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*



Region IVa  
Theatre Winter Haven  
Winter Haven, FL  
*Golda's Balcony*



Region IVb  
Actors Guild of Parkersburg  
Parkersburg, WV  
*Tuesdays with Morrie*



Region V  
Dakota Fine Arts Consortium  
Burnsville, MN  
*Leading Ladies*



Region VIa  
Baytown Little Theater  
Baytown, TX  
*God of Carnage*



Region VIb  
Ohlook Performing Arts Center  
Grapevine, TX  
*Spring Awakening*



Region VII  
Aspen Stage  
Aspen, CO  
*Unmarried in America*



Region VIII  
OnStage Playhouse  
Chula Vista, CA  
*To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday*



Region IX  
Lake City Playhouse  
Coeur d'Alene, ID  
*K2*

# AACTFest Awards 2013

**Overall Best Show:** *Radium Girls* – Burlington Players, Burlington, MA

**Second Place Best Show:** *God of Carnage* – Baytown Little Theater, Baytown, TX

**Third Place Best Show:** *Cradle and All* – Wisconsin Rapids Community Theatre, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

## BEST DIRECTOR

Nominees:

Susan Leslie Edgren for *Cradle and All*

Taylor Dobbs for *God of Carnage*

Celia Couture for *Radium Girls*

**Winner: Taylor Dobbs, *God of Carnage***



*Radium Girls*, from Burlington Players, Burlington, MA,  
Overall Best Show winner

## BEST ACTOR

Nominees:

Steve Martin as Nate in *Cradle and All*

Kenny Haney as Allen in *God of Carnage*

John Davenport as Melchior in *Spring Awakening*

**Winner: Steve Martin as Nate in *Cradle and All***

## BEST ACTRESS

Nominees:

Karly Telleson as Annie in *Cradle and All*

Katrina Ploof as Golda in *Golda's Balcony*

Megan McCray as Wendla in *Spring Awakening*

**Winner: Katrina Ploof as Golda in *Golda's Balcony***

## BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Nominees:

John Flannagan as Jack in *Leading Ladies*

John Lee as Morrie in *Tuesdays with Morrie*

Kevin Derkash as Chet in *Unmarried in America*

**Winner: Kevin Derkash as Chet in *Unmarried in America***

## BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Nominees:

Michelle Burkhart as Esther in *To Gillian on Her 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

Missy Moore as Gina/Woman Scorned in *Unmarried in America*

Willow Bousu as Audrey in *Leading Ladies*

**Winner: Missy Moore as Gina/Woman Scorned in *Unmarried in America***

## BEST ACTOR IN A FEATURED ROLE

Nominees:

Tony Venable as Hyde 3 in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Craig Howard as Actor 8 in *Radium Girls*

Ryan Fleming as Gary/Ex-Priest in *Unmarried in America*

**Winner: Ryan Fleming as Gary/Ex-Priest in *Unmarried in America***

## BEST ACTRESS IN A FEATURED ROLE

Amy Miller Martin as Veronica in *God of Carnage*

Kaitrin Higbee as Elizabeth in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Jenn Shea as Grace in *Radium Girls*

**Winner: Amy Miller Martin as Veronica in *God of Carnage***

## BEST ENSEMBLE

Nominees:

*Spring Awakening*

*Radium Girls*

*Unmarried in America*

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

**Winner: *Unmarried in America***

## BEST BACKSTAGE SPECIAL AWARD

**Winner: Baytown Little Theater, *God of Carnage***

## BEST COSTUME DESIGN

Nominees:

Suzanne Pettit, *Radium Girls*

Linda Wiesinger, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Hannah Blalock, *Spring Awakening*

**Winner: Linda Wiesinger, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***

## BEST LIGHTING DESIGN

Nominees:

Thom Altman, *Golda's Balcony*

Randy Zonker, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Jill Blalock Lord, *Spring Awakening*

**Winner: Randy Zonker, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***

## BEST SOUND DESIGN

Nominees:

Dave Dufour and Garry Cobbum, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Bob Pascucci, *Radium Girls*

Thom Altman, *Golda's Balcony*

*Cradle and All*

**Winner: *Cradle and All***

## BEST SET DESIGN & DRESSING

Nominees:

Thom Altman, *Golda's Balcony*

Taylor Dobbs, *God of Carnage*

Douglas Cooper, *Radium Girls*

John Shoup, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

**Winner: Taylor Dobbs, *God of Carnage***



# Design Exhibit and Competition Awards

## Scene Design:

Sarah Hunt-Frank - *Don't Cry for Me, Margaret Mitchell* for Racine Theatre Guild, Racine, WI

Jacee Rohlck - *Superior Donuts* for South Bend Civic Theatre, South Bend, IN

## Costume Design:

Janet Mervin - *Ghost of Christmas Past, A Christmas Carol* for Polaris Productions, New York, NY

## Graphic Design:

James Gallagher – Poster for *1776* for The Colonial Players of Annapolis, Annapolis, MD

James Gallagher – Poster for *Xanadu* for Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre, Annapolis, MD



Exhibits for Scene Design Competition winners Sarah Hunt-Frank and Jacee Rohlck

## Thanks to AACTFest 2013 Singers and Musicians

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the volunteer musicians and singers who dedicated the many hours of rehearsal necessary to prepare for the Saturday Awards program. Special thanks also to Jim Sohre for writing, scoring, and preparing the program, and to Larry BoneBright who recruited the band and some singers.

### The Singers:

Jeff Tish  
Angela Richardson  
Dennis Jones  
Jeanne Ragonese  
Scott Semester  
Laurie Colton  
Onis Dean  
Joline Powell  
Rich Phipps  
Casiana Warfield

### The Band:

Larry BoneBright, Piano  
Wayne Dunlap, Trumpet  
Robert Lewis, Trombone  
Judy Dunlap, Saxophone  
Mary Ellingson, Flute  
Don Smith, Bass  
Greg Huckleberry, Drums



Best Actress winner Katrina Ploof in *Golda's Balcony*, from Theatre Winter Haven, Winter Haven, FL



*The ReGifters* by Robert Lynn  
Bell Tower Theater (IA)

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## Keeping Kids Safe

By Jennifer Van Bruggen

It seems like everyone is getting in on the act by adding educational programs to our theatres. In fact, Topeka Civic Theatre & Academy actually added the word “Academy” when we began including programming for youth in 1999. Just in the last decade or two, more and more community theatres find themselves educating kids of all ages through classes, camps, and youth productions. With that comes the responsibility of keeping those young performers safe. If you have an education program in place, you have undoubtedly considered the need for safety measures, and you have probably put together a Child Safety Policy for your theatre. Regardless, I hope you find something useful in the following information. I’ve shared some ideas about keeping children safe along with our procedures.

