

spotlight

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Murray Chase
AACT President
2015-2017

I'm sending a shoutout this issue — one that's well-deserved — to the community theatre festival in Colorado. This is the fifth consecutive AACTFest cycle that I'm serving as commissioner there, and I am more impressed — and have more fun — each time.

The Colorado Community Theatre Coalition is an all volunteer organization. It is a standalone operation, not supported or governed by any multidivisional state theatre association. There is extraordinary work by several theatres each festival.

And the sense of fun is electric. Why?

First, almost everyone sees every show (8 - 9 each festival). The audiences are supportive, encouraging, and friendly. Groups learn from each other as colleagues and friends. Negativity of any kind is almost nonexistent.

Of course there is a sense of competition; after all, it is a hierarchical festival. But the feeling I get when I'm there is, "We're trying to do our best work. We want you to do your best work. Let's celebrate the accomplishments."

I know Colorado is not alone; this sense of community at a community theatre festival happens in many states across the country.

As we experience AACTFest in the states and regions in the next 12 months, let's share those stories with each other. Let's do good work. Let's connect with each other. Let's help each other. Let's be a little silly from time to time.

Let's make sure our festivals are "festive." Otherwise, it's just a bunch of shows.



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Barbara Baker Malangoni (Enola) and Mary DeBoer (Trudy) in a scene from the AACT NewPlayFest 2016 world premiere of *Wash, Dry, Fold* by Nedra Pezold Roberts at Chicago Street Theatre in Valparaiso, Indiana. Photo by Linda M. Lee

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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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DEATH BY GOLF

By
Gregg
Kreutz

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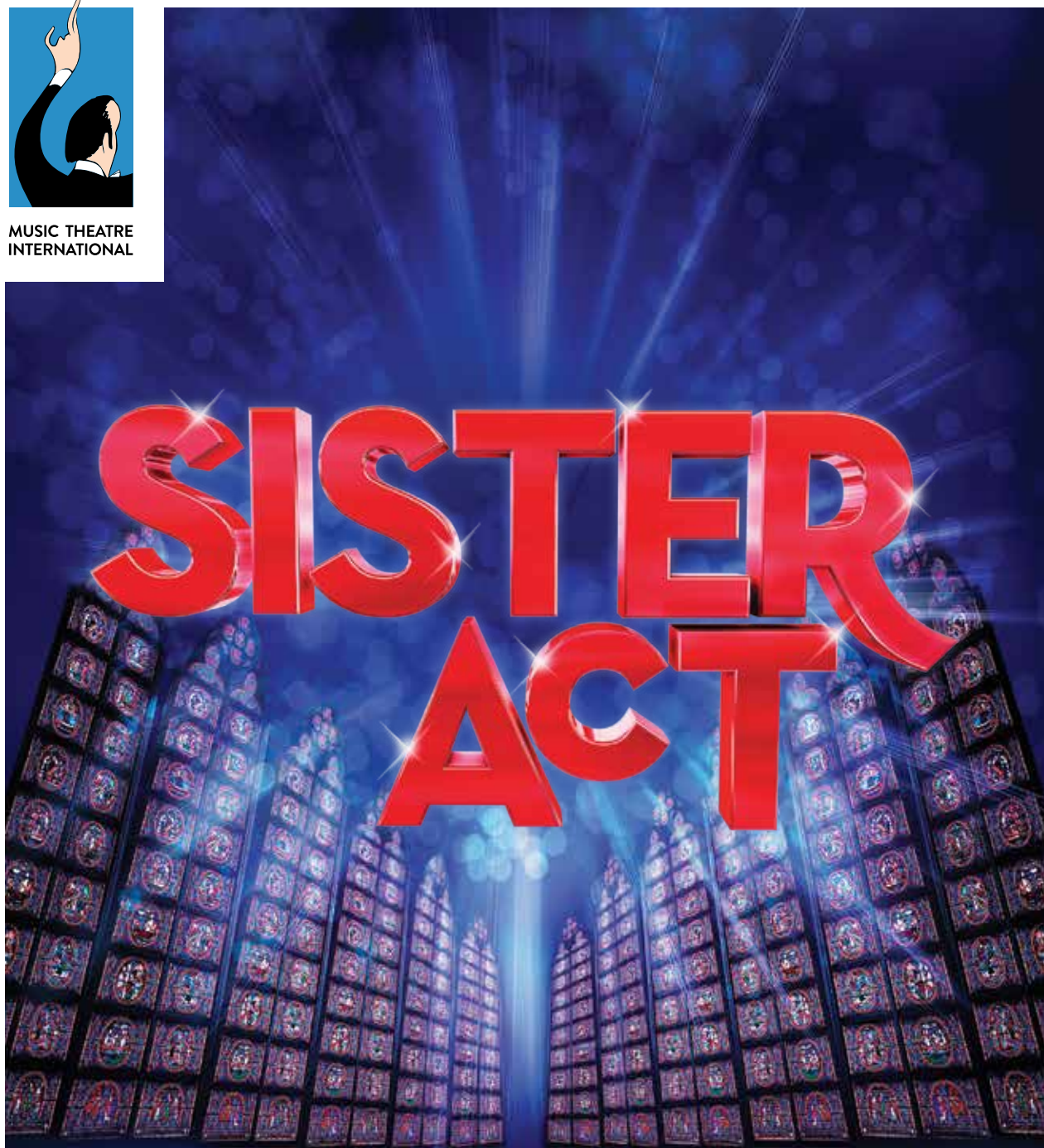


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Upcoming Meetings

AACT Summer Meetings 2016

July 5 - 9, 2016

Annual AACT Membership Meeting and Awards

July 9, 2016

New York City, NY as part of the AACT New York Adventure 2016

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office or visit aact.org/calendar for details.

Upcoming Events

AACT 2016 TEAM Conference

August 19 - 21, 2016

Des Moines, Iowa

Hosted by Des Moines Community Playhouse

An expanded educational conference, with four tracks focusing on theatre education programs, artistic direction of a theatre, development and marketing, and technical theatre.

Visit aact.org/team for details

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Spotlight

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



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Who's Responsible for Closing the Gaps? We Are!



by Ken Roberts

Many of us feel secure in the knowledge that no matter what circumstances arise, we have the proper insurance coverage to handle any emergency. All too often, we find out there is a gap in our coverage, and it's usually after a horrendous claim. These catastrophic claims can put us out of business if we're not adequately protected, and someone should be held accountable to make sure this can't happen, but who?

More often than not, we rely heavily on our agents and brokers, as well as the insurance companies that they represent, to understand the various nuances of our dynamic industry. We assume that they know us well enough to anticipate virtually any disaster that befalls us, and they usually do, but what if they don't? After all, we're only human, and keeping up with the constant barrage of amendments concerning what insurance companies will and won't cover can be an extremely daunting task at times.

We choose our agents and brokers for a variety of reasons. They can be a brother or sister-in-law, a member of our board of directors, or maybe even one of our major donors. Regardless of how or why

we choose them, it is imperative that we develop a relationship with them that ensures that they understand the intricacies of our theatre operations, and that they can convey these accurately to the carriers they represent. Theatres are not just about putting on shows. Consider the organization that recently found out that the insurance company that had covered them for quite some time did

**We've got to ask the right questions.
Does this agent know what we do?
Do they represent other theatres? Do
the companies they represent insure
other theatres?**

not cover special events at all. They had to go shopping in a hurry! The exposures surrounding community theatre are as unique as the theatres themselves, so it is essential that all parties be on the same page.

