

spotlight

November/December 2015 \$2.50

american association of community theatre

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Murray Chase
AACT President
2015-2017

As I write this, it's early Sunday evening in the fall. All around our community, people are gathering in restaurants, going to church, watching football, grilling out, and driving home from watching the sunset. Many around us are putting the final recreational touches on a relaxing weekend.

Except at the theatre. You see, today we closed a show. In our building, literally dozens of volunteers are striking a set, doing costume laundry, storing props, sweeping up, and cleaning the

It's not that the volunteers don't like football; in fact, the DVR is working overtime.

greenroom. Dozens more are upstairs, rehearsing for the next show. Even more are bringing sandwiches, pizzas, snacks, and bottles of water to provide sustenance and keep the workers going.

That's what theatre volunteers do. This choice to shun the beer sofa epitomizes the spirit of community theatre. On "any given Sunday," all across America the same thing is happening. It's almost indefinable, this giving of time, energy, and good will.

It's not that the volunteers don't like football; in fact, the DVR is working overtime. It's not that they want to get away from family; most bring families with them.

It's just that it needs to be done.

There's no glory to be won, no prize to be gained. It's just that the job needs to be done. Nobody does that job better than the community theatre volunteer. The heart of the volunteer can't grow two sizes larger; his chest would burst.

If you're a community theatre professional, hug a volunteer today. If you're a community theatre volunteer, hug yourself—and another volunteer. Because you not only *do* America's theatre, you *are* America's theatre.

2015-2016
featured **farces**

full frontal nudity

by jerry rabushka

"a true gem!" —john payton, *ragged blade productions*

thee and thou by bret jones

"the new script succeeds as brisk comedy!"
—john brandenburg, *NewsOK*

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headsets (a view from the light booth)
by william missouri downs

"the audience will be laughing at double entendre, missteps, and the antics that happen backstage!" —jamie a. hunt, the recorder

barely heirs

by david lassig

"this play is wacky, absurd, totally hilarious, and not appropriate for young audiences"

—phraidra yunker, high plains writer

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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at david@aact.org to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone numbers above.

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Upcoming Meetings

AACT Executive Committee

November 20-22, 2015
Madison, WI
Hosted by University of Wisconsin, Continuing Studies

AACT Winter Meetings 2016

February 18-21, 2016
San Antonio, TX

Upcoming Conferences

National Community Theatre Managing Directors Conference

November 21-24, 2015
Madison, WI
Co-sponsored with the University of Wisconsin, Continuing Studies

Its not too late

to register for the National Community Theatre
Managing Directors Conference.
Information: aact.org/madison



Spotlight

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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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Who Is an Insured? *Depends on the Claim!*

by Ken Roberts



I have been contacted several times recently by theatre board members who are concerned about not having Directors' and Officers' Liability insurance. While it is a valid concern, I usually press them for information about why they believe they need it. They typically just want to be sure that if the board or any individual board member is specifically named in a claim, their insurance will protect them. My follow up question for them is, "What type of claims do you want protection for?" Depending upon the cause of the claim, nonprofit board members may need more than one type of policy to be sure that they are adequately protected.

Depending upon the cause of the claim, nonprofit board members may need more than one type of policy to be sure that they are adequately protected.

More often than not, a board's major concern is for claims made against them due to injuries suffered by a third party, such as a patron or volunteer. There is also the possibility of a claim for property damage suffered by a third party. Bodily injury and property damage claims are covered by a *general liability policy* rather than a *D&O policy*. Insurance Services Office (ISO), which develops standardized insurance policy language for most insurance companies, defines **Who Is An**

Insured in a general liability policy as follows: if an organization is structured as other than a partnership, joint venture or limited liability company, *your executive officers and directors are insureds with respect to their duties as your officers or directors*. Since nonprofit organizations don't typically fall into any of those three categories, their board members are included for coverage as part of the organization.

Where general liability doesn't cover claims against board members is in cases where no one has been physically injured and no property has been damaged. We typically refer to these claims as monetary claims, as the claimants usually want to be compensated for a perceived wrongful act by a board member or the board as a whole. Examples of these types of claims are breach of contract and misappropriation of funds, and employment practices claims like discrimination or sexual harassment. Claims of this nature can only be covered by a Directors' and Officers' Liability policy with Employment Practices Liability included. Serving on a nonprofit board of directors can expose a board member's personal assets if a judgment is rendered against the organization or an individual member, and there is either no insurance or insufficient insurance to cover the judgment.

I hope I have demonstrated the clear distinction between what types of policies are needed, depending on the cause of the claim. Board members are seldom directly responsible for the average claim, but you'd want to be sure to protect them, no matter the circumstances. ♦

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AACT New York Adventure 2016

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Broadway shows are currently being negotiated for the AACT New York Adventure 2016. Shows in consideration are

Hamilton

Shuffle Along or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921

School of Rock the Musical

The King & I

and more

check out what is playing on Broadway – www.broadway.com



Register NOW for the best deal!
Register online at aact.org/nyc

Save \$200 by registering by December 1! The early bird rate for AACT members is \$1,200 per person, double occupancy; \$1,575 single occupancy. The early bird rate is good through December 1.

Registration includes three nights hotel, two Broadway Shows, AACT Saturday dinner at the historic Hudson Theatre, Specialty Tours, and more.

See Broadway shows and experience Manhattan's Times Square with your community theatre friends and AACT family. Make a highlight of your summer of 2016 by joining AACT at this great adventure July 7-10, 2016. Come early or stay late (with a great hotel rate!) and see more of all that NYC has to offer.

The Millennium Broadway Hotel New York will be the host hotel and is in the heart of New York City. Located in Times Square, the Millennium Broadway offers convenient access to Broadway theatres and Fifth Avenue shopping. The hotel is connected to the Hudson Theatre, a beautiful landmark built in 1903.



The lobby of the Millennium Broadway Hotel, in the heart of New York City

The Charlotte Bar at the Millennium Broadway Hotel



Only \$250 holds your place.
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Registration includes three nights, but if you want to come early or stay to see more shows or explore Manhattan, you can add nights at the Millennium for only \$250 per room, per night. And if you book extra nights through AACT you won't pay taxes on your room!

See the sights of the Big Apple. There will be time to explore the city. If you're not sure of striking out on your own, don't worry! You'll be surrounded by friends who can share your adventures, provide you with tour options, teach you how to use the subway, when it's better to catch a cab, and how to get half-price show tickets. Radio City Music Hall is nearby, as is Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rockefeller Center, and Central Park. Explore Manhattan with a boat tour around the island, a visit to the Statue of Liberty, or just enjoy the theatre shows, the cafes, and restaurants. ♦



The NYC 2016 Adventure will include activities for YOUTH

- ★ workshop with a Broadway performer
- ★ special seminars
- ★ Broadway shows
- ★ and connections with theatre youth from across the country



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Arts-People is sponsoring *We See the Light*, a Broadway walking tour.

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Are you thinking of a fundraiser for your theatre?

Customize this trip for a group from your theatre. For details contact Jill Patchin at jill@aact.org.

AACT New York Adventure 2016 Schedule

Tuesday 7/5/2016

5:00 pm AACT Executive Committee meeting

Wednesday 7/6/2016

9:30 am AACT Finance Committee meeting

11:00 am AACT Board meeting

Thursday 7/7/2016 NYC Adventure Begins!

Arrive in the Big Apple and check in to the Millennium Broadway Hotel

Afternoon AACT Committee meetings
Youth Summit

2:00 pm **Subway Tour** Is it true that the Bronx is Up and the Battery's Down?