### 1. Information, Information, Information!

- **Try to get as many contact numbers as possible.** The more information you can get from parents or caregivers, the better. When a child first enters our programming, they must not only register, they must complete a New Student Information form for our Education Staff. A file is created that is accessible to all teachers. We request several phone numbers from the primary caregivers as well as a number for an alternate individual (i.e.- grandparent, uncle, aunt)

in case we are unable to contact them. There have been occasions when we’ve needed to try each and every number on a student’s information form.

- **Find out about special needs.** We include a section on our New Student Information form that asks if there are any special needs the child might have. This could be anything from behavioral issues to a severe allergy. It has been an invaluable resource and often is the key to maintaining a safe environment for that student and his or her classmates.

### 2. A Prepared Staff.

- **Safety Policies.** Make sure your staff reads and understands your child safety policies. We include our Child Safety Policies as part of our training package. Go over additional expectations. For us, this includes our policies covering proper supervision, bullying, and ...
- **CPR and First Aid.** Keep staff certified in CPR and First Aid. We offer and pay for a yearly course for our academy instructors.
- **Know Your Staff.** We all know that interviewing potential staffers is an inevitable part of the hiring

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process. Conduct background checks before hiring any independent contractors or full-time staff that may have contact with minors.

### 3. Beyond the Band-Aids and Bruises.

- **Safety Backstage.** Many community theatres are now mounting several youth productions, whether through their camps or as part of their main-stage or second-stage seasons. For us, a youth production means that *everyone*, except the directors and designers, is under the age of 18. Not only are our actors kids. Our stage managers, crew, light board operators, and spotlight operators are all kids. Our technical director spends time with each one, discussing the potential hazards of their 'job' and how to avoid those. No one under the age of 12 is permitted to crew a youth production.
  - **Releasing Kids.** In a situation where there are a hundred or more children leaving at the same time, there must be some sort of control. We provide parents with a 'pick-up' form on which they list those permitted to pick up their child and their relationship to the child. We, in turn, check ID's before releasing the children. Parents are warned that we will be checking their ID at least until the teacher gets to know them. And if someone new comes, we check *their* ID. We never release children to anyone not on the list. We consistently have the child's teacher downstairs to greet the parent and we do not release them from the upstairs classroom until we know the individual picking them up has permission to do so. This also keeps the adults that are picking up the kids from wandering our building. Walkie talkies are used to communicate.
  - **Safe from Each Other.** How many times have you found yourself telling your kids to stop hitting each other? Now, imagine 100 plus kids, half of whom are aged 9 – 11. Granted, kids can find themselves in 'un-safe' situations when their contemporaries are using them as a punching bag. They can also harm
- each other without intending by playing games like Red Rover, climbing on each other, etc. It's difficult to find a balance. We all want our students to have fun, but picking up the biggest sticks and playing "pirates sword-fighting" might be a little much. Learn to establish reasonable boundaries when kids are playing. We have several breaks during our summer camp schedule as well as breaks for kids during classes and youth rehearsals. And let's face it: kids are going to get a little rambunctious at times. I find that if my staff is vigilant as supervisors, we are able to keep the accident reports to a minimum. We have several "stations" outside around the area where the kids play. Being able to see the kids from every angle helps us avoid any major catastrophes. Although, if I had a nickel for every time I said, "put down that stick"...
- **Accident Reports.** Most of you probably have a system in place for reporting accidents that happen at your theatre. When dealing with youth, we don't complete accident reports for a scratch or bruise on an arm or leg, or a bug bite that's been picked open (yuck!). We do complete them for *any* injury that occurs above the neck. I've found that in those cases it's better to be safe than sorry. Sometimes just a bump on the head can end up being something much more serious.

These little performers are our future. By instilling in them a sense of security, they will want to return year after year and provide us with the next generation of volunteers. ♦

*Jennifer has been the Education Director at Topeka Civic Theatre & Academy for 11 years. Since joining the staff at TCTA, Jennifer has directed over forty youth and TYA productions. She received a Bachelor's Degree in theatre from Sterling College and a Master's Degree in Theatre and Film from the University of Kansas. She has served on both the Workshops and Education committees for AACT and has enjoyed performing as an AACTFest singer. She lives in Topeka with her husband and brand new baby girl.*

A Comedy-Drama in Two Acts About Love and Dependency

## *Monkey Monkey Bottle of Beer, How Many Monkeys Have We Here?*

By Marsha Sheiness  
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Long Island Press

*"... a gallery of characters interestingly and richly observed."*

The New York Times

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... carefully sustained tension."*

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# AACT Endowment Fund Aids National Companies

Each of the twelve national companies that performed at AACTFest 2013 received \$1,915 from the AACT Endowment Fund to put towards travel expenses. The funds are greatly appreciated and a nice bonus for the companies who spent countless hours and monies to make festival participation possible. To ensure continued financial support of future companies, Endowment Trustees held fundraising activities during the week of the national festival. The largest of these was the Silent Auction. The auction was housed in the lobby of the Tarkington Theatre and offered all sorts wonderful treasures. Festival attendees were able to browse through and bid on items before, between, and following shows. The Silent Auction brought in \$5,184. Carmel Repertory Theatre generously donated \$4,845 to the Endowment Fund. Add to that the \$2,851 collected through other fundraising initiatives and donations, and the total raised for the AACT Endowment Fund is \$12,880. Many thanks go to all of the Endowment Trustees and everyone who contributed to the auction, participated in the bidding, or made donations. ♦



## AACTFest to Return to Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, the site of AACTFest 1997, has been selected as the site of AACTFest 2015.

In a departure from past national festivals, AACT will co-produce the festival with the theatre. The move comes after an extensive study by a specially appointed task force, which examined whether or not the festival's structure needed to be revamped. As a result, AACT is breaking with the longstanding process of soliciting sponsors who then bid on the festival and paid a franchise fee in order to host.