What all of this really boils down to is this: We are ultimately responsible for making sure our theatres are completely protected. It is up to *us* to do our homework when choosing the people and companies that will represent *us* when we suffer a loss. We've got to ask the right questions. Does this agent know what we do? Do they represent other theatres? Do the companies they represent insure other theatres? Have they ever even been inside a theatre like ours? We can't be afraid to check references. If they work for other theatres, ask for names and contact those theatres and see what they think of the level of service they receive and how their claims experiences have gone. If we do our part to make sure that our insurance representatives are doing their part, the question of accountability becomes a mute point. We will have closed any gaps in coverage long before our next calamity strikes. ♦

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AACT NewPlayFest

The city of Valparaiso, Indiana welcomed the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of **Wash, Dry, Fold** by Nedra Pezold Roberts with a near capacity crowd in attendance at Chicago Street Theatre in Valparaiso's opening night festivities on May 20. In addition to the wonderful opening night production, the show's audience and guests were invited to an after party in downtown Valparaiso. The production ran through June 4.



Playwright Nedra Pezold Roberts, a second time winner of AACT NewPlayFest, attended the opening weekend of the production and met with the production staff. She reported, "I had maybe the best learning session with the two directors, Jonnie Pera and Traci Brant. My whole focus is to learn everything I can about the playwriting craft and particularly about what would make my play stronger. Traci and Jonni were amazing; these two women gave me insights into what a director looks for when reading a new script, what strategies they use in solving staging issues, what few but specific spots in my script could be smoothed out to make the flow of the action stream better.

It was like mining gold. Honestly, as careful as a playwright tries to be in editing a script, there's no substitute for working through the rough spots in getting a production on its feet. I have a tight script, but they showed me ways to transition more smoothly from one scene to another, to keep in mind necessary costume changes when scenes move from one location to another. These aren't the first order of my concerns while I'm creating characters and structuring plot, but from now on they will definitely be a focus when I reach the editing stage.

"The actors were also another enlightening resource. As I did with the director and actors with the AACT NewPlayFest 2014 production of *The Vanishing Point* at California Stage in Sacramento, California, the Chicago Street Theatre actors and I traded insights into the script, joked about the rich back stories they created for my characters, and shared emotional reactions to intense moments in the play. They made me more aware of the process they use in breathing life into my characters, another insight I'll keep in mind as I write. And where else can a playwright find such generous tutors?



Linda M. Lee

Opening Night of the AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere of *Wash, Dry, Fold* by Nedra Pezold Roberts at Chicago Street Theatre/Community Theatre Guild in Valparaiso, Indiana.

Front Row (l-r) Linda M. Lee, Jack K. Ayre & Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation; Barbara Baker Malangoni, cast/*Enola*; Mary DeBoer, cast/*Trudy*; Caity Mullen, cast/*Arlene*; Nedra Pezold Roberts, playwright; and David Pera, cast/*Mick*
Back Row (l-r) Carrie Granatelli Blomquist, Dramatic Publishing; Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director; Marty Weisenbacher, Technical Effects; Sheri Nash Braun, Rehearsal Assistant; Daena Sisk, Stage Manager; Paul Braun, Sound Design; Ed Hubbard, cast/*Uncle Slack*; Bob Cooley, Lighting Design; Tevlyn Schwerd, Costume Design; Traci Brant, Director; and Jonni Pera, Director
Not pictured: Eric Brant, Set Designer



Linda M. Lee

Nedra Pezold Roberts and Jim Henry visit at the opening of *Wash, Dry, Fold*. Nedra and Jim were winners of NewPlayFest 2014, the winning plays, *The Vanishing Point* and *Jellofish* as well as the other winners of AACT NewPlayFest are available from Dramatic Publishing - dramaticpublishing.com

"This whole AACT experience—both the 2014 California Stage production and this 2016 Chicago Street Theatre production—has enriched my perspective and my work. The thrill is wonderful, but the education and opportunity are priceless."

Opening next for AACT NewPlayFest will be the world premiere of **Gracefully Ending** by A.J. DeLauder at Theatre Arlington in Arlington, Texas on July 1. The production will run through July 17. Tickets can be reserved at theatrearlington.org

Set in 2009 amid the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia, *Gracefully Ending*, depicts, through flashback, the tale of Beth Fuller, a divorced, former bank clerk facing homelessness. Beth's only son, Andrew, is emotionally distant and has no room for her. So Beth attempts to move in and help her ailing widowed mother, Margret, who has recently been falling down late at night. But Margret doesn't want help and the two begin feuding, especially after Beth learns that Margret believes she sees her late husband, Hank, in the house. In desperation, Beth calls on a doctor to declare her mother incompetent and even asks Andrew for help. The fight grows between the two women, much like the early season snowstorm outside, and soon both will face the same ultimatum: resign control to another or face death alone.

The 2016 AACT NewPlayFest calendar also includes

The Emperor of North America by Thomas Hischak
Silver Spring Stage, Silver Spring, MD
September 16 – October 1, 2016
ssstage.org

Shades of Valor by Karen L. Lewis
Twin City Stage, Winston-Salem, NC
October 28 – 30, 2016
twincitystage.org

Get Out of Dodge by Jeanne Drennan
Venice Theatre, Venice, FL
November 3 - 20, 2016
venicestage.com

The 2016 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of **Lighthouse** by William Baer at the Windsor [Colorado] Community Playhouse September 25 – October 10, 2015, continued with the world premiere production of **Laguna Beach, Ohio** by Malcolm MacDonald at Stage Right Productions/2nd Street Theatre in Bend, Oregon March 25 – April 9, 2016, and the world premiere production of **Wash, Dry, Fold** by Nedra Pezold Roberts at Chicago Street Theatre/Community Theatre Guild May 20 – June 4, 2016.

The seven AACT NewPlayFest 2016 scripts will be published by Dramatic Publishing Company in an anthology and Dramatic is licensing production rights for the plays, a big boost to the launch of any new script! The six plays from the inaugural AACT NewPlayFest are available in an anthology from Dramatic Publishing ([dramaticpublishing.com/p3742/American-Association-of-Community-Theatre-AACT-NewPlayFest-Winning-Plays:-Volume-1-\(2014\)/product_info.html](http://dramaticpublishing.com/p3742/American-Association-of-Community-Theatre-AACT-NewPlayFest-Winning-Plays:-Volume-1-(2014)/product_info.html)) and licensing rights are available through Dramatic Publishing.

Sign Up NOW to be a Reviewer for AACT NewPlayFest 2018

Individuals are asked to volunteer to read and score the scripts. Each script will be evaluated 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. Application form for Reviewers is available at aact.org/newplayfest

Submit a Script for AACT NewPlayFest 2018

Scripts will be accepted between August 1 and September 30. Non-musical, full-length plays only. Scripts must be unpublished and must not have received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre's production is to be a world premiere.) Only one script per playwright accepted. No fees required for AACT member playwrights, \$10 script processing fee for non-members. For more information and script formatting guidelines visit aact.org/newplayfest

New plays are exciting! Participate in AACTNewPlayFest 2018! ♦

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Producing Theatres for AACT NewPlayFest 2018

AACT NewPlayFest 2018 has kicked off with the selection of the Producing Theatres. These Producing Theatres will read scripts that make it to the final round, select the winning plays, and produce the world premiere of the winning plays between June 2017 and December 2018.