4:00-5:00 pm **Meet & Greet** See who else is in town for the NYC Adventure

7:00 pm **Broadway Show #1**

10:30 pm **Join friends** (and make new ones) for a nightcap!

This is a preliminary schedule. Times and events are subject to change

Friday 7/8/2016

9:00 am-5:00 pm AACT Committee meetings
Youth Summit

10:00 am **Theatre District Walking Tour** Times Square is just outside your door! Tour will end at the TKT booth - Pick up tickets for an extra show or two at a discount

7:00 pm **Broadway Show #2**

10:30 pm **Join friends** (and make new ones) for a nightcap!

Saturday 7/9/2016

10:00 am **Annual AACT Membership Meeting and National AACT Awards Presentation**
Youth Summit

10:45 am **AACT Board Meeting**

Free Time Catch a matinee, do some shopping, check out the sights!

5:00 PM-7:00 pm **Dinner at the Historic Hudson Theatre**

8:00 pm **Enjoy your evening!** See a show, ride the Staten Island Ferry, join a guided tour of lower Manhattan...

10:30 pm **Join friends** (and make new ones) for a nightcap!

AACT NewPlayFest Opens with *Lighthouse* by William Baer

AACT NewPlayFest opened the world premiere of *Lighthouse* by William Baer on September 25, 2015 at the Windsor Community Playhouse in Windsor, Colorado. The production ran through October 10. With AACT NewPlayFest, AACT is addressing the critical need for new, high-quality plays for theatre audiences around the globe. Seven theatres across the nation are producing the winning plays within the next year.



Attending opening night were (standing, l - r) Dramatic Publishing's Linda Habjan, Assistant Director/Stage Manager Terri White, Technical Director Eika Haas, Steven Haas (cast), Playwright William Baer, Julie Legg (cast), Director Tim Bernhardt, AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, AACT Past President and Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation representative Linda M. Lee (seated, l - r) Lindsay Savage (cast), Barry Bartram (cast), Sarah Robertson (cast), Dennis Conmay (cast)

Photo by Linda M. Lee

Playwright William Baer was honored to be an AACT NewPlayFest winning playwright. He stated, "Seeing my play *Lighthouse* produced at the Windsor Community Playhouse was a wonderful experience! I'm extremely grateful to AACT and the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation for making everything possible and to the play's director Tim Bernhardt and his excellent cast and crew. It was very exciting to have Julie Crawford, AACT executive director, Linda Lee of the Ayre Theatre Foundation, and Linda Habjan of Dramatic Publishing all present for opening night. The NewPlayFest is every playwright's dream!

Lighthouse tells the story of Luce Fouchet, the keeper of the Beach Haven Lighthouse and a professional travel writer. As she's planning to leave on a trip to Lisbon, an unexpected visitor arrives, and her world suddenly falls apart. Despite her generally up-beat demeanor, Luce is now forced to deal with her unresolved past, a romantic intruder into her present, a jealous and suicidal friend, and the devastating ramifications of an extremely-rare, skin disorder known as Xeroderma Pigmentosum (XP).

The victims of this disease, which causes multiple skin cancers and early death, can never go out in the sunlight due to the devastating effects of ultraviolet rays on their skin.



William Baer, a recent Guggenheim fellow, has received the James Wilson Playwriting Award and the New Works of Merit Playwriting Award. His plays have

been produced or read at more than 25 American theatres, including the 13th Street Theatre in New York City, Chicago Dramatists, and the Metropolitan Playhouse of New York. *Morons*, one of his 10-minute plays, was chosen "best in show" at the Camino Real Playhouse's ShowOff Festival, and his most recent full-length play, *Three Generations of Imbeciles*, was chosen for the 2013 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in Saginaw, Michigan. A former Fulbright Scholar in Portugal, he's also been the recipient of a NEA Creative Writing Grant for fiction. A graduate of Rutgers, New York University, Johns Hopkins, and University of Southern California, he's the author of 18 books, including *Times Square and Other Stories*, *Classic American Films: Conversations with the Screenwriters*, *"Borges" and Other Sonnets*, *Conversations with Derek Walcott*, and *Elia Kazan: Interviews*.

Windsor Community Playhouse (WCP) originated in 1981. WCP is a family-oriented community theatre directed by a volunteer Board of Directors dedicated to promoting cultural growth and mutual enjoyment through live theatre. WCP offers a mix of comedies, dramas, musicals, children's shows, and festive holiday shows. The intimate 75-seat theatre has been named Best Live Entertainment in the northern Colorado region, and the addition of participating in the AACT NewPlayFest continues their dedication to promote new, quality theatre.

windsorplayhouse.org ♦

A look ahead at upcoming AACT NewPlayFest world premiere productions

Learn more about the AACT NewPlayFest winning playwrights, producing theatres, and world premiere productions at aact.org/newplayfest

Laguna Beach, Ohio by Malcolm MacDonald

Stage Right Productions/2nd Street Theatre
Bend, Oregon, AACT Region IX
2ndstreettheater.com
March 25 – April 9, 2016



Malcolm MacDonald is a playwright, painter, and teacher from Southern California, whose first play, *One Bean*, premiered at the Brooklyn Art Theater while he was working as a graphic artist for the legendary modern choreographers Alvin Nikolais and Murray Louis. His play, *the beetles*, was written in a month-long residency with the great Lanford Wilson. MacDonald's award-winning play, *Coyote's Christmas Carol*,

continues to be performed throughout the world.

Gracefully Ending by Anthony DeLauder

Theatre Arlington
Arlington, Texas, AACT Region VI
theatrearlington.org
July 1 - 17, 2016



Anthony DeLauder is a native of West Virginia and works as an actor and playwright for Theatre On The Lake in Deep Creek Lake, Maryland. *Gracefully Ending* (2014), in addition to being part of AACT's NewPlayFest, also was semi-finalist for the Silverthorne New Play Contest, and semi-finalist Playwright's First Best New Play Competition. Other works include *The Jungle Books* (2013, adaptation), as well

two other full-length plays, *A Dirtbag Airman* (2014) and *Destiny Recalculated* (2015). Anthony holds a B.A. in English from the University of Maryland University College, and he is currently pursuing an M.F.A. in Writing for Stage and Screen at the New Hampshire Institute of Art.

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Wash, Dry, Fold by Nedra Pezold Roberts

Chicago Street Theatre/Community Theatre Guild
Valparaiso, Indiana, AACT Region III
chicagostreet.org
May 20 – June 4, 2016



Nedra Pezold Roberts, a former English and drama teacher is an emerging playwright based in Atlanta. Her plays have won competitions including the 2013 Southern Playwrights Competition and the 2014 AACT NewPlayFest. *The Vanishing Point*, produced at California Stage in Sacramento, California, as part of the 2014 AACT NewPlayFest, won seven Elly Awards, among them Best Script, in the 2014 awards announced by the Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, Working Title Playwrights, and serves on the board of the Atlanta Writers Club.



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Get Out of Dodge by Jeanne Drennan

Omaha Community Playhouse
Omaha, Nebraska, AACT Region V
omahaplayhouse.com
July 22 - 24, 2016



Jeanne Drennan is a playwright, librettist, and lyricist whose works have brought her seven fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Her plays have been produced or developed at theatres across the country, from Under St. Marks in New York to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Plays recently produced include *Asparagus*, *Waxworks*, *Atlas of Longing*, and her musical with composer David Berlin, *Dear Boy*. Her play *12 Dogs* was the 2008 winner of Boston TheatreWorks's new play festival. Jeanne is managing director of Musical Theatre Artists of Pittsburgh, an incubator for new works of musical theatre, and is a member of the Dramatists' Guild.