AACT Vice President for Festivals Kay Armstrong said she is optimistic and excited for the next national festival. "I'm looking forward to another festival cycle that once again promises high quality productions in all ten regions," she said. "The excitement is already building toward Grand Rapids. From our 1997 experience, we know these folks certainly know how to show us a good time and production companies will enjoy working with their knowledgeable and helpful staff."

Planning has already begun for the 2015 festival; the first state festival of the 2015 Cycle will occur in the spring of 2014. ♦

# D R E A M Y O U R D R E A M S

## DREAM YOUR DREAMS: THE BUFFALO JONES STORY

**A New Musical about Charles Jesse Jones,  
He saved the buffalo from extinction.**

**Words & music by Duane West.**

**Orchestration and Arrangements  
by J. Taylor & Sandy Starcher**

Known as Buffalo Jones, this colorful and legendary individual's tireless dedication and heroic work saved the buffalo from extinction!

As a youth in Illinois, he knew Abraham Lincoln, his father's lawyer.

As an adult, his friend, Teddy Roosevelt, appointed him the first Game Warden of Yellowstone National Park, where he made the bears behave!

Zane Grey, the famous Western novelist, narrates the story of his friend, a true American hero. Grey's book, "The Last of The Plainsmen," was about Jones and his many incredible adventures.

Prior to saving the buffalo, Jones and three friends founded Garden City, a town on the High Plains of Southwest Kansas. His unique promotional efforts insured its very existence and future prosperity!

He once helped capture the notorious outlaw, "Billy The Kid."

In 1910, he earned world-wide acclaim from an African Safari that overshadowed Roosevelt's famous trip made earlier that year.

Grey and the cast tell this entertaining story via crisp narration, true to life and humorous dialogue, and 24 memorable and catchy tunes, including several lovely ballads, and the signature song: "Dream Your Dreams."

The 7 scene first act and the 10 scene second act have a running time of 2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 15 minute intermission. The show can be done with a cast of ten performers doing multiple roles.

A fully orchestrated score is available for the Music Director, Piano, Piano/Vocal, Bass, Guitar, Violin, Mandolin and Key Board. The World Premiere community theatre production was at Garden City Community College on July 8, 9 & 10, 2011, with Brian Seagraves starring as Buffalo Jones. Only piano was used for this first production.

Email Duane West at [dowest@gcnet.com](mailto:dowest@gcnet.com) or write P.O. Box 712, Garden City, Kansas 67846, or call 620/276-6754.

# AACT Years of Service Recognized

In celebration of volunteer service to AACT, the board created the Years of Service recognition. The first Years of Service pins were presented in Rochester during AACTFest 1.1 as part of AACT's 25th anniversary celebration. The tradition continued at AACTFest 2013 in Carmel, IN.

Years of Service pins are presented to recognize five-year milestones of volunteers who have served AACT as Board members, on committees, and as State Contacts.



## 25 Years

Jon Kerkhoff (Omaha, NE)  
Stephen Krempasky (Knoxville, TN)

## 20 Years

Dwight Martin (Honolulu, HI)  
Rod McCullough (Des Moines, IA)  
Jack Phillips (Downers Grove, IL)  
Bruce Tinker (Grand Rapids, MI)

## 15 Years

Linda Miller (Prescott, AZ)  
Penelope Notter (Grand Rapids, MI)

## 10 Years

Bob DeVito (Waterbury, CT)  
Toni Higgins-Thrash (Arlington Hts, IL)  
Wanda Schenk (Alexandria, LA)

Gary Walker (Grand Rapids, MI)  
Jim Walker (Bath, SD)

## 5 Years

John Eppert (Independence, MO)  
Sue Ellen Gerrells (Alabaster, AL)  
Allan Liebgott (Littleton, CO)  
Mary K. Molineu (Harrisonburg, VA)  
Chris Serface (Tacoma, WA)

## Volunteer & Staff Service 25 Years

Julie Crawford (Fort Worth, TX)  
Ron Ziegler (Des Moines, IA)

## Staff Service – 5 Years

Susan Austin (Weatherford, TX)

A large, lovable, lonely-heart, named Maureen Mulligan, gives romance one last shot on a blind-date with sweet awkward Joseph Spinelli ...

# Skin Deep

by Jon Lonoff

★Currently playing★

Vista's Broadway Theater, Vista CA — September 20 thru October 6

## VOLCANO THEATRE, Volcano CA "4 out of 4 stars."

The only drawback: a few of the funny lines were too hard to hear over the raucous laughter."

– *Ledger-Dispatch*

## CARPENTER SQUARE THEATRE, Oklahoma City, OK

"... a wonderfully happy, bouncy comedy...delightful theatre treat."

– *Postcards from the Web (Brent Weber)*

## GRANITE THEATER, Westerly, RI

"The laughs are plentiful, winning the cast a standing ovation... a sparkling brand new comedy."

– *The Theater Mirror, New England's LIVE Theater Guide*

## WORKSHOP THEATER CO., New York, NY

"Warm-hearted comedy... the laughter was literally show-stopping."

– *TalkinBroadway.com*

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](http://www.samuel french.com/store/product_info.php/products_id/7961)





# Community Theatre Reaches Beyond the Stage

## AACT Supports Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS

Those involved in community theatre are accustomed to giving. They give of their time, sweat, energy, money, and much more to rehearsals, set builds, light hangs, marketing endeavors, serving on a Board of Directors, and various other tasks. More often than not, all of these commodities are given on a voluntary basis. The actual theatre facilities are sometimes used for fundraisers for community organizations, because the theatre managers realize the importance of giving back to their communities. There is no doubt about it – the impact community theatre has on society extends far beyond the stage.

One such way AACT chooses to give back is through its association with Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (BC/EFA). BC/EFA is a national nonprofit whose mission is, according to its website,

- To mobilize the unique abilities within the entertainment industry to mitigate the suffering of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS;
- To ensure direct support specifically through the social services and programs of the actors fund to all individuals in the entertainment industry affected by critical health issues, including but not limited to HIV/AIDS;
- To support organizations across the country which provide treatment or services for people specifically affected by HIV/AIDS and their families;
- To promote and encourage public support for national and international programs and services which benefit people with HIV/AIDS;
- To increase public awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS through the creation and dissemination of educational materials;
- To support efforts by the entertainment industry to address other critical health issues or respond to an emergency, in each case as approved by the Board of Trustees;
- To support efforts by the entertainment industry in other charitable or educational endeavors, in each case as approved by the Board of Trustees.



