

spotlight

September/October 2016 \$2.50

american association of community theatre

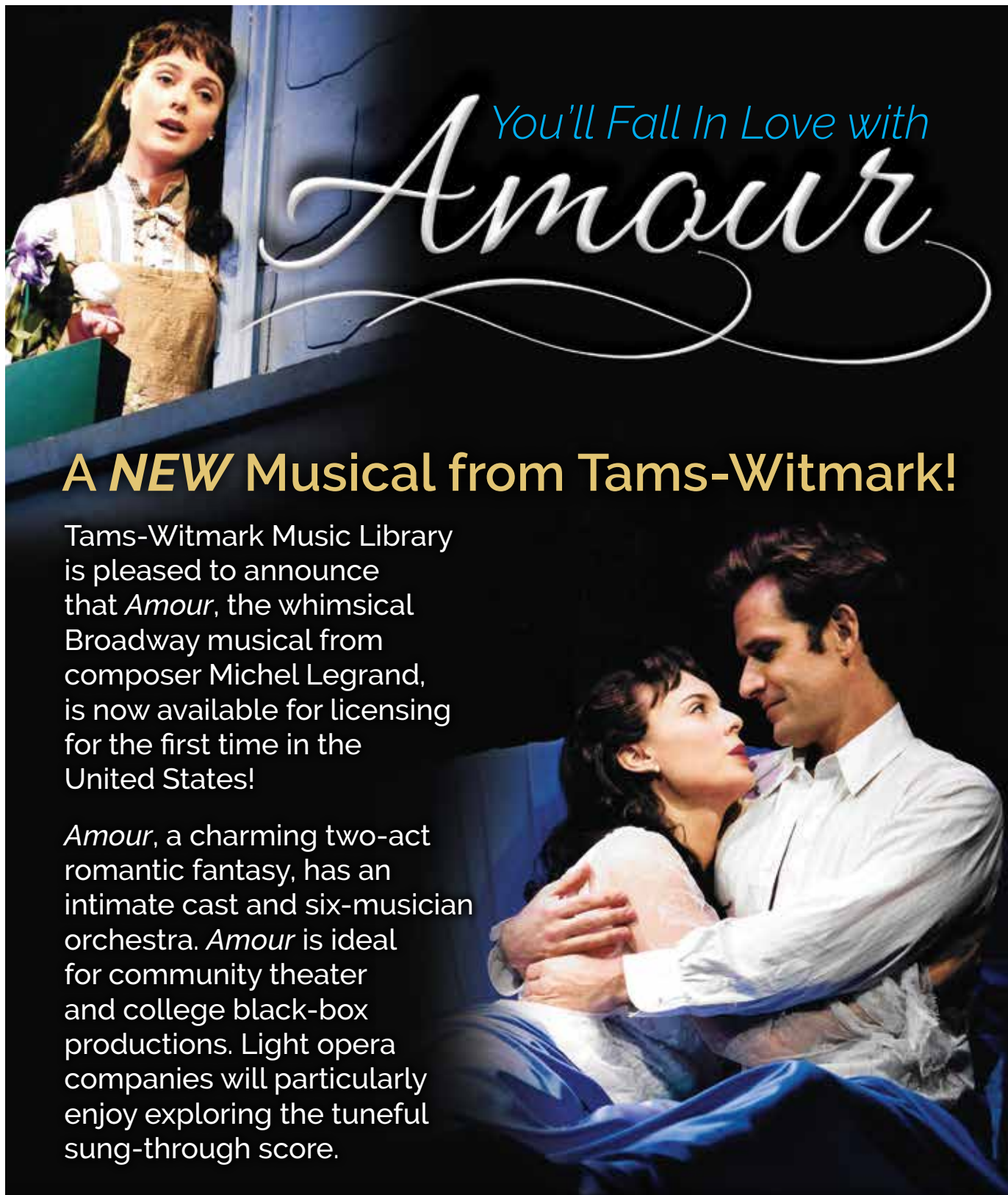


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Murray Chase
AACT President
2015-2017

The slow percussive march began in the dark. And for the next three hours, we were transported back in time to our country's infancy. We were wrapped—and rapped—in a very different world.

Hamilton was indeed one of the shining moments of AACT's New York Adventure 2016, for many the shining moment. But there were plenty of others: thought-provoking, hilarious, fantasy-filled. Over one hundred fifty theatre lovers, ages 7 to 90, from across the U.S. gathered to celebrate the state of the art. We thrilled to new works, we celebrated youth AND older age, and we networked late into each night.

And now we take our ideas back home, to the place where the art begins: our own community theatres. We realize anew that storytelling is changing to reflect our country's diversity. We reimagine staging and color palettes. We marvel at new possibilities in lighting and sound and wardrobe. And we find new things that we'll use in our own spaces.

As a result, community theatre across our country will change. Nothing is remote and separate. We influence and

we are influenced by all we experience. Whether we gather at AACTFest, our own state festivals, WorldFest, Broadway, or at the theatre just down the street, we share and glean (some say steal) great ideas.

Lin-Manuel Miranda says the idea for *Hamilton* came from the Chernow biography which he began reading on a flight. Who would think that a book on an airplane would change musical storytelling forever.

How will the next great idea reveal itself? And who will have it? **If we stay open** to new ideas, it just may be us.

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'Twas the Fight Before Christmas!

Cast: 4 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

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My In-laws are Outlaws!

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

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Dave Harper (Hank), Sherri Britton (Margaret), and Lindsay Hayward (Beth) in the AACT NewPlayFest 2016 world premiere of *Gracefully Ending* by A. J. DeLauder at Theatre Arlington in Arlington, Texas.
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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Upcoming Meetings

AACT Executive Committee Meeting

October 14-16, 2016
Rochester, MN

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

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Spotlight

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AACT NewPlayFest

Arlington, Texas celebrated the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of ***Gracefully Ending*** by A. J. DeLauder at Theatre Arlington. The opening night festivities on July 1 included the superb production and a splendid reception hosted by the Theatre Arlington Guild. The production ran through July 17



Linda M. Lee

Opening Night of the AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere of *Gracefully Ending* by A. J. DeLauder at Theatre Arlington (TA) in Arlington, Texas

Front row (seated, l-r) Omar Padilla, cast/Dr. Jimenez; Lindsay Hayward, cast/Beth; Dave Harper, cast/Hank; A. J. DeLauder, playwright; Sherri Britton, cast/Margaret; Parker Fitzgerald, cast/Andrew

Back row (l-r) Linda M. Lee, Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation; Linda Habjan, Dramatic Publishing; Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director; Debra Freiheit, TA Board of Directors; Malcolm Chakery, TA Board of Directors; Lea Pritchett, crew; Valerie Galloway TA Executive Director; Ashley Moseley, Stage Manager; Fay Brewer, crew; Maria Pope, crew; Jim Johnson, Director; Dr. Aaron Reich, TA Board of Directors; Peter Scott TA Board President

Playwright A. J. DeLauder attended the opening and stated, "Working with director Jim Johnson and Theatre Arlington was a dream. They took my script and formed a personal connection with it, making it their own. As a result, what I witnessed on opening night was much more than what I'd imagined. The performance became an accumulation of my dreams for the script and theirs. Or to phrase it another way, I felt like I drew a rough outline with my script, and they painted a beautiful picture. That's not to say I don't still have work to do as a playwright – that work never ends – but I now fully know what needs to be done, thanks to the work of the talented cast, director, and crew of Theatre Arlington."

A. J., a native of West Virginia, reflected about his experience with AACT NewPlayFest, "I've applied to a lot of different playwriting contests. Most promise a cash prize of some kind. Some offer a production. A few others offer publication. But only the AACT NewPlayFest offers all three of those rewards, with an added bonus of being connected to thousands of theatres through AACT *Spotlight*

magazine and the networking of AACT. Winning the NewPlayFest has been very special to me – I absolutely feel that it has given me traction in my playwriting career. And everyone at AACT, from Executive Director Julie Crawford on down, has been so kind and so resolute in their pursuit of developing theatre. I couldn't have asked for more. "

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, Margaret, who has recently been falling down late at night. But Margaret doesn't want help and the two begin feuding, especially after Beth learns that Margaret 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

continued on page 10

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"Side-splitting, hilarious, and full of showstoppers!" - Next Magazine

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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.

Linda M. Lee



Playwright A. J. DeLauder, AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, and Theatre Arlington Executive Director Valerie Galloway at the opening of *Gracefully Ending* at Theatre Arlington

Theatre Arlington Executive Director Valerie Galloway was delighted to partner with AACT to help shine the light on up-and-coming new playwrights and their work. She stated, "What a remarkable experience to be a part of something so fresh, so new and especially with the play, *Gracefully Ending*, something so

poignant and real. A. J. DeLauder's story speaks to every single person in the audience; no matter where you are in life – you relate to someone or some life event on that stage. And what a thrill for our actors and directors to have the opportunity to breathe life into these characters for the very first time...ever! We will never forget the look on A. J.'s face on opening night after the curtain came down – pure joy and exhilaration! Theatre Arlington thanks AACT for being part of such a special event."