Cottage Theatre

Cottage Grove, Oregon, Region IX
cottage theatre.org

Cottage Theatre produces a year-round main season of six productions and serves an annual audience of more than 10,000. From the humble beginnings under an Army surplus

parachute on the lawn of a local motel in 1982, Cottage Theatre now performs in its own 150-seat facility that was built with community support in 1998 and expanded in 2006. During the summer, theatre camps are offered for children ages 5 through 14. It prides itself on being an organization fueled by volunteers. All personnel, from actors to directors to set painters to lighting designers to ushers, are volunteers.



Stage III Community Theatre

Casper, Wyoming, Region VII
stageiii theatre.org

Stage III opened in a small, rented storefront over 35 years ago. It has evolved into Casper, Wyoming's largest community theatre. Stage III now owns its building and produces a minimum of

six main stage shows, a Renaissance Faire, dinner theatre, and a variety of community programs each year. From the classics to the latest Broadway hits, and even original works by Casper playwrights, Stage III has been bringing professional quality live theatre to the greater Casper area for over 33 years. Each production is made up entirely of volunteers, from the producers, directors and actors, to the all important set builders, sound and light technicians, ushers, box officers, and backstage crew.



The Vortex Theatre

Albuquerque, New Mexico, Region VI
vortexabq.org

Founded in 1976, The Vortex Theatre is New Mexico's oldest continually producing black box theatre, producing an average of ten plays per year, and a pioneering venue for classic, contemporary, and cutting-edge theatre. The theatre continues to entertain audiences with some of the city's finest stage productions, from local and national premieres to new interpretations of classic works. Recently, educational programs have expanded with development of programs for students ages 8 - 17, and for seniors.



County Seat Theater Company

Cloquet, Minnesota, Region V
countyseattheater.com



The County Seat Theater Company has been producing top-notch theatre in Carlton County since 1987. In 2008 the nonprofit organization moved into its current facility, the Encore

Performing Arts Center and Gallery. The Arts Center includes a space for local artists to showcase their work and provides the community with a full season of plays, concerts, and events. The theatre produces four to five adult productions throughout each year. It also produces children's theatre four weeks during the summer, allowing over 160 youth to participate. There is an additional week dedicated to teen theatre, allowing another 30 teenagers to perform.



Lincoln Community Playhouse

Lincoln Community Playhouse

Lincoln, Nebraska, Region V
lincolnplayhouse.com

The roots of the Lincoln Community Playhouse are deep. Lincoln Community Playhouse has produced plays for 70 consecutive years. After performances in hotels, a bathhouse, and a synagogue, the Playhouse built a theatre in 1971. In 1976 the Playhouse opened The Gallery Theatre, and in 1980 opened The Children's Theatre. The Playhouse produces an eight-play season, but is now most noted for its outreach programs that feature Title I school shows, a senior group, and the Penguin Project.



Elkhart Civic Theatre

Bristol, Indiana, Region III
elkhartcivictheatre.org

Established in 1946 as the "Elkhart Little Theatre," Elkhart Civic Theatre was incorporated in 1960 and bought their current

home, The Bristol Opera House, in 1961. Built in 1897 as the town post office/barbershop/gymnasium/theatre, the building now operates as a year-round, community theatre seating 191 patrons. Elkhart Civic Theatre produces a six-show season, mixed with musicals, comedies, and dramas, plus two youth theatre (ECTeam) productions as well as concerts, classes, and cabarets rounding out the year.

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

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

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

be received in the AACT office by September 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.



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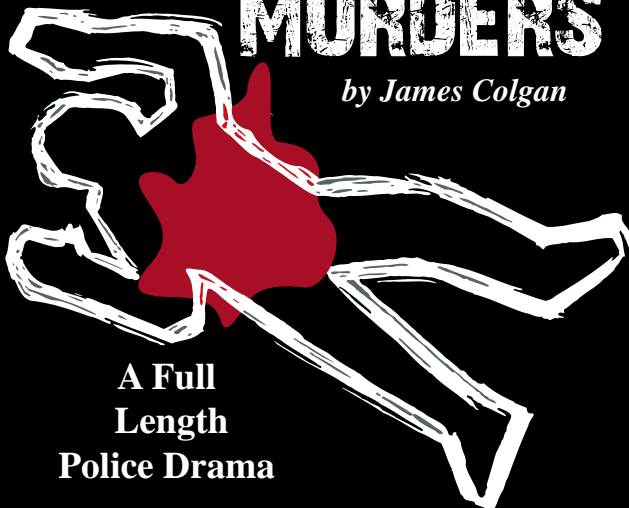
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ASCAP is the oldest, largest, and foremost organization in the United States that licenses the right to publicly perform copyrighted musical compositions. It makes it easy to legally utilize music by providing an annual license at a reasonable flat 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. ASCAP's function is to protect the rights of its members by licensing public performances of over 8.5 million works, and distributing royalties to its members for performances of their copyrighted works. 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. 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. To learn more about the ASCAP Community Theatre license and the AACT ASCAP Discount Program go to the AACT website at aact.org/ascap or contact the AACT office. ♦

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Cast of 6 (3m,3w) 85 min. running time

*script/info at **InfinityStage.com***



Molly Paradise (**Ashley Mitchell**) just can't seem to get rid of the bizarre crew of misfits who have invaded her home, as eccentric hitchhiker Winifred (**Judy Bruno Bennett***), kneeling, wonders if it's time to start looking for a new boyfriend, and hopelessly inept med student Muffin (**Kalista Tazlin**), checks for signs of life while trying to avoid spilling her wine in Act III of the New York Production of *The Will to Get Married* at Hudson Guild Theatre. *member Actors' Equity Association



How to Make Social Media Work With Your Website

By Scott Bloom

Part 1: *It's a Jungle Out There.* Five Reasons You Must Keep Your Website Up To Date!

Social Media is the greatest marketing tool ever! You're reaching more people faster and with more timely information than your website ever could. Cast, crew, and audience members are providing content for you - instant reviews, tweets of praise, or just that someone is at the theatre. And it's all free with hardly any effort and little technical know-how.

So now that your group has its own Facebook page, Twitter account, YouTube Channel, and more, why bother with the expense and grief of keeping up a website? Let me give you five very good reasons to maintain your website, and next time I'll tell you how you can make all of them work well together with minimal effort and technical knowledge.

1: Your website is your name, brand, identity, reputation, and the last thing you can afford to lose.

Two major points I want to strongly emphasize:

1. Control your domain name. Do not, under any circumstances, allow it to fall into the control of someone else. If your domain name lapses it could end up linking to a foreign holding company that would be happy to sell it back to you for a lot of money. Registration is cheap. Bite the bullet, spend a hundred dollars or so and register it for the next ten years.
2. As long as you have a domain name, you must have a website. Your website directly reflects your group's reputation and it must contain real information about your organization. There are lots of available options for a free single page placeholder, or a redirect to Facebook or a "personal" page. A redirect is not acceptable; it must be under your domain name and be searchable.

Free social media is a wonderful concept, but it isn't a business model, so if you think you have any real control over the information you're posting, think again.

2: You decide the look and feel of your website.

You choose a look that reflects the personality and professionalism of your organization - colors, fonts, images, type sizes, what's important and goes at the top of the page, your logo on every page, a history, and a usable menu system that's consistent on every page. You may include links to neighborhood restaurants

and businesses, maps and directions, your State and Regional associations, and the AACT member logo. Most importantly, your website states what you're doing now, with show times, dates, and locations, and how to get tickets! If you want your history, lists of shows and casts, photos, and much more displayed in a sensible chronological order, it isn't going to happen on Facebook. Believe it or not, a lot of people do not use Facebook. If they can't find your location, what you're doing next and when, and whether seats are available or not, they're not going to waste their time.

