

spotlight

May/June 2014 \$2.50

Reviewers Needed for AACT NewPlayFest

AACT is seeking people who love to read scripts.

Over 200 scripts were submitted two years ago in the inaugural cycle of AACT NewPlayFest. Each was read and scored by three readers. This year begins the second cycle (AACT NewPlayFest 2016) and even more scripts are anticipated. That means several dozen volunteers are needed to review the scripts!

AACT NewPlayFest is one of the largest new works festivals in the country. Scripts will be accepted in the fall. Then the Reviewers get to work. Each script will be adjudicated by at least three Reviewers. Those that rise to the top will be read by a second set of Reviewers. Their scores will determine the finalists. The winning plays will be announced in June 2015. Then, five to seven community theatres around the country will produce the top plays of the contest. In late 2016 the

winning plays will be published in an anthology by Dramatic Publishing Company.

The script is the heart of any theatrical production and it is the script that records and brings to life our culture for future generations. There is no shortage of new works, but few will survive if not discovered, produced, and published. AACT created AACT NewPlayFest to support the efforts of today's playwrights and to help community theatres find quality new plays to share with their audiences.

An AACT NewPlayFest Reviewer must have the time, interest, and theatre expertise to review and score up to 20 scripts. For more information and to apply to be a Reviewer visit www.aact.org/newplayfest. Questions? Contact AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator Susan Austin at newplayfest@aact.org or call the AACT office: 866-Our-AACT (687-2228). ♦

AACT NewPlayFest Productions Continue with Premieres in California and Connecticut

The Vanishing Point by Nedra Roberts of Atlanta, GA opened in Sacramento, CA at the California Stage Company on March 29 as the third production of the inaugural AACT NewPlayFest. A "Cajun" Opening Gala was held, and attended by playwright Nedra Roberts, AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, AACT Past President and Jack K. Ayre Foundation representative Linda M. Lee, Dramatic Publishing's Andrea Summer, and AACT staff David Cockerell and Stephen Peithman.

Playwright Nedra Roberts stated, "Every playwright dreams of seeing her characters come alive on stage, hearing them speak and watching them contend with the world they inhabit. The cast of *The Vanishing Point* and its director, Ray Tatar, are breathing life into the words I've crafted on paper, but AACT and California Stage Company made it possible for my dream to become reality. In the midst of the excitement and preparation (and, of course, the chaos of butterflies in my stomach) I met generous collaborators, kind friends, and creative professionals who already have made the AACT NewPlayFest experience exceed any expectations I might have had. I'm deeply grateful for the amazing opportunity they've gifted me. It's truly the thrill of a lifetime."

The Vanishing Point is set in the wetlands of Louisiana



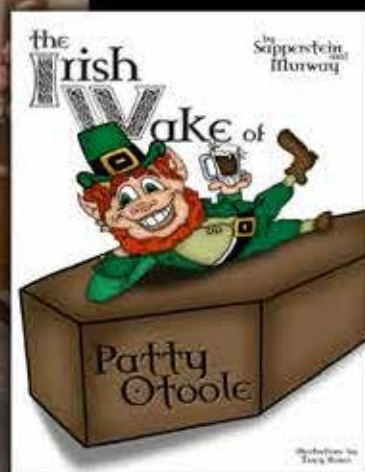
Linda M. Lee

Playwright Nedra Roberts (center) with cast members Richard Winters and Jeremy Minagro enjoy Opening Night of *The Vanishing Point* at California Stage Company.

in the summer of 2005 – just before Hurricane Katrina. Following the St. Pé family and their struggle to restore the wetlands and save their way of life, the play allows us to speculate on another kind of restoration – one of human relationships and their power to heal the broken spirit.

Next for the AACT NewPlayFest, ***Jellofish*** by Jim Henry

Continued on page 11



Sapperstein and Murway have written a fun filled evening of Irish themed humor. The cast is having a ball and it radiates to the audience.

- Arnie Finkle,
Stage Magazine

"The script is well-written and very funny with a small cast. The Press Play sound track worked great and surprised the audience who loved it from beginning to end! J&G was fun to work with and made the whole process worthwhile!"

- Loretta Geotis,
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Gary Walker
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Change.

I suppose change is on my mind for many reasons, not the least of which is the change from the second snowiest winter in Grand Rapids history, to the warmth (hopefully!) of spring.

I was taught that if a system is not changing, it is dying. Change is a healthy state that can lead to improvement and growth. The songwriters back in the day all used change as a theme. From David Bowie and Sheryl Crowe to Bob Dylan, change has been a theme of memorable songs. Countless plays have the theme of change – arguably, all of them as we constantly search for growth and change in the different characters on stage.

And like any healthy, growing organization, change is a part of AACT.

We're doing a major rewrite with much clearer displays, so it will be easier for our members to get the info they need.

One change will be visible: Our website. We're doing a major rewrite with much clearer displays, so it will be easier for our members to get the info they need. We want the AACT site to be the first place people turn to for information on community theatre. From starting a theatre, to solving problems, to networking with peers, or tracking member benefits, you'll find the revised, updated AACT website much improved! Watch for its debut later this year.

More change may come from the work of two task forces. One is working on further defining AACT's role in youth theatre. An earlier task force identified the opportunity to encourage and nurture the vast group

of young people who participate in theatre. We are establishing a new youth membership, making AACT and its resources available to this exciting new group of participants. The new task force will also look for events or activities, tailored for our youngest members, to serve their unique needs.

Theatre is not only for the young, however! So a second task force is looking at the role AACT can play in senior theatre. We know that a strong senior theatre community exists, but we need to look at whether our services and benefits serve our most mature members, or if we should establish specific services for them.

Change. It can lead to a brighter future for AACT and our members.



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Even more submissions are expected for the second cycle of AACT NewPlayfest, and several dozen reviewers will be part of the process

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aactWorldFest

The city of Venice and Venice Theatre stand ready to treat you to one of the most exciting weeks of theatre you'll ever experience...and one of the most hospitable

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Contacting AACT

AACT
1300 Gendy Street
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817-732-3177 Fax 817-732-3178
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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Board and Committees

June 16 - 21, 2014

AACT Annual Membership Meeting

June 21, 2014

Venice, FL

Hosted by Venice Theatre

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Conferences

Education Directors Conference

August 22-23, 2014

Tulsa, OK

Hosted by Theatre Tulsa

Technical Theatre Conference

August 8-10, 2014

Grand Rapids, MI

Hosted by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

Artistic Directors Conference

August 22-23, 2014

Tulsa, OK

Hosted by Theatre Tulsa

For details: www.aact.org/conf/ or 866-Our-AACT (687-2228)

**Did you
know?**

A brand new AACT website will launch soon.
www.aact.org

Thanks

to Steele Spring Stage Rights for helping Long Beach Playhouse host the reception at the AACT Winter Meetings held in Newport Beach, CA

to Linda M. Lee, Janet Salters, Gary H. Lee, and Cliff and Cathy Lee for funding AACT NewPlayFest in the memory of Jack K. Ayre

Spotlight

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Content and resource contributions:

Dorian Boyd, Murray Chase, Lori Chase,
Laurie Colton, David Cockerell, Jim Covault,
Julie Crawford, Darlene DeLorenzo,
Richard Gannon, Anne Gilmour, Twink Lynch,
Karen Matheny, Linda Miller, Ken Roberts,
Gary Walker, Ron Ziegler

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AACT Insurance Program

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

For more information, contact:



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or check out the program at
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Employment Practices Liability: *Volunteers Are People Too!*



by Ken Roberts

Ask the vast majority of Executive Directors and Board members of community theatres if they think they need Employment Practices Liability (EPL) coverage, and they will respond with something like, "We don't need that because we don't have any employees." While that may be true to a certain extent, the key to remember for that type of insurance is that it covers *employment practices* rather than employees. Organizations such as ours apply employment practices every day to people who never get paid a cent, and this should be taken into account when considering whether or not to purchase EPL insurance.

Organizations such as ours apply employment practices every day to people who never get paid a cent.