The Emperor of North America by Thomas Hischak

Silver Spring Stage
Silver Spring, Maryland, AACT Region II
ssstage.org
Production dates TBA (Fall 2016)



Thomas Hischak is an internationally recognized author, playwright, and teacher in the performing arts, and author of 38 published plays. Awards include the Stanley Drama Award for *Cold War Comedy* and the Julie Harris Playwriting Award for *The Cardiff Giant*. He is also the author of 24 books, including *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical*, *The Rodgers and Hammerstein Encyclopedia*, *Broadway Plays and Musicals*, *Through the*

Screen Door, *The Tin Pan Alley Encyclopedia*, *Off-Broadway Musicals Since 1919*, *The Disney Song Encyclopedia*, *Broadway Lyricists*, *American Literature on Stage and Screen*, *Theatre as Human Action*, *The Film Composers Encyclopedia*, and *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*. As Professor of Theatre at the State University of New York at Cortland, he has received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity, and the SUNY Outstanding Achievement in Research Award. A Fulbright scholar, he has taught and directed in Greece, Lithuania, and Turkey.

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Shades of Valor by Karen L. Lewis

Twin City Stage

Winston-Salem, North Carolina, AACT Region IV

twincitystage.org

Production dates TBA (Fall 2016)



Karen L. Lewis grew up in Alexandria, Virginia where she spent many happy years working in every conceivable backstage capacity at the Little Theatre of Alexandria. Her playwriting was interrupted by a career writing for soaps – primarily *All My Children*, which resulted in five Emmys and three Writers Guild awards. Her plays have been performed in regional theatres and off Broadway. Her play, *The Perfect*

Wife, won the 2012 Stanley Drama Award, was a semi-finalist for both the 2012 Eugene O'Neill Theatre's National Playwrights Conference, and 2012 Pandora's Box Festival, a finalist in the Actor's Theatre of Charlotte's 2013 nuVoices Playwriting Festival, and was premiered in NYC this past spring by the Ivy Theatre Company. A member of The Writers Guild of America and The Dramatists' Guild, Karen divides her time between New York City and Saranac Lake, NY.

The AACT NewPlayFest world premier productions are made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation. Jack K. Ayre celebrated his 90th

birthday before passing away in December 2011. At his birthday party he sang with a barbershop quartet – one of his favorite activities – and celebrated with his cousin and lifelong friend, Frank Ayre Lee. The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation has been created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, who passed away in August 2012, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through a lasting legacy promoting new works for theatre through AACT NewPlayFest.

AACT NewPlayFest winning plays are published in anthologies by Dramatic Publishing Company. The first, with plays by Cece Dwyer, Paul Elliott, Jim Henry, Nedra Pezold Roberts, Barry Weinberg and Bo Wilson, is now available. dramaticpublishing.com.

Since publishing the *American Association of Community Theatre AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 1* in 2014, Dramatic Publishing has licensed 18 productions of titles in the anthology, resulting in more than 130 performances. More than 100 copies of the anthology have been sold.

The first acting edition from the anthology, *Exit Laughing*, has experienced great success during the past year. As announced at this year's AACTFest by Christopher Sergel, President of Dramatic Publishing, the second title from Volume 1, *Jellofish*, is now available in an acting edition. Additional titles from Volume 1 will also be available as acting editions in 2016.

This year's winning plays will be available in a Volume 2 anthology. One of the winning titles will receive the additional honor of being published as an acting edition. ♦

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- Daily Variety

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- The Tucson Times

"Hilarious!"
- American Eagle News

"Superb!"
- Tulsa World

ANiceFamilyGathering.com

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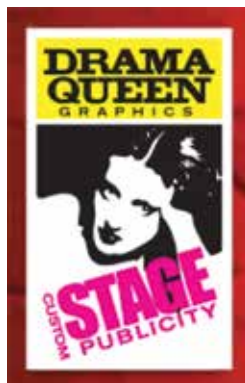
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StageShare was created in response to the difficulties expressed by AACT Members during a workshop at AACTFest 2013 regarding the production of new works. Stage Rights will pair producers interested in mounting the same titles and help facilitate the sharing of resources, such as sets and costumes, between their productions. In addition, producers who participate in StageShare will receive a discount on rehearsal and performance materials.

Samantha Levenshus, Managing Director of Stage Rights, recently announced the program at AACTFest 2015, "StageShare is our attempt to offset the financial challenges that many community theatres face when producing new work."

StageShare is available for the following titles in its inaugural year: ***another musical, Becoming Britney, Camp Rolling Hills, Delphi or Bust, Friends Like These, Gary Goldfarb: Master Escapist, Gotta Dance!, Holiday of Errors, I'm Just Wild About Harry, Miracle in Bedford Falls, Running Mates, Searching for Romeo, The Snow Queen, Summer of Love***, and ***Tales of Tinseltown***.

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Get Your Community Into Your Theatre

by Lynn Harper Nelson

Community theatres everywhere are facing new challenges. Changing demographics, competition for entertainment dollars, and difficult economic times are keeping patrons away from our theatres. In order to survive, we must attract new people to join our audiences. So how do you get people into the seats in your theatre? I've been active in community theatre for more than thirty years and I know enough to definitively declare there's not a "one size fits all" answer. In my years of networking and experimenting and researching, I've also learned this – it takes creativity and it takes knowing your market. And some of my home theatre's best strategies have come from adapting ideas from other arts organizations to fit our own needs.

I'm going to throw some ideas out for you about getting people in a seat for the first time. Some are from my home theatre and some from other theatre friends around the country. Adapt them to fit your needs... and share your original ideas with us on the AACT Facebook page! (www.facebook.com/AACT.org)

- **Go for the youth** – this idea may be obvious, but it works. If you get children in your theatre, whether it's as an audience member or as an actor, you also get their parents in the door. In addition to seeing the

shows, don't be afraid to ask the parents to volunteer, ushering, building sets, or whatever you need. They'll never know how much fun they can have until they do it!

- **Gimmicks work** – Kristy Meanor from Wetumpka Depot Players (AL) recently promoted a show that appealed to women by partnering with local hair salons. She provided posters advertising the show to be placed at each stylist's station and rewarded the stylists with complimentary tickets for "talking up" the show. A lot of shows lend themselves to marketing ideas like this if you think creatively.
- **Group sales** – look for groups that might have an interest in the subject matter of your next show. Examples might include inviting church groups to see *Godspell*, veterans groups to see *A Few Good Men*, English teachers and students to any Shakespeare play – the list is endless. Offer discount group pricing for a performance.
- **Take it to them** – You've heard the proverb that starts "train them up in the way they should go." Tupelo (MS) Community Theatre produces an educational play every year and takes it to area elementary schools free of charge. The students are encouraged to invite