*Sandra Schorffhaar was the happy winner of a Kinky Boots poster signed by the Broadway cast.*

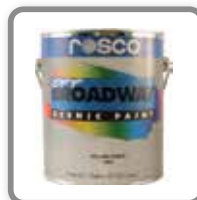
Since 1987, BC/EFA has granted more than 134 million dollars to Emergency Assistance Programs, Food Service and

Meal Delivery Programs, Quality of Life Programs, and many other valuable organizations throughout the country.

At AACTFest 2013 in Carmel, IN, AACT committee members manned a BC/EFA booth, greeted guests and shared with them the importance of the nonprofit organization, and held a drawing for three Broadway show posters autographed by the casts. Their fundraising efforts resulted in \$1,006 being collected for BC/EFA! They also shared literature that offered many practical and simple ways AACT members can raise money in support of Broadway Cares. For information on how your community theatre can support BC/EFA, contact Joe Norton at Norton@broadwaycares.org or by phone at 212-840-0770 ext. 227. ♦



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# How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare

Award-winning playwright, and one of AACT's greatest supporters, Ken Ludwig, recently released a new book titled, *How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare*. We are excited to share it with our members, as it is an excellent addition to any theatre school, or home library.

Following is a synopsis of the book itself and an interview with Ken on what inspired him to write it.

## About the Book:

William Shakespeare's plays contain the finest writing in the English language. To know some Shakespeare provides a head start in life. Acclaimed playwright Ken Ludwig's first book, *How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare*, is a foolproof, enormously fun method of teaching children these classic works.

Ludwig devised his methods while teaching his own children, and his approach is friendly and easy to master. Beginning with memorizing short passages from the plays, he then introduces both children and adults to Shakespeare's stories and language. Ludwig's approach provides an understanding of Shakespeare's period, and discusses the cultural references that make Shakespeare so valuable. Finally, the book includes a brief biography of Shakespeare, synopses of his plays, and a short history of how the plays have been preserved.

Shakespeare novices, experts, and readers of all ages, will find something delightfully irresistible and new to learn as Ludwig shows how to instill an understanding, and love, of Shakespeare's works in your students and children.

## About Ken Ludwig:

Ken Ludwig is AACT's spotlight playwright of 2012-2014. He is an internationally acclaimed playwright with numerous hits on Broadway and London's West End. Some of his Broadway and West End shows include *Crazy for You*, *Lend Me a Tenor*, and *Moon Over Buffalo*.

## What inspired you to write this book?

One day, my daughter came home from school spouting a line of Shakespeare – "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – and a light bulb went off in my head. I've loved Shakespeare all my life, and it occurred to me I could teach Shakespeare to my children while spending quality time with them. Because my daughter was only six, she had no prejudices against Shakespeare. She didn't think it was "hard"; she thought the words were beautiful. I chose one passage after another, starting with easy ones from the comedies then working up to more complex passages. My daughter and I spent two hours every weekend snuggled up together memorizing glorious words. Without a doubt, it's the best time we've ever spent together.



Ken Ludwig

## What is the premise of the book?

This book has four basic premises: (1) in order to be an educated person, you must know some Shakespeare; (2) Shakespeare's plays are daunting because his language is so complex; (3) it isn't hard to crack the Shakespeare code if you treat it like a foreign language and learn a few rules; and (4) the best time to learn Shakespeare is when you're young because then you aren't intimidated. Building on these ideas, I wrote a book that introduces everyone to Shakespeare. A book that makes Shakespeare easy to learn, yet preserves his subtlety and depth.

## Why is learning Shakespeare so important?

Shakespeare remains one of the greatest writers in history. To know Shakespeare means to be

*continued on page 34*

## Ben Vereen at AACTWorldFest 2014

Where can you learn performance skills from the one and only Mr. Ben Vereen? At AACTWorldFest 2014! Don't miss your chance to take a master class with the master.



When you register for AACTWorldFest, you are guaranteed to see performances and make friends from around the globe. Also included in your registration is the opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops at no extra charge.



Ben Vereen

However, due to high demand and limited space, there is a fee for the Master Class with Ben Vereen. Whether he invites you to get up on stage with him, or you observe from the audience, you will get invaluable advice from a master entertainer if you sign up for his class.

Register as soon as you can for this unique opportunity to learn from a Tony and Emmy Award Winner. Mr. Vereen's class is just \$50 with your WorldFest registration. Go to [www.aact.org/world](http://www.aact.org/world) to sign up today. Questions? E-mail [lorichase@venicetheatre.net](mailto:lorichase@venicetheatre.net) or call 941-484-4033 ext. 271. ♦



# Spotlight Award Honors Jerry Davis

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.

**Jerry Davis** has been active in community theatre for over 40 years! Jerry was honored for his outstanding dedication, service, and contribution to theatre and the arts, with the AACT Spotlight Award. Carousel Theater's (Hot Springs Village, AR) **Association of Senior Arts Programs (ASAP)** presented the award to Jerry on February 16<sup>th</sup> of this year. AACT State Contact, Lisa Bell, and Bobbi Dodge made the presentation. Jerry is the first Arkansas resident to receive this distinction!

Jerry began his community theatre involvement in 1972, as co-founder and president of the board of directors of the Crittenden Fine Arts Center, West Memphis, AR. In 2002, he established ASAP and Carousel Theater Workshops for Seniors in Hot Springs.

Jerry's workshops have encouraged seniors to express themselves, and have given them a confidence they thought they had lost. He emphasizes education in all aspects of theatre. Seniors from his workshops have gone on to participate in acting, directing, producing, and even writing plays. Under his guidance, they have gone from "I can't" to "I did." Jerry's countless hours of preparation and endless miles of driving to and from meetings and performances have been for the joy of introducing seniors to theatre.

Jerry has made a huge difference in the lives of so many who thought there was no place for them in community theatre. His knowledge and passion for theatre, along with his enthusiasm and patience, has helped them discover a great love for it too!