There are many common types of claims that would fall under the umbrella of EPL coverage. These include discrimination, invasion of privacy, defamation (libel and slander), sexual harassment, and any type of civil rights violation. Upon review, would we have to be paying someone in order to commit one of the offenses against them? Absolutely not! Our volunteers are no less susceptible to these egregious behaviors than any paid employee, and as such, the coverage is no less vital. Another crucial factor

that is often overlooked is defense costs. Even in the event that an organization is not guilty of any of these infractions, it must have legal representation when charges are levied, and that is where valuable theatre funds can be jeopardized. EPL policies will cover the cost of defense.

EPL coverage is available by itself as a "stand-alone" insurance, but where it is typically and more affordably found is accompanying a Directors & Officers Liability policy. Most insurance companies that offer D&O to nonprofit organizations offer EPL automatically. In those cases, the policy will often share one limit of insurance to pay claims from, and that is usually the least expensive method. However, organizations that actually do have employees may want to have a separate limit of insurance for their EPL than they have for their D&O, and this too, is not cost prohibitive. This keeps them from depleting the limits for one type of coverage if they experience a claim against the other.

The most important thing to remember when evaluating insurance programs, is that a paycheck does not determine whether or not any individual is vulnerable to inappropriate behavior, nor does it absolve us when that type of behavior occurs. As dependent as we are on our volunteers, we must be no less heedful in treating them as employees, and no less vigilant in protecting our organizations against claims for inappropriate employment practices. After all, volunteers are people too. ♦



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Linda M. Lee



Big smiles all around after the premiere performance of *The Vanishing Point* at California Stage Company. I-r: Dramatic Publishing's Andrea Summer, AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, Producer/Director Ray Tatar, Nick Lunetta (cast), Richard Winters (cast), AACT Past President and Jack K. Ayre Theatre Fund representative Linda M. Lee, Emily Kentta (cast), Jeremy Minagro (cast), playwright Nedra Pezold Roberts.

of Chicago, IL, opens on May 2 at Phoenix Stage Company in Naugatuck, CT. *Jellofish*, focuses on four World War II veterans who have been playing a monthly game of poker since 1945. They've been dragging five percent from every pot for over 50 years and this "side pot" has grown to a sizable fortune. Who will survive this game of wits and be the heir presumptive to the poker fortune? Or will competition and resentment destroy their friendships and the game itself?

AACT NewPlayFest will also premiere **End Papers** by Barry Weinberg of Bethesda, MD at Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg (Mechanicsburg, PA) opening on July 24, and **The Boatwright** by Bo Wilson of Richmond, VA at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre (Grand Rapids, MI) opening on September 13.

These four winning plays of the AACT NewPlayFest as well as **The Seamstress** by Cece Dwyer, which opened at Hickory Community Theatre (Hickory, NC) in January, and **Exit Laughing** by Paul Elliott, which opened at the Springfield Little

Theatre (Springfield, MO) in November 2013, are focusing on the initiative of AACT to address the need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe.

The six winning plays of AACT NewPlayFest are now in the Dramatic Publishing Company database. They are available to be produced after the respective AACT NewPlayFest production. Dramatic Publishing Company will publish the six plays nationally in an anthology later this year.

Each producing theatre company of AACT NewPlayFest 2014 receives \$4000 to aid in producing and marketing these new theatrical works. The estate of the late Mr. Jack K. Ayre of Sunnyvale, CA is providing these funds.

Linda M. Lee, AACT Past President, and her siblings were beneficiaries of his estate and made the decision to help finance the new play productions of AACT NewPlayFest. ♦

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> May 2 – 11, 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

The producing theatres, playwrights, titles, and production dates for the six winning plays in AACT's first AACT NewPlayFest.

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It's almost time for aactWorldFest 2014!

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The city of Venice and Venice Theatre stand ready to treat you to one of the most exciting weeks of theatre you'll ever experience...and one of the most hospitable. From the volunteer “Make-A-Wish” drivers to the friendly and delicious restaurants (if you stick with the recommendations), you'll love your week. You'll want to come back. And maybe, like a few folks in 2010, you'll put down roots here.



You'll enjoy swimming, relaxing and searching for sharks' teeth on Venice's beautiful beaches - just a 15 minute walk from Venice Theatre.

Such can be your experience with aactWorldFest 2014, coming up June 16-21 in Venice, Florida. Yes, you'll enjoy shows from 17 countries on six continents, dozens of workshops from Chinese theatre to trapeze. And lots of social gatherings. But you'll also have time to enjoy the area's varied attractions.

Venice is a small resort city on the Gulf of Mexico. Its sandy beaches are just a 15 minute walk from the theatre. And did you know Venice is nicknamed the Sharks Tooth Capital of the World? Due to the Gulf Stream and its oddities, most of the world's fossilized sharks' teeth wash up onto the Venice area beaches. A popular low-tide pastime is hunting and collecting a wide variety of them, and making them into ornamental items such as necklaces and bracelets. You'll be sure to have interesting souvenirs to take home, even if you don't go shopping. But, we know you'll want to stroll along the avenues downtown where you'll find a variety of restaurants, bars, and shops. The shops are as eclectic as the restaurants, and they all look forward to serving you!



Just a few miles east of downtown, Old Florida rivers and creeks await you. You might want to take a boat ride down the Myakka River where there's a good chance you'll encounter a few alligators and manatees along the way.

If you like to golf, there are 23 courses in the Venice area alone, including the championship Plantation G&CC courses, where the Ladies PGA Q-school tournament is held. Deep-sea fishing, parasailing, canoeing, kayaking, and bird-watching are also popular pastimes in this paradise on the gulf.

Nearby you'll find even more to do:

- Sarasota (just north of Venice) is consistently hailed as one of the nation's top-five cities for the arts. You'll find local theatre, Broadway tours, ballet and symphony performances, art galleries, and local flavor (such as the world-famous Selby Botanical Gardens and Historic Spanish Point).
- The Ringling Museum, with a huge collection of classic masterpieces—as well as the world's largest collection of circus art — is also in Sarasota.

continued on next page



Arrive early or stay a few days after the festival to take in all the area has to offer. Enjoy boating? Venice has got you covered!

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aactWorldFest continued from page 13

- Just an hour away you can enjoy Tampa Bay Rays major league baseball games or Busch Gardens Amusement Park and Zoological Gardens.
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- And, the Kennedy Space Center is just a three-hour drive from Venice.

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AITA/IATA Scheduled to Meet at aactWorldFest

The International Amateur Theatre Association (AITA/IATA) promotes understanding and education through theatre. AITA/IATA fosters dramatic art by all amateur groups of the world, and promotes international relationships of its members. AITA/IATA coordinates its members in enriching the human experience and educating through the medium of theatre.

AITA/IATA has selected aactWorldFest held at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida for its meetings in June. The Executive Board, which meets between three and four times a year, will meet on June 15, chaired by President Merja Laaksovirta of Finland. All members of the Executive Board will be in attendance including Vice President Dr. Roger Ellis of the USA and President Elect Rob Van Genechten of Belgium. Rob was elected in Monaco at last year's General Assembly and will

begin his term in 2015 when the General Assembly is held in Ypres, Belgium as part of the World Festival scheduled for July 3 – 12, 2015 in Westouter, Belgium.

The Council of AITA/IATA will meet on June 16 & 17. The Council consists of the Executive Board and Regional Representatives of eight cultural regions which include Asian Regional Centre (ARC), Caribbean Regional Alliance, Central American Regional Alliance, Central European Committee, Conseil International des Federations de Theatre Amateur Culture Latine, North American Regional Alliance, North European Amateur Alliance, and the South American Regional Alliance.

The AITA/IATA Council and Executive Board will address several issues including recommendations presented by the

continued on page 17

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Strawdog Theatre Company, Chicago. (l-r) Megan Kohl, Mike Regell and Amanda Drinkall. Photo: Chris Dehan.

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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.

As artists, or people involved in the arts, we understand and respect the need for artists to be compensated for their craft.

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 10 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.)

You may wonder why you need an ASCAP license if you already purchased the CD, album, or download. 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 or downloaded music 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. ♦



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Free online acting technique resource



- Acting beats: Why they matter
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- Script analysis: Connecting the dots
- The myths of acting dispelled

Also available: ***Weekend acting seminars at your theater*** that give even beginners true experiences of "staying in the moment," "listening and reacting," and what accessing your emotional life feels like!