David Cockrell

The Theatre Arlington Guild held a wonderful reception as part of the opening night festivities.

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Opening next for AACT NewPlayFest will be the world premiere of **The Emperor of North America** by Thomas Hischak at Silver Spring Stage in Silver Spring, Maryland on September 16. The production is being directed by Scott Bloom and will run through October 1. Tickets can be reserved at ssstage.org

The 2016 AACT NewPlayFest calendar also includes

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 productions of **Laguna Beach, Ohio** by Malcolm MacDonald at Stage Right Productions/2nd Street Theatre in Bend, Oregon March 25 – April 9, 2016, **Wash, Dry, Fold** by Nedra Pezold Roberts at Chicago Street Theatre/Community Theatre Guild in Valparaiso, Indiana May 20 – June 4, 2016, and **Gracefully Ending** by A.J. DeLauder at Theatre Arlington [Texas] July 1 – July 17.

Dramatic Publishing Company will publish the seven AACT NewPlayFest 2016 scripts in an anthology and Dramatic Publishing 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.

AACT NewPlayFest 2018 Sign Up NOW to be a Reviewer

Each script will be reviewed during a first tier to select plays that are compelling and dynamic, suitable for community theatres, and ready for production - and eliminate plays that are not. The second tier reviewers will be given approximately twenty full-length plays, all of which have passed the first tier. Each play will be adjudicated by at least three reviewers. Those that rise to the top will be read by a third set of reviewers, whose scores will determine the finalists. AACT members and persons with theatre experience are invited to apply to be Reviewers at aact.org/newplayfest.

Submit a Script for AACT NewPlayFest 2018 NOW!

Scripts are being accepted until 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. ♦

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Get Ready for AACTFest 2017

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

The Mayo Civic Center will hold workshops and meetings, and performances will be in the Rochester Civic Theatre, also located in the Civic Center complex.

State festivals have commenced, and the excitement of AACTFest 2017 is building. There will be approximately 40 state festivals with more than 200 theatre productions, followed by nearly 60 theatre companies performing in regional festivals on the way to the national festival.

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



Downtown Rochester at twilight



tunities, ending with a festival awards presentation.

AACTFest is an exciting process, involving community theatres in every corner of the country. 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/aactfest2017

AACTFest Myths

to dispel common myths related to festival participation

AACTFest MYTH: Winning the festival is the only success!

NOPE! There are many ways to “win!” Entering a show in the festival starts a process in your hometown; building the production and networking with the many resources within your community. There are many rewards - your company acquires financial support by many methods - selling raffle tickets for your board president to sing at a Bat Mitzvah, entertaining at every fraternal organization’s annual banquet, selling handcrafted *commedia del arte* masks at the local RennFest, standing on the street corner singing for spare change (Don’t judge until you try it, it can work!).

During this process, your mayor becomes your strongest supporter, the police department now has been introduced to an alternative program for kids they see at risk, local

philanthropists get their name associated with the art of live theatre, and your theatre company gets tons of publicity...which turns into season ticket holders, volunteers, and zealots. So, even if your show doesn’t make the “winners’ circle” you have accomplished a “success!”

Entering a show is only part of the AACTFest experience. AACT offers a wide range of opportunities to share experiences, problems, successes and love of theatre. It serves both individuals and organizations by providing expertise, assistance, and support so that community theatres can provide the best possible theatrical experience for participants and audience alike.

Make plans for AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota and find out for yourself!

Submitted by Nancy Eppert, AACT Education Committee member. Nancy is pleased to share what she has learned from participating in all aspects of AACTFest (workshops, shows, networking, etc.), and notes that her experience is assisted by the insights of many theatre friends she has acquired by attending every AACTFest since 2003. She looks forward to meeting you at AACTFest 2017.

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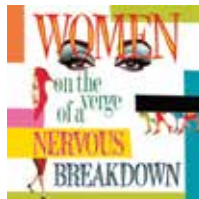
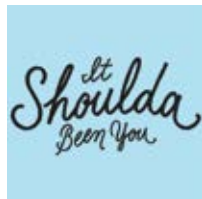
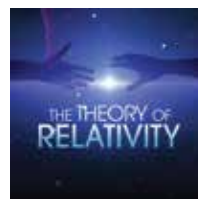
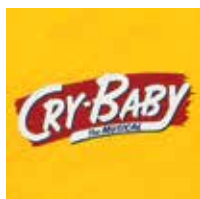
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Shows



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AACT New York Adventure 2016

The AACT New York Adventure 2016 was quite an experience for all that attended. From July 7 – 9 the adventure, based at the Millennium Broadway Hotel in the heart of the Theatre District, took attendees to Broadway's best shows and all that New York has to offer. Attendees also participated in AACT Committee and Team meetings, receptions, tours, field trips, social networking, the annual

AACT membership meeting including the AACT National Awards presentations, and a very special dinner at Sardi's. The AACT New York Adventure also included the AACT Youth Summit which engaged 19 youth in round table discussions, a studio workshop with a Genie, and presentations from special playwrights.



Cran Dodds

Times Square was just down the street from the Millennium Broadway Hotel

After the AACT Board of Directors and Committees met on Wednesday, the Adventure officially began on **Thursday** July 7 with a matinee Broadway show (*The Broadway show!*) *Hamilton*!

Thursday also included a Meet & Greet Reception at Sardi's sponsored by Samuel French. It was a grand way to start an adventure. Those who attended *Hamilton* were still buzzing from the performance, and Samuel French provided great food and hospitality for all.



Cran Dodds

Hamilton was a highlight for many. AACT Board member Emily Anderson was invited backstage and had the opportunity to meet several members of the original cast, including creator Lin-Manuel Miranda.



Photo taken on Emily's phone by Lin-Manuel Miranda



Cran Dodds

Abbie VanNostrand from Samuel French welcomed all at the Greet and Meet at Sardi's



David Cockerell

Food, Drinks, Fun, and Networking began



Chad Alan Carr

The Thursday reception was followed by a Times Square Tour sponsored by Arts People.

Friday included AACT Committee meetings, Youth Summit workshops, field trips to Samuel French and Dramatists Guild, and a spectacular NightCap at O'Lunney's Irish Pub right across

the street from the hotel. Steele Spring Stage Rights and Dramatic Publishing held a great reception for all with fun, food, goody bags, and appearances by special guests who presented door prizes.



David Cockerell

Door prize winners at the O'Lunney's Nightcap sponsored by Steele Spring Stage Rights and Dramatic Publishing Company. Pictured (l - r) Jessica Keenan Wynn from the cast of Beautiful The Carol King Musical presents Sharon Burum a signed playbill, Eric Anderson from the cast of Waitress presents Gil Savage a signed playbill, Christina Bianco from the cast of The Marvelous Wonderettes presents Rick Alf a signed playbill, Jessica Rush from the cast of Jersey Boys presents Frank Peot a signed playbill, Ken Davenport, Tony Award-Winning Producer and author of Miss Abigail's Guide to Dating, Mating, & Marriage, presents Jim Walker a signed edition of his game Be A Broadway Star



David Cockerell

The Nightcap at O'Lunney's was great fun and was hosted by Roger Bean, President of Steele Springs Stage Rights.



New York Adventure continues on next page

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Saturday started with the Annual AACT Membership Meeting and the presentation of the AACT National Awards. AACT President Murray Chase, and AACT Board members, Emily Anderson, Chad-Alan Carr, and Chris Serface presented the AACT National Awards.



David Cockerell



David Cockerell

Accepting National AACT Awards in New York were (top row, l-r) Trinity Bird accepts for Dr. Charles "Bud" Vear, Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer; Jim Chervenka, Distinguished Merit; Tom Cordingley, David C. Bryant Outstanding Service (Tom also accepted for Beverly Allen, Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer and Dr. Tim Ballweber & Ballweber Orthodontics, Special Recognition); Rhonda Wilson, Special Recognition; Doug Starcher and Andy Backus of the Bellingham Theatre Guild, Diamond Crown Organization; Susan Tucker, Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer; (bottom row l-r) Linda M. Lee of Texas Nonprofit Theatres accepts for Zada and Earl Jahnsen, David C. Bryant Outstanding Service; Margi Ritscher, Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer; Barbara Christensen, Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer; Morrie Enders of Lincoln Community Playhouse, Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement; Celia Couture, David C. Bryant Outstanding Service; Ginger Heath, Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership



David Cockerell



David Cockerell

Disney's Aladdin was sensational. The Disney creative team from Disney's Aladdin gave a presentation prior to the performance in the New Amsterdam Room at The New Amsterdam Theatre. Some technical secrets of the show were shared, and some were kept to be a surprise of the special theatre magic that is Disney's Aladdin.

Years of Service Pins recognizing years of volunteer service to AACT were also presented at the annual meeting. Accepting their pins in New York were (Front l-r) Emily Anderson, 5 years; Lynn Ruhl, 10 years; Bill Muchow, 20 years; John Viars, 30 years; (back row l-r) Kris Geddie, 5 years; Gil Savage, 10 years; Tim Jebesen, 20 years





The AACT New York Adventure 2016 concluded with a special AACT Dinner at Sardi's with special entertainment from Ed Linderman presenting excerpts from his new show The Zimmer Girls

The Zimmer Girls is a new musical comedy with book and music by Ed Linderman and lyrics by Ed Linderman & Robert Solomon. The musical is based on an original script by Robert Solomon, and is available for production.