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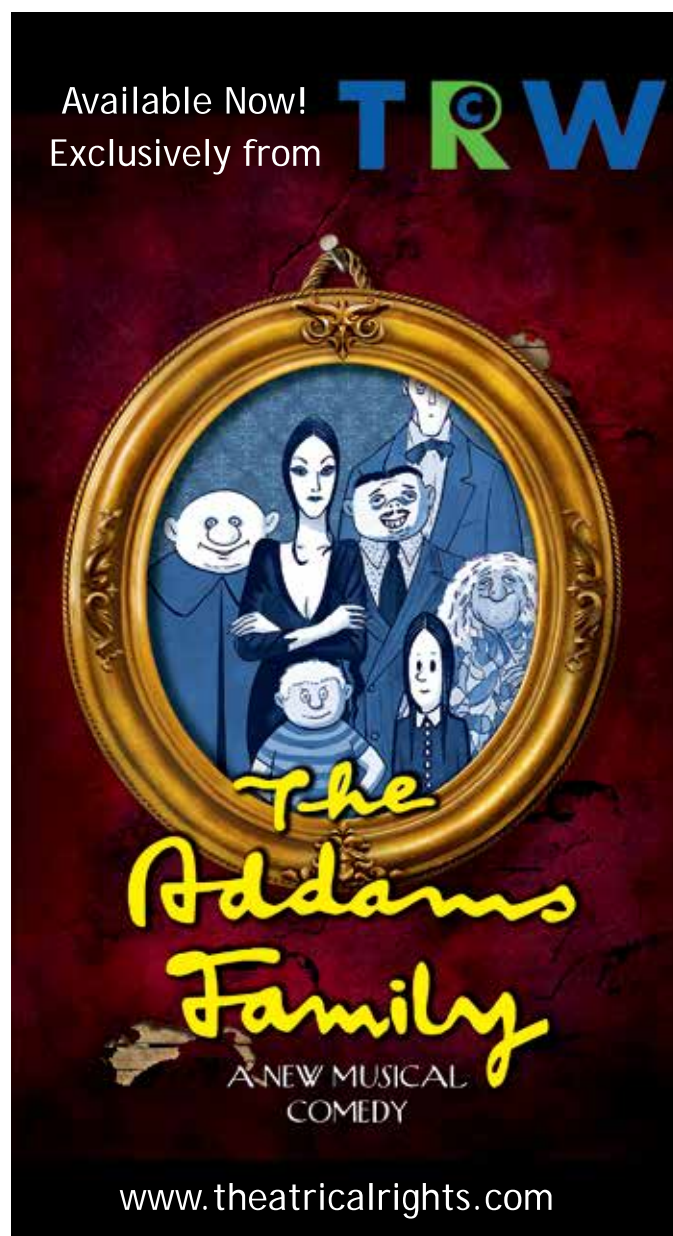
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their siblings and parents to evening performances at the theatre. Charging only a few dollars for admission, this gets hosts of new faces in the building and many return for other main stage productions.

- **Social media contests** – Offer a drawing for a free ticket(s) for doing something related to the show – like sharing a poster for the show or posting old wedding pictures for a production of *Father of the Bride*. Any activity increases exposure, not only on the theatre's page but on theirs, and their friends, and – well, you get the idea.
- **Remove barriers** – A neat idea I recently saw targeted removing the barrier of the high cost of a night out for young married patrons with young children. The theatre partnered with a local children's museum to provide a Parents' Night Out, offering discounts for a supervised evening at the museum for the children and discounts on two tickets to the theatre's performance when both were booked at the same time.
- **Get them while you're dark** – my home theatre looks for ways to get people in the seats between main stage productions. We've booked local popular bands for concerts, hosted trivia nights, conducted an annual haunted theatre hosted by our resident ghost, sponsored film festivals, and held themed dance parties in the street in front of the theatre. Once they're in the building, you have a captive audience for marketing other performances.

These are just a few ideas you might use or adapt to fit your theatre's needs. Please share with us on Facebook your own ideas that have worked. And share how you get "first timers" back a second time or turn them into regular patrons. We may use your ideas in a future column. Let's fill those seats! ♦

Lynn Harper Nelson has been an active community theatre volunteer for more than thirty years, serving as her home theatre's (Tupelo Community Theatre) Marketing Director for much of that time. She currently serves on AACT's board as Region IV Representative.





What's Trending: Budgets and Sources of Revenue

By Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director

Trends can help you understand what is happening or assist you in preparing before a trend reaches your theatre.

Changes in budget size and sources of theatre revenue was the subject of a Trends survey distributed in early September. Responses were received from 62 theatres in 25 states and a U.S. military base in Italy.

About half, 51.6%, of the surveys were completed by the theatre's Executive Director or another staff member and 48.4% were completed by the treasurer, finance chair, president, or another volunteer. This may indicate that theatre staff were more likely to see and respond to the survey than those handling the finances for all volunteer theatres.

Another indicator of who responded to the survey is budget size. Slightly more than 2/3rd of AACT member theatres have budgets under \$100,000; however only 40% of theatres completing the survey have budgets that size. The median current operating budget of survey respondents was

Some theatres can operate on ticket sales, in-kind contributions, and a few individual donors, but most need diverse streams of revenues to truly serve their communities and realize their missions

\$163,925, with budgets ranging from \$1000 to \$3,043,690. When comparing current budgets to last year's budgets, 66.13% showed an increase, 20.97% were about the same, and 12.9% of theatres' budgets decreased. Delta Center Stage in Greenville, MS noted its decrease in this year's budget was "due to [last year's] overwhelming box office success of *Shrek The Musical*. Current year's season will not contain a similar box office buster."

The average budget change was an increase of 10.65%. Budgets under \$100,000 added an average of 19.34% and those over added an average of 5.17%. Looking ahead, 58.33% of theatres expect to increase their budgets next year, 30% expect little change, and 11.67% expect to decrease their budgets.

The survey asked theatres about the changes in revenues from a number of sources. Surprisingly, in all areas, most theatres reported revenue has increased or stayed about the same. More than 50% of theatres reported increases in ticket sales (68.85% of theatres reporting ticket sales), individual contributions (62.71%), memberships (54.76%), rental income from facilities (54.29%), and fundraising events (54.35%). However, large theatres (budgets over \$100,000) were more successful with fundraising events; 59.38% of large theatres, but only 42.86% of smaller theatres saw increased event revenue.

Larger theatres tend to have more diverse sources of revenues. The majority of theatres reported revenues from ticket sales (98.39% of theatres), individual contributions (95.16%), grants (85.48%), corporate/business contributions (85.25%), concessions (82%), in-kind contributions (80%), program ad sales (75.8%), fundraising events (74.2%), and memberships (70%). But only half of small theatres, compared to 92% of large theatres sell program ads; concessions is a revenue source for 91.89% of large theatres, but only 2/3rd of small theatres; 97.37% of large theatres receive grants, 2/3rd of small theatres do; 84.2% of large theatres conduct fundraising events and 58.33% of small theatres do; and 73% of large theatres and one third of small theatres receive rental income on their facilities.

In addition, larger theatres are more likely to have revenue from tuition/education fees (78.95% of large theatres/20.83% of small), other program fees (59.46% of large theatres/25% of small), rental of costumes/props/etc. (48.65% of large theatres/25% of small), and gift shop/merchandise (21% of large theatres/4.17% of small).

Of course, the picture is not rosy for every theatre. Small theatres that saw decreases in revenues were most likely to see them in corporate/business contributions (35.29% of small theatres reported decreases), memberships (33.33%), grants (25%), individual contributions (22.73%), and ticket sales (21.74%). Large theatres that saw significant decreases most likely saw them in memberships (29.63% of large theatres reporting) and program ad sales (22.86%).

Some theatres are working to increase the diversification of their revenue sources. Spotlighters Theatre in Baltimore, MD is seeking to expand corporate giving and rental income. The Austin (TX) Theatre Project is looking to add grants and corporate sponsors to their revenues. DLO Musical Theatre in Danville, IL is "seeking additional grant sources, especially

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since our major grantor, the Illinois Arts Council, might not be funded this year."