Renewal Working Group, which is looking to shape the future of AITA/IATA. More information can be found at www.aitaiata.org/gil/resources/shaping-the-future/.

In November 2014 the AITA/IATA Executive Board and Council will be hosted by the Spanish National Centre, Confederacion Española de Teatro Amateur (CETA) in Peligros, Spain. ♦



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AACTBucks is an incentive plan to encourage AACT members to recruit more AACT members. AACTBucks are simple. For every theatre that joins AACT and lists YOU as its referral, you receive 10 AACTBucks. For every individual who joins and lists you, you receive 5 AACTBucks.

Each AACTBuck is worth a \$1 discount, and can be used when making a purchase from AACT between now and August 31, 2014. AACTBucks may be used toward any purchase in the AACT Shop or toward registration for an AACT festival or conference. It can even be used toward your membership renewal for next year if you renew before August 31.

Look who's earned AACTBucks:

Curtain Call, Inc.
Highlands Little Theatre
Maurer Productions Onstage, Inc.
Tacoma Little Theatre
Rich Gannon
Susan Harrington
Chris Serface
Keith Vogt

Add your name to the list. Recruit AACT members and earn AACTBucks. Learn more at www.aact.org/aactbucks. ♦

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Get to know as much about local officials as you can. You may be surprised that you share common interests which may help you establish a strong working relationship.

TWO COMEDIES by LONDOS D'ARRIGO

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Travis Walter, Artistic Director, Meadow Brook Theatre says ...

"I am so thrilled and honored that you gave Meadow Brook Theatre this chance to sparkle with a new piece of wonderful theatre. The audience response on Sunday was simply exhilarating... 350 people laughing and having a great time together"

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Theatre Sound on a Shoestring Budget

Advice from Dorian Boyd, Sound Designer, Venice (FL) Theatre

Theatre sound on-the-cheap is a labor of love.

You will cackle within as Frankenstein's Laboratory explodes out of a donated PC. Later, your heart will stop a little when that same PC starts randomly freezing as it tries to run the Curtain Speech on Wednesdays when the moon is full, or when a second-hand hard drive crash stops your show. You will wade through the spec sheets of many different hand-me-down machines, trying to divine meaning from all the figures therein, so you can choose the best tools available to serve the play as best you can.

The PCs that play my Sounds were new 8 years ago, and they were obsolete before they arrived. Before that, Sounds played from an arcane combination of CDs, Cassettes, and MiniDiscs. For a long time my small space ran in mono because the mixer's main right channel made an unearthly crackling-whining-buzzing noise. But, as I frequently reminded myself, all that stuff was FREE!!! (We've since upgraded to a *much* more reliable mixer!)

Free equipment is usually that way for a reason; it was too much of a hassle for the original owner's liking. You'll find the odd gems now and then, so I say it is worth your time to take almost any equipment anybody offers. Take it, but employ it judiciously, and after much testing and retesting.

Sound on a Shoestring Budget is a lot like musket warfare. Your tools are powerful, yet finicky. Timing problems and operator error are common. But, with well-maintained tools, smartly employed, both can be highly effective.

Remember, "Shoestring Budget" doesn't mean "Zero Budget." Sound equipment costs money, usually a slightly uncomfortable amount. (If there is a place where they give away equipment, please email me.) Therefore, here's a list of stuff on which I believe you should spend your sound dollars. It is entirely biased, in no way objective, and I could be wrong. Season to taste, and always buy too much cable.

Microphones:

Shure SM57 & 58 Wired Mics: About \$100 each

A box full of these classic-yet-affordable microphones is a good investment. If the 58 can't do it, the 57 probably can. Be classy: get stands, spare cable, and pop filters also.

Floor and Ceiling Mics: \$200-\$300 (and up)

Don't be afraid of these, but DO spend the time to EQ them for minimal feedback. These can be very effective, but you can pick up backstage noise as well. I tend to add a layer of foam underneath floor mics to dampen some foot-noise. Also, there's nothing that says you can't screw a floor mic to the ceiling or wall. I use a floor mic on the ceiling of my black-box space so I can generate reverb from whatever's happening in the room.

As Many Decent Handheld Wireless Mics As You Can Get: About \$300, (and up)

Cheap wireless gear is exactly that. This isn't the place to show your frugality, so do some research, and test some equipment at music stores. **Shure** and **Sennheiser** remain the big brands here.

Body Mics Are Expensive and Kind of a Pain: About \$300 (and up)

See how far you can take those floor mics before you go down this path. Wireless mics require daily attention, and a more skilled hand to apply and mix. Again, **Shure** and **Sennheiser** rule the roost, at least for mic packs (aka "transmitters").

For the actual microphone part, **Samson** has some decent mics in the **SE10** and **SE50**, and they look very similar to the more expensive "Broadway" mics. **3M Transpore** medical tape is my recommendation, but there are a multitude of other sticky options.

Adapters: \$5-\$50 (and up)

Be able to plug anything in. Strive to use as few adapters as possible; every adapter coupling is a possible failure point. A good collection to have on hand includes: ¼" Mono Female to XLR Male; ⅛" Stereo Female to ¼" Male; ⅛" Stereo Male/Male Cable in various lengths.

Some Kind Of Playback Software, Probably With Video: About \$200-\$800

iTunes and PowerPoint might get you by for a while, but eventually you're going to want/need more control over how

your cues come and go (fade in/out, crossfades, timed auto-follows, etc.)

Show Cue System deserves a mention, as it's the program that brought *many* community theatres into the Digital Age. It's affordable, compared to its competitors, it can run on a wide array of PCs. SCS also handles Video/Image Cues on multiple screens, if you have the video card for it.

Editing and Recording:

AUDACITY should be on your computer. It's a free/open-source program for editing audio, and it's probably my most important Sound Design tool. It's simple, powerful, capable of multi-tracking (should you need to record a band), has a massive actually-useful-effects library, and it's free.

A Video Editor Of Some Kind:

I use Windows Live Movie Maker, because I haven't found a video editor in the cheap/free realm that *isn't* basically awful or missing some key feature.

A Sound Interface: \$99-\$500 (and up)

USB, FireWire, PCI, you have choices. You have to plug your computer into your sound system, and you should have a quality device to do it, with as many options/channels/features as you can afford. Pay the money for this one.

So, you've pulled all your gear together and plugged it in. Now you're making noise. You've put together a multi-channelled, multi-functional sound creature out of a PC that used to run Solitaire in an office.

Here's the catch:

YOU are the discount. Your time and attention will be what holds this system together. Your organizational and logistics skills dictate how effective it is. You will pay for your No-Budget Sound Rig in missed meals, late nights. Your troubleshooting skills will become second-to-none. Second-hand machines tend to reveal their second-hand problems at their own pace.

- Pay attention to your equipment.
- Simplify and clarify your needs.
- Make some friends. Train some people.
- Take notes. Read your notes.
- Make checklists. Use them.

Full disclosure: As I write this, I'm strongly considering "Going Mac." While it may be rewarding to wring a little more performance from some former-dentists'-office PC, the schedule my theatre keeps doesn't really allow for PC downtime. The Pentium 4-Dual Core era was great; low-end PCs got powerful and cheap all at once. Then came the iPhone; Video became ubiquitous. Those old graphics cards can't keep up with High Def needs. I've upgraded all the pieces, but I'm nearing the end of available expansion options.

In an odd way, I'm up to the same thing I was doing in the P4 days; I'm wading through the spec sheets of different machines, trying to divine meaning from all the figures therein, I want the security of knowing I'm using the best tools to serve the play as best I can. ♦

Dorian Boyd is Sound Designer/Technician at Venice Theatre in Venice, FL. He can be contacted at dorianboyd@venicetheatre.net.

Dorian will be presenting
a workshop,
**Fancy Sound on a
Shoestring Budget,**
at
aactWorldFest
held at Venice Theatre in
Venice, FL the week of
June 16 – 21.

www.aact.org/world

If only one of them had just stayed home...

