

spotlight

January/February 2017 \$2.50

american association of community theatre

AACTFest 2017



**Rochester,
Minnesota**

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Competition**

**Youth
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**Trending
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**AACT
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Murray Chase
AACT President
2015-2017

I attended a high school graduation dinner recently for one of our theatre students. A local minister had some words of inspiration, noting that many would challenge them to do great things.

"Don't worry about the great, grand things," he told them. "Just try to do a little good every day. The great and grand will take care of themselves."

Such has been the story of AACT for the past 22 years under Julie Crawford's leadership. Each day the organization has moved forward, ever so surely. And at the end of two decades, we have a dynamic organization poised to catapult community theatre more and more into the center of America's culture.

For just one example:

- Growing advertising revenue has allowed more newsletter pages, thus more editorial space. That space often has been used to solicit input from constituents. Soon enough, we received a request to serve playwrights better. That led to a task force, which led eventually to NewPlayFest, world premieres, good new producible plays for all of us,

and more revenue for both playwrights and our theatres. All because we solicited more advertising.

Julie has, for 22 years:

- organized meetings
- nudged committees and task forces
- marshaled staff and volunteer forces as needed
- kept projects focused, often many at a time, and solidified their progress
- and kept AACT's books in the black....always!

One can never extol enough the virtues of doing a little good every day. As Julie works on the big AACTFest in Rochester this year — with its many ancillary attractions added over many years — we owe her a "job well done" and a sincere "thanks."

Hilarious Comedy Plays!



'Twas the Fight Before Christmas!
 Cast: 4 Female, 2 Male Length: Two Acts
 Think your family is complicated? Meet the most dysfunctional family you can imagine as they try to navigate Christmas. Peace on earth and good will to all men? Not likely! Ever since her husband died, Mary's horrible adult children have been ruining Christmas. This year, with the help of a suicidal French psychiatrist, Mary is determined to take Christmas back. Hilarious and uplifting Christmas comedy.

My In-laws are Outlaws!
 Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male Length: Two Acts
 Annie discovers her in-laws are outlaws... and her mother-in-law has hired a mad group of assassins to kill her! How will Annie, a mild mannered Librarian, outwit the best of the Italian, Russian and Irish contract killers? This is outrageous, laugh out loud comedy at its best.

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

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Much of the work of AACT would not be possible without the generous support of these partners, and their commitment to community theatre

On the Cover

The newly renovated Mayo Civic Center, including the Rochester Civic Theatre, site of AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota

Photo by David Cockerell

Contacting AACT

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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 number above.



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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE AACT NEWPLAYFEST WINNING PLAYS VOLUME 2 (2016)



AVAILABLE NOW

AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 2 (2016)

Includes all seven of the national new play festival winners.
Code: AL7. Price: \$29.95.

Laguna Beach, Ohio

By *Malcolm MacDonald*. Dove needs to sell his family beach house, so his best friends from high school have come together to figure out a way to buy it. The old friends are now in their 50s, and their margarita-fueled reunion, along with the surprise appearance of an old flame, ignites emotional fireworks. Premiered at Stage Right Productions/2nd Street Theater, Bend, Ore. Code: LL7.

Wash, Dry, Fold

By *Nedra Pezold Roberts*. Trudy and Enola are stuck with each other trying to salvage Grace's Place, the run-down laundromat they inherited from their mother. And there are other problems. The bank has turned Enola down for a loan, and Officer Baby Face is threatening to lock up their Uncle Slackjaw, a Vietnam P.O.W., as a public nuisance. Premiered at Chicago Street Theatre/Community Theatre Guild, Valparaiso, Ind. Code: WJ2.

Get Out of Dodge

By *Jeanne Drennan*. Molly Hamilton has an enviable east-coast liberal's life, with a great job, an equally great husband and talented kids. Then her long-missing father, Schuyler, knocks on the door to entice her to join him on a road trip back to Idaho, the place where he left her at 17 after wounding a U.S. marshal. Family alliances shift as the family fights over how to handle the fugitive under their roof. Premiered at Venice Theatre, Venice, Fla. Code: GD5.