Set by the sea in Staten Island in 1898, three young New York sisters named Zimmer get their first taste of life.

Zorita, the eldest, has been trying to preserve herself and her siblings for traditional marriages, but finds herself courted by the comically villainous owner of the nearby seaside carnival. Zena, next in line, lovely but dumb, falls for the town's not-quite-idiot, and Zelda, the youngest, runs off with the Bolivian Navy. In the meantime, other lovers in the town, including a washed up mermaid (it's the seaside, after all) and an extremely able bodied seaman, also stumble upon happiness.

The score is tuneful, light and hummable; the songs—music and lyrics—articulate and funny. The show stands firmly in the tradition of outrageous shenanigans. It is charming, fast moving, funny, a landslide of laughs, and a delightful romp with characters the audience will love.

The authors are very interested in having a full production of this delightful musical. If you are interested, please contact Ed at sandyanded@earthlink.net or at 917-863-9939. ♦



Ed Linderman at Sardi's



Performing excerpts from The Zimmer Girls at the AACT Dinner at Sardi's (l - r) Richard Flanders, Deborah Thomas Shull, Tina Scariano, Caroline Eckman, Natalie Fabian, Jamie Boswell, Anne Tarpey Flanders, and Helena Grenot.



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AACT Youth Summit 2016

The AACT Youth Summit was part of AACT's New York Adventure 2016 and was a great success. Nineteen youth from across the country attended the Youth Summit and participated in many special events.

Participants Camille Gray and Katie Ison share their experiences of the AACT Youth Summit 2016.



Camille Gray

I had the privilege to go to New York City for the first time as part of the AACT New York Adventure 2016's Youth Summit. It was stunning: the lights, the sounds, the rhythm, all of it. I spent most my time in Times Square, but got to go as far down as to see the Statue of Liberty and as far up to see the Met. I was incredibly lucky to get to see *Chicago*, *Wicked*, *Disney's Aladdin*,

and *Fiddler on the Roof*. I ate really good food and learned metro routes and streets by the time we left. Seeing the city while attending the AACT Youth Summit was a great experience, and most importantly I got to spend time with my mom before I leave for college.

AACT youth members attending the Youth Summit met with Major Attaway, the standby for the character of the Genie in *Disney's Aladdin*. He encouraged that it is possible to make it to Broadway with hard work, determination, and lots of connections, of course. We also talked with representatives from Music Theatre International learning about shows to be licensed soon, and met the former Stage Manager of *Disney's Aladdin*, who let us in on some little secrets of the show and gave us a look at stage managing a show with about 1,000 cues.

I particularly enjoyed getting to work with Chad-Alan Carr and enjoyed his leadership with the round table discussion with other youth. We shared what theatres do to fundraise and how they work with children and youth. I took several pages of notes that I shared with my theatre's Board President, and we hope to use some of them in the future. I shared a program we have in place, the Youth Service Board (YSB), a group of teenagers, ages 13-18, who shadow the Board of Directors with the goal of building more generations of members. The YSB is pivotal at our theatre. We have no paid staff, and the YSB does everything from cleaning the bathrooms, to being in shows and working on crew for shows, to running our week-long summer camp (we just finished a fantastic camp!). Being a member of the YSB provides skills in leadership, discipline, initiative, work experience, and so much more.

Some of the main things I took away from the Youth Summit were connections to other theatres, many in the same or similar situations our theatre is in, knowledge of

how to overcome some challenges we have that others have had as well and have solutions to, the experiences of getting to see *Disney's Aladdin* and *Wicked*, which I'll never forget, and just... New York!

I look forward to attending future AACT events, continuing to build theatre connections and relationships.

Camille Gray is President of the Youth Service Board at Theatre Bristol in Bristol, Tennessee. She will be attending Emory & Henry College in the fall to pursue a Bachelor's of Fine Arts with a focus in Musical Theatre.



Linda M. Lee

The AACT Youth Summit met Major Attaway, the standby for Genie, Babkak, and Sultan in Disney's Aladdin.



Gran Dodds

They also met with Maryann Cocca-Leffler, author of Princess K.I.M. The Musical, and Roger Bean, author of The Marvelous Wonderettes.



The Youth Summit participated in a round table where they networked and shared viewpoints from their home theatres.

Katie Ison



The Youth Summit was very beneficial to me as well as others from theatres across the country. One of the wonderful experiences we had was the round table where each student had the opportunity to discuss fundraising ideas, favorite shows, leadership opportunities, and classes offered by each of our theatres. After the meeting, we were privileged to talk

to the playwright of *Princess K.I.M. The Musical*, Maryann Cocca-Leffler. She gave advice on writing plays and told us about the inspiration for her musical. We also met Roger Bean, playwright of *The Marvelous Wonderettes*. My theatre produced the third revival of the play (My community loves the play.) as a fundraiser to send us to the AACT New York Adventure! It was a great privilege to meet its playwright.

Broadway shows were utterly amazing. *Hamilton* is one of my favorite shows and it was so good to see Phillipa Soo, Leslie Odom Jr., and Renee Elise Goldsberry.

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Before we saw *Disney's Aladdin* we met Major Attaway, the standby for Genie, Babkak, and Sultan. He shared with us how he performed the Genie's entrance.

He told us to "let out your inner Genie" as he let us show how we would enter the show as the Genie. The experience as a whole was fantastic and it was an honor to be able to participate.

The Youth Summit and The AACT New York Adventure is something I will never forget. Thank you AACT for this awesome opportunity!

Katie Ison is active with *Playhouse in the Park* in Murray, Kentucky. She started participating in a summer theatre camp for 1st through 6th grade students, and discovered her love for theatre. She is now a member of the theatre's high school group, *Box of Frogs*, and her love for theatre continues to grow. ♦

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AACT Summer Meetings

Board Updates AACT's Mission Statement

AACT Helps Theatres Thrive was officially adopted as AACT's mission statement during the AACT Summer Meetings in July, which were held during AACT's New York Adventure in New York City. "Helping Theatres Thrive" will be used as a tag line with the AACT logo. AACT's previous mission statement was 29 words or over 200 characters long: "To foster and encourage the development of, and commitment to, the highest standards by community theatres, including standards of excellence for production, management, governance and community relations and service."

"AACT Helps Theatres Thrive" was first discussed by the Executive Committee in November last year and was introduced to the Board at the Winter meetings in February. It has been used as a catch phrase in AACT materials during the past few months. "Our new mission statement is succinct, accurate, and easy to remember," noted AACT president Murray Chase. "It falls into the category of 'why didn't we think of this until now?' All AACT members can help us spread this message."

In other action, the Board drew performance slots for the 2017 National Festival to be held in Rochester, Minnesota in June of next year and selected Gettysburg, Pennsylvania as the site of the 2019 National Festival.

Details of the 2019 festival will be available on the AACT website following contract negotiations with theatre and lodging facilities.

The Board discussed rewriting the AACT Bylaws to make the document more concise and AACT more nimble in meeting members' needs. The President will send direction to the Governance Committee, asking for a proposed document by October when the Executive Committee meets. After review by the Executive Committee, the proposed bylaws will be posted on the AACT website, so members can review and comment. The Board will consider adoption of the document at the Winter Meetings in February.

The Board also took action to further the research of the Endowment Restructure Task Force, which is charged with recommending how to best safeguard the AACT Endowment Funds. The task force is researching formation of a separate 501(c)(3) and contracting with a community foundation.

News of the defunding of the Army Entertainment Program was an issue of great concern. It greatly affects AACT's Region X member theatres on Army bases overseas. The Region X Representative, Dane Winters, sent word that the October festival for selecting a Region X entry to the 2017 AACTFest National Festival has been cancelled, along with funding for theatres that would have entered. It is not known if the theatres will be able to continue without Army funded staff and facilities support. It was announced that a petition to save the program was created on the White House website at petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/fund-us-army-theater-entertainment-program, and that individuals can have more impact by writing their senators and representatives.

Meetings were also held by AACT Committees, task forces, and volunteer teams. One of these is the Accreditation Task Force looking into ways to provide community theatres with a national system for measuring their abilities and achievements and gaining

recognition of the validity of the system by funders, vendors such as royalty houses, and others.

Another group that met in New York was the Future Festivals Task Force. It is considering how festivals can better attract participants and meet theatre and individual needs in the future. Educational aspects of the 2017 National Festival were addressed by the Education Committee. It is planning a youth festival as part of the national festival week, lining up workshops, and developing guidelines for the Design Competition/Exhibit, along with other ideas. The International Committee discussed ways to increase AACT member theatre participation in international festivals.

The Finance Committee recommended and the Board approved a two-year rolling budget (2016-17 and a preliminary budget for 2017-18). The budget includes more money for staff travel so that staff can attend more state/regional events and visit more individual theatres.