APPEARANCES to the CONTRARY



by Jim Inman

In this dark, urban comedy about the cruel ambiguities of Love and Sex, seismic sexual energies crack the professional and personal veneers of two couples, uniting them in a confrontation of exposed secrets, shattered egos, and eventual redemption ... for three of them...

Grand Prize Winner of the National Repertory Theatre's International Best Play Competition

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AACT Announces National Awards 2014

AACT is proud to recognize the 2014 recipients of AACT National Awards, which will be presented in June, during aactWorldFest 2014 in Venice, Florida.

Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award

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



Murray Chase (Venice, Florida - Venice Theatre) has served as the Executive/Artistic Director of Venice Theatre for 17 years, following six years as Executive/Artistic Director of Corinth Theatre-Arts in Mississippi. Under his leadership, the theatre has grown to become the 3rd largest community theatre in the U.S. and the largest per capita.

Murray has directed approximately 200 shows including many award winning efforts. He has served as president of Venice MainStreet Board of Directors, as division chair and festival chair of the Southeastern Theatre Conference, as division chair of the Florida Theatre Conference, as a grants panelist for the Florida Arts Council and the Mississippi Arts Commission, as chair of the Sarasota County Arts Council, and with the Venice Chamber of Commerce he served on the City of Venice Anniversary Committee and the Cultural Executives Committee. Nationally, Murray serves AACT as the Executive Vice President and on the Endowment, International, and Festival Committees, and is leading his theatre in hosting the AACT International Community Theatre Festival for the second time.



Norman Small (Winter Haven, Florida - Theatre Winter Haven) has contributed to community theatre across state, national and international borders. He founded and has been the Producing Director of Theatre Winter Haven for the past 44 years. He is a published author (*The Making of Drama*, Holbrook Press-1972) and an award winning director. Norm

lead Theatre Winter Haven to a first place win at the 1987 International Play Festival in Dundalk, Ireland and has taken five AACTFest winning productions to the national festival. His most recent national festival entrant was the 2013 production of *Golda's Balcony*, which ended its banner year with a performance in Germany. Norm served on the AACT Board for five years including a term as VP Planning and Development. His contributions on the national level continued an additional six years with his participation on various AACT committees. Norm is a recipient of the Florida Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award in Community Theatre, as well as both the AACT David C. Bryant Outstanding Service and Fellow Awards.

David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

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



Harriet Friedman (Waltham, Massachusetts - Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre) suggested creating a state organization to support the festival and other community theatre activities when, twenty-eight years ago, community theatres in Eastern Massachusetts

found themselves suddenly without support for their annual community theatre festival, which had run uninterrupted since 1954. She visited theatres to hear their needs, explained the long-term benefits of the organization, and asked for their financial support. In 1989 EMAC (Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre) was born. Today EMAC is a thriving organization with a membership of 50+ groups, a vital workshop series, and strong education and theatre evaluation programs. As EMAC moves into its second 25 year history, Harriet remains very active and continues to offer help, support and guidance.



Dotti Peek (New Palestine, Indiana - Indiana Community Theatre Association) has been involved with more theatres and theatre related organizations in Indiana then one might even know existed. She participated in Buck Creek Players, Footlite Musicals, Epilogue Players, Edavein Theater, IUPUI Children's Theatre, Indiana Community

Theatre Association, AACT, Indiana Theatre Association, and even her local church. Through her involvement with these organizations, she has contributed an amazing 50 plus years of service to community theatre. Whether chairing a festival, writing a newsletter, serving on the board, assisting committees, or doing her part on-stage or backstage, Dotti embodies the phrase "the show must go on." Her involvement with the Indiana Community Theatre Association and AACT, as well as the wonderful advice and support she gives to those who follow in her footsteps, has made Dotti an inspiration to others and a motivating force for growth in all aspects of community theatre.

Distinguished Merit Award

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



Melanie Cornelison (Ashland, Kentucky - Paramount Players) saw the need for an in-house community theatre shortly after accepting the position of Director of Education and Outreach at the Paramount Arts Center; thus Paramount Players was born. As the group's current Artistic Director, Melanie produces, directs, and volunteers her time to create

the choreography for each of the 5 - 7 plays and musicals in addition to her other job responsibilities. In furthering arts education for ages 7 - adult, Melanie created an Arts Academy Program and personally oversees the nearly 20 local artists who deliver classes in acting, dance, chorus, visual arts, and private voice lessons. Wanting to reach underprivileged children and rural schools with the arts, Melanie created *Paramount on Tour*, taking productions on the road. Thanks to Melanie's vision, nearly 1,000 tri-state residents now call themselves Paramount Players and whether on-stage or backstage, there's a place in the community for everyone to shine.



Lisa Garza (Houston, Texas - Houston Family Arts Center) is an example of that singular individual who combines major donor, talented director, playwright, set designer, Assistant Artistic Director, and accomplished costume designer. As a founding partner, she and her husband provided initial financial support to help start Houston Family Arts Center

(HFAC) in 2005, then in 2006, she joined the board and has played an integral role ever since. Lisa and her husband have

demonstrated extreme generosity by providing funding to the Garza Main Stage, Actors Academy, and Fischer Studio. These spaces have allowed HFAC to serve additional patrons, commission and present new works, expand the theatre's Actors Academy which now serves over 1500 students per year, and provide a permanent home for both the HFAC Main Stage and Actors Academy productions. Lisa's inspiration as a donor, a volunteer, an artistic talent, and her generosity of spirit make her a community theatre dream come true.



SCERA Center for the Arts (Orem, Utah)

is celebrating its 80th Anniversary. Since 1933, SCERA has produced wholesome and affordable arts and entertainment for patrons young and old and, and as they like to say, "Every time a curtain rises, so does the quality of our lives." Over the past eight decades, SCERA has grown to include the historic SCERA Center for the

Arts; SCERA Shell Outdoor Theatre; Orem Heritage Museum; SCERA Art Studios; a full scale costume, scenic and prop building; and dozens of arts education programs serving more than 18,000 youth and adults. Thousands have performed and fallen in love with theatre through their involvement at SCERA. While State Street is no longer a dirt road and the farms that once dotted the Orem landscape are few and far between, SCERA remains front and center - raising the curtain and the quality of life in Utah.

continued on next page



Murder Inn

A brand new Murder Mystery/Comedy by
Howard Voland & Keith McGregor

Published by

Samuel French, Inc.

www.samuel french.com

"Features wonderful dialogue, a colorful kooky cast of characters, and a good dose of humor"—
Everett Herald

One interior set, two acts, four men & eight women; modern dress.

Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award

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



Alvin Blasco (Streator, Illinois - Community Players of Streator) has been with the Community Players of Streator every single step from the beginning through its recently celebrated 57th anniversary. He served as the theatre's first business manager, helped as the very first show was produced at the local high school auditorium, and has

continued to serve as a friend and mentor to many over the years. In June of 2010 the theatre was hit and destroyed by a tornado. Many on the board stared at the ruins and wondered where to even start. Alvin, in his calm voice of reason, shrugged his shoulders and said simply, "We built it once, we can do it again." That comment became their mantra and with Alvin's continued support, the group found itself in a stunning new facility in less than a year. Alvin has been described as "a forward thinker - with the best interests of the theatre at heart."



Ronald McDaniel (Oakwood, Illinois - Danville Light Opera Musical Theatre) is often at the top of the list when one thinks of "arts supporter." From his first role in 1961, to his latest DLO Musical Theatre performance in 2012, he has delighted in sharing his talents with his hometown. Ron has performed in 39 plays and musicals since 1961, assisted

the local Vermillion County Museum by portraying Abraham Lincoln, and debuted the character of Rev. Enoch Kingsbury, a local citizen of importance. Behind the scenes, Ron has been a tireless volunteer: directing, producing, stage managing, and

conducting workshops. Ron has also served on the Boards for Danville Light Opera, the Danville Area Arts Council, and the Theatre Advisory Panel for the Illinois Arts Council. He feels that theatre has played such an important role in his life, it is only right that he should use his talents to prolong, strengthen, and promote this strand of art in his community.