The AACT Spotlight Award was presented to Jerry at the Carousel Theater Tenth Anniversary Celebration. When

he received the award Jerry said, "I am amazed and pleased to receive this honor. I've not been working for an award, but it's nice to get one. I've just been having fun!" ♦



Bobbi Dodge (left) and AACT representative Lisa Bell present the Spotlight Award to Jerry Davis

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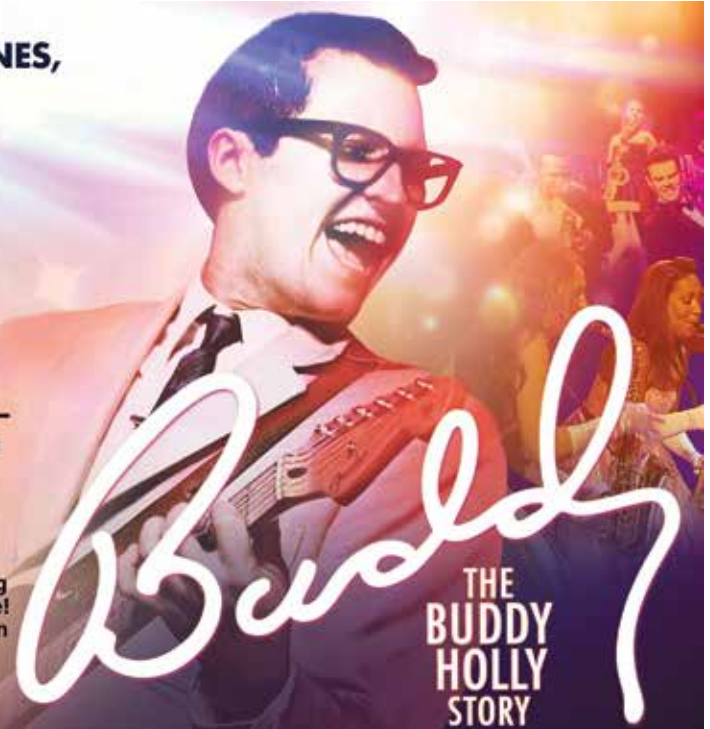
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"Buddy did GREAT! Everyone LOVED the show. Many commented that it was the best show we have ever done! We had eight sold-out performances - LOVED IT!"

Coni Wetz  
Executive Director, Muskogee Little Theatre (OK)

"This production went far beyond expectations. We were standing room only for all performances and have heard nothing but praise! Buddy was only the second production to have an extended run here since 1956. That says a lot about the show!"

Ted MacIntosh  
Greenwood Little Theatre (MS)



For licensing enquiries and perusals:  
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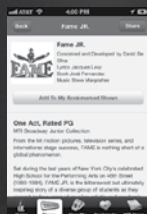
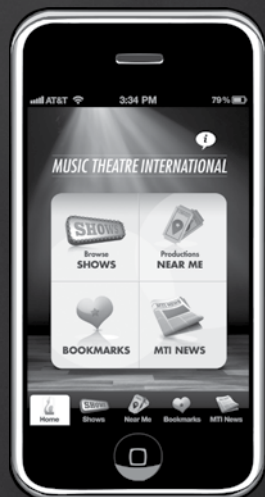
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# Hit the Road With Your Kids

By Roger Ellis

You've probably noticed a certain "uptick" in the level of activity lately among our member theatres conducting children and youth programs. At the Carmel AACTFest, for example, Sara Phoenix's task force reported that a surprising number of AACT theatres are teaching skillsets in youth theatre classes, as well as offering involvement onstage for youngsters in youth productions. And these programs have been growing in popularity for the past several years.

It was encouraging to read this committee's report because this activity says many good things about the health of our organization. And it's also important to note that in the next three years, these youth performance programs will have a couple of unique opportunities to export their work internationally. In fact, international tours are an excellent way to strengthen not only the theatre education of young people who are involved, but also the reputation of the sponsoring theatre.

The first international youth festival to look into is the "13th World Festival of Children's Theatre" that is scheduled to take place in Germany from July 25 - August 1 next summer (2014). The other event follows closely on its heels as the "14th World Festival of Children's Theatre" that is scheduled for Ontario, Canada in June of 2016. Both festivals are closely affiliated with the International Amateur Theatre Association (aita/iata) of which AACT has been an active member for decades.

**The Lingen Festival** in Germany is the first event that should occupy your attention because it has an application deadline of November 1 this year, but more importantly because it is one of the two "showcase" festivals of aita/iata's global membership. It's a festival designed to serve children 8 - 14 years of age, and has regularly occurred every four years since 1990. The Lingen Festival offers much more than simply the opportunity for youth troupes to showcase their work. In 2009, for example, more than 60 youth ensembles—300 children—descended on Lingen for the week of shows, workshops, symposia (for the adults), social events and other activities in a wide range of venues. Check out next year's program at their website: [www.aitaiata.org/gil/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/13th-World-Festival-25-Jul-1-Aug-2014-Lingen-Germany.pdf](http://www.aitaiata.org/gil/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/13th-World-Festival-25-Jul-1-Aug-2014-Lingen-Germany.pdf).

**The 14th World Festival of Children's Theatre** will take place in Stratford, Canada, a community very familiar with hosting international visitors since it has been the venue of North America's largest annual Shakespeare Festival since 1952. This festival promises to be even larger than the Lingen event, anticipating between 300 - 500 children between 7 - 15 years of age. It will include performances, a directors' forum, symposia, workshops, social programs and area excursions for kids, their chaperones and artistic supporters. And it will also provide homestays for the children as well as experiences for foreign kids in the Ontario public schools. The Stratford website will be up and running early next year with more information.