The Sauk in Jonesville, MI is starting a "second stage" season next year and is seeking corporate sponsors for the first time in 2016. Manoa Valley Theatre in Honolulu, HI started participating in the United Way unified giving last year. In Texas, the Playhouse San Antonio obtained its Mixed Beverage Permit and opened a lobby bar, increasing its revenue dramatically. Walpole Footlighters, Inc. is hoping to realize some investment income.

The Suffield (CT) Players and Stage 212 in LaSalle, IL attributed increased revenues to fundraising that paid for major repairs: a new roof (Suffield) and exterior doors and windows (Stage 212). Bay City (MI) Players is in the middle of a capital campaign and was able to increase its operating budget 20%. State Street Theatre Co. in New Ulm, MN reported, "We now own the theatre property so 'rental income' has dramatically increased." Playhouse 2000 in Kerrville, TX expanded its facility, "allowing us to move into School Break/Summer Drama Camps. We project that these will have some positive net income."

The Prescott (AZ) Center for the Arts plans to partner with other nonprofits in the area to share costs as well as revenue, including some shared fundraisers and also shared that after receiving several bequests, "We are being much more aggressive about suggesting patrons include us in their planned giving." Owosso (MI) Community Players has plans to

utilize Crowd Funding. Greater Grand Forks (ND) Community Theatre is looking into "social entrepreneurship." Cottage Theatre in Cottage Grove, OR shared, "Long-term, we plan to increase our Endowment so that it provides an additional sustainable revenue stream."

Ferndale (CA) Repertory Theatre was able to increase its budget as the "result of hiring a competent Artistic Producing Director who was able to increase all the income sources. This takes our theater from the edge of disaster to almost enough resources to operate."

Some theatres can operate on ticket sales, in-kind contributions, and a few individual donors, but most need diverse streams of revenues to truly serve their communities and realize their missions. Thanks to the theatre contacts who filled out the survey sharing their revenue sources, their successes, and some challenges. ♦

Next up in "What's Trending" is volunteers. Check it out in the Jan-Feb issue of *Spotlight*.

To participate in "Trending" surveys, be sure your theatre contact's email is in the AACT database. Check your record online or contact the AACT office.

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FROM PLAYWRIGHT JULIAN WILES

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Inga Binga

JFK's World War II Romance with an Alleged Nazi Spy

Gardner Reed as Inga Arvad and Phil Mills as Jack Kennedy

Intrigue, espionage, and forbidden romance abound in *Inga Binga*. The play draws on the amazing and true story of Ensign Jack Kennedy's World War II romance with Inga Arvad, a glamorous suspected Nazi agent whom Jack called "Inga Binga." With FBI agents listening in from the next room and reporters from *LIFE* magazine in hot pursuit, a full-blown farce is soon in the works. *Inga Binga* is a face-paced romp through this steamy footnote in American history. Cast: 7M, 2W



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Fruitcakes

Try a New Flavor This Holiday Season

Matthew G. Myers as Skeeter

Mix together a batch of fruitcakes, a Christmas hog named Buster, 10,000 outdoor Christmas lights, two teetotaling spinsters, a chicken pox epidemic, and a town of eccentrics, and you've got *Fruitcakes*, a recipe for fun-filled holiday hilarity. Into this world comes a runaway city kid who finds himself spending Christmas in a town where he thinks everyone is "nuttier than a fruitcake."

Cast: 4M, 4W, 6 boys, 7 girls (extras as desired)

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AACT's Tim Jebesen Elected Vice-President of International Theatre Association

by Roger Ellis

This year's AACTFest National Festival took place in my own home town of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and what a pleasure it was to see shows from all around the nation and overseas! I sampled the workshops and talk sessions, and I chatted-up old friends and met some new ones. And I spent a lot of time talking with conference-goers about international theatre activities.

AACT's International Committee is my favorite working group, and this year we ushered-in a new Chair: Tim Jebesen from Midland, Texas. In speaking with Tim after our meeting, we discussed the impact on AACT troupes of traveling overseas to share their work on world festival stages. Tim has toured his own work from the Midland Community Theatre on more than one occasion, most recently in 2012 to the aita/iata World Festival and Congress in Tromsø, Norway.



Tim Jebesen's 2011 production of *My Way* at the aita/iata International Congress and Festival in Tromsø, Norway
Photo: Midland Community Theatre

Tim wrote me later about the great advantages of touring a show to an international festival. He remarked, "the experience of preparing the show and then traveling and performing in a different country develops great excitement among my theatre volunteers and donors." In short, it was a tremendous morale-booster for his ensemble, the theatre, and his theatre's donors.

Also, this year Tim was elected Vice-President of the International Amateur Theatre Association (aita/iata) at the World Congress in Ypres, Belgium. I pointed out to him the need for us to encourage more AACT theatres to tour their work internationally. His predecessor on the AACT International Committee, Jim Sohre, had relentlessly encouraged this, and I hoped that Tim would now help to continue those efforts.

Tim agreed, saying, "during the festival, there is a tremendous amount of sharing and learning from people in other countries-everyone shares the common bond of theatre even if we don't

share a common language. Each and every time, I have returned enriched and excited to incorporate new ideas from the festival into our local theatre." He and I also agreed that more features in *Spotlight* magazine might help to spark more interest among AACT member theatres.

Tim has also been appointed by the Executive Board of aita/iata to join the selection committee for the 2017 Mondial Festival scheduled to be held in Monaco. Hopefully we'll see a number of AACT member theatres sending applications to the committee before the Fall, 2016 deadline. At the 2013 Mondial, the Arlekin Players from Needham, Massachusetts brought their Russian-language production of Chekhov's *The Bear* to Monaco. They

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astounded world audiences by their ability to present the work in the Russian language, and by using many of Stanislavski's approaches to characterization.

In the next few issues of *Spotlight* I will say more about the advantages of taking your group to international festivals. A number of our members with global touring experience have helped me develop some important points on this subject, and I look forward to sharing them with you. ♦

Roger Ellis has been a member of AACT's International Committee for the past five years, and served as Vice-President of the International Amateur Theatre Association from 2013 - 2015.



Cast, crew, and director of *The Bear* following their performances in Monaco, with AACT Region I Representative Bevie Lord (right)
Photo: Arlekin Players Theatre

AACT Artistic Directors Conference Charlotte, NC, August 21-22, 2015



By David A. VanCleave
Artistic Director, Des Moines Young Artists
Theatre (Des Moines, Iowa)

My favorite part about theatre has always been the community it creates. So, naturally, I was thrilled to attend the Artistic Directors Conference in Charlotte. I was eager to network with my peers, soak up the lessons and tips shared by artistic directors who are far more experienced and successful than me, and share all the wonderful things about my home theatre in Des Moines, Iowa.

I learned invaluable tips on everything from production effects, to working alongside a Board of Directors, and from honoring our incredible volunteers, to expanding our donor base. We discussed insurance policies, audition protocol, resources, season selection, and many more topics that theatres face every day around the nation. I began to value every single tip that was shared with me and was furiously writing pages and pages of notes, calling my coworkers on break to tell them everything I was learning.

Perhaps more interesting than the tips themselves, were the accompanying stories of success. It wasn't enough to show each other BlissLights® (a remarkable lighting instrument that creates firefly-like effects), we were able to hear how they enhanced productions and connected with audiences across the nation. It wouldn't do us any good to exchange titles of our most successful shows if we didn't explain *why* they were successful and how much the audience loved them. True connections with our audiences motivate us to do the best work possible. The passion with which my colleagues shared their success was inspiring. The root of theatre is storytelling, so it was no surprise our weekend was filled with them.