Barbara Tarlin (Wellesley, Massachusetts - Wellesley Players)

has dedicated 50 years of service to the Wellesley Players. She has served on the Board of Directors in positions including President, Program Director, Publicity Chairperson, Play Reading Chairperson, and Box Office Chair.

Barbara has been a featured actress in countless Players' productions as well as those produced by surrounding community theatre organizations. Utilizing her advanced degree in directing from Boston University, Barbara has directed several shows and her strong dance background was utilized when Wellesley mounted their first musical, *Mame*, in 1969. Barbara began a tradition for the group, dubbed "Coffee House Capers," an annual social gathering showcasing individual talents of the membership. This tradition continues today and remains one of the highlights of the Wellesley Players calendar. Barbara's focus on Wellesley Children's Theatre in the mid 70s helped it grow, and she continues to epitomize team leader, team player, and lifetime member of the Wellesley Players.



Hilarious Comedy Plays!

How To Train Your Husband

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

Three generations of the Smith family attempt to turn their men into fully trained and obedient husbands. Nothing quite goes according to plan and the result is hilarious comedy with plenty of unexpected twists and turns.

My In-laws are Outlaws!

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

Annie discovers her in-laws are outlaws... and her mother in-law has hired a mad group of assassins to kill her! How will Annie, a mild mannered Librarian, outwit the best of the Italian, Russian and Irish contract killers? This is outrageous, laugh out loud comedy at its best.

The Old People Are Revolting!

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male

Length: Two Acts

Hilarious comedy about seniors seeking revenge! The residents of the Sunshine Retirement Village have had enough: they're revolting! Bursting with eccentric characters and crazy shenanigans the play is great fun to stage and a huge audience pleaser.



Order your free perusal script or read online at
www.comedyplays.net

Special Recognition Award

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



Wil Breden (Wellesley, Massachusetts - Wellesley Players) is a veteran of the Wellesley Players for close to forty years, and is recognized as a tireless worker, brilliant musician, and a generous fellow. Wil is an engineer by trade and a Renaissance man in all other aspects and the Players are the lucky recipient of his largess. A composer and lyricist, he

generously offers his talents. As a performer, he cheerfully volunteers to step in whenever we "need a man!" He does so with humility and professionalism. Wil is a set construction problem-soalver, methodical and thorough in preparation and exacting in his work. He has secured building and storage space, and makes time to attend government meetings in order to keep the theatre's profile raised in the town. Wil Breden embodies all of the many qualities that compose a stellar community theatre member and does so with honesty, compassion, and dedication.



Twink Lynch (Topeka, Kansas) devoted her life to community theatre and to serving as a mentor to both individuals and community theatres across the country. She helped shepherd the national organization's transition from American Community Theatre Association (ACTA) to AACT, served on the Board for six years, including a term as President

and VP of Education and on AACT committees for an additional 19 years. Twink managed Topeka (KS) Civic Theatre for many years, retired, then came back during hard times and guided the theatre back to a stable organization. Her passion

was such that she earned three degrees in theatre; it is said, she is the only person to earn a Ph.D. in Community Theatre Management. Twink shared her knowledge and experience through consulting and through her "Spotlight on Boards" column in AACT's newsletter, which she wrote for 14 years. In 2000, she edited her columns into a book, *Boards in the Spotlight*, the proceeds of which benefit AACT. Twink suffered a debilitating stroke in 2005, but her book and reprints of her articles still educate those who are managing and governing community theatres.



Kirk Players (Mundelein, Illinois) was founded in 1966 and has a unique mission: to provide community service through the arts. Theatre profits

are donated back to the community and since 1966 over \$100,000 has been given to organizations as diverse as the public library and local food bank. Key to this concept is responsibility toward the community. The Kirk Players offer educational and technical service beyond its production schedule; work cooperatively with other community organizations to improve and enrich the cultural climate of the community; develop and serve audiences beyond their original clientele; and recognize the various potential in children, the aging, and the disadvantaged. The Players have no home or permanent facilities, choosing to reinvest their funds into programming and the community. Many theatres provide services to their community but for the Kirk Players that IS its purpose. This year the theatre lost its founder, John W. Lynn, and has rededicated itself to his vision of "service through the arts."

continued on next page

Here it is: Great Comedies for Youth Theatre

www.heuerpub.com

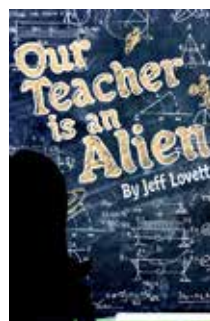
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NEW RELEASE!

Robin Hood and His Merry Men by Richard Gremel

Experience Nottingham like never before!

let's scroll



Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award

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



Aviano Community Theater (Aviano Air Base - Aviano, Italy)

took major steps this year in new directions, expanding services to the US and Italian communities it serves by enhancing their publicity efforts and partnering with local institutions to enrich the performance experience. ACT created a new Facebook page that

links with the My Military Communities (MyMC2) smart phone application. ACT members film and interview performers and crew, releasing these as video clips linked to this year's new ACT YouTube channel. In addition to using social media to enhance ACT publicity efforts, it has partnered with the local medical facility and the Department of Defense Education Activity and the local DoDEA elementary, middle, and high schools to address relevant topics and provide expert information to their audiences and performers.



Mesa Encore Theatre (Mesa, Arizona) was established in 1937 and is the longest operating community theatre in Arizona. Since becoming

a Founding Resident Company of the highly acclaimed Mesa Arts Center in 2005, MET has flourished and grown into an award-winning, major force in live theatre offerings in the Phoenix area. In addition to a full season of shows, including some Arizona premieres, it raises funds to present at least one annual scholarship for college students in performing

arts and serves as a cooperating theatre with Arizona State University's theatre department, working with undergraduate theatre majors as interns. 2013-2014 marked the inaugural season of MET's new Black Box season. In the 85-seat Black Box venue (separate from the Mesa Arts Center) they are able to present a variety of expanded and new theatre opportunities for artists and audiences. These include new works, the All-Puppet Players, small-cast plays, and the All-AZ Women's Theatre Festival.



Tupelo Community Theatre (Tupelo, Mississippi)

was founded in 1969 with a mission to "stimulate, promote, teach, and develop interest in the

dramatic arts." In 1985, TCT purchased the historic Lyric Theatre building in downtown Tupelo and has since raised slightly more than \$2 million to maintain and improve the historic theatre. The board of directors became aware of the need to take the next step in strategic planning and set realistic and challenging goals related to its mission. One of the most challenging goals was to establish an alternative venue for smaller, less "commercially viable" productions not suitable for the regular five-show season. In November 2013, TCT opened "TCT Off Broadway" with *SantaLand Diaries* in a renovated retail space just blocks from the Lyric Theatre. Actors, directors, board members, and patrons are excited about this new opportunity for Tupelo Community Theatre to further its mission and serve its community.

Mort Clark International Achievement Award

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



Kathie Maldonado (Alto, New Mexico) has been a tireless advocate for international theatre; nurturing opportunities and creating connections with the international theatre community. She has made annual visits to the Region X (Overseas Military) festival in Germany, and enthusiastically performed logistical tasks large and small in

support of the festival and its goals. Kathie has become increasingly involved as a liaison to the International Amateur

Theatre Association (IATA) and has invested an unequalled amount of time and personal resources to represent the US with the IATA organization, frequently traveling to far flung locations to advise and plan events of mutual interest and benefit. She has been a strong advocate for reviving the North American Regional Association (NARA) of IATA and as its chair, has been striving to revitalize its mission and membership. Kathie has worked to stimulate Canadian and US participation and partnerships and has been a steady and visible presence for the US at diverse international festivals. ♦



AACT Festival Commission member Steve Krempasky, Education Committee member Harv Thompson and Advocacy Committee member Rich Gannon chat between meeting sessions at the AACT Winter Meetings, held in Newport Beach, CA, February 20-22.

Long Beach Playhouse Business and Operations Manager Madison Mooney addresses members of the AACT Board and Committees during a reception at the theatre. The event was part of AACT's Winter Meetings, held in Newport Beach, CA, February 20-22.