Gracefully Ending

By *A.J. DeLauder*. Beth Fuller, divorced and facing homelessness, moves in with her ailing widowed mother, Margret. But Margret, who sees and talks to her late husband, doesn't want help. In desperation, Beth calls on a doctor to declare her mother incompetent. The fight grows between the two women, and soon both will face the same ultimatum: resign control to another or face death alone. Premiered at Theatre Arlington, Arlington, Texas. Code: GD4.

The Emperor of North America

By *Thomas S. Hirschak*. A middle-aged hack writer is haunted by the ghost of "emperor" Joshua Norton, an historical figure from 19th-century San Francisco, about whom he is trying to write a biography. The writer is also haunted by Leo Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*. He suspects he is losing his mind, and the only alternative to insanity is to assassinate the emperor. Premiered at Silver Spring Stage, Silver Spring, Md. Code: E90.

Shades of Valor

By *Karen L. Lewis*. Rick Marshall, a young lieutenant, is killed by Danny Preston, an equally young enlisted man. When Rick's mother, Barb, arrives to crash Danny's "welcome home" from prison celebration, she learns that Dan has not shown up. Barb's demand for answers launches the two women on a difficult journey of examination, discovery and, ultimately, acceptance. Premiered at Twin City Stage, Winston-Salem, N.C. Code: S2H.

Lighthouse

By *William Baer*. Luce Fouchet is the keeper of the Beach Haven Lighthouse and a professional travel writer. As she's planning to leave on a trip to Lisbon, an unexpected visitor arrives, and her world suddenly falls apart. Luce is now forced to deal with her unresolved past and the devastating ramifications of an extremely rare skin disorder. Premiered at Windsor Community Playhouse, Windsor, Colo. Code: LL6.



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VI Jeffrey Brown
Boerne, TX
VII Donna Fisher
Casper, WY
VIII Gil Savage
San Diego, CA
IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA
X Dane Winters
Germany (US Army)

Upcoming Meetings

AACT Winter Meetings

February 9 - 12, 2017 • Las Vegas, Nevada

The AACT Board, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams will meet in Las Vegas for the AACT Winter Meetings 2017. Most meetings are open. Contact the AACT Office for more details.

Embassy Suites by Hilton Las Vegas - Reserve by January 10, 2017
4315 Swenson Street, Las Vegas, Nevada

More Info: aact.org/winter

2017 Arts Advocacy Day & Nancy Hanks Lecture

March 20-21, 2017

Washington, DC
americansforthearts.org
AACT is a National Partner

World Theatre Day

March 27, 2017

aact.org/world-theatre-day

Thanks

Rochester CVB for hosting the AACT Executive Committee meeting, October 15, and for the tour of the Mayo Civic Center

AACT Staff

Julie Crawford, Executive Director
David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director
Cranston Dodds, Member Engagement Director
Karen Matheny, Office Support Manager
Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator

Jill Patchin, Corporate Partners Manager
Mary Jo DeNolf, Events Coordinator
Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator
Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator
Winston Daniels, Office/Festivals Assistant

Spotlight

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Pingel, Ken Roberts, Bobby Ryan, Lou Ursone,
Kelly Van Oosbree, Ron Ziegler

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AACT Insurance Program

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



For more information, contact:
325-486-5150
610-362-8832 Fax
ken.roberts@usi.com



Get Ready for AACTFest 2017

Plan now to attend AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota where twelve winning productions will be presented. The AACTFest 2017 national festival includes a theatre management conference, a youth leadership conference and youth festival, educational workshops, top vendor displays, the design exhibition and competition, a new monologue competition, social events, sightseeing and networking opportunities, all ending with a festival awards presentation. Mark your calendar and attend this great celebration of American community theatre! AACTFest 2017, the national community theatre festival, will be held June 26-July 1, 2017.