3: It's your data, keep copies.

ALWAYS keep a copy OR TWO of your website! That includes backups of the database if you have one. It's a good idea to keep a second backup copy on a separate hard drive. Update the backup whenever something changes. (There are automatic sync programs that will do updates on a regular schedule.)

You don't have to put the entire archive online, but archive it, never delete it. Keep the date you took them offline and other useful information with the files, keep everything. It isn't as large as you might think. Most of even the biggest websites are only going to be a couple of Gigabytes of data and can easily fit on a single DVD or a 4 or 8 gigabyte thumb drive.

4: Maintain the CONTEXT, not just the content.

Social media sites make major and minor changes and will not consult you. Maintain the integrity of your organization's data and the context in which it is displayed. Targeted ads, news stories, and political commentary that may appeal to some of your viewers but may be offensive to others, are the price you pay for "free" social networking.

Worse can be the risk of an attack by someone you don't even know. Social media commentary can be controlled to an extent, but what about the fakes, unflattering reviews on other people's pages, and the comments you don't get to in time? Who knows why some people are immature enough to want to damage your reputation? On your website you don't have to publicly deal with the disgruntled auditioner, or someone offended by your choice of material.

5: Social Media is a business, not a charity.

There are three simple facts about Social Media that you should remember, not just for the sake of your organization, but also for yourself:

1. Facebook spends more than a billion dollars a year on infrastructure, nearly a billion on development, and has more than 12 thousand employees. That's a lot of operating expense, and yet their revenue is more than four times their overhead costs and growing. So, if you aren't paying to use their site, how do they make these astronomical amounts of money? Advertising is the simple answer, but it's much more than that. They are paid to collect your data, mine it for every piece of information they can get, and supply it to their advertisers. Free social media is a wonderful concept, but it isn't a business model, so if you

think you have any real control over the information you're posting, think again.

2. All the major players in Social Media are large corporations. Google, Microsoft, Apple, Comcast, AOL, and others are supplying their huge arrays of servers, storage, and infrastructure for you to use because they make money gathering and selling your data.

On your website you don't have to publicly deal with the disgruntled auditioner, or someone offended by your choice of material.

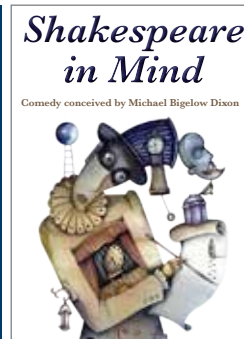
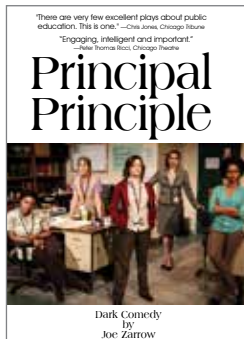
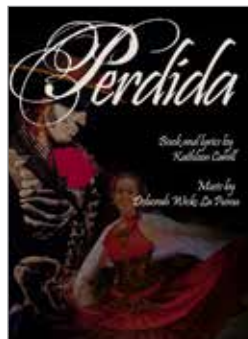
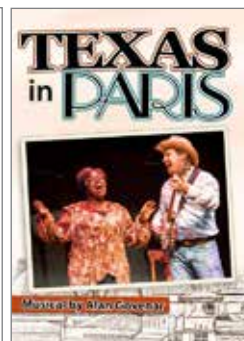
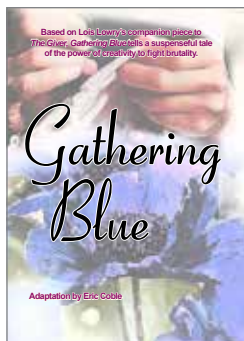
3. The Internet may have been invented to exchange information, but it has long since evolved into a chaotic and overwhelming bazaar of news and opinions, facts and misinformation, hackers, viruses, corporate and government propaganda, good, bad, and often pornographic entertainment, and social networking that can range from the cute and clever to the snide and rude, and very often both in a single sentence. The amount of information that travels the web in a day is simply staggering. As long as there is good information, entertainment, and real human interaction out there, there will also be misinformation, tasteless and degrading culture, cyber bullying, and political manifestos by people with malformed agendas and worse spelling and grammar. And, of course, puppies and kittens.

Knowing these things should make you cautious of the quality of information that surrounds nearly everything on the Internet. Getting free advertising assistance on Facebook, Twitter, etc. is both a benefit and a potential curse. If competing with kittens is as bad as it gets, consider yourself very lucky. Your group page can be cluttered with distracting news story feeds, advertising for stuff that's irrelevant to your audience, and the very real potential for someone with a bad attitude to post a diatribe of hateful and damaging comments about your work.

Preserve your name, reputation, integrity, artistic vision, history, content, context, and relevant information, and probably your sanity on your website that you control. Maintaining a well thought out and effective website can take time and cost a few dollars, but it's a small price to pay for your organization to control information that you and your audience can trust. ♦

Long time AACT board and committee member, Scott Bloom is the State Contact for Maryland, and an AACT Fellow. He has more than 35 years in the IT industry, is an expert at network security, and has been working with Internet technology and building websites for more than 20 years.

See the next issue of *Spotlight* for
Part 2: *Making Your Website Better Than Ever*



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AACTFest 2017

AACTFest 2017 national community theatre festival, will be held June 26-July 1, 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota.

Workshops and meetings will be in the Mayo Civic Center, with performances in the Rochester Civic Theatre, also located in the Civic Center complex.



Rochester at night, from Silver Lake

Leading up to the excitement of the national festival are approximately 40 state festivals with more than 200 theatre productions, followed by nearly 60 theatre companies performing in regional festivals.

and networking opportunities, ending with a festival awards presentation.



The national festival will feature 12 productions that have received top honors in their respective state and regional festivals. All participating theatre companies adhere to a common set of rules documented in the *AACTFest 2017 Handbook* (available at aact.org/handbook).

The AACTFest 2017 national festival also includes a theatre management conference, educational workshops, top vendor displays, social events, sightseeing



Rochester Civic Theatre, site of AACTFest 2017 performances

AACTFest is an exciting process, involving community theatres in every corner of the country, and on military bases in Europe. Plan to join this invigorating theatre event by entering your state festival and start on the road to the national festival—or mark your calendar and attend this great celebration of American community theatre!

aact.org/aactfest-2017-national-festival

Call for AACTFest 2017 Workshops

The AACT Workshops Committee is offering you the opportunity to share your expertise with others at the national festival of AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, MN June 26-July 1. Send your proposal for a workshop and don't be afraid to think outside the box. Proposals need to be received by September 1, 2016.

Some popular workshops in the past have covered these subjects:

- Acting (various styles and techniques)
- Musical Theatre
- Directing
- Starting a Special Needs Theatre Program
- Theatre for Youth
- Administration
- Technology (IT)

We would also love to see more proposals for workshops on:

- Technical theatre
- Improvisation
- Anything else you can think of!!!

Workshops are well received when those in attendance have a chance to learn by doing, so please keep that in mind as you put together your proposal. Most workshops will be in the traditional 75-minute format, but we're open to ideas for longer and shorter presentations.

The RFP (Request for Proposals) form is now available online. You will be able to complete and submit the form online. Just go to aact.org/workshop.

The Committee is also interested in suggestions for topics. Email your ideas to Chris Serface (chris@tacomalittletheatre.com). We are looking for new and exciting workshops.