Both these festivals offer lodging, airport transfers, and meals for kids and their accompanying staff and chaperones; and both adhere to the most rigorous standards of quality and safety established and monitored by the aita/iata organization. They are planned and managed by the most senior organizers of aita/iata, the local municipalities, and the national theatre organizations in their

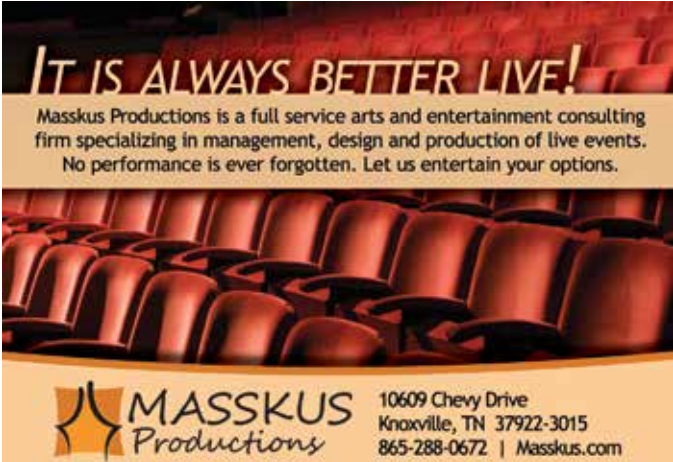
countries. The Stratford Children's Fest is especially eager to see a number of youth ensembles participating from the U.S.A. because of the proximity to the festival of border states like Michigan, Ohio, and New York.

For those of us who regard youth theatre as more than simply the opportunity to showcase talent onstage, events like these are one-of-a-kind opportunities. A week-long immersion in a foreign culture, sharing lives and experiences with dozens of peers from around the globe, gaining exposure to performance styles of different cultures—such things guarantee a priceless and memorable experience for the young people participating. I've seen friendships among these kids develop and unfold at aita/iata youth festivals in Japan, Russia, Cuba, and elsewhere, and they are both profound and moving to witness. And equally important may be the impact upon theatre staffers and parent chaperones accompanying the group (many of whom enjoy the opportunity of foreign travel and of spending quality time with their kids).

Of course, any touring involves careful planning and major fundraising; but both festivals give us ample lead-time to accomplish this, and the rewards of touring youth productions far exceed the benefits of touring adult shows. And when has fundraising not been a challenge? Experienced members of AACT's International Committee like Frank Peot, Jim Sohre and others stand ready to advise and assist you with planning and making arrangements. And remember—the chair of the AACT International Committee, Jim Sohre, needs to be notified first if you decide to apply. AACT must screen and recommend the USA entries before you'll be accepted by the festival producers. Contact Jim Sohre at: [jimsohre@yahoo.com](mailto:jimsohre@yahoo.com).

So don't pass up these opportunities for a theatre experience like no other in the next couple of years. Other AACT theatres—both large and small—have taken their shows on international tours and you can do so, too. Get your show planned & hit the road for an adventure in theatre that you and your kids will never forget or regret! ♦

*Roger Ellis is a member of AACT's International Committee and Vice-President of the International Amateur Theatre Association.*



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**Does your theatre/organization offer educational programs for children or youth shows? If so, what are some measures you take to ensure the safety of the children involved?**

**Responses on Facebook**

([www.facebook.com/AACT.org](http://www.facebook.com/AACT.org))

**Kim Martin, Baytown Little Theater, Baytown, TX**

[www.baytown.littletheater.org](http://www.baytown.littletheater.org)

Start with what I suspect every theatre must have: a Protection Policy for Minors. It's not the end, maybe not the beginning, but a must have.

**The South Devon Players Theatre Company, Brixham, United Kingdom**

[www.southdevonplayers.weebly.com](http://www.southdevonplayers.weebly.com)

We tend not to have many children in our group, but with our current production, a new non-musical *Les Mis*, there are child roles (Little Cosette/Gavroche) and we have a couple of minors in the factory scene. We make sure that not only are several committee members on hand who have all the relevant police checks to work with children, but that each child has a parent present at all rehearsals (and shows, when we hit performance time).

**Responses on AACTList**

(To sign up for AACTList, go to [www.aact2.org/default.asp?page=aactlist](http://www.aact2.org/default.asp?page=aactlist))

In addition to locking the doors, we issue pick-up passes to the parent or guardian that need to be displayed in the car window or carried into the building when picking up a child. Students are held at the door after class until their parents' car gets to the front of the

car line and an intern or teacher's assistant walks them to their car. Young children cannot leave the classroom unescorted, i.e. going to the restroom or early pick-up, etc. Students and interns must have an updated medical form on file at the theatre with emergency contacts. Students are checked in every day. Parents are called if they are absent.

**Mary Britt, Ocala Civic Theatre, Ocala, FL**

[www.ocalacivictheatre.com](http://www.ocalacivictheatre.com)

First of all, we perform a background check on every single volunteer, helper, or teacher who might come in contact with our youth. At the start of camp each day, we lock the doors to the theatre and don't allow strangers inside without a staff escort. We also have several forms for the parent/guardian to complete which gives us important emergency contact information, alerts us to any allergies, and important medical info. Each camper must sign a contract of conduct which includes a "no bullies allowed" clause.

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## New Roles

**Anchorage Community Theatre**, Anchorage, AK, has appointed **Don Gomes** as Executive Director to replace **Bill Cotton** who is retiring. Don is the former Executive Director of the Utah Nonprofits Association. His background includes many years as an award-winning public radio broadcaster and as founder and executive of theatre groups in California and Utah. He holds an MBA and has extensive experience in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Don's employment began in May.

The Board of Directors for **Lawton Community Theatre**, Lawton, OK, has chosen Administrative Assistant **Shelley Lytle** as the theatre's next managing director. She replaces **Cynthia Kent** who has retired. After graduating from Lawton High School, Shelley earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma's School of Drama. She took the helm at the theatre in June.

**Thomas Townsend** has been appointed theatre manager for the **Johnson City Community Theatre**, Johnson City, TN. Thomas has

performed in theatre, television, and film all over the United States, including Theatre IV in Richmond, VA, the Eugene O'Neil Theatre in New York, and the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. He also taught English in Dongying, Shandong, China, where, as part of his course work, he directed his students in adaptations of traditional Appalachian stories. He assumed his new position in April. ♦

## Artie's Advocacy Tip



Grassroots advocacy, in the case of the individual community theatre, begins with something as simple as identifying opportunities to mine and develop the creative potential of our communities. Take the lead in promoting all cultural events and then follow up with congratulatory notes, such as letters to the editor of local newspapers.



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The Burlington Players, Burlington, Mass. Photo: Stephen Bird.

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## What We Do For Love - or Whatever

by Twink Lynch

Let's talk a minute about "love" as in "what I did for love" or in "I just love theatre" or in "theatre is my first love" (which I am fond of saying and to which my husband responds, "Yes, and it's her second love and her third love . . .").