Registration and more information is available at aact.org/17

State festivals are taking place now that will lead to the national festival. Check out the Moving On section (page 15) to see theatres that have been selected to advance to Regional Festivals. And keep up with the AACT Calendar (page 50) or aact.org/calendar for upcoming state and regional festivals. 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.

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).

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 Civic Theatre's original building houses the Mainstage Theatre, a 300-seat proscenium theatre built in 1963. The facility has seen major changes in the 21st century. In 2000, the front of house was renovated and backstage areas improved to make way for the addition of a black box theatre. 2016 saw the addition of the Studio Theatre, a 200-

seat black box-style theatre. The facility also houses a Lobby Stage and an outdoor Patio Stage. The theatre is situated in downtown Rochester adjacent to the Mayo Civic Center and accessible from the host hotels via skyway.



AACTFest 2017 YOUTH FESTIVAL

AACT will present the very first national AACT Youth Festival as an integral part of the national festival of AACTFest 2017. During AACTFest, four youth theatre companies will perform early afternoon on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday - one per day. All four will again perform and be adjudicated on Saturday afternoon. All Youth Festival performances are included in AACTFest 2017 registration. Bill Anderson, Penelope Notter, and Sara Phoenix will adjudicate the AACT Youth Festival productions. Do not miss this exciting new component to our Rochester, Minnesota AACTFest 2017 festival!

AACTFest 2017 YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The AACT Youth Leadership Conference will focus on cultivating youth who aspire to be leaders in their communities. The conference is open to ages 14-18 and will consist of round-table discussions, youth activities, educational workshops, and four 75-minute enlightening sessions. The goal of this exciting conference is to instill confidence, knowledge, and team building skills in an exhilarating and stimulating experience. April Cochran, Education Director of Market House Theatre, will facilitate, and the conference will prove to be robust and challenging for all participants. Register for AACTFest 2017 Youth Leadership Conference by registering for AACTFest 2017, selecting Youth Leadership Conference. Youth receive a discount. aact.org/17

More AACTFest 2017 ►

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KEN LUDWIG'S BE MY BABY

A short-tempered Scotsman and uptight English woman are pitted against each other and forced to travel 6,000 miles to California to pick up their adopted grandchild.

BETTER LATE LARRY GELBART

Marital vows and family dynamics are put to the test in this December-December-December romantic comedy.

DUSTY & THE BIG BAD WORLD CUSI CRAM

PBS's most popular animated show gets some unwanted notoriety when the producers pick a little girl and her two dads as winners of a model family competition.

POWER PLAYS ELAINE MAY & ALAN ARKIN

From two veteran comedy writers comes this trio of short plays exploring the collision of wills and the fine line between reality and absurdity.

THE WAVERLY GALLERY KENNETH LONERGAN

Irrascible but increasingly erratic Gladys has run an art gallery in a small Greenwich Village hotel for years, which may now be replaced by a coffee shop.

ADRIFT IN MACAO CHRISTOPHER DURANG & PETER MELNICK

From the master of outrageous comedies comes this musical parody of noir films, full of songs, gags, and farcical shenanigans.

BIG NATE: THE MUSICAL JASON LOEWITH, LINCOLN PEIRCE & CHRISTOPHER YOSTRA

Based on the popular comic strip, sixth-grader Nate Wright must take his game to an all-star level to capture beautiful Jenny's heart and win the Battle of the Bands.

FLY BY NIGHT KIM ROSENSTOCK, WILL CONNOLLY & MICHAEL MITNICK

A comic rock-fable and sweeping ode to young love set against the backdrop of the northeast blackout of 1965.

HANDS ON A HARDBODY DOUG WRIGHT, AMANDA GREEN & TREY ANASTASIO

Ten hard-luck Texans fight to keep at least one hand on a brand-new truck in order to win it. But only one can drive away with the American Dream.

JUDGE JACKIE: DISORDER IN THE COURT CHRISTOPHER DIMOND & MICHAEL KOOMAN

Judge Jackie rules her television courtroom with an iron fist, presiding over a three-ring circus of America's most chaotic civil cases in this over-the-top musical comedy.