Help us enrich the creative experience in Rochester at AACTFest 2017.



Linda M. Lee

Scene painting workshop hosted by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre at AACTFest 2015

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AACTFest Myths

to dispel common myths related to festival participation

AACTFest MYTH: Entering a show is the only reason AACTFest exists!

NOPE! The festival is attended by people, like you, who participate in literally all aspects of live theatre: audience members, costumers, script writers, actors, lighting designers, box office volunteers, board members, well, you get it - everybody! The Education Committee uses your survey requests (and conversations from around dinner tables or hanging out in the hotel lobby) to put together informative and enlightening community theatre educational opportunities. You can learn and embellish your skills in

literally every aspect of theatre... I am not exaggerating! (If you have an expertise, you are invited to share it as a workshop presenter.) From these workshops you can begin networking, gain inroads to resources, share your successes from overcoming a challenge, AND earn AACTEd Hours for your attendance and participation. So, entering a show is actually only a part of the AACTFest experience.

Submitted by Nancy Eppert, AACT Education Committee member, who attended her first AACTFest in 2003. She participated in workshops, watched shows, visited with the many welcoming members of AACT, and well, fell in love with the organization. Nancy is pleased to share what she has learned from participating in all aspects of AACTFest, and notes that her experience is assisted by the insights of many theatre friends she has acquired by attending every AACTFest since 2003.

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Avoid paralysis by analysis!

Though having a thorough analysis of your case is important and necessary, be brief and to the point when stating your case. Overwhelming your listener with facts and figures may end up being a distraction and lead to indecision.

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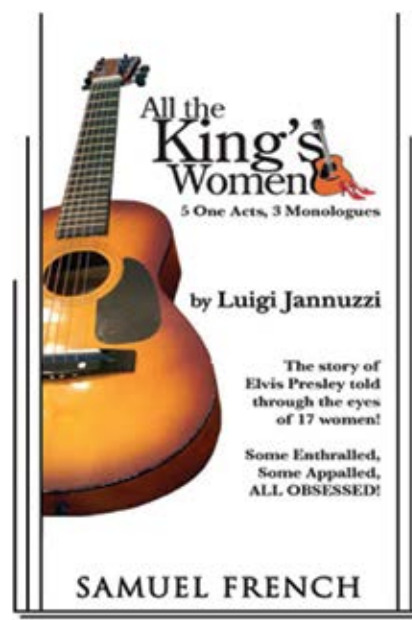
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Years of Service 2016

In celebration of our volunteers, the AACT Board of Directors recognizes the following volunteers who have served AACT as Board members, on committees, task forces, and in other ways, and as State Contacts. Years of Service pins are presented to recognize five-year milestones of volunteer and staff service.

AACT congratulates and appreciates these volunteers with AACT Years of Service pins.

Years of Service

30 Years

Jim Carver (Erie, Colorado)
JoAnne Nissen (Racine, Wisconsin)
John Viars (Des Moines, Iowa)

25 Years

Jon Skaalen (Stillwater, Minnesota)

20 Years

Tim Jebson (Midland, Texas)
Bill Muchow (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

15 Years

Lisa Bell (West Memphis, Arkansas)
Kristi Quinn (Dakota City, Nebraska)

10 Years

Richard Bostwick (Hallowell, Maine)
Lynn Ruhl (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)
Gil Savage (San Diego, California)

5 Years

Emily Anderson (Midland, Michigan)
Tom Eacker (Broken Bow, Nebraska)
Rich Gannon (Naperville, Illinois)
Kris Geddie (Venice, Florida)

Staff Service

15 Years

Darlene DeLorenzo (Lago Vista, Texas)



I love being an individual member of AACT. It has helped me so much to grow - to become a better director, a better actress, AND a better audience member. Because of this, I am now a better contributor to my home theater. And besides all that, IT'S FUN!!!"

Lynn Nelson, Tupelo, MS

AACT Election Results

Congratulations to those elected to AACT leadership positions

Secretary

Frank Peot (Sun Prairie, Wisconsin)

Members at Large

Ron Cameron-Lewis (Ontario, Canada)
Kristofer Geddie (Venice, Florida)
Sara Phoenix (Tulsa, Oklahoma)
Chris Serface (Tacoma, Washington)

Nominating Committee

Penelope Notter (Grand Rapids, Michigan)
John Viars (Des Moines, Iowa)

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ALL SHOOK UP



What's Trending: Lighting

By Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director

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

Lighting was the subject of a Trends survey distributed in May. Responses were received from 119 theatres in 37 states. The median budget for theatres responding was \$100,000. The theatre's primary performance facility is owned by 57.1% of theatres.

Of those completing the survey, 48.7%, were lighting designers. However, 38.7% of those responding serve in more than one position. Often the lighting designer is also the technical director and/or the lighting operator. This is more often true in smaller theatres than in larger ones. Respondents from theatres with budgets under \$100,000 were almost twice as likely to hold multiple positions (50.9%) than those with larger budgets (27.4%).

Learning to operate the lighting system must happen on the job in most theatres.

Lighting designers are volunteers in 82.5% of smaller theatres and in 40.3% of larger theatres. Designs are created by paid staff in 32.3% of larger theatres; 12.3% of smaller theatres and 27.4% of larger theatres hire lighting designers on a per show basis. Lighting operators/technicians are volunteers in 84.9% of theatres, however, 24.2% of larger theatres have paid operators. Hanging lights and maintaining equipment is the responsibility of per show designers and crew in 47.5% of theatres, however, for 32.1% of smaller theatres those chores are handled by one person. A resident technical director carries the responsibility for 21% of larger theatres and 12.5% of smaller theatres.

The primary performance space is rented or leased by 26.9% of theatres responding to the survey. 40% of those theatres use lighting equipment supplied by the facility. 77.8% of theatres renting provide their own lighting operators. The rest hire the facilities' operators, with half required to do so and half by choice. Training is provided by only 8.9% of those facilities.

Learning to operate the lighting system must happen on the job in most theatres (69.7%) as they have no training program, although 7.6% do have internship programs that include training in lighting.

Lighting instruments (or fixtures) are owned by 90.8% of theatres in the survey. Some or all instruments are rented

by 14.3% of theatres and 18.5% borrow or supplement by borrowing instruments. 62.2% of theatres borrow from other theatres, with local high (or other secondary) schools (31.1%) and local colleges/universities (24.4%) also frequent sources. Port Aransas Community Theater in Texas borrows and lends, "We also allow these groups to borrow from our theater." Other sources noted for borrowing equipment include local rental companies. Actors' Theatre in Grand Rapids, Michigan cited, "Partnerships with professional theatrical lighting companies."

Lighting inventory that theatres own (and are still using) include a wide range of styles and ages. Fresnels are in use by 80.7% of theatres. Lekos (ellipsoidal reflector spotlights) manufactured over 20 years ago are still in use at 55.5% of theatres and 61.3% use enhanced lekos, manufactured more recently. Parcans help light the stages of 62.2% of theatres. Clip lights are useful to 18.5% of theatres and 20.2% own moving lights. Follow spots are owned by 57.1% and 47.1% utilize strip lights. Only 2.5% are using home-made coffee can or stove pipe lights.

LED lighting instruments are owned by 52.9% of theatres. 11.8% of theatres rent or borrow LEDs. 25.8% of larger theatres and 45.6% of smaller theatres are not yet using LEDs. However, 74.8% said they plan to switch to LED fixtures. Changing all at once is the plan for only 2.5% of theatres; 38.7% plan to slowly integrate LED fixtures, and 33.6% plan to change, but don't yet have a budgeted plan in place.