The AACT Summer meetings began on Tuesday, July 5, before the New York Adventure, and ran through Saturday, July 9. A highlight was the annual Membership meeting with the AACT National Awards presentations on Saturday morning. Award recipients with friends and family traveled to the Big Apple where they received applause and acclamations from an enthusiastic, national audience. ♦

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Spotlight Award Goes to Bonnie Cahill

The **AACT Spotlight Award** partners AACT with theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of their local theatres. Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award.

Bonnie Cahill of Butler (PA) Little Theatre (BLT), was presented the AACT Spotlight Award for long time service to the BLT community. She was awarded the recognition for her service of almost fifty years. BLT life member, Sue Collar, presented the Award on May 14th, at the closing night performance of the last show of the season, *Come Blow Your Horn*. Bonnie's Spotlight Award was part of the celebration of BLT's 75th season.

Bonnie joined Butler Little Theatre when she was a teenager in 1969, and has been active ever since. She is experienced in all aspects of theatre including set design and construction, make-up and costume design, and acting in supporting and leading roles.

Bonnie has served BLT as a Board Member and its Treasurer for over 30 years. She was instrumental in the purchase of a piece of property adjoining the theatre, providing much needed space. And Bonnie led the efforts to renovate the theatre building, within budget.

Butler Little Theatre's Spotlight Award nomination declared, "As one of the cornerstones of the theatre, we would like to honor Bonnie Cahill during our 75th Anniversary Celebration!" Congratulations to Bonnie and to Butler Little Theatre. ♦



Bonnie Cahill (r) accepts her AACT Spotlight Award from Butler Little Theatre's Sue Collar

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Five Reasons You Must Keep Your Website Up To Date

Part 2: Finding a clearing in the jungle, or How to know what you want

By Scott Bloom

In Part 1 we examined why a fully fleshed-out website was still relevant in the time of easy publicity via Social Media.

It takes time, thought, and work to build a good website. Help, information, tools, and resources are available to you, but it isn't possible here to provide full and complete explanations of terminology and acronyms, comparisons of the different systems, tools and resources, and reasons to consider different hosting schemes.

There is information for you to check out including real comparisons, explanations, resources, and more in a growing library on the AACT website. Sign in and go to Making Theatre > Governance > Resource Library > Computer Internet Technology to find a new section about Computer, Web, Network, and Internet technology catered toward community theatre - aact.org/computer-and-internet-technology.

If it doesn't belong in public, don't connect it to the internet.

Planning: Figuring out what you want the site to do for you

Deciding what tools you need depends entirely on what you want to accomplish. It's not unreasonable to think that a good website cannot only advertise your group and provide your patrons with your most current information, it can be your box office, take donations, and process money transactions. It can also help you communicate interactively with members, staff, board, casts and crews, keep calendars and schedules readily available to users, help manage and track donors, and build your subscription base.

The more you want the website to do the more complex the design becomes, so let's take a step back and think about how you do what you're doing now. You're probably already doing many things like box office, accounting, and finance off line, and it may not be in your best interest to put them on line. A multifunction tool, while convenient, is seldom the best tool for the job. I would caution anyone, (and I can't emphasize this enough,) that keeping your financial information on your website can be dangerous, and open you to legal action should information about your donors be made public.

Rule of thumb: If it doesn't belong in public, don't connect it to the Internet, it's that simple.

Donor tracking database systems can be complex. Such systems help you maximize turning subscribers into donors, providing a whole different level of communication with potential sources of income, and assist with major development projects. They also cost a considerable sum to purchase, and it isn't advisable to mingle these systems with your website.

Quick View of Types of Websites

There are essentially two ways to manage website content: online and offline.

In the past most websites were managed offline. Pages were built on a computer and then uploaded to a server. Several systems were developed to manage and track changes and assign or create a second server for testing and collaboration, whereby a web page would be checked out, modified, and checked back in. This allowed for distribution of permissions to actually publish the pages once they were approved by the webmaster.

If all you need is a few pages of relatively static information, having all the content managed offline is the best choice. A single person maintains the data, and it doesn't require a database, no server functionality is expected, and plain HTML code is sufficient. HTML is fairly easy to learn and an essential first step for learning how to edit a website. There are plenty of excellent products out there for offline page editing, and many of them are free and open source.

Taking care of content that changes frequently, grows, collects, and interacts with the user, requires server functionality and a system to manage it. Editing your pages directly on the web server is what a Content Management System (CMS) is all about, and regardless of what type of CMS you choose, from forums and social networking platforms, to bulletin board and classified ads applications, to Constituent Relations Management (CRM) and collaboration systems to modular multifunction portals, to pure CMS and blogging engines, these systems have reached a level of maturity, sophistication, and ease of use that makes them highly desirable for anyone building a website.

What to look for in a CMS

You can start comparing Content Management Systems by making decisions about what functions would be useful to have and which you can do without. Look at the features of each system and note those that are of interest to you. Useful functions include:

- E-commerce add-ons for ticket and merchandise sales
- Membership, mailing list, and/or donation management
- Website membership to dole out permissions for various portions of your site

- Good editing tools allowing users to add or edit content
- Responsive Templates that will automatically scale down to mobile platforms, OR mobile application add-ons so people can use your site from their smart phones and tablets
- Group and collaboration add-ons, like mutual calendars, messaging, blackboards, and scheduling
- Polls, audience reaction surveys, contests, and feedback forms
- Forums and Bulletin Boards
- RSS news feeds, automatic social media updates and the ability to receive and send Facebook, Twitter, and other feeds

Keep in mind not just what you want now, but what you may want in a year or two. If you think you may want it all and decide on the most powerful system you can find, be aware that beginning the process with a CMS that has a steep learning curve may prevent you from ever finishing the job.

Blogs, Bulletin Boards, CRMs, Portals, and CMS Systems: What to choose

There are many different types of Content Management Systems. Most of them have developed and evolved to provide more functions for the user. What starts out as a bulletin board can become much more than that, so labeling them becomes harder. The big three are WordPress (primarily a blogging platform), Joomla (a powerful developers portal that's highly customizable), and Drupal (perhaps the most complete and adaptable modular CMS available). There are people who will champion each of them and insist that their favorite is the best, but there are dozens of others that are probably just as good and deserving of consideration. As one review site said, "There is no best CMS. There may not even be a single best for you or your situation and needs."

To learn more visit the series of articles at aact.org/computer-and-internet-technology.

Don't rule out cloud services from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, and others.

Finding the right host

When looking for a place to park your website start with your domain registrar. It should offer some sort of hosting that will cost very little. Almost all of them offer some form of template driven system that will allow you easy setup for a simple website with some functionality. I personally don't like cookie cutter websites, but if you have little knowledge going in and need it running fast they can be an option.

There are some like GoDaddy that offer multiple levels of servers, virtual and real, and hosting services including email for your website under your own domain name. For a few dollars a

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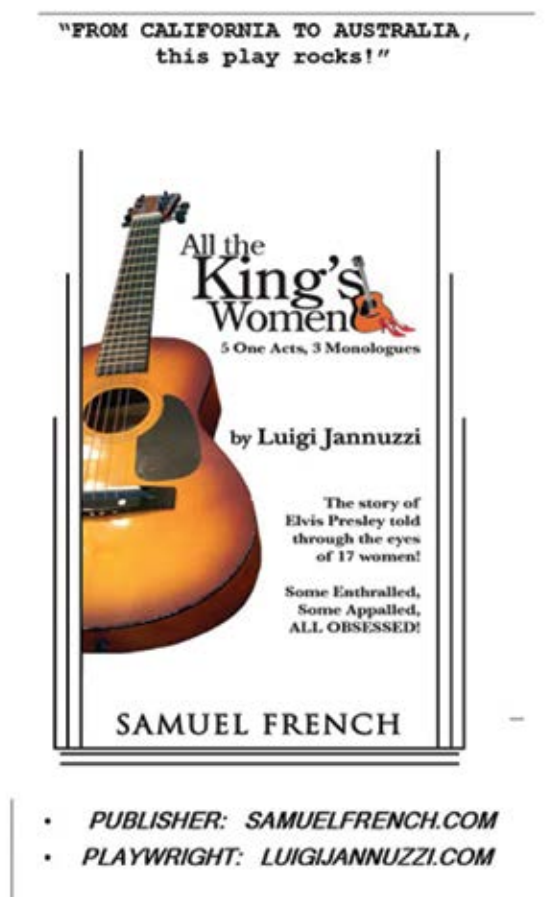
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month they can set you up with a "Hosting Control Panel," which gives you a lot of control over the technical aspects of the domain. You can create subdomains, or testing sites, manage DNS and FTP among other network services, and perhaps best of all, they have hundreds of different website engines you can simply install and start learning and using. Compare Drupal and Joomla and other CMS systems, compare bulletin boards and forums, and try out e-commerce systems. There are other services with similar offerings. Some have complained about GoDaddy's tech support and assistance, but I give it as an example of what's available. Don't rule out cloud services from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, and others. The pricing may be difficult to calculate, but there are plenty of opportunities to get started for free. Google has many services free for nonprofits, research others for similar nonprofit benefits.

There's much more I can offer, so if you're looking for advice or guidance on any particular aspect of the process, check out my new online information corner on the AACT website - aact.org/computer-and-internet-technology.

Long time 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.