Some of us really cannot *not* do theatre; we just cannot conceive of life without the magic of theatre being a significant part of it. I have become interested in just what we all mean by this "love," and, as you might suspect, it means different things to different people. Opening nights. Applause. The magical transformation of muslin and paint under lights. Turning a waif into a princess with a yard or two of satin, a rhinestone necklace, and a powdered wig. Designing, building, and successfully stowing the staircase for *Lettice and Lovage*. The camaraderie. The parties. Sondheim's lyrics. McNally's plays. Lloyd Webber's melodies. Sontag's choreography. Simon's one-liners. Those of us who "do" theatre have a special addiction to all the above and much, much more.

But what about Board Members? What do they love about theatre, particularly our theatre, and most particularly about their job on the Board?

Board Members come to us with all sorts of needs, skills, and expectations. I know Board Members who like putting budgets together and crunching the numbers. Some love the creative marketing challenges. Some enjoy the group decision-making process itself. Most of them enjoy being "in the loop," knowing what's really going on. Some enjoy learning and putting into practice; others enjoy selling – season tickets, advertising, the theatre itself; still others actually enjoy raising money. (Imagine!) I know Board Members who never want to be onstage, but who delight in learning how a production is put together or how a set is designed and built. I know some who serve on Boards because they are new in town and want to make friends; I know others who are building their resume (which isn't all bad, as long as the theatre's goals and objectives are being met with their help.) I know some who want to do whatever they can to keep the theatre going for their children or grandchildren, and others who

just like to organize things, who like to use their influence in order to be part of something significant and to contribute to the quality of life in their community.

So there are many reasons why people would say "yes" to Board service. These reasons are actually what we are talking about when we use the word, "motivation." And I want to make a really key point here: these reasons, this thing we call motivation, is internal to each person. We cannot "motivate" someone else to do anything. We can only describe the opportunities for service/participation and the possible rewards, as we see them, and hope that something we are doing matches something our potential Board Member wants to do. These are things we should talk about in our early interview(s) with our Board prospects. If we don't know what the potential Board Member wants to achieve, or expects to experience when coming on our Board, we may make a bad choice (and so may he or she).

There are several theories of human motivation that I have found particularly helpful in developing an understanding of my own and others needs and drives. Two in particular have been extremely valuable. Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" is often presented as a pyramid, with the base being Level One – **SURVIVAL NEEDS**. Every person born on this planet begins at Level One. This cluster of needs includes the need for water, air, food, sex, and sleep. Unfortunately, many humans never get beyond these needs due to their life circumstances, but if the needs are reliably and predictably met, the second level of needs – **SAFETY** – emerges to drive our behavior. Safety needs include shelter, physical safety, economic security, psychological safety, and preference for the familiar (people meeting safety needs are definitely not risk-takers!).

As we progress, fewer people get to each new level – thus the pyramid shape. The third level of needs is for **BELONGING** or **AFFILIATION**. It is at this level, I believe, many people volunteer to work at our theatres. Affiliators like working with others in groups. They are definitely not loners, so don't send them out by themselves delivering posters all over town. Since they spend a lot of time worrying about relationships, they are not usually our fund raisers. They think people

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will get mad at them for asking for money – not true, but they worry about it anyway.

If belonging needs are predictably and reliably met, Level Four - **ESTEEM NEEDS** - will emerge. These include the need for self-respect as well as for the respect and recognition of others; the need for status, prestige, and importance. Many of our theatre artists are working on esteem needs – the need for applause, for starring roles, perhaps for a chance to design the sets for our production of *Titanic*. Board Members working on esteem needs may need to chair committees, serve as officers, run a fundraising event, or design a marketing campaign.

And, finally, if esteem needs are reliably and predictably met, the needs for **SELF-ACTUALIZATION** will emerge. In all honesty, Maslow didn't find too many people working at this level, which includes the need for realizing your highest potential or becoming what psychologist, Carl Rogers, called "the fully functioning person." I believe people at this level are great mentors – they get turned on when their mentoree achieves a desired objective. Our best teachers must be functioning at least partly at this level.

Important things to remember about Maslow's theory are:

1. Needs are "prepotent" – they need to be reliably and predictably met before the next level of needs can emerge to drive our behavior.
2. Met needs are no longer motivators: Thus Board Members will often tire of always getting the mailings out, always doing the financial tasks, always chairing the fundraising activities.
3. Needs can change with changes in life circumstance. Loss of a job, for example, can lower your need level from "esteem" to "safety" in a heartbeat. We need to be aware of this so Board Members can renegotiate their commitments to our theatres and not "lose face."
4. No one is completely at one level at any given moment in time. We all fall back to safety needs or belonging needs from time to time even as we reach for new goals and accomplishments.

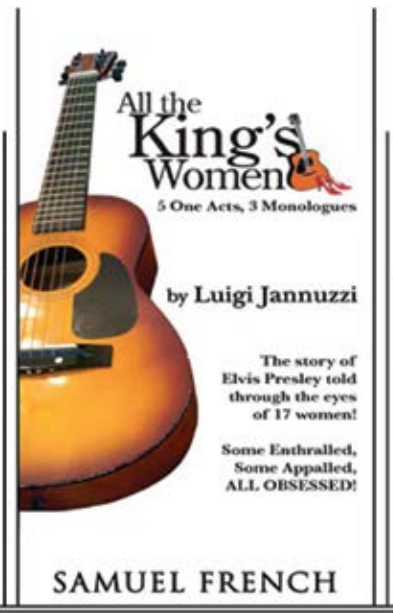
Another motivation theorist is David McClelland whose work on needs for achievement, affiliation, and power I found particularly useful as I thought about the composition of Boards (we need all kinds of people). His "achievement" and "affiliation" needs are similar

to Maslow's "esteem" and "belonging" needs, and his material on the "two faces of power" helped me to understand the difference between negative and positive power needs in people. ♦

*Reprinted from Spotlight, September/October 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 ad on the next page for ordering information.*