Many theatres look forward to the advantages of LED lighting.

When asked why or why not change to LEDs, 25% of theatres noted the high expense of changing. Dorset Playhouse in Vermont explained, "Although the trend is going to LEDs, they are very expensive for us." Conifer StageDoor Theatre in Conifer, Colorado agrees, but says, "Hope to pick up more used [non-LED] fixtures as bigger theatres convert to LED."

Other theatres cite problems they see with LEDs. Chattanooga Theatre Centre, Tennessee, "When LEDs dim like analog lights they'll be most useful." In Lynn Haven, FL, the Kaleidoscope Theatre purchased some and found changing "Requires additional training to be used correctly. Older volunteers have not accepted the challenge." Cottage Theatre in Cottage Grove, Oregon said, "Don't want to use them for front lighting (bad for eyes, etc.), but excellent for washes and cycloramas."

Many theatres look forward to the advantages of LED lighting. The Encore Theatre in Tulare, California, cites “Flexibility, cost of operating, less heat. (A/C costs money).” The Colonial Players, Inc. of Annapolis, Maryland, “Flexibility and ease of color changing as well as enhanced lighting effects.” And the Vermillion Players, Inc. of Pontiac, Illinois, “We perform in an open air building during the summer, and switching to LEDs would greatly reduce the heat onstage.” Auburn Players Community Theatre pointed out that LED systems do not need dimmers; that the long life and energy savings over time will repay the initial costs, but LED stage lighting technology is still in its infancy. The Manhattan Arts Center in Kansas upgraded its house lights to LEDs and estimate saving 75 – 85%. Casper Theater Company in Wyoming is sold, “LED is the only way to go!”

Budgeting for new lighting equipment often means finding grant money

The survey also asked about dimmers and controls. DMX signal has become the standard in the last decade (replacing analog) and almost 9 out of 10 theatres in the survey are now using it (89.2% DMX vs 10.8% analog).

Dimmers in their primary performance facilities are built in (not movable) reported 62.6% vs 37.4% that are using portable dimmers. However, 69.8% of those using portable dimmers in their primary performance facilities seldom move them. Fully computerized lighting control boards are now being used by 71% of larger theatres and 50.9% of smaller theatres (budgets under \$100K). 26.1% use boards with preset sliders that also have computer programming capability. Simple preset slider boards are still being used by 21.1% of smaller theatres, but only 4.8% of larger theatres.

Although most theatres have upgraded their lighting equipment as technology has improved, few have found funding

to replace the entire system at once. Still 7.9% have installed entire new systems in the last three years and 9.6% plan to do so in the next three years. Interestingly smaller theatres are ahead of larger theatres here. 8.9% of smaller theatres vs. 6.9% of larger theatres recently installed new systems, but going forward, 12.1% of larger theatres and 7.1% of smaller theatres plan to install new systems. Acquiring a few instruments every year is the plan for 49.1% of theatres. One third of theatres reported they have no plan for lighting upkeep/expansion in place (42.9% of smaller theatres, 24.1% of larger theatres).

Budgeting for new lighting equipment often means finding grant money. LED fixtures are tremendously more energy efficient than other systems, yet few theatres have looked into local power company programs to assist in upgrading to more energy efficient fixtures. 47.1% of theatres reported they don't know if such programs exist locally. 7% of smaller theatres and 4.8% of larger theatres in the survey have applied and 10.1% of theatres are exploring applying. Grants from other sources have been used by 15.1% of theatres to upgrade their lighting systems. The Sauk in Jonesville, Michigan was successful in securing grants: “Three seasons ago we installed \$54,000 worth of new lighting equipment and use almost all LED fixtures. The project was almost entirely funded through grants and donors.” ♦

Next up in “What's Trending” is the intersection of community theatre and local community issues and community-building. Check it out in the September-October issue of *Spotlight*. Do you have a topic you'd like to see in “What's Trending?” Send your subject ideas to Julie Crawford at Julie@aact.org.

The Trends survey indicated a desire for an article on LED systems. Look for an article on the accessibility, convenience, equipment, and operations of LED systems in a future *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.

Believe in the magic!

2016 NEW HOLIDAY MUSICAL RELEASES:
The Day Before Christmas by K. Jones, C. Jones and J. Strawn
The Gift of the Magi by Beverly Bremers and Faith Grant



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Careers in Theatre

Highlighting professional staff changes in theatre

Santa Barbara, California – **Ensemble Theatre Company (ETC)** welcomes **Jill Seltzer** as the new Managing Director. Jill has spent the past 20 years providing leadership to nonprofit organizations that focus on the creative arts. Most recently, Ms. Seltzer served as Executive Director of the Screen Actors Guild Foundation where she spearheaded the development of the Actors Center in New York City. Jill also served as Vice President of Institutional Advancement for WBEZ Chicago Public Radio raising over \$15M in capital campaign funds. “I’m looking forward to working with Jill as we continue to build the company” said Jonathan Fox, ETC’s Executive Artistic Director. “Having Jill on board will allow us to develop new artistic direction and programs.” Hats off to you, Jill and ETC!

Denver, Colorado – **Maureen Johnson Ediger** has been named Executive Director of **Phamaly Theatre Company**. Maureen has been a Phamaly board member since 2013. Prior to that, she served as Director of Strategic Advancement at Sewell Child Development Center. She leaves her post as Director of Leadership Programs at the University of Colorado’s School of Public Affairs where she worked for over a decade. After a national search, Maureen became the new Executive Director by demonstrating experience in leadership, strategic execution, financial acumen, and fundraising. She will lead Phamaly’s staff of six employees. Congratulations, Maureen!

San Antonio, Texas – **Nicole Erwin** has been appointed Executive Director of **The Overtime Theater**. Ms. Erwin holds a BA in Vocal Music from the University of Denver’s Lamont School of Music. She also serves as Executive Director of Texas Light Opera. In addition to wearing these very busy hats, Nicole has also been selected to sing with Opera San Antonio in their 2016 season. Overtime Theater is well known for its efforts to produce new works by local or relatively unknown writers. Introducing the San Antonio theatre scene to new works is a passion of Nicole’s and she serves this project well. We wish you the very best, Nicole!

Earlville, New York – **Earlville Opera House** is pleased to announce **Kate Castle** as the new Executive Director. Kate is a graduate of Ithaca College with a BA in Art History. She had the pleasure of interning with the Smithsonian American Museum and also with the Gooden Gallery in London, England. Kate will lead all operations including developing programming, marketing, donor cultivation, special events, managing staff and facilities, fundraising, and development. The Board of Earlville Opera House is very excited with this valuable addition to their performance family!

AACT welcomes submissions to *Careers in Theatre*. Positions listed are paid professional positions. Submit your new hires to Cranston Dodds at cran@aact.org.



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AACt Board Member at Large Rick Kerby attends a meeting of Florida Theatre Conference's Spring Fling, held in Winter Haven, Florida April 16, 2016. Florida State Contact Kristofer Geddie is second from the left in this photo.



photos by Ron Ziegler



AACt Past President John Viars, Des Moines Playhouse Development Director Nikki Severson, AACt Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler, Vice President for Festivals Kay Armstrong, Corporate Partners Manager Jill Patchin, and Past President Rod McCullough sit in the Des Moines [Iowa] Playhouse lobby during an AACt site visit, May 20, 2016.