Federal Regulation Affects Theatre Budgets on December 1

By Julie Crawford, Executive Director

Many theatres with paid employees are likely to find they must pay them more beginning December 1, 2016 due to new regulations to be implemented by the Department of Labor (DOL) in support of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Employees who are not "exempt," must be paid overtime for all hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (Overtime payment is usually 1.5 x the usual payment.) To be exempt, the position must meet a "duties test" and be paid a minimum salary. That minimum salary is set to double on December 1, from \$23,660 per year to \$47,476. Your theatre's managing director and other staff who are now exempt may become nonexempt, meaning they must be paid overtime wages on hours over 40 per week that they work. (Hours worked does not include paid time when they did not actually work, such as holidays and vacations.)

The FLSA was passed to protect employees. Nonprofit organizations' employees are covered just as they would be if employed by a for-profit business. In protecting all employees from abusive employers, the FLSA reduces employee choices about how

they are paid. Employees can not choose to not receive overtime pay or to work less one week to make up for working more than 40 hours another week; the law requires the employer pay overtime for any hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek. The employer can set the beginning and ending days of the workweek; it does not have to be a calendar week. Employees also cannot choose to volunteer hours to their nonprofit employer to do the same type of work for which they are employed by the nonprofit.

Employers have until December 1 to figure out how to mitigate the impact of the new regulations on their organizations. For greater detail check out the links in the sidebar, but here are summaries of a few options for your theatre to consider.

- **Raise salaries** to the new minimum to maintain the employee's exempt status. (Be aware that the DOL intends to raise the minimum salary again in three years.)
- **Pay overtime above a salary** for employees who usually work 40 hours or less, but occasionally work more. The employer must keep a record of hours worked each week, but the employee may provide a total, rather than signing in and out each time work is started and stopped.
- **Evaluate and realign employee workload** which may decrease hours for newly nonexempt employees and increase hours for employees currently working less than 40 hours a week. Or spread the work over more weeks, so hours worked are more consistent week to week. For a theatre this may mean starting set builds or other activities earlier in order to reduce overtime the week a play opens, hiring more paid workers, or recruiting more volunteers.
- **Reduce base pay and pay overtime** for employees who work a small and predictable amount of overtime. To accomplish this, divide the current weekly salary by the number of hours the employee actually works in an average week. Then multiply this amount by

40. This becomes the new weekly salary amount. Overtime on hours over 40 brings the employee's annual pay up to the previous salary. However, this means the employee's pay will be less some weeks than it was previously and that overtime will be needed to bring pay up to the previous level.

• **Base salary on more than 40 hours and pay overtime** for employees who are paid a salary that covers more than 40 hours a week. An employee whose salary is based on a set number of hours that is more than 40 hours per week (such as 50 hours) is still due overtime for the hours over 40, but the hours between 40 and the expected number of hours is paid at half time (50% of the hourly rate), since the salary covers the regular pay for the overtime hours. However, hours worked beyond the amount covered by the salary are paid at time and a half.

• **Base salary on fluctuating work hours** for an employee whose hours of work fluctuate from week to week. If certain conditions are met, including a clear understanding with the employee, the hourly rate upon which overtime is paid fluctuates with the number of hours worked that week. The salary covers all the hours, but not the overtime pay. The weekly salary is divided by the hours worked that week to determine the hourly rate. The hours over 40 are then paid overtime based on 50% of that hourly rate.

The federal exemption designation is often used by states, but states may have stricter payment rules. For example, California looks at hours on a daily, rather than a weekly basis, with overtime due after eight hours in a day. Check with your state to see how the federal change in exempt status may further impact your theatre's budget and procedures.

Your theatre should consult with your accountant, payroll service, or even a lawyer to determine the best route to take. You should also stay abreast of the situation. The Department of Labor has announced this as the "final overtime rule." However, I have heard that after the election, there may be legislation to reduce the immediate impact on organizational budgets. This might mean a compromise in the amount of the increase in the minimum salary level or a change in the effective date. But don't wait to plan how to handle the increase in your budget. ♦

Department of Labor

Overtime Final Rule and the Non-Profit Sector

www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/overtime-nonprofit.pdf

Guidance for Non-Profit Organizations on Paying Overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act

www.dol.gov/whd/overtime/final2016/nonprofit-guidance.pdf

Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute

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www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/29/778.114

Association Trends

What nonprofits should know about the Labor Dept.'s new rule limiting 'white-collar' exemptions to OT pay

www.associationtrends.com/news/trends/headlines/what-every-nonprofit-should-knowabout-us-labor-depts-new-rule-limiting-white

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What's Trending: Social Issues

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.

Social Issues was the subject of a Trends survey distributed in July. Responses were received from 80 theatres in 36 states. Most theatres (83.75%) responding to the survey address social or community issues through programming or other activities. "Yes, frequently," answered 17.5%; "Yes, sometimes," was the response of 66.25% of theatres. Only 16.25% of theatres reported not addressing such issues.

The survey showed no trend in the amount of social/community issues programming in the past three years. Many (41.77%) said it is about the same. The others were equally divided between increased and decreased programming.

Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre in North Dakota reached out to veterans to tell their stories with Warrior Words

Theatres address a wide variety of issues in their programming and many have addressed multiple issues. Almost half (46.25%) have addressed Special Needs. Race has been addressed by 41.25% and Arts Education or Arts Accessibility by 40%. Also high on the list are Teen/Coming of Age issues and Sexual Orientation or Identity issues. (See sidebar for Social Issues.)

Although theatres often address social issues, only one said social change or social justice is its mission. The Weekend Theater in Little Rock, Arkansas "is dedicated to personally, interpersonally, and educationally reducing prejudice, cruelty, and indifference through live theater." 11.25% said it is part of their focus. Actors for Children Theatre in Appalachian Kentucky reported, "More than producing excellent theatre for children... at the heart of what we do is bringing HOPE and IMAGINATION to children and families in a place where little hope exists due to plant closures, layoffs, etc."

A majority of theatres (72.5%) completing the survey have programming for specific populations, cultures, needs, etc. Of those, 44.68% said such programming has increased in the past three years and 55.32% said it is about the same. None have decreased it.

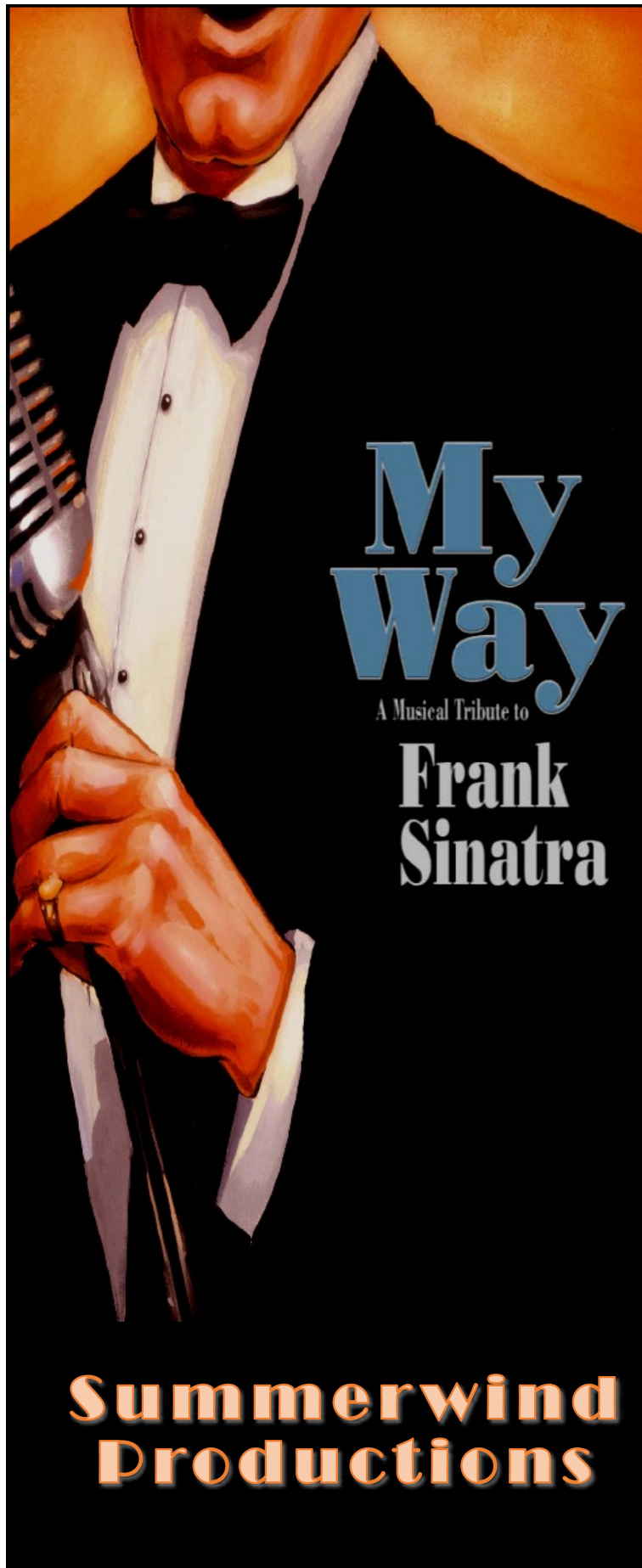
Youth is the most often specifically served group, with 65% of theatres reporting youth programs. One third have programs specifically for Senior Citizens and 25% work with youth or adults with Special Needs. (See sidebar for Specific Group Programming.)