*For more information on this exclusive offer, visit the
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AACTFest 2017 National Festival Schedule

Sunday, June 25

Afternoon Community Theatre Management Conference begins

Monday, June 26

Afternoon Tech Meetings/Rehearsals begin
AACT Executive & Finance Committee Meetings
Evening Welcome Party!

Tuesday, June 27

Morning Community Theatre Management Conference ends
Adjudication Training begins
AACT Board Meeting
Afternoon Youth Performance 1
Performance Session 1 (Regions VII, TBA, V)
AACT Committee/Task Force Meetings
Evening Performance Session 1 repeats
After Glow

Wednesday, June 28

Morning Vendor Exhibits Open
Workshops
Youth Leadership Conference
Noon Adjudication of Performance Session 1 Shows
Afternoon Youth Performance 2
Performance Session 2 (Regions IVb, VIII, III)
Workshops
AACT Committee/Task Force Meetings
Evening Performance Session 2 repeats
After Glow

Thursday, June 29

Morning Vendor Exhibits, Design Exhibits Open
Workshops

Youth Leadership Conference
AACT Membership Team
Adjudication of Performance Session 2 Shows
Afternoon Youth Performance 3
Performance Session 3 (Regions IX, X, VI)
Workshops
AACT Committee/Task Force Meetings
Evening Performance Session 3 repeats
After Glow

Friday, June 30

Morning Vendor Exhibits & Design Exhibits
Workshops
Youth Leadership Conference
Noon Adjudication of Performance Session 3 Shows
Afternoon AACT Membership Meeting & AACT National Awards
Youth Performance 4
Performance Session 4 (Regions IVa, I, II)
Workshops
Evening Performance Session 4 repeats
After Glow

Saturday, July 1

Morning Design Exhibits
AACT Board Meeting
Workshops, Monologue Competition
Youth Leadership Conference
Noon Adjudication of Performance Session 4 Shows
Afternoon Youth Performances 1-4 (repeat)
Monologue Finals
Evening Awards Reception & Show

New for AACTFest 2017 Two performances by each National Company.

Each Performance Session will include three National Companies and will have an afternoon session and an evening session on the same day.

Registration Fees

AACTFest 2017 National Festival

AACT Member

by March 1 - \$240
March 2 - June 1 - \$265
after June 1 - \$295

Non-member

by March 1 - \$340
March 2 - June 1 - \$365
after June 1 - \$395

add Adjudication Training - \$135
add Intro to Adjudication - \$30
Discount for Youth (under 18) - \$15

Community Theatre Management Conference

AACT Member

by March 1 - \$235
March 2 - June 1 - \$260
after June 1 - \$290

Discount if also registering for National Festival - \$15

Non-member

by March 1 - \$310
March 2 - June 1 - \$335
After June 1 - \$365

AACT Adjudication Training

Quality adjudication is one of the key ingredients for a festival at any level. To help develop a stronger pool of adjudicators, AACT offers Adjudication Training at the National Festival. In addition, directors and others who want to understand adjudication better, can attend the first session, Introduction to Adjudication.

Adjudication Training is for those who want to develop or improve their abilities as effective adjudicators. It is an intensive five days of instruction and practical application that begins on Tuesday, June 27 and continues throughout the festival. Participants will learn the skills of adjudicating and gain practical experience through observing and critiquing the festival shows.

The schedule for the 2017 national festival includes each company performing twice (afternoon and evening) with adjudications at noon on the following day. The Adjudication Training class will meet for instruction in the mornings, view the shows in the afternoons, and gather in the evenings to review the shows. For the first time, they will be able to attend the critiques given by the national adjudicators.



Kathy Pingel

Conducting the Adjudication Training and the Intro to Adjudication Workshop is Kathy Pingel from North Port, Florida. Kathy has adjudicated at the state, regional, national, and international levels for AACT. She has taught workshops in improvisation, directing, and senior theatre. She has facilitated AACT's National Theatre Education Directors Conference.