All photos by Ron Ziegler



AACT committee member and SETC Festival Chair Lori Chase listens to an adjudication following a performance session at the Southeastern Theatre Conference Community Theatre Festival. The festival took place in the historic Saenger Theatre in Mobile, AL, in conjunction with the SETC convention, March 5-8.



AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford listens to a presenter speak at the National Executive Director and State Leadership Forum at the Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention. The convention was held in Mobile, AL, March 5-8. In the background left to right are Educational Theatre Association Director of Chapters and Communities Diane Carr, SETC Executive Director Betsey Horth, and USITT Executive Director David Grindle.

more AACT on the Road on the next page

Linda Lee



Chester Eitze of Bastrop Opera House addresses the attendees at the Texas Nonprofit Theatres Conference, including AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford (fourth from left) and Region VI Representative Tracy Alexander (third from right). The event was held in Bastrop, TX March 14 and 15.

Dane Winters is New Region X Representative

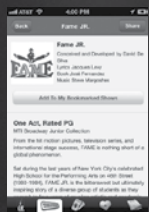
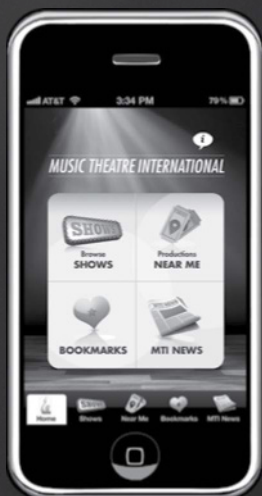
The AACT Board of Directors welcomes Dane Winters as the new Region X Representative. Dane is USA Army Europe Entertainment Director and USAG Kaiserslautern Entertainment Director, based in Kaiserslautern, Germany, and the 2009 recipient of AACT's David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award. He worked with US Army Europe Entertainment for 27 years, most recently (prior to his current position) as Entertainment Director at the Roadside Theatre in Heidelberg, Germany from 2000 to 2012. Dane received his MFA in Acting/Design at the Dallas (TX) Theater Center from Trinity University in 1984. He spent four years as a professional actor/singer/dancer in the Dallas region. He moved to Bamberg, Germany as a US Army Music Specialist in 1986, and then served as the Stuttgart Theatre Center Director from 1988 to 1998, and the Stuttgart Entertainment Branch Director from 1998 to 2000. Dane has received many awards for his directing, design, and technical direction, and in 2005, he was honored with a special commendation from US Army Europe Commanding General B. B. Bell for his contribution to the US Army in Europe. ♦



Dane Winters

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How to Apply to Present the AACT Spotlight Award

Do you know someone who has made a significant impact to the quality of your local theatre? Do you know an organization that continues to participate in and make important contributions to your theatre's success? Do you know a person or an organization that is dedicated to your mission, a high achiever that assists in building a stronger community?

Partner with AACT to recognize those special contributions with an AACT Spotlight Award.



Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award. Member theatres, across the nation can nominate any individual, organization or company. Spotlight Award applications may be submitted anytime, and the award may be presented at any time during the year. The nomination form is available at www.aact.org/awards.

The AACT Spotlight Award must be confirmed by the AACT Awards Committee, but the criteria are very broad. It is designed to help AACT organizational members pay tribute to an individual or organization for long or special service. The Spotlight Award should not replace any acknowledgement the theatre might otherwise make, nor should it be simply for last season's acting or technical work, or out-front activities. It should recognize outstanding dedication, service, or contribution to your theatre by a volunteer, staff person, or supporter. It is for that special person, business, or group whose contributions have made a significant impact on the quality of your theatre.

AACT will provide a certificate and will attempt to send a presenter, if desired. The award can be presented any time. In addition, AACT will list recipients in Spotlight and on the AACT website. Further details are available through the AACT office.



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Theatre is a recognized core subject that integrates a wide range of knowledge and teaches the most valued 21st century skills of education—creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. But in too many schools the opportunity for students to experience the art has diminished. To ensure that theatre is part of education reform, we need trained teachers who understand that “theatre at the core” means it is essential to every child’s education.

Educational Theatre Association
2343 Auburn Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45219-2815

513-421-3900

www.schooltheatre.org/events/edtanationalconference

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

Submissions (email attachment only) to:
Todd W. Ristau, Chair
SETC Playwriting Committee
tristau@hollins.edu

The Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest is dedicated to the discovery, development, and publicizing of worthy new plays and playwrights. One winning script will be selected. A staged reading of the script will be presented at the annual Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) Convention in collaboration with the playwright. The reading will include adjudication by a select panel of judges.

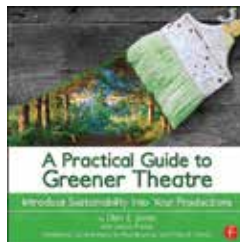
Playwrights who reside in the SETC region or who are enrolled in a regionally accredited educational institution in the SETC region, or who reside outside the region but are SETC members are eligible for consideration. SETC Region states include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North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

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

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

Deadline: June 1, 2014

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



A Practical Guide to Greener Theatre Introduce Sustainability Into Your Productions

by Ellen E. Jones

Protecting the environment should be a priority of every theatrical production, but it can be challenging to mount an environmentally-friendly show with limited time, resources, and information. *A Practical Guide to Greener Theatre: Introduce Sustainability Into Your Productions* not only gives you the information you need to make greener decisions, but provides you with practical, workable solutions. You will learn how to assess and improve every production area – from costuming and painting, lighting and technical direction, to administrative offices and the rehearsal process. Even non-technical people who find themselves responsible for supervising productions will find green solutions that can be instituted with a staff of volunteers or students.

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New Works of Merit Playwriting Contest

New Works of Merit Playwriting Contest
50 West 13th Street
New York City, NY 10011

NewWorksOfMerit@aol.com

The New Works of Merit Playwriting Contest is an international playwriting contest developed in 2003 to bring works of social significance to the general public, works that might not otherwise have the opportunity to be presented.

For unpublished full length (not over two hours or 100 pages) or one-act plays that have not had a professional production. Children's plays are eligible, but no musicals or adaptations.

See the website for important thematic guidelines.

First prize: \$300 plus a reading and Q&A in a professional theatre.

Submission fee: \$25. Critiques are available for an additional fee.

Submission deadline: June 30, 2014

Details: www.newworksofmeritplaywritingcontest.com

New Roles

Spokane, Washington – **Spokane Civic Theatre** has named **Keith Dixon** as its new Artistic Director. Keith is currently the Managing Artistic Director at Theatre Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge, LA, and will take over his new role full-time in June. Keith was with Theatre Baton Rouge for ten seasons, and directed more than 35 productions for that organization. He has also directed at Columbia University and the American Theatre of Actors in New York. Keith is an Associate Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. He holds a BA in Theatre from Middle Tennessee State University.

Bismarck, North Dakota – **Dakota Stage, Ltd.** has named **Chris Zinovitch** as its new Artistic Director. Chris spent 13 years with ArtsWest Playhouse and Gallery in Seattle, WA, and compiled an impressive resume of acting and directing credits in the Seattle area. Chris appeared all over the world, touring with the Missoula Children's Theatre as Magic in *Jack in the Beanstalk*, and with the California Theater Center's Productions of *The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Elves and the Shoemaker*, *The Princess and the Pea*, and *The Canterville Ghost*. He joined Executive Director Amber Rae Bernhardt as Dakota Stage, Ltd's second staff member, and began his duties on March 6.

Rapid City, SD - **Black Hills Community Theatre** has hired **Nicholas Johnson** as the new Executive Director, sharing the position with the **Performing Arts Center of Rapid City**. Nick replaces outgoing Performing Arts Center director Merritt Olsen, who has retired. Nick served as Executive Director of the WYO Theater in Sheridan, WY since 2005. He has had leadership roles in performing arts with the Chicago Symphony, Northwestern University, and the Grand Teton Music Festival. Nick holds a Master's Degree in Music from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. ♦

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Do you offer comp tickets to your cast, crew, and volunteers?

Responses on AACTList

(to sign up for AACTList, go to www.aact.org/aactlist)

We give two comps to cast members and running crew. Construction crew (set and costume) get 1 ticket if they work at least 6 hours. We give two BOGOs (buy one, get one free) to all cast and crew. These are tickets good for only the current show. They can be transferred to another cast member if both parties agree.