AACt Vice President for Festivals Kay Armstrong, Corporate Partners Manager Jill Patchin, and Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler pose with statue in Lincoln Square in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, May 18, 2016. The three were in Gettysburg exploring potential sites for a future national festival.



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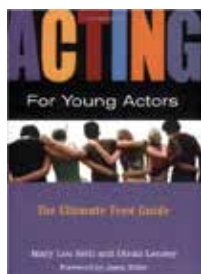
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Acting for Young Actors The Ultimate Teen Guide

by Mary Lou Belli & Dinah Lenney
Back Stage Books

Acting for Young Actors, aimed at teens and tweens, lets kids hone their skills and develop their craft. It begins with the five W's: WHO am I? WHAT do I want? WHY do I want it? WHERE am I? WHEN does this event take place? Sounds basic - but many young child actors are told simply to "get up there and act." This book explores each of these questions, using helpful exercises to allow young actors to work through problems of character identity and motivation. With comprehensive chapters on auditioning, rehearsal, and improvisation, plus a primer on how young actors can break into film, theatre, and television.

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American Alliance for Theatre and Education 29th National Convention

Boston, Massachusetts
July 27 - 31, 2016

In a city with a complex history of race relations and activism, this convention will engage in provocative dialogues about diversity and inclusion to move forward on multiple fronts. AATE will bring some of Boston's most renowned cultural, historic, and civic sites to life through the dynamic medium of theatre. Interact with characters from the past in order to understand the present and build a better future. The Freedom Trial, Museum of Fine Arts, Swan Boats, Shakespeare on the Common, and a historic pub crawl await!

The convention will feature a keynote address from Ali Stroker, a groundbreaking performer with an inspiring story. In 2009, Ali became the first actress in a wheelchair to earn a degree from the NYU Tisch Drama Department. This year, the GLEE and GLEE PROJECT star made history as the first actress in a wheelchair to appear on a Broadway stage, where she is currently originating the role of Anna in Deaf West's 2015 revival of *Spring Awakening*.

aate.com/mpage/2016Conference

Yale Drama Series David C. Horn Prize

Yale Drama Series
PO Box 209040
New Haven, CT 06520-9040

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

There is no application form or entry fee.

The winner of this annual competition will be awarded the David Charles Horn Prize of \$10,000, publication of his/her manuscript by Yale University Press, and a staged reading at Lincoln Center Theater. The winning play will be selected by the series' current judge, playwright Nicholas Wright.

Deadline: Submit between June 1 and August 15, 2016
Electronic submission strongly advised, hard copy also possible.

See the website for more details:
dchornfoundation.org/competition-rules

Cone Man Running Productions Five Minute Mile - Theatre on the Run

November 10 - 19, 2016

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conemanprod.wix.com/home

A theatre festival of five-minute plays. Each evening, twenty plays will be performed off book by a core ensemble of actors. Eight of those plays will be set for each evening, six will be drawn at random by audience members and the last six will be voted on by the audience. Every night will be a different experience! If the playwright is able to attend, the producers will work with them to assure their play is one of the set plays performed that evening.

Plays must be non-published. No musicals, adaptations, or theatre for young audiences. Five minute plays or monologues. No scenes or parts of other plays. Should be compact plays/monologues with a start, middle, and end. Playwrights may submit up to three plays, but only one play per playwright will be accepted for the festival. A total of 32 plays will be chosen for performance.

Submission deadline: July 31, 2016

See the website or facebook page for more details:
conemanprod.wix.com/home#!submit/zuemz
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Artistic/Managing Director Celebrations



Josh Darby is celebrating his second anniversary as Artistic Director of Academy of Children's Theatre in Richland, Washington. Congratulations, Josh!

academyofchildrenstheatre.org



Dennis Yslas is proud to announce his first anniversary as Administrator for Mainstage Irving-Las Colinas in Irving, Texas. In addition, Dennis has worked for the Board of Governors for Texas Nonprofit Theatres for 15 years! Dennis is one busy artist!

irvingtheatre.org
texastheatres.org



Sidney Nelson-Hunt is happy to announce her fourth year as Artistic Director of Sand Springs Community Theatre in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. Hats off to you, Sidney!

sandspringstheatre.com



Vicki Richards is celebrating her sixteenth anniversary as Artistic Director of Paradise Theatre in Gig Harbor, Washington!

paradisetheatre.org



Chris Serface is excited to announce his third anniversary as Managing Director of Tacoma Little Theatre in Tacoma, Washington!

tacomalittletheatre.com



Reggie Law is celebrating his seventeenth year as Managing Artistic Director of Oak Ridge Playhouse in Oak Ridge, Tennessee!

orplayhouse.com



As a new theatre the Union County Playmakers has used the AACT website for so many things pertaining to starting a theatre. It saved us valuable time, effort and money! I attended the Artistic Directors Conference in Charlotte, NC and have implemented ideas learned from other theatre directors. AACT provides amazing networking opportunities! We will always be AACT members.

Ginger Heath, President,
 Union County Playmakers, Monroe, NC

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Turning Board Members into True Believers

by Twink Lynch

In our efforts to develop an effective Board of Directors, we must not underestimate the value of Board Member education. We will need to be somewhat circumspect about this issue, however, because:

Many Board Members haven't a clue that they need any special education or training, thus aren't seeking it, and may be offended if we insist on it.

*Most of our Board Members are beset by **time** issues of the "not enough" variety, and they will resist extra meetings at all costs.*

So we need to strategize this program into our list of "Board Expectations" and into the already committed time frame of scheduled Board meetings, at least 3 to 4 times a year (a total of 9 to 12 sessions in a 3-year tenure).

What kind of training/education is needed? All Board Members need training in strategic planning, human motivation theory, the management cycle, group dynamics, the field of community theatre, and most of all, active listening — the single most important skill of Board Members.

One of the greatest services we can do for the business people, and what will hopefully turn them into "true believers," is training them in the process of making the magic of theatre.

Other training needs depend on your theatre's level of development. For Levels 2 or 3 (theatres having mostly production people as Board Members), a primary need would seem to be in financial management: how to read balance sheets and income statements; how to understand liability and insurance issues; perhaps issues regarding buildings and grounds; handicap accessibility; and, once staff is hired, personnel issues such as compensation packages, legal and personnel policies. And don't forget fundraising!

For Levels 4 or 5 (with one or more paid staff), more business people tend to be recruited for Board service, and the time factor is even more crucial. One of the greatest services we can do for the business people, and

what will hopefully turn them into "true believers," is training them in the process of making the magic of theatre. There are at least two good ways to do this. One is to bring member(s) of the current production staff to a Board meeting to talk about their roles in the upcoming production. Teach Board Members about casting, blocking, lighting, costume styles and textures, selection of music, choreography, and how to build a flat. There are so many secrets to share to make them more knowledgeable — and therefore more appreciative — of what it takes to create a theatrical production. Give them a glossary of terms, take them backstage, into the scene shop, and up to the light booth (maybe they'll finally realize why you need that computerized light board!).

Their involvement is an invitation to exercise their own creativity!

A second way is to design a Board Liaison program in which 2 to 4 Board Members (depending upon the size of the company) "adopt a production" to achieve goals such as: 1) helping Board Members understand how a production grows to performance level; 2) helping Board Members appreciate the hard work and time commitment of production volunteers; and 3) building communication bridges between Board Members and every one else in the organization (this helps eliminate a "them vs. us" mentality which sometimes exists in our theatres). This program is not an invitation to Board Members to co-direct the production, and that must be made clear.