Kathy was the Director of Education and Youth Programming at the Des Moines Community Playhouse for ten years. She also served as Artistic Director of the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. She holds a BA in Theatre from Eastern Michigan University where she studied with Virginia Koste and a MA from Northwestern University in Performance Studies where she worked with Frank Galati. She also holds a MAT in Teaching from Northwestern.

The AACT Adjudication Training is part of the national festival, but requires an extra fee (\$135) to help cover the costs of the five plus days of intensive instruction. The fee for the Intro to Adjudication is \$30. Register for the either when you register for AACTFest. For more information see aact.org/17 or contact the AACT office. ♦

More AACTFest 2017 ►

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AACTFest Design Exhibition & Competition

How many Actors does it take to change a Light bulb?

All of them - One to do it, the rest to say how they could have done it better! Ah, actors are so easy to make fun of, but then again where would designers and technicians be without them? Good natured joking aside, we are there to support the actor's work: dressing them, enhancing their features and hair, giving them a set to work within, making sure they can be seen and heard and enticing the public to come in to watch them perform. The only problem is, when we do our jobs well, we are invisible. The technical side of the stage is there to create the environment- the props should look natural in the actors hands, the perfect setting for the action to take place, sounds real to that specific place in time, clothing that tells the audience who the character is before the actors open their mouths and posters that entice the audience to come see the show are all part of the invisible nature of what we do.

The AACT Design Competition and Exhibition gives you the chance to become visible by displaying examples of your craft at AACTFest 2017 - it's finally all about YOU! It's easy to enter - the guidelines are summarized here; and complete guidelines are posted at aact.org/17 or you can contact me for info. Either you or the Producing Company must be a member of AACT. It would be great to see some examples of the fine work you all produce in your home spaces. You can even ship your display and we will set it up for you! We have had some wonderful entries in the past but nothing like what you can present. Entry forms need to be in by June 12, 2017. Let's make this Design Competition and Exhibition one to remember by covering the walls with your work!

Bob Frame, (315)294-8640, framer@cayuga-cc.edu



Design Categories:

Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Make-up/Hair, Sound, Graphic

General Guidelines:

1. There will be an entry fee of \$20 for each design.
2. Entry must be from a realized production.
3. Entry of the Design may be made by the Member Company or by the Individual Member Designer.
 - Either the Designer OR the Presenting Company **MUST** be a Member of AACT.
4. The Entry must be exhibited at Festival and must be set up Wednesday, June 28 from 5 - 7 pm, and removed after 1pm Saturday, July 1.

Requirements for All Entries:

1. Every Entry must have a written "**Design Statement**" in which the designer discusses the concept, thought, and rationale for their design.
 - This "Design Statement" should be no longer than 250 words.
2. **Photos or videos of the design as it was originally presented ARE required.**
 - A Sound Design entrant will need an audio playback rather than visual.
3. A pleasing presentation of the Design Entry is strongly encouraged.

AACTFest Myth to dispel common myths related to festival participation

AACTFest = American Association of Community Theatre **Festival**. Stating the obvious is sometimes the best place to begin to defunct a myth. In so doing, I would like to continue this series with discussing the Festival of AACTFest. When attending a festival one would expect to find: fun, new ideas, entertainment, flashy gadgets, people of all sorts, and joy, in addition to all the performances. There is no better place to engage in hundreds of experiences centered on the best sort of joy, one solely focused on all aspects of theatre than AACTFest: the state and regional festivals that culminate in the national festival of the AACTFest cycle! My very first national festival was in Torrington, Connecticut in 2003. The first day I knew that I was with people that I wanted to be associated with for as long as possible. All AACTFest national festivals have answers to questions, workshops to enhance skills, opportunities to share, vendors showing wares for all aspects of the theatre, speakers from the industry (such as: Tom Dudzick, Dan Goggin), and nurture for immediate

friendships. The AACT Board, Committee Members, Staff, and Volunteers go out of their way to make sure that every attendee is welcomed, nurtured, and guided to whatever and whomever might be of interest to each person. AACTChat will be new this year, and will be a great way to share your ideas. Attend - if you are "in love" with theatre, this is the ball (festival) to meet your true love! Corny, yeah, but this is, after all, live theatre and this is the THE National Theatre Festival of AACTFest!