The most crucial part of storytelling, however, is listening. I looked around the room in awe as I watched colleagues from

multimillion dollar organizations and those in their infancy, take notes on the suggestions and tips we all shared. It was a beautiful reminder of why we work in the field we do—community.



Attending the AACT Artistic Directors Conference in Charlotte, NC

Murray Chase (Venice Theatre), JC Conway (Flowertown Players), Jacqueline Engel (Community Theatre League), Ginger Heath (Union County Playmakers), Pamela Livingstone (Hickory Community Theatre), Tarra McCain (Fort Bend Theatre), Collice Moore (Magnolia Arts Center), Devin Pendleton (PHCC Patriot Players), Janice Schreiber (Magnolia Arts Center), David VanCleave (Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre), and facilitator Rick Kerby (Manatee Players).

A community is only as strong as its weakest members. We must continue to collaborate—with companies a few miles away or on the other side of the country—to grow and expand America's Theatre. Regardless of our age, experience, or budget, we all have stories to tell. And it is our duty to our audiences and our art itself to listen to those stories. The success of one means the success of many. Whether we're telling the story of a forty-year-old company with a four million dollar budget, or are planning our first season, we all need someone to listen. And luckily, with AACT, we do. ♦

AACT Artistic Directors Conference Tacoma, WA, August 28-29, 2015



By Susan Goes
Executive Director, Cottage Theatre (Cottage Grove, Oregon)

True confession: the first thing I did upon returning home from the Artistic Directors Conference in Tacoma was go to the AACT website to find out when the next educational conference would be! As I write this recap three weeks later, my brain is still full of the inspiration and ideas that came out of that gathering.

We were a diverse bunch who sat around a conference table in the stunning Hotel Murano in downtown Tacoma. (If you're ever in Tacoma, be sure to check out the incredible stained glass Viking boats suspended from the Murano's lobby ceiling!) Our theatres ranged in age from the just-started-in-2015 Casper Theater Company to the 97-years-old-and-still-thriving Tacoma Little Theatre. Our annual budgets ranged from \$10,000 to over \$1 million. Some of us came from theatres producing a traditional season of plays and musicals, some of us worked in children's theatres, some in senior theatre, and one group even specialized in creating original ensemble works through improvisation.



Attending the AACT Artistic Directors Conference in Tacoma, WA

Don Barney (Encore Senior Players), Daved Driscoll (SkyVault Theatre Company), Rich Early (Encore Senior Players), Kathleen Edwards (The Hi-Liners Musical Theatre), Donna Fisher (Casper Theatre Company), Susan Goes (Cottage Theatre), James Mierkey (Golden Chain Theatre), Charlie Monte (Pend Oreille Players), Jennifer Piccolotti (Golden Chain Theatre), Robert Picklesimer (Creative Dramatics Workshop), Richard Reuther (Valley Theatre Company), Bobby Ryan (San Juan Community Theatre), Chris Serface (Tacoma Little Theatre), Rose Shannon (Bigfork Community Players), Michele Shapero (Bigfork Community Players), David Vale (Bigfork Community Players), and facilitator Keith Dixon (Spokane Civic Theatre).

The diversity around the table was stimulating and perspective-building, but what was more remarkable was how much we all had in common. We all struggle with choosing a season that balances what our actors and directors want to do

with what our audience wants to see. We all wear a dizzying number of hats in our organizations, shifting between the roles of producer, marketer, fundraiser, and "chief cheerleader" on a regular basis. It was this commonality that fueled our passionate sharing with one another on topics that ranged from managing auditions to building budgets to allocating rehearsal time.

The conference is over, but the benefits continue. Since getting home, we have shared production manuals, new actor packets, and play submission forms. We each now have a new network of wonderfully-friendly colleagues who we can turn to when we have a question or need an "outsider's perspective" on a niggling problem. Spending a weekend with fellow community theatre leaders was energizing and inspiring – and I can't wait to do it again! ♦

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Bevie Lord



(From left to right): Region I Representative Bevie Lord, New Hampshire State Contact Joe Pelonsi, AACT Ambassador Patricia White, former New Hampshire State Contact Lowell Williams, and Pennsylvania State Contact Marsha Amato-Greenspan pose for a photo between sessions of the New Hampshire Community Theatre Festival. The event took place in Rochester, NH on September 12, 2015.

AACT Region III Representative Lucinda Lawrence (left), Vice President for Festivals Kay Armstrong and convention attendee Christi Thomas (right) discuss ways to promote benefits of AACT festival participation. The three were in attendance at the Ohio Community Theatre Association Convention, held September 4-7, 2015 in Cincinnati, OH.



Dawna Kornick

Ron Ziegler



South Carolina State Contact JC Conway (left) discusses a fine point of theatre direction with AACT President Murray Chase (center) and participant David VanCleave following the day's sessions at the AACT Artistic Directors Conference, held in Charlotte, NC, August 21-22, 2015.

Colorado State Contact Brad Moore (left) and AACT Governance Committee Chair John Davis go over the festival light plot before the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition Festival. The event was held in Denver, CO September 11-13, 2015.



Brad Moore

Cranston Dodds Joins AACT Staff

AACT is pleased to announce Cranston Dodds has joined the AACT staff as Member Engagement Director. Cranston will utilize his strong theatre experience to communicate with AACT members and provide personal and professional guidance to inspire networking among current members and to encourage new members.

Cranston, who goes by Cran, received a BA in Theatre from the University of North Texas and has performed in summer stock, toured with dinner theatre productions, and managed the Denton (TX) Community Theatre. He has also been the Artistic Director of the Warehouse Theatre in Corsicana (TX), a company member of Casa Mañana in Fort Worth (TX), and was Director of the National Touring Theatre, Bravvo Productions for ten years. Cran is a Past President of Texas Nonprofit Theatres, currently serves as a board member for the organization, and has served as a Theatre Review panelist with the Texas Commission of the Arts. Cran was a Texas



Cran Dodds

high school theatre teacher as well as a theatre teacher at one of the highest-ranking International schools in Cairo, Egypt. Cran is an adjudicator, having judged state theatre festivals in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. He has also adjudicated the Texas Youth Festival on many occasions. Cranston is married to playwright/teacher Frances Seidensticker and is the proud father of a son and two daughters.

Cran is looking forward to working with AACT and the dedicated individuals that create magic through theatre across the nation. His contributions will assist AACT to encourage the standards of excellence in community theatre and increase relationships among theatres across the country.

AACT encourages anyone to ask Cran how to engage with AACT programs and benefits, and connect to the national network of America's theatres and theatre lovers. ♦

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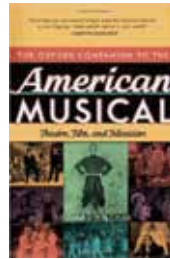
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The Oxford Companion to the American Musical

by Thomas Hischak

With more than two thousand entries, this illustrated guide offers a wealth of information on musicals, performers, composers, lyricists, producers, choreographers, and much more. Biographical entries range from early stars Fred Astaire, Bing Crosby, Mary Martin, and Mae West to contemporary show-stoppers Nathan

Lane, Savion Glover, and Kristin Chenoweth, while composers Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, and Andrew Lloyd Webber all have articles, and the choreography of Bob Fosse, Tommy Tune, and Debbie Allen receives due examination. The plays and films covered range from modern hits like *Mamma Mia!* and *Moulin Rouge!* to timeless classics such as *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Show Boat*. Also, numerous musicals written specifically for television appear throughout, and many entries follow a work - *Babes in Toyland* for example - as it moves across genres, from stage, to film, to television. *The Companion* also includes cross references, a comprehensive listing of recommended recordings and further reading, a useful chronology of all the musicals described in the book, plus a complete index of Tony Award and Academy Award winners.