Theatres connect their communities to social issues in various ways. Most select relevant plays (85.71%) and/or post or pre-show talks related to play content (52.86%). 40% conduct training or educational programs, while 37.14% utilize touring or outreach programs. Special population programs allow 27.14% of theatres to connect the community with social issues. Development of new works help 22.86% of theatres connect and 20% present other art forms, such as story-telling and visual arts.

Thirty percent of theatres reported working with local residents or community groups to support them in telling their stories. Actors for Children Theatre in Flatwoods, Kentucky "was asked by our local hospice to work with their bereavement camp for kids. I led an activity that paired my youth cast with camp kids on a storytelling (writing memories of their loved one) exercise/creating monologues. We did staged readings of the kids' work." Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre in North Dakota reached out to veterans to tell their stories with Warrior Words, "We held writing workshops for Veterans. They wrote essays, ...playwrights selected essays to adapt into monologues, which we then toured." Theatre Charlotte in North Carolina reported, "A writer worked with clients of Time Out Youth, an organization to assist LGBTQ teens who have been abused or disowned. The writer created a play based on these stories."

Attention to social issues and reaching out to specific groups helps theatres expand their audiences

Spotlighters Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland has seen great benefits for their participants, "Many of our youth have improved academic scores, and are reported by teachers to have improved social and problem solving skills. Various Individuals report finding their voice to speak up, or to become leaders in work related, community, and social programs." Volunteers often benefit in ways that enable them to impact other projects in the community. Eighty percent



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Vampire Monologues
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of theatres reported those involved in their theatre develop increased self-confidence and 80% noted volunteers enjoy the pride of contributing. Learning teamwork is a benefit for volunteers in 77.5% of theatres and in 76.25%, developing skills. Social support via "Theatre family" connections is a benefit for volunteers in 73.75% of theatres and 61.25% gain community connections. Volunteers in 46.25% of theatres in the survey become more aware of community issues. Only 5% of theatres in the survey checked "None of the above" for this question.

Attention to social issues and reaching out to specific groups helps theatres expand their audiences. Of theatres completing the survey, 56.25% report more people are seeing their shows. Only 12.5% have not increased their audience members. The composition of the audience has changed slightly in the past three years for 52.5% of theatres and changed significantly for 6.25%.

Audiences are getting younger in 28.75% of theatres, but stayed the same for 58.75%. Race diversity has stayed the same for 60% of theatres, but has increased for 40%. Socio-economic diversity has increased in 26.25% of theatres and decreased for only 2.5%. Fifty percent of theatres have increased their local geographic diversity, serving a broader range of their communities. Educational diversity has stayed the same for 76.25% of theatres, with 21.25% showing an increase.

Increasing audience size needs good strategies. Newnan Theatre Company in Georgia increased its audience in several ways using focus groups and surveys of patrons. Adams Community Theatre in Wisconsin increased its socio-economic diversity through "awareness of income level and what folks are able/willing to pay...keeping prices as low as possible...." Spotlighters Theatre of Baltimore, Maryland increased racial diversity in audiences by "programming to

place POC [people of color] in roles on stage, so the audience can see themselves on stage."

Theatres create ways to build community cohesiveness or awareness. Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre in North Dakota said, "We keep the word 'Community' in mind when planning programming. Who are we missing? How can we serve different pockets of the community?" Newport Theatre Arts Center in Newport Beach, California builds community in several ways, including "community service opportunities to meet school requirements, [and] mentor high school students."

Theatres can have great impact on their communities. Morgan-Wixson Theatre in Santa Monica, California said its "biggest impact would be ... our children's programming focusing on literacy." Actors for Children Theatre in Flatwoods, Kentucky said, "We have traveled and performed in venues



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Casey Hockett, Eric Sharp, Nastacia Nicole, H. Adam Harris and Autumn Ness in The Jungle Book by Greg Berke. Photo by Dan Norman

where live theatre has never been performed. ...AND the participants (cast) in our shows are people living in poverty, disenfranchised individuals for the most part.” Spotlighters Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland “raised awareness of various LGBTQ issues, ... of sexual violence, and gender diversity - provided opportunity for audience and community to raise questions in a safe space - and receive clear answers and guides.”

Kumu Kahua Theatre in Honolulu, Hawaii, said, “More people are discovering our theatre. When they find out that we produce plays about the local community, they are very surprised. To see their stories on stage and to tell others about us and what they saw is very impactful.” Newnan Theatre Company in Georgia explained, “By bringing the best shows possible to our community, we open minds and eyes to ideas that might not be talked about elsewhere.” ♦

Next up in “What’s Trending” is Board involvement in fundraising. Check it out in the November-December issue of *Spotlight*.

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

Specific Group Programming

% of theatres responding

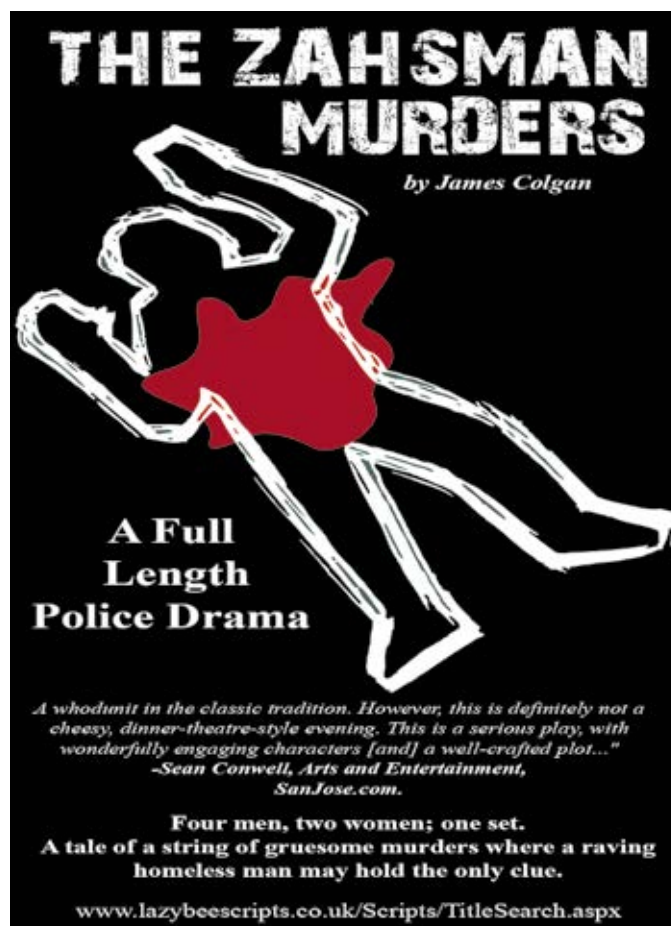
65%	Youth
33.75%	Senior Citizens
25%	Special Needs
21.25%	Low Income
18.75%	Women
17.5%	Black
13.75%	LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, or Questioning)
7.5%	Veterans/Soldiers
6.25%	Latino/Hispanic
5%	Asian/Pacific Islander
3.75%	Religion Based
3.75%	Prison
3.75%	Native/Indigenous
3.75%	Homeless

Social Issues

% of theatres responding

46.25%	Special Needs
41.25%	Race
40%	Arts Education or Accessibility
37.5%	Teen/coming of age issues
36.25%	Sexual orientation or identity issues
31.25%	Discrimination: ageism, sexism, racism
30%	Aging and/or end of life
30%	Bullying
20%	Literacy
17.5%	Multiculturalism
17.5%	Suicide
15%	Divorce/family violence
7.5%	Politics
7.5%	Environment
7.5%	Homelessness
5%	Safety
2.5%	Voting Rights

Written in by more than one theatre: Veterans’ Issues, Sexual Violence/Violence against Women, Addiction/Abuse/Alcoholism, Mental Health/Illness, Animal Protection



If your theatre has a goal to increase your audience, are you targeting specific groups in your efforts? Who and how?

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

A dinner theatre in Dickson, Tennessee reaches out to senior citizen centers, independent living communities, and housing complexes. Activity Directors in these communities are always looking for new and exciting activities. Group discounts are offered for two matinees per weekend. The seniors are a major portion of the audience, coming in busses from as far away as 50 miles.

Another recommendation is to target interest groups for a particular play. Example: *Red*, the play about artist Mark Rothko. Target interest groups would include artist, galleries, and schools that offer visual art training.

Dennis West
Flower and Bone Productions, Albuquerque, New Mexico
flowerandbone.com



Artie's Advocacy Tip

Children are our future.

Think long term for your theatre's future. Use unsold seats or even a rehearsal as an opportunity to cultivate a younger audience. Invite local schools, after school clubs, or home school groups. They will enjoy no cost live theatre, and you might spark a lifelong appreciation of the arts and create a personal connection to your organization.