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 national festival since 2003. She looks forward to meeting you at the AACTFest 2017 National Festival in Rochester.

AACTChat

The AACTFest 2017 schedule includes AACTChat on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 12 – 1 pm. Attendees will visit and share ideas. AACTChat will be a time to discuss challenges, share success stories, and network with everyone who is in attendance without having to rely on chance gatherings or near misses.

Hotels & Ground Transport

aact.org/17, *Transportation & Hotels*

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Rochester - \$154
150 South Broadway, Rochester, Minnesota
507-281-8000

Group Name: AACTFest, Group Code: ACT

Hilton Garden Inn - \$134
225 South Broadway, Rochester, Minnesota
800-281-8000

Group Name: AACTFest, Group Code: ACT

Kahler Grand Hotel - \$124
20 SW Second Avenue, Rochester, Minnesota
Reservations - 800-533-1655
Code: AACT or American Association of Community Theatre

Go to aact.org/17, click on *Transportation & Hotels* in the National Festival menu for information on ground transportation from both Rochester and Minneapolis airports.

Please support AACT by staying at one of the official convention hotels listed. In addition to offering discounted rates to our attendees, these hotels have been carefully vetted to ensure you are staying in hotels with good reputations as recommended by the Rochester Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Plus, by booking within AACT's block of hotels, you help keep registration costs down for future AACT events.

To ensure that AACT gets credit for your reservation:

- Book your room at a hotel on the AACT list
- Use the code or tell the hotel you are with AACT
- Don't cancel at the last minute – no one else has time to book that room
- Stay for your entire reservation – don't check out early

Airline Discounts

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AACTFest 2017 Workshops

Surrounding the performances, the festival hosts a variety of workshops. Led by the popular Adjudication Training and the Introduction to Adjudication Workshop, an assortment of workshop topics are available to give you a thorough understanding of aspects of community theatre allowing you to enrich your own theatre community.

Listed are workshops currently on the roster, watch *Spotlight* and aact.org/17 for additional workshops.

Administration

3 R's of Volunteers

Mary Jo DeNolf, Director of Volunteers and Operations, Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

Discuss and network ways to recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers on a day to day basis.

Powerful Media Relations and the Community Theatre

Mike Broemmel, Media Relations Consultant

Develop powerful media relations and strategies.

If You Build It, Will They Come?

Mary Doveton, Executive Director, Theatre Lawrence

Engage, excite, extend, and retain your donors as long term partners.

Money, Money, Money, Money!

Tom Booth, Executive Director, Tupelo Community Theatre

Ideas for special events that help raise additional \$\$!

Disrupting Performing Arts Business Models

Chris Boucher, Theatre Manager, Tech Entrepreneur

New approaches to business models, monetizing theatre, engaging audiences, and if/when change is appropriate for your theatre.

Theatre Branding in the Digital Age

James Gallagher, Co-Creative Director at Herrmann Advertising, Owner of Drama Queen Graphics

Get the most from graphic designers, photographers, and videographers; use your organization's website as a marketing tool.

Facilitating/Moderating a Community Theatre Conference

Liz Lydic, AACT Board member, Long Beach Playhouse staff

Advice on keeping the pace, encouraging participation, staying on track, covering a full agenda, dealing with conflict, and more.

Email Power Tips: Turn Your Email List Into \$\$\$

Jarrold Kopp, Theatre Executive, Communications Consultant

Become an email marketing guru through the power of permission-based marketing.

Artistic

Licensing In-and-Out

John Prignano, Senior Operations Officer, Music Theatre International

Making the licensing of a show painless, fun, and affordable.

Don't Forget the M & M's...Using Music, Movement, and the Creative Arts to Heal

Ann Walsh, Compassionate Friends (support group for families who have lost children).

Bereaved young and young at heart experience a new way to handle their loss.