Thomas Hischak is also the author of *The Emperor of North America*, one of the AACT NewPlayFest winners.

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Neil Simon Festival
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The winning script will receive a staged reading during the 2016 Neil Simon Festival in Cedar City, Utah (July 11 - August 13). The selected script may also be considered for full production in a future season. The winning playwright will be invited to be a part of the staged reading process and will be offered a stipend to help him/her attend.

Script must be full-length (80 - 120 minutes). Must be a character-driven American comedy, an original work that has not been professionally produced. Musicals are accepted.

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Electronic submission only.

Submission fee: \$25, \$55 for written critique

See the website for more details:
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For More New Play Contests see aact.org/contests

Southern Playwrights Competition
Jacksonville State University

The Southern Playwrights Competition seeks to identify and encourage the best of Southern playwriting. Playwrights must be native to or a resident of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, or West Virginia.

Plays must deal with the Southern experience.

Entries must be original, full-length plays. No musicals or adaptations will be accepted. Play cannot have had a professional production.

Award: \$1,000 will be presented to the first-prize winner, as well as a consideration for production by the Jacksonville State University Department of Drama.

Deadline: December 15, 2015

No electronic or faxed submissions.

Send entry form with play submission to:
 Sarah Moersch
 Department of English
 Jacksonville State University
 700 Pelham Road North
 Jacksonville, Alabama 36265-1602

See the website for entry forms and more details:
jsu.edu/english/southpla.html

Now that the economy seems to be improving, are you producing riskier shows? What are those shows?

Responses from AACTList

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

Last summer we did *Rent*, which we considered to be pretty risky in our conservative community. It was not easy getting it approved by the board. We did not offer it as part of our season package, but rather as a one weekend fundraising event. It was a blow out success. I am confident that we could have sold out another weekend if we had been able to extend the run. Many of our stalwart season ticket holders surprised us by attending and we also attracted a lot of newcomers. Audiences were truly amazed by what a great production it was. Proceeds from the production funded the replacement of all the doors and windows on the front of our building. I'm glad we took the risk!

Natalie Smigel, Business Manager
Stage 212, Inc., LaSalle, IL
stage212.org

We usually do at least one "risky" show each year: shows with nudity, strong language, and/or adult themes. Most of these plays are non-published plays by regional playwrights. Economics is part of the reason, with a 60 seat theater, \$10 tickets, and an average audience of 40, \$100 royalties for a play makes almost any play financially risky. Our Board of Directors has been very supportive of "risky" plays as long as it is "good theater" and "people are properly warned".

We are a mainstream theater with a conservative, older audience that does mostly mainstream plays, but we also do plays that our audience has never heard of like *Love Song* by John Kolvenbach and *When Bullfrogs Sing Opera* by Carl Williams.

We are currently presenting *Calendar Girls*, which has tasteful nudity. It is smashing our all time attendance records. For the first time in our history, the entire run sold out before opening night. We produced a 13-month calendar with nude photos (like the play, the calendar shows nothing that shouldn't be seen) of all cast members and the crew. The calendars are

available for a \$15 donation, and will make more profit than the production. And yes, the Producer and Director (me) appears nude in it.

Risky shows we have done: *The Vagina Monologues* We ended up remounting the show three times to meet the demand. *Tracers*, a gut level story of soldiers in the Viet Nam war with really strong language and subject matter. *Torso* by Seattle Playwright Keri Healey. A dark drama about a brother and sister who plan and murder their other brother. More popular than you might think. *Love, Loss And What I Wore* by Nora and Delia Ephron. Adult language and themes, presented as a readers theater as was done in the original production. Most of our audience looks forward to our "off beat" plays.

Doug Bechtel, President
The Actors Theater of Orcas Island, Eastsound, Washington
orcasactors.com

P.S. If you know of a play that is good but maybe a little too off-beat for most theaters, pass it on to me: doug.becht@orcasactors.com. Thanks!

We live in a very conservative community, but we've done some interesting shows that have gone over very well, including some less traditional shows. *Looking for Kitty* by Maryjane Cruise, *Clutter: The True Story of the Collyer Brothers Who Never Threw Anything Out* by Mark Saltzman, *Miracle on South Division Street* by Tom Dudzick, *I'll Be Back Before Midnight* by Peter Colley, and *Indoor/Outdoor* by Kenny Finkle.

Next year we're planning a super-traditional show (*Nunsense* by Dan Goggin) and a very contemporary show focused on the role of technology in contemporary society (2.0 by Jeffrey Jackson).

Our feeling is that if we keep doing great productions, our audiences will keep coming back. We probably can't do *Equus*, but we may be able to stretch the imagination of our local theater community.

Larry McLellan
Lompoc Civic Theatre, Lompoc, California
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Conflict: Opportunity or Threat?

by Twink Lynch

Human relations experts tell us conflict is inevitable in human life, and it need not be a negative experience. Tell that to the volunteer actor who has just been reamed out by an out-of-control director or to the box office volunteer who has just been excoriated by a customer dissatisfied with his/her seat location!

But when you realize that all work groups are made up of individuals who come to the situation with different experiences, knowledge, capabilities, and emotional characteristics, perhaps it is no wonder there are conflicts.

Conflicts arising from “goals or purpose” take longer and are more basic and vital to the life of the organization.

Douglas McGregor, noted researcher in human relations, points out: “On the one hand, these differences provide the essential ingredients of innovation, creative problem solving, organizational accomplishment. On the other hand, these same differences are the source of inevitable conflict and disagreement that may interfere with effective group

and organizational accomplishment. They can lead to major inefficiency, delay and frustration, and to the least common denominator decisions and highly unsatisfactory solutions.”

Some conflicts are easier to deal with than others. Those arising out of “facts or data” can be resolved when all pertinent information is shared with those concerned. Conflicts arising out of “processes or methods,” in which people disagree about the best way to achieve a goal or solve a problem, can be settled through the use of sound problem-solving techniques. Conflicts arising from “goals or purpose” take longer and are more basic and vital to the life of the organization. Again, problem-solving efforts involving openness, active listening, and investment in the overriding need for the organization to survive will usually bring an end to the conflict. Those arising from basic “values” will probably need a third party to help negotiate a solution, because it is very hard to change people’s basic core values.

But sometimes the conflict seems to be generated by one individual or a small group whose needs, expressed or hidden and often rooted in personal power, are not being met and whose style of communication tends to be disruptive, not collaborative. In such people, there is no commitment toward a common goal; no sense of team spirit in which “all ideas belong to all participants.” Getting one’s own way is

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more important than finding the best understanding of and solution for a problem. Disruptive people tend to use defense mechanisms such as aggression, withdrawal, repression of others' points of view, or projection of blame onto others. They also tend to become locked into their own viewpoints and are unwilling even to consider the possible value of others' ideas. Frequently they will resort to personal attacks instead of focusing their disagreement on the issues.

So, what's to be done?