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Bloomington Playwrights Project Reva Shiner Comedy Award

Reva Shiner Comedy Award
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107 West 9th Street
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The Reva Shiner Comedy Award presents an unpublished full-length comedy with a cash prize of \$1,000, a full production as part of the Bloomington Playwrights Project's Main-stage season, along with travel reimbursement.

Previous winners have gone on to enjoy productions around the world and to garner additional honors such as the National Play Award.

"Full-length" plays will have a complete running time of between 1 hour 15 minutes to 2 hours 15 minutes. Plays

submitted must be unpublished at the time of submission. Plays that have received developmental readings, workshop productions, or productions at small theatre companies are acceptable. No scripts with previous productions at major regional theatres will be accepted. Once entered, subsequent activity does not change the acceptability of the script.

Deadline: October 31, 2016 (postmark)

No email submissions

Submission fee: \$10

See the website for more details:
newplays.org/node/7?subnid=71

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Plays can be on any subject or theme. Must be able to be performed in ten minutes. No musicals or plays for children.

From the website: "The work must have a beginning that grabs your attention, a middle with some meat and character development, and an ending that makes sense. It can surprise you, shock you, make you laugh, make you cry, make you think, but it must have an ending. Everything else! Is the dialog natural for the characters created? Are the characters ones that an audience can hate, love, believe? Is there some emotion touched? Is it something that an audience will remember? Something to tell someone else about? In short, is it a good story!"

Blind reading selection process. The final seven plays will be performed on the main stage in January. The audiences vote for their favorites during the run of ShowOff!; the top three winners will split the entry fees collected from playwrights.

entry fee: \$10

Deadline: October 15, 2016

See the website for more details: caminorealplayhouse.org



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Spotlight on AACT Member Discounts



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ALL SHOOK UP

MTI Announces New Exclusive Offer

Senior Operations Officer at Music Theatre International John Prignano has revealed a new offer specifically for AACT Members. Only for a limited time MTI is offering a discount on a handpicked collection of MTI shows perfect for community theatres.

Featuring some of the hottest, newest releases as well as beloved classics, the AACT Collection is full of award-winning musicals guaranteed to thrill and delight your audiences.

If you book a show from the AACT Collection between August 1, 2016 and July 1, 2017 **you will receive 25% off of the standard rental fee and every 4th performance will be royalty free.**

In addition, MTI will donate 10% of rental fees to AACT as part of the special offer. All perusals for these shows will also be free for the dates of the offer.

Shows in the AACT Collection offered by MTI with the special discount for AACT members include:

1776

Cry-Baby

Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson

Theory of Relativity

The Robber Bridegroom

It Shoulda Been You

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

Little Miss Sunshine

Leap of Faith

MTI's ongoing offer of 20% discount on standard rental fees is still available through August 2017. AACT member



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theatres will receive a 20% discount on standard rental fees for the first four MTI musicals produced during 2016-2017. If a theatre produces five MTI musicals in the year, the fifth standard rental package is free.

Most standard rentals cost between \$750 and \$1,200 per license according to MTI's John Prignano. Using that range, with a 20% discount AACT member theatres save between \$150 and \$240 for the first MTI musical. Essentially, theatres with budgets up to \$99,999 save more than the cost of their AACT membership with the first rental.

Find more information on application and review conditions and of the exceptional discounts offered from MTI to AACT members at aact.org/mti. Both discount offers cannot be used on the same production. ♦

Take advantage of all your AACT membership has to offer. AACT members benefit from offers and ongoing discounts from royalties to supplies. Check out current member discounts and special offers at aact.org/discounts.



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Ron Ziegler

Region VII Representative Donna Fisher (left), AACT President Murray Chase (serving as Festival Commissioner), AACT Festival Commission member Lori Chase and AACT Education Committee member Kathy Pingel (serving as an adjudicator) enjoy a quick lunch between sessions of the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition Festival, held June 23 - 25, 2016 in Salida, CO.



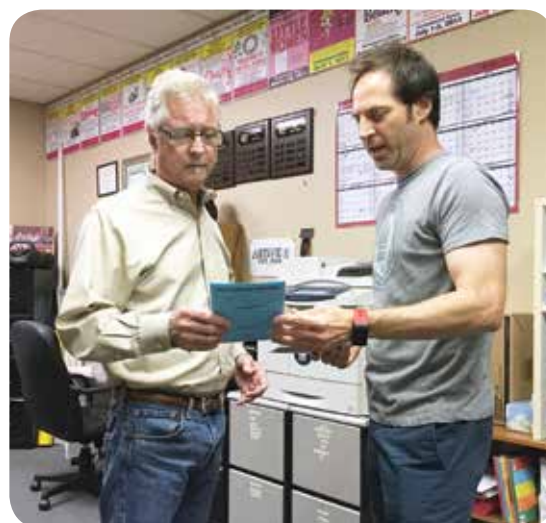
Ron Ziegler

AACT Education Committee member Kathy Pingel adjudicates a production at the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition Festival, held June 23 - 25, 2016 in Salida, CO.

Cran Dodds, AACT Member Engagement Director, discusses the latest show at Tyler Civic Theatre with Technical Director Dave Dickson on a visit to Tyler, Texas on May 16, 2016.



Cran Dodds



Cran Dodds

Cran Dodds, AACT Member Engagement Director discusses program ideas with Jason Richards, Director of Arts View Children's Theatre, on a trip to Longview, Texas in May 16, 2016.



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Careers in Theatre

Highlighting professional staff changes in theatre

San Antonio, Texas – **Overtime Theatre** has announced the appointment of **Chelsea Robertson** to New Promotions and Communication Director. Chelsea recently graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a BA in English. As a performer, she has been seen on Overtime stage for the past two seasons. Chelsea is very excited to help spread the good word of Overtime throughout San Antonio and the surrounding region. Congratulations, Chelsea!

Kalamazoo, Michigan – The **Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo** has named **Kristen Chesak** as its new Executive Director. Chesak is well known in Kalamazoo's arts and nonprofit communities for her 22-year tenure with Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, which includes serving as Executive Director for the last 10 years. Kristen reports, "I have been very fortunate to have had such a diverse and varied career at Kalamazoo Civic Theatre creating and producing theatre. There are so many enriching opportunities in Kalamazoo and I am excited to advocate for all the arts in this wonderful city." Board President, Bryan Zocher, says this about Kristen. "She will be a valuable asset to lead our Arts Council team. I can't wait to see what the future holds."

Fort Worth, Texas – **Jubilee Theatre** has appointed **William (Bill) Earl Ray** as their new Artistic Director. With a career spanning over 30 years, Bill has performed and directed in the Dallas Fort Worth area for Jubilee Theatre, Circle Theatre, Stage West, Dallas Theatre Center, Theatre Three, and for the African-American Repertory Theatre where he also served as Resident Director. Nationally, he is former Artistic Director for Nbaba Theatre in Tacoma, Washington. Bill's acting credits cover both film and television. "On behalf of the Jubilee Theatre Board of Trustees, we are thrilled with the appointment of Bill Ray," said Board President Ellen Benson. "With his artistic vision, we look forward to a promising future for our theatre."

Midland, Texas – **Midland Community Theatre** [MCT] has named **Audrie Palmer** as Business and Development Director. In this position, Audrie will be in charge of individual, corporate, and foundation donors as well as overseeing marketing, business operations, rentals, building management, and box office. Prior to working at MCT, Audrie worked at the Museum of the Southwest and the Midland Reporter Telegram. Audrie will complete her Master's Degree in Public Administration in August 2016, and expects to finish her Certified Fundraising Executive exams in December 2016.

"A resounding 'Bravo'...The banter is witty, the pacing crisp, the twists and turns true one-upmanship..."

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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

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Please contact Julie Crawford,
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Jean Trammell - 43 years - President of the Board, Guild, Actress, Running Crew,

Shirley Gawne - 40 - years Silver Foxes, Education and Outreach, Guild, House Manager, Usher

Kathryn Killinger - 37 - years Silver Foxes, Guild, Education and Outreach, Performer

Dick Trott - 30 - years Set Construction, Running Crew

Libby Williams - 27 years Usher, Guild

Ray Jennings - 26 years Set Construction, Usher

Maggi Taylor - 26 years Education and Outreach, Silver Foxes, Guild, Performer

Jean West-Walker - 26 years Silver Foxes, Education and Outreach, Guild, House Manager, Usher

Lianne Hanson - 25 years Education and Outreach, Guild, Actress



Ron McDaniel has just reached the 50-year mark as a member of the Board of Directors of Danville Light Opera Company (now dba DLO Musical Theatre). Mr. McDaniel was a 2014 recipient of AACT's Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award.



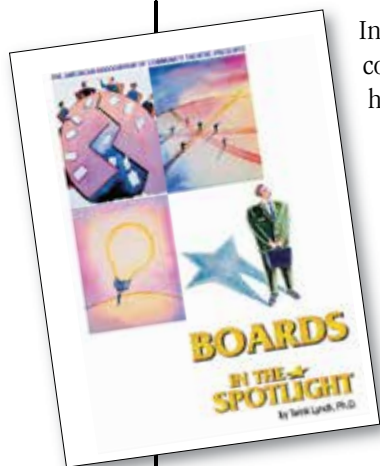
Julie Douglass is celebrating 41 years of volunteer service with the Reno Little Theatre!