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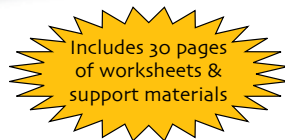
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Oct 9-13	Georgia Theatre Conference 2013 One Act Play Festival	GA Kingsland	229-985-8194 www.georgiatheatreconference.com/
Oct 11-13	Installation Mgmt Command - Europe Division 2013 Festival of One Acts	Kaiserslautern, Germany	011-49-631-411-6252 www.armymwr.com/installation/europe.aspx
Oct 24-27	New England Theatre Conference 62nd Annual Convention	MA Natick	617-851-8535 www.netonline.org/index.php
Oct 24-27	Tennessee Theatre Association 62nd Annual Convention	TN Maryville	865-660-1177 www.tn-theatre.com/ tta-conference2013.html
Oct 25-27	Alabama Conference of Theatre ACTFest'14	AL Wetumpka	205-936-9162 www.alabamaconferenceof theatre.com

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

Ken Ludwig continued from page 24

educated and to know the meaning of great literature. All great Western writers since 1600 have been deeply influenced by Shakespeare's plays. You cannot fully appreciate Jane Austen or Charles Dickens – or even *The Godfather* or *Harry Potter*—without recognizing how Shakespeare influenced these works. On a practical front, knowing Shakespeare helps kids communicate with greater ease and depth; it can make them better writers; and it gives them the confidence of being genuinely educated.

#### What advice do you have for children and adolescents just getting started in theater?

Work hard. Stick to it. As Woody Allen says, eighty percent of success is showing up. People like to pretend certain artists just had lucky breaks, and that's how they succeeded. It's never true. You pay your dues, and the only way to do that is to work hard and put in the hours. When someone said to Alan Jay Lerner's father that his son was "lucky," Lerner senior replied, "Yes. The harder he works, the luckier he gets."

#### What are your favorite Shakespeare plays?

My favorite is *Twelfth Night*. It so sublimely combines remarkable, original comic situations with a melancholy air and startling depth, I could read it every week and find something new in it. The language of the play is breathtaking. It was written at the height of Shakespeare's powers – around 1600, the time of *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *Henry V* as well. All of them are masterpieces, as well as some of my other favorites: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*.

#### Why is Community Theater so important?


Community theatre is a cradle. It allows all of us to participate in the theatre, no matter where we started or what we've become. It is the lifeblood of theatre in America, and I honor everyone who participates in it. ♦

To purchase *How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare*, visit [www.howtoteachyourchildrenshakespeare.com](http://www.howtoteachyourchildrenshakespeare.com).

# LUANN

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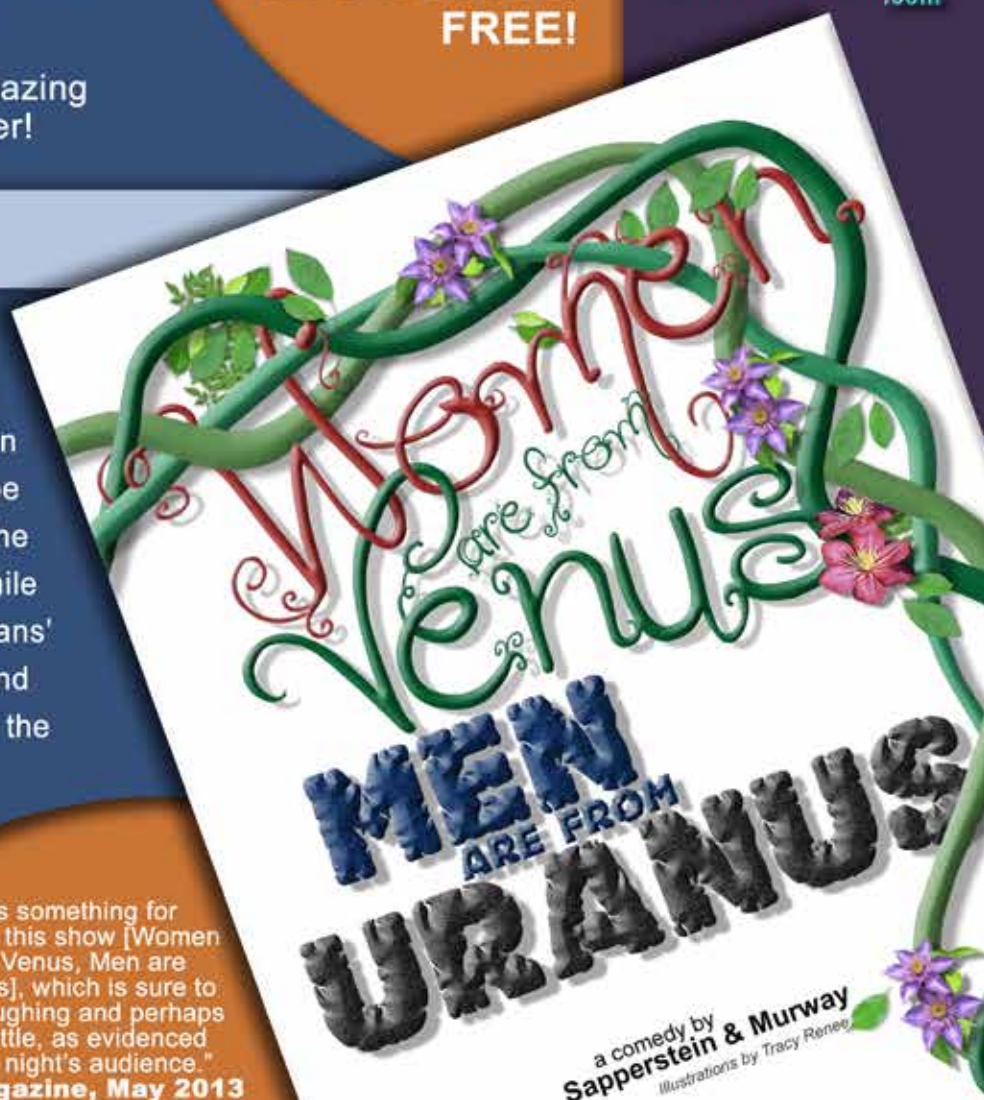
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sighing a little, as evidenced  
by opening night's audience."

- Stage Magazine, May 2013





*The Radium Girls company, from The Burlington Players, Burlington, MA, with their Best Production award at AACTFest 2013. Inside, AACTFest coverage begins on page 12.*



## Huge News!

**Ben Vereen** will host a Master Class at AACTWorldFest 2014! See the article on page 24 for more information.