David R. Kilpatrick

La Crosse Community Theatre, LaCrosse, WI
www.lacrossecommunitytheatre.org

We don't do comps but we have a one-ticket rule for cast members only: If a family member purchases one ticket, they can come every night on a space available basis. We started this when we had kids in a show and the parents came every night to bring their kids and take them home after the show. We didn't feel it was fair for them to have to purchase tickets every night but one. Like any other system, this gets abused from time to time.

Doug Bechtel

The Actors Theater of Orcas Island, Eastsound, WA
www.orcasactors.com

Responses on Facebook

(www.facebook.com/AACT.org)

Martha Daniels Cherbini

Muskogee Little Theatre, Muskogee, OK
www.muskogeelittletheatre.com

One of the theatres I work with has traditionally given each actor and crew member two comps, plus additional comps for working on the set. It dawned on them this year that, in a large cast show they were giving away nearly one full night's house. The solution was to give each actor and crew member a sheet of coupons with which the holder could buy a ticket for \$5 instead of the regular \$12-15. No griping that I heard. The other theatre I work with has never given any comps at all, ever. I think one aspect of this is that, in my opinion, comps should be given to people who have never been to the theatre (co-workers) and not to friends who would likely come and buy a ticket anyway.

Jamie Ulmer

Community Players Inc., Beatrice, NE
www.beatricecommunityplayers.com

We give each cast member 10 discounted tickets for the show. We also just started a volunteer reward card program. Volunteers earn points on their cards depending on the type of work (ex. usher gets 1 point, house manager 2 pts, etc.) It takes 10 points to fill a card. A full card is good for

1 admission to any event at the theatre. Actors and stage managers receive a full card at the last performance of their show. The idea is to get them to come back to see a show they are not involved in. Cards can be redeemed within a year of being filled.

Callan Williams, also from Community Players Inc. added:

We also allow cast members to invite two or three guests to final dress rehearsal. When I am a cast member I often invite people who never have been to live theatre.

Alicia Harabin

Circle Players, Inc., Piscataway, NJ
www.circleplayers.com

Everyone who works on a show gets a comp to be used at any performance. We are a membership company, and for a nominal membership fee, members are entitled to one comp per show. Most members only use their comp if they work, but there are a few who use it as a cheap subscription. We also have a "Significant Other" policy, whereby an actor can designate a SO for the run of the show who pays full price once, and then can attend for \$1 on a space available basis for the remainder of the run.

Tom Booth

Tupelo Community Theatre, Tupelo, MS
www.tctwebstage.com

We do not offer any comps of any kind. We do offer the chance to see our show free of charge to our ushers on the night they usher.

Gary Payne

Theatre Arlington, Arlington, TX
www.theatrearlington.org

We offer comp tickets to our cast, crew and volunteers. Cast/crew usually receive 4 each to be used any time during the run of the show, reservations required, and contingent on seat availability. Volunteers typically receive a comp for working a performance, but we encourage them to use the comp at another performance when they are not working as a volunteer. On occasion, when seats are available, we will sometimes offer additional comps or ticket discounts (with a promo code) on a case-by-case basis for specific performances.

Sue Ellen Howell Gerrells

South City Theatre, Alabaster, AL
www.southcitytheatre.com

Our theatre is so tiny—37 seats—that we can't afford to give comps to cast/crew for performances so we encourage our folks to attend the final dress rehearsal. If we had a larger space we would definitely give comps, particularly on those nights that don't fill up as fast or for opening night to help get word of mouth out there about the show.

Editor's Note: Inviting an audience to the final dress rehearsal makes it a preview performance and royalties are required.



My Kingdom for a Horse!

by Twink Lynch

Over time, various wags have decried committees as useless time-wasters which “process” issues to death and end up with compromises no one really likes. The old saw, “a camel is a horse designed by a committee,” has amused several generations of decision-makers.

In truth, committees can be a drag on the organization’s decision-making process, especially if committee members don’t know their task, don’t have a time line, and no one is held accountable for their work.

But I don’t know of a Board today which can function well without effective committees doing the research and making recommendations for many (if not most) of the decisions. Boards simply don’t have the time to deal with every single issue “from scratch.” We probably all know of organizations functioning almost entirely as “committees of the whole,” but I believe that happens most often in younger theatre groups whose founders and charter members seem to have the energy, commitment, and time to talk about everything (sometimes endlessly). And yet, even young, less complex organizations almost always have some committees: nominating, play reading, and production come to mind.

With all the work theatre Boards must do, I certainly recommend the use of properly constituted “standing committees” (those defined in the bylaws which relate to the on-going governance of the organization). Besides the executive and nominating committees, other typical standing committees include:

For a Governing Board:

- long-range planning
- budget/finance
- fundraising
- audit
- investments
- board development (orientation and training)
- personnel policies

For an Operating/Governing Board (with little or no paid staff):

- production
- marketing/season ticket campaign
- publications (newsletter, programs)
- volunteer development
- play reading/selection
- social events
- building and grounds
- planning

- budget/finance
- fundraising
- personnel
- board development (orientation and training)

Temporary or “ad hoc” committees, created for a specific purpose, with a limited charge, might include bylaws review, special events, AACTFest, staff search, etc. These committees should be disbanded, with thanks, when the job is done.

Sometimes we create task forces to address immediate issues needing special expertise such as the computerization of the office or of the lighting and sound systems. All

I don’t know of a Board today which can function well without effective committees doing the research and making recommendations for many (if not most) of the decisions.

committees and task forces need to have clear job descriptions and expectations, and there must be job descriptions for committee chairs and members, including a list of skills and experience needed to serve effectively. Boards that have approved qualifications for committee service are more likely to trust the results of the committees’ work.

What exactly do committees do? They do research and develop policy options for the Board; and having weighed various approaches, recommend actions for the Board’s consideration and approval. They do not - repeat NOT - make any final decisions, and committee members need to realize the Board does not have to follow their recommendations. I have, however, a caveat for Boards: if you cannot accept the recommendations of the committee, do not try to re-write the recommendations of the committee when the Board is functioning spontaneously as a committee of the whole.

continued on next page

Refer the matter back to the original committee. If necessary, augment the committee with a new member or two and clarify the charge, but do not change their recommendations on the spot and then approve them, based on your own limited information. This is especially true for Play Reading Committees. I'm sure many of you have had the frustrating experience of sitting on a Play Reading Committee and having the recommended season be rejected by the whole Board - whose members have not read many, if any, of the plays themselves. In some cases, the Board then proceeds to create its own season! This kind of craziness can also happen around budget issues, special events, interior decorating for a new building, etc. *It is not okay!* It shows disrespect for the committee's work and makes the committee members feel they wasted their time. It also often leads to terrible decisions.

How big should committees be? Big enough to bring the necessary resources to bear on the issue and small enough to give everyone a significant role to play. You may need eight to ten members on your Play Reading Committee in order to hear from all points of view in your organization. But two to three people are usually sufficient for bylaws review.

The tenure of committee chairs and members should only be as long as that of the President who appoints them.

Committees are an ideal training ground for future Board Members. People can really connect to the theatre by serving on a committee, especially if care is taken to let them know how their work contributes to "the good of the order" and helps to fulfill the long-range plan. Don't forget thank you notes and praise for work well done.

I think it works best if Standing Committees are chaired by current Board Members, but I think it's great to open up membership on committees for non-Board Members, too. Ad hoc committees and task forces could be chaired by former Board Members (keep them involved if they're good!) or non-Board Members with special expertise. The tenure of committee chairs and members should only be as long as that of the President who appoints them. I like the idea of assistant chairs when the assistant chair becomes the chair the following year; this is good for continuity. But everyone must be clear about the duration of the appointment so no one gets his/her feelings hurt if a new President exercises his/her prerogative and chooses other people to serve. We all talk about the need for "new blood" - "changing the guard" is a great way to involve new people.