Joe Super has been a Super volunteer with the Bellingham Theatre Guild in Bellingham, WA for 25 years!

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

Are You a "Travelling Troupe"?

by Ken Roberts



About a year ago, I wrote about a major player in the theatre insurance industry refusing to insure a production of *Mary Poppins* because of “aerial activities,” which led me to remind readers to be very sure that not only their agent, but also their insurance company, knew what we do in community theatre and are comfortable with it. After the *Mary Poppins* fiasco, that same insurance company proceeded to non-renew every theatre insurance policy in cases where the theatre had its own regular performance venue, whether owned or rented. Recently, they have taken the further step of not writing new theatre insurance business at all, and another major player has begun referring to these nomadic theatres as “traveling troupes.”

To the average ear, the traveling troupe designation sounds like a touring company, bouncing from city to city to perform for the locals. However, in the theatre insurance world, it just means that they don't perform at the same venue every time they mount a production. It also means that theatre insurance companies will rate their policies differently. Instead of being rated on the estimated number of attendees for the theatre on an annual basis, the policy may be rated on payroll. “What if we don't have any

There are still several companies that still rate every theatre policy on attendance, regardless of where and how often their productions take place,

payroll?” you may ask. The company will then determine the minimum payroll charge for the applicable state and multiply it by the number of board members the theatre has to arrive at a rating basis. The resulting premium is now strikingly similar to rating by attendance, although it started out being substantially higher.



Never fear, there are still several companies that still rate every theatre policy on attendance, regardless of where and how often their productions take place, but the lesson here is that I still see far too many theatre policies that have been rated incorrectly. As a result, it becomes even more incumbent upon theatres to make absolutely sure that their agent and their insurance company know exactly what they do and are comfortable with it. It might surprise

It becomes even more incumbent upon theatres to make absolutely sure that their agent and their insurance company know exactly what they do and are comfortable with it.

theatre folks to know how many policies I see that have nonprofit performing arts organizations rated as nonprofit movie theatres because the insurance company that underwrites their policy doesn't have a class code for what we do. *Beware of this* – if they don't have the proper class code for what we do, that's usually a pretty good sign that they don't typically insure our types of operations, whether traveling or stationary. While a theatre might sometimes save money by being insured this way, they might also be exposing themselves to an uncovered claim. How does that savings look then? ♦

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The Good, the Bad and the Best

by Twink Lynch

We had a stimulating discussion of “good” and “bad” Board Members at workshops on effective Boards at an AACTFest a few years ago. Among the “good” qualities were:

- hard-working,
- generosity of spirit/time/money
- honesty
- enthusiasm
- inspirational
- visionary
- objective
- open to change

Other “good” qualities included:

- capacity for enjoyment
- willingness to be held accountable
- being a good listener
- possessing organizational skills
- willingness to be a team player
- a capacity for consensus building and creative problem-solving
- ability to recognize opportunity and to manage change
- ability to communicate effectively
- ability to complete a task

A “good” Board Member knows and is committed to the mission, comes to all meetings prepared and on time, understands that the bottom line is service (not money); he/she answers and/or returns phone calls, and is an effective representative in the community. Wow! Just add “walks on water” and that should complete the picture.

On the other hand, “bad” qualities in Board Members were identified at that workshop as:

- being lazy
- being obstructive
- being inattentive
- being close-minded, and/or resistant to change
- behaving like an empire builder
- having too much need for control

Other “bad” Board Member traits included:

- seeking prestige
- blaming others
- rejecting criticism

- being a know-it-all, an ostrich (in denial), or a “loose cannon”
- being disorganized

Still other “bad” qualities included:

- being an ineffective communicator, including being too quiet (no participation in discussion)
- micromanaging

A “bad” Board Member asserts that “we’re just volunteers” and therefore not accountable; never reads Board information ahead of time; comes late, leaves early, and doesn’t return phone calls. Yikes!

Of course, there is no one Board person who is all “good” or all “bad.” But there is enough reality (and pain!) in the ideas listed above that I have summarized them into a list of “**Keys to Effective Board Service**”:

1. Knowledge of the Organization

This includes knowledge of the theatre’s purpose, goals, and objectives, of its history, and of its programs/services. How is it organized? Who does what? Is there a paid staff? If so, what does each staff member do? What is the theatre’s image in the community? Who else serves on the Board? What facilities, equipment, and other material resources does the organization possess? What are its current financial status and long-term liabilities? What are its current pressing problems? Will there be a major fundraising effort during your tenure? For what?

2. Understanding of Your Role in the Organization

Why have you been asked to serve? What specific skills, talent, experience, education, and connections do you bring to the table? What committee will you serve on? What is your job description? How do you feel about what you’re being asked to contribute? Do you have the time? The interest? Have you worked in some capacity for this organization in the past? What needs for personal growth do you have that might be met by serving the needs of this organization? What is your own “5-year plan?” What benefits will you get?

3. Commitment to the Theatre

Not only must you philosophically “buy into” the mission and goals of the theatre, but you must also commit to making “what’s right for the organization” the framework within which you assist in problem solving and decision-making. You must further determine what kind of commitment of time, money, and energy you are being asked to make, and decide if you are really willing to make it. You should not say “yes” unless you are.

4. Eagerness to Learn

You should seek to learn more about the organization and more about how you can increase your effectiveness in it. Ask questions. There is now a wide variety of printed and online resource materials,

workshops, conventions, festivals, and consultancies available to Board Members of nonprofits, and we should take advantage of them. You should leave your theatre a better Board Member than when you began, and you should leave the organization in better shape than when you came on Board.

5. Active Participation

Do your homework. Come to all meetings prepared and on time; stay until the meeting is over (of course there are exceptions when necessary). Serve on an active committee. Attend the shows. Attend the Board Retreat and the special events. Contribute money as well as time. Fundraise when asked (and learn how, if necessary - it's a learnable skill!). Talk up the theatre in all the groups you are a part of.

6. Communication Skills

The ability to listen "actively" (checking out what you've heard for accuracy, paying attention to nonverbal messages, listening for feeling as well as thought) is the most important skill any person brings to interpersonal situations, but it is especially needed in a group decision-making process such as Board meetings. Other skills include consensus building, ability to let others be "partly right" (especially when they disagree with you), helping others to be heard, ability to synthesize, and so on. These are all learnable skills! How do you check out?

7. Openness to Change

Nothing stays the same. This is a fact of life. Unfortunately, change is scary and brings on feelings of "fight or flight" in many of us, especially when we cannot see what our own role will be after the change has happened. But sticking our heads in the sand or setting up all kinds of barriers are not good problem-solving techniques and often generate anger and resentment in others. Often what we need is more information (knowledge is an antidote to fear). Sometimes we can ease into a needed change by doing something on a "pilot" basis. Mostly we need to let others be "partly right." If we cannot live with a change that has the support of the majority, we need to get off the Board.

8. Dependability

Do the job you agreed to do within the appropriate time frame. If you are confused about any aspect of it, or if you find new circumstances make it impossible for you to do what you agreed to do, check out your concerns and/or renegotiate your commitment with your President and/or Chief Staff Person. And, for heaven's sake, return phone calls and emails!

9. Willingness to be Held Accountable

Your job as a Board Member is to move things forward. You should request an evaluation of your accomplishments each year you serve on a Board, along with a general evaluation of the achievements of the theatre. Your role should be renegotiated each year in light of the previous year's experience. As a learning/growing person, you may wish for increased responsibility.

10. Passion

Passion is the most important quality of all! The more fully and meaningfully you participate as a Board Member, the more you get turned on and buy into the dream, the deeper and more compelling your passion for the theatre will become, and the better advocate you will be. And if there's anything our community theatres need, it's passionate advocates!

So - how do you check out? Are there some things that "need work"? If so, get to it! If not, thank heaven for you. ♦


Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight, page 73

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

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
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Sept 9 - 11	New Hampshire Community Theatre Association *New Hampshire State AACTFest 2017	NH Concord	781-377-4233 facebook.com/pages/NHCTA
Sept 9 - 10	Connecticut Community Theatre Association *Connecticut AACTFest 2016	CT Torrington	860-489-7180 netonline.org
Sept 16 - Oct 1	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>The Emperor of North America</i> by Thomas Hischak Silver Spring Stage	MD Silver Spring	301-593-6036 ssstage.org aact.org/newplayfest
Oct 12 - 15	Georgia Theatre Conference *Georgia State AACTFest 2016	GA Augusta	229-985-8753 georgiatheatreconference.com
Oct 14 - 16	AACT Executive Committee Meeting	MN Rochester	817-732-3177 aact.org
Oct 27 - 30	Alabama Conference of Theatre *Alabama State AACTFest 2016	AL Wetumpka	205-936-9162 alabamaconferenceoftheatre.com
Oct 28 - 30	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>Shades of Valor</i> by Karen L. Lewis Twin City Stage	NC Winston-Salem	336-725-4001 twincitystage.org aact.org/newplayfest

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