Denial/withdrawal/avoidance will not work. This kind of conflict will not just "go away." "Making nice" or smoothing over also will not work for the long haul, although it may be a

Try to get on the table what really is at stake in the conflict — what does the irate person really want?

temporary solution under certain circumstances. We can use power in several ways: we can take a vote where the majority rules, or as president/boss/person-in-authority, we can fire the offending person. Keep in mind, though, that the "losers" in such solutions will often not support the decision and may work actively against its implementation, which could ultimately destroy the group, depending on what's at stake.

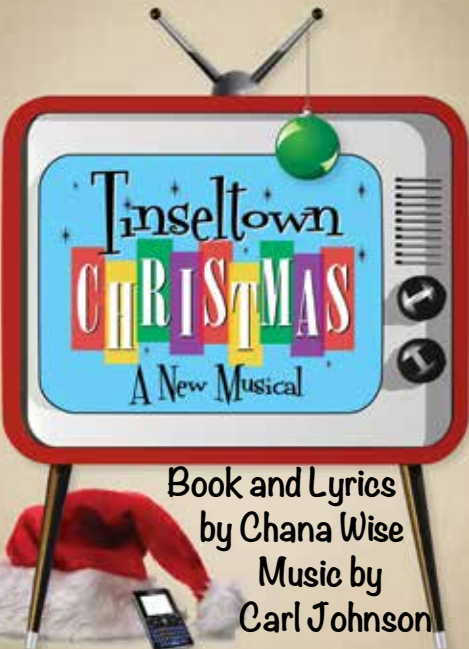
Compromise sometimes works, but research has found that such solutions ultimately satisfy no one. However, compromise may buy some time to create other options.

For the long-range good of the theatre, some kind of confrontation is going to be necessary. If the conflict is at an open meeting, rehearsal, or performance, the best thing to do is get the parties in conflict away from their "audience." Recess or adjourn the meeting; turn the rehearsal over to the

continued on page 32

What happens when the ghosts of Jimmy Stewart, Judy Garland, Bing Crosby, and Natalie Wood, pop out of their classic Christmas movies, on a 24-hour assignment to bring cheer to a pair of holiday haters?

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stage manager or dismiss the actors; pull the angry audience member into a quiet office. Try to get on the table what really is at stake in the conflict — what does the irate person really want? Bring in a third party to facilitate the interaction, if necessary. A cooling-down period may be required. Try not to be intimidated by angry feelings and loud voices — that's often what the angry person wants.

Remember that not all needs can be met, especially if they are in direct conflict for available resources (time, money, position/role). On the other hand, try to make space in your thoughts and feelings for the person-in-conflict to be “partly right.” Sometimes what is really needed is skill in active listening so the person throwing the tantrum feels he

Just because his
behavior is disruptive
doesn't mean he is 100
percent wrong about
everything.

is finally being heard. Just because his behavior is disruptive doesn't mean he is 100 percent wrong about everything. Respecting his right to have a different point of view can go a long way to diffusing a situation.

If you have given the situation your really best shot and the person-in-conflict has been unable to give an inch, then termination of the relationship may be the only option left. It happens that certain core values can never be changed. It

also happens that some people are psychologically so needy that our theatres simply cannot “fill their buckets.”

Hopefully, the conflicts we experience in our theatres will not come to such a sad and unsatisfactory end. One of the things we can do to help is to get our people trained in active listening techniques. Get help from your local colleges with speech communication departments or from big employers who have human relations experts on staff. Don't wait for the conflicts to surface. Schedule training sessions for Board or membership or volunteer meetings now. You'll be glad you did. ♦

The material in this article is based on University Associates' 1974 *Annual* and Marlene Wilson's book, *Survival Skills for Managers*, 1981, Volunteer Management Associates, 320 South Cedar Brook Rd., Boulder, CO 80304.

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*, available at aact.org/store.

Reprinted from *Boards in the Spotlight*. (page 59). Originally appeared in *Spotlight* May 1996.



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New Roles

Harrisburg, PA - **Brett A. Bernardini** has been named Executive & Artistic Director of **Theatre Harrisburg**, effective August 3, 2015. His responsibilities include the operations and artistic vision of the theatre. Brett comes to the organization having directed over 300 productions, worked as a singer, actor, and dancer, and served as the founding artistic director and CEO of the Spirit of Broadway Theatre in Norwich, CT. He also worked as a teacher for two decades, creating the Connecticut High School Music Theater Awards in 2008. Brett replaces **Sam Kuba**, who has retired.

Winter Haven, FL - **Theatre Winter Haven** announces the hiring of **Dan Chesnicka** as the theatre's new Producing Director. He follows founding Producing Director **Norm Small** who retired last August. Dan has contributed to Theatre Winter Haven as a performer and technical specialist for approximately seven years. He came to Florida in 1991 through Disney's CareerStart program, and worked for 12 years at Disney's Magic Kingdom and Animal Kingdom, mostly in guest relations. In 2005, Dan founded his own product development company, Auburndale Investments, where he and his partner developed and found buyers for several products. He took the reigns at the theatre on September 1, 2015.

Cheyenne, WY - **The Cheyenne Little Theatre Players** (CLTP) announces the hiring of **Amy Gorbey** as the theatre's Managing Director. She will serve as the face of the theatre group, keeping regular office hours, working with other local organizations and dealing with day-to-day business issues. A native of Pennsylvania, Amy has produced the Youth Summer Stock program with CLTP for the last two and a half years. She holds a bachelor's degree in theatre and a master's degree in acting from Temple University. Her career work ranges from community theatre to professional acting. She began her new position with the theatre in August 2015.

Hurst, TX - **Artisan Center Theater** has announced Jeremy Blaido as the organization's new Chief Administrative Officer. He will manage the staff, oversee fund-raising, and have direct responsibility for the government affairs of the theatre. Mr. Blaido will also manage the efforts of the Board of Directors and participate with the Executive Producer in overseeing the administrative, marketing, public relations, and various business affairs of Artisan Center Theater. After a 20 year career with Chuck E. Cheese, building it to the brand it is today, Jeremy is happy to call Artisan Center Theater home. ♦

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Nov 7	West Virginia Theatre Conference West Virginia Theatre Festival	WV Wheeling	304-290-2582 wvtheatre.org
Nov 11-14	Florida Theatre Conference Florida Community Theatre Festival	FL Gainesville	941-488-1115 x247 flatheatre.org
Nov 13-15	Kentucky Theatre Association Kentucky Community Theatre Festival	KY Bowling Green	859-312-1041 theatreky.org
Nov 20-22	Theatre Association of New York State TANYS Festival 2015	NY Auburn	315-685-8193 tanys.org
Nov 21-24	AACT & University of Wisconsin - Madison National Managing Directors Conference	WI Madison	886-687-2228 aact.org/madison

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

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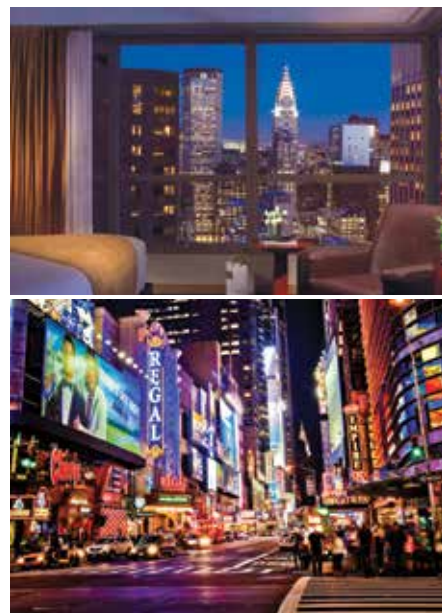
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