If at all possible, *committee meetings should be set up a year in advance* with various reporting "due dates" noted on a master calendar. This will allow interested Board Members (not on a given committee) to attend as observers and will help in the planning of Board meetings. The master calendar

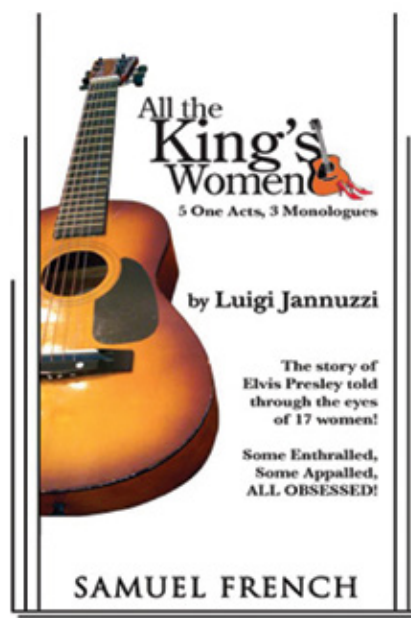
will give the President "permission" to call and check on the status of any committee's work, and eliminate most surprise action items from meeting agendas.

Thoughtfully designed committees can be enormously helpful to a busy Board, but if horses are to result rather than camels, committees need planning and oversight. If their recommendations are supported by a clear rationale and a financial impact statement so the Board is not making decisions in a vacuum, committees can facilitate the process of good governance exponentially. I simply can't imagine trying to run a theatre without them. ♦

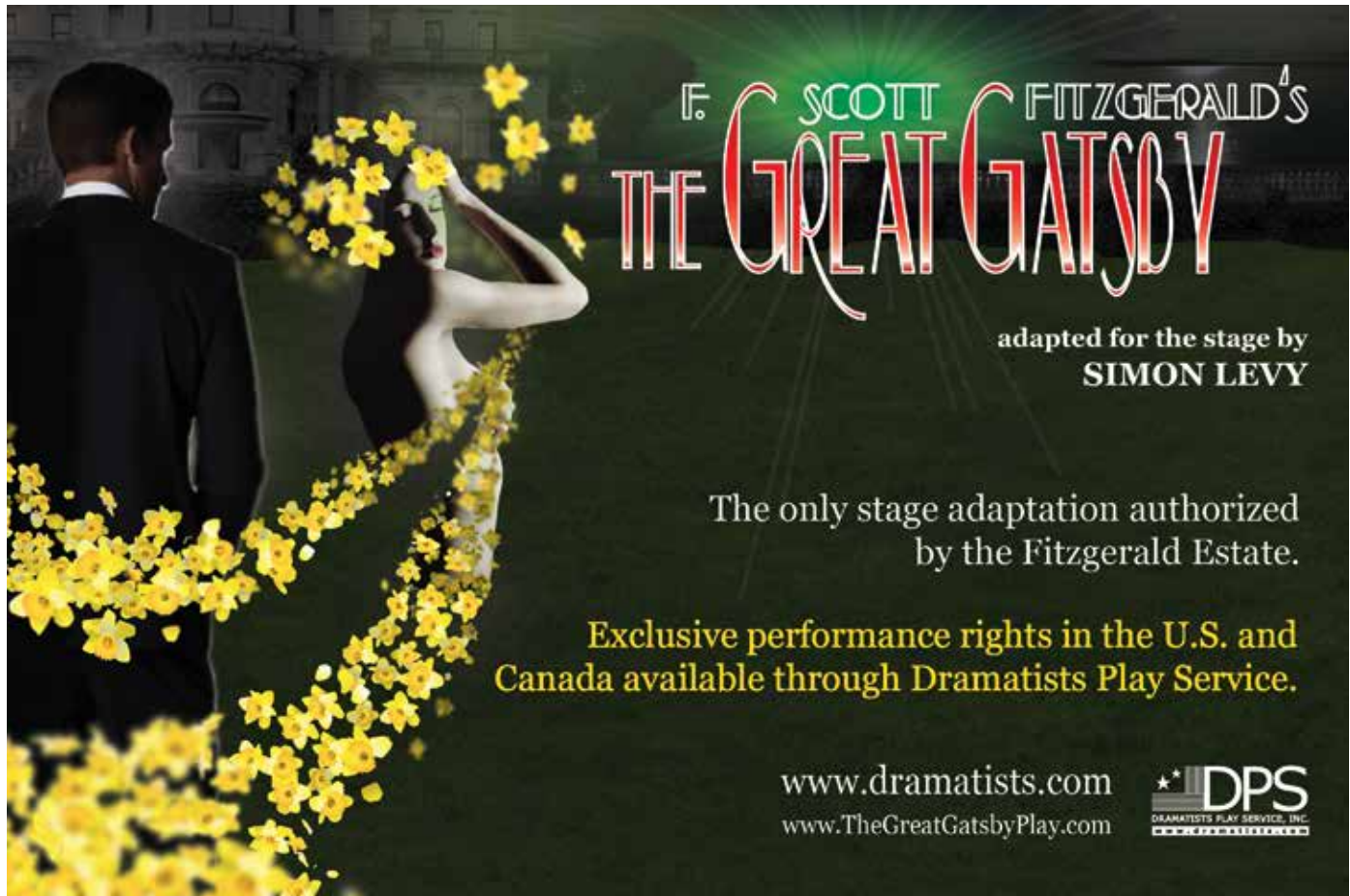
For more on committees, the following are available from BoardSource www.boardsource.org: *Financial Committees* by Thomas A. McLaughlin, *Development Committee* by Eugene R. Tempel, *Executive Committee* by Light Mark, *Governance Committee* by Outi Flynn, Sandra R. Hughes, Berit M. Lakey, and *The Nonprofit Board's Role in Mission, Planning, and Evaluation* by Kay Sprinkel Grace, Amy McClellan, John A. Yankey

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardmanship for *Spotlight* for many years. Her early articles are compiled into a still relevant book for boards: *Boards in the Spotlight*. See ad on page 34 for ordering information. Reprinted from *Boards in the Spotlight* (page 41). Originally appeared in *Spotlight*, June 1999.

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
June 12-16	Texas Nonprofit Theatres Youth Conference	TX Odessa	817-731-2238 www.texas theatres.org
June 27-29	Eastern Mass. Assn. of Community Theaters ★ EMACT State AACTFest 2014	MA Tewksbury	978-640-1261 www.emact.org

★ Indicates festival in the AACTFest 2015 Cycle

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

Late Breaking News!

Music Theatre International (MTI) is extending discounts to AACT member theatres to include the 2014/2015 season!!



MTI offers discounts on rental materials to AACT member theatres. Each and every year the number of theatres participating in this discount has grown!

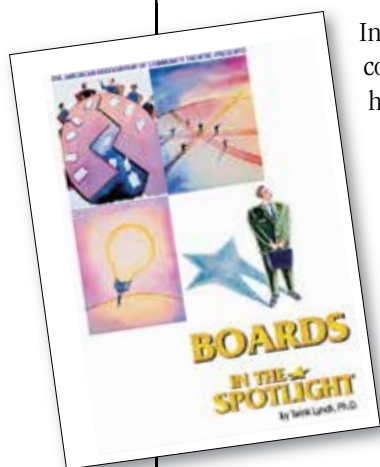
Here's how the discount works:

For the first four MTI musicals produced during the membership year, AACT member theatres receive a 20% discount on standard rental fees. If a theatre produces five MTI musicals in a year, the fifth standard rental package is FREE.

If you are doing a MTI musical this spring or summer it's not too late to claim the AACT member discount (even if you have already paid!).

AACT Membership offers you great discounts. We say thanks to all the supporters of AACT and encourage you take advantage of this special offer.

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Open to anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for their theatre's educational programs. Share materials, exchange ideas, and tackle theatre education issues guided by an experienced education director, April Cochran, Education Director for Market House Theatre in Paducah, KY.

August 22-23 in Tulsa, OK

Artistic Directors Conference

Open to anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for the artistic direction of their theatre. Roundtable discussions will address hot topics chosen in advance by the participants. Facilitated by Tim Jebson, Executive/Artistic Director of Midland (TX) Community Theatre.

August 22-23 in Tulsa, OK

Details and registration: www.aact.org/conf or 866-Our-AACT