Ideally, Board Liaisons attend auditions, the first read-through, one rehearsal a week, a tech-dress rehearsal, and the opening. They can bring treats if they want, but that is not required. They might offer to order, serve, and pay for the dinner served on the first long tech day; and they often arrange for the Board opening night gift (e.g., bottles of elderberry wine for *Arsenic and Old Lace*, individual "break a leg" cards with a candid rehearsal photo of that cast or crew member, or homemade kugel for *Beau Jest*. Their involvement is an invitation to exercise their own creativity!). It helps if a veteran and knowledgeable Board Member is matched with a new Board Member. They can go together to the auditions and first read

through, and then they can split up and come separately to subsequent rehearsals so the cast gets the benefit of two visits a week. That's the ideal.

However, the time reality must be addressed, and over the years, my theatre has made adjustments to the guidelines. Board Members are now asked to stay as long as they can, even if they can't stay the length of the rehearsal. Those who are fretful because they "aren't doing anything" are encouraged to bring some busy work to do during some of the more tedious scene work. Some Board Members don't participate at all, and that is okay — we don't want to make them feel guilty — that's the fastest way I know to lose an otherwise good Board Member.

Even though there are business people on the Board now, they don't necessarily know how to read a balance sheet, especially for a nonprofit organization.

If this idea appeals to you, I suggest getting your Artistic Director or individual show directors sold on the concept. Then get Board Members involved in the design of the expectations of the program, and especially what out-of-pocket expenses might be incurred, so you won't be asking too much from the start. You might try it on a pilot basis, evaluate it, adjust it, and go from there.

Level 4 and 5 theatres have other training needs as well. Even though there are business people on the Board now, they don't necessarily know how to read a balance sheet, especially for a nonprofit organization. How pledges are recorded and accounted for might be a helpful kind of learning.

Ask your Board Members what they wish they'd known before coming on your Board.

They might need training in investment issues and policies, personnel law, insurance issues, capital campaigns, planned giving instruments, etc. Strategic planning is particularly important for theatres functioning at Level 4 or 5, and many of our Board Members are woefully undereducated and inexperienced regarding effective planning.

To start an education program, ask your Board Members what they wish they'd known before coming on your Board and what would make the biggest difference to them right now. Find people to do the training from Board or Staff, other nonprofits, colleges, or human resources departments in big companies. Hopefully, they will be skillful, articulate, energetic, and prepared. Don't let them "wing it!" Design a 3-year program and check it with the new Board at the beginning of every fiscal year. Make adaptations as necessary. Handouts are good for adult learners. Be creative! Be inspirational! Do your job well, and they will return the favor by doing their jobs well, and, when they go on other Boards, they will raise the level of Board performance all over your community. Now, there's an outcome devoutly to be wished! ♦

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight, page 71.

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardsmanship for Spotlight for many years. Many of her articles are compiled into a relevant book for boards: Boards in the Spotlight, available at aact.org/store.



AACT's *Spotlight* offers informative articles. As president of our not-for-profit theater board, I find Twink Lynch's column to be particularly insightful and helpful.

**Candace Andrews, President
Valley Theater Company, Prosser, WA**

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possible.**

If your light board operators are volunteers, where do you find them?

Responses from AACTList

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

The Evergreen, a small community theater in the foothills west of Denver, offers a program called EP Academy for our volunteers. The program features training for various backstage jobs taught by designers and stage managers. Areas of instruction include light board operator, sound board operator, costumes, stage crew, and stage management. There is also a class in sound design using Qlab that is very popular. We have a lot of folks who are interested to learn to work backstage. We get initial information from interested volunteers from our online volunteer registration form.

John Davis
Evergreen Players, Evergreen, Colorado
evergreenplayers.org

Whitefish Theatre Company finds volunteers to run the light board from the high school drama program, from word of mouth, and mainly from friends and family of the actors.

Gayle MacLaren, Executive Director
Whitefish Theatre Company, Whitefish, Montana
whitefishtheatreco.org



Regional Theatre of the Palouse has a couple of resident members that work on running the light and sound boards for productions. When they are not available, we just go hunting in the community for help, some times not an easy task. Most of the time local high school and college students have no interest in doing such work. We are finding in general that volunteers are getting fewer and fewer.

When we have college student helpers, they are fulfilling class assignments or sorority/fraternity volunteer hour requirements.

John Rich, Executive Director
Regional Theatre of the Palouse,
Pullman, Washington
rtoptheatre.org

I beg my husband who is now retired. His profession was electronics and he was involved in sound/light design for high school auditoriums. So I beg...it works most of the time.

Donna Fisher, President/Artistic Director
Casper Theater Company, Casper, Wyoming
caspertheatercompany.net

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Please consider including American Association of Community Theatre in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift. Through these special gifts, friends like you are able to sustain AACT's mission and provide learning experiences for AACT member companies participating in the AACTFest national festivals.

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Please contact Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director, for more information at 866-OurAACT (687-2228) or julie@aact.org

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The Casualty of Cupid's Arrow

by David Dietz

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AACT Welcomes New Staff



Mary Jo DeNolf

Mary Jo DeNolf, AACT Events Coordinator, has been the Director of Volunteers & Operations for Grand Rapids Civic Theatre since 1998. She has served on the Community Theatre Association of Michigan board as Secretary, Vice President, and finished out the last two years as President. Her numerous

theatre experiences includes Stage Manager for Grand Rapids Civic Theatre and Circle Theatre Grand Rapids, Props Coordinator for Circle Theatre, Actor's Theatre, and Mason

Street Warehouse, and she represented Grand Rapids Civic Theatre as Event Chair for AACTFest 2015.

Mary Jo has also utilized her organizational skills as Production Assistant for KBOGroup (Grand Rapids, MI) and Behind the Scenes (Memphis, TN) for large events of 1,000 to 6,000 attendees, and as a workshop leader on the State and National level on Volunteer Management. As a Boy Scout Leader for the past 6 years she has enjoyed high adventures such as 50 mile hikes in Canada, 50 mile canoe trips, and 80 mile bike runs. ♦

Susan Austin

Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator, works as the Costume Shop Supervisor/Lecturer in Dance for the School of Classical and Contemporary Dance at Texas Christian University. She has a lifelong involvement in the



Fort Worth, Texas dance/theatre community and previously worked in the AACT office in membership services. She helped inaugurate the AACT NewPlayFest program in 2012 and assisted with the organization of the 2014 and the 2016 cycles. She serves on the boards for Festival Ballet of North Central Texas, Texas Nonprofit Theatres, and the North Texas Daylily Society. ♦

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
July 1 - 17	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>Gracefully Ending</i> by A. J. DeLauder Theatre Arlington	TX Arlington	817-275-7661 theatrearlington.org aact.org/newplayfest
July 7 - 10	AACT New York Adventure 2016 & Youth Summit Includes AACT Summer Meetings	NY New York City	817-732-3177 aact.org/nyc
July 9	Annual AACT Membership Meeting & Awards Millennium Broadway Hotel	NY New York City	817-732-3177 aact.org/nyc
July 22 - 24	Nebraska Association of Community Theatres *Nebraska State AACTFest 2017	NE Minden	402-984-4099 nebact.org
July 27 - 30	Oklahoma Community Theatre Association *OCTA State AACTFest 2017	OK Stillwater	405-880-5798 oktheatre.org
August 19 - 21	AACT TEAM Conference AACT Educational Conference	IA Des Moines	817-732-3177 aact.org/conf

* Indicates festival in the 2017 AACTFest Cycle

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

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