Plays for Older Actors: Discovering Ones that Work

Bonnie Vorenberg, Senior Theatre Resource Center

Plays that work well for seniors.

Using Original Music To Enhance and Support Your Production

Mark Toeppen, Music Composer, Sound Designer

Incorporate original music in your productions.

Audience Engagement - Hosting Talkbacks

Stephen Lydic, Professional Actor, Educator

Best practices for holding talkbacks at your productions.

Performance

Improvisation For Your Own Murder Mysteries

Paul Warshauer, Creator of Improv

Improvisational skills for fund raisers!

Stage Combat - Safety for Actor, Stage Managers, and Directors

Steven Schwall, Society of American Fight Directors

Safe practices in the execution of theatrical violence.

Stage Combat - Fundamentals of Swordplay

Steven Schwall, Society of American Fight Directors

Basic fundamentals of targeting and footwork.

Hire a Fight Director

Steven Schwall, Society of American Fight Directors

How, why, and the necessity of employing a qualified person to design stage violence.

Speaking Shakespeare

Ron Cameron-Lewis, Professor Emeritus, Sheridan College, Oakville, Canada

Shakespeare was meant to be spoken, not just studied as literature. Begin with a classical foundation then make the text your own.

Words and Music - How Musicals are Made

Chana Wise and Carl Johnson, Multi-Emmy Award winners

Marrying the words and the music.

I Won't Dance, Don't Ask Me!

Chad-Alan Carr, Executive/Artistic Director, Gettysburg Community Theatre

Musical Theatre choreography made easy for the "non-dancer."

Playing the Action

Stephen Carver, Executive Director, Kalamazoo Civic Theatre

Explore two essential elements that bring a character to life.

Swashbuckling 101

David Metcalf, Director

Building and annotating moves for a staged swordfight.

Mission: Improvi-Song

Improv Mafia, Student-run Ensemble, Illinois State University

Tips and tricks needed to perform an improvised song.

Are We Delicious? Writer/Actor Workshop

Sara Beth Hahner, Maestro, Stage Manager, Madison, Wisconsin

Get a taste of the popular ensemble group Are We Delicious? – write, act, get feedback!

Writing Your Own Children's Theatre Pieces

Stephen Lydic, Professional Actor, Educator

Creating original plays and musicals for young performers.

Technical

The Art of Stage Management

Keith Hight, Theatre and Dance, College of Southern Maryland
Become a great and effective stage manager. Beginners to the experienced.

Sound Design for the musical (non-musical)

Bob Pascucci, Sound Designer
Enhance your show (musical or non-musical) with great sound design and execution.

Sound Design Case Study: Creating a Soundscape

Scott Bloom, Sound Designer, Musician
Recording music, alteration and synthesis, cutting into cues, and programming for production.

Miscellaneous

Social Media and Ticket Sales

Dr. Laura L. Vedenhaupt, Senior Research Associate, Missouri Department of Higher Education
Examine research on the relationship between social media usage and ticket sales at small nonprofit community theatres.

Special Needs Theatre! Don't Be Afraid!

Chad-Alan Carr, Executive/Artistic Director, Gettysburg Community Theatre
Start a special needs theatre program in YOUR community.

Seniors and the Community Theatre, it's a win-win for everyone

Bonnie Vorenberg, Senior Theatre Resource Center
Attract seniors and make them feel welcome. Keep them engaged and creative on stage, backstage, and in supporting roles.

Speak The Speech!

We hope you're looking forward to the newly created Monologue Competition at AACTFest.

Participants may be any age with categories for those 18 and under and those above 18.

Your monologue (up to 120 seconds) will be adjudicated in front of your peers and those advancing onto the finals will perform again on stage during the festival. A cash prize will be given!

\$20.00 entry fee. For more information, contact Kristofer Geddie: kgeddie@venicetheatre.net

Connecting with and learning from my fellow Artistic Director peers from across the nation is invaluable. Thank you AACT for creating workshops that make this possible!



Bobby Ryan
Artistic Director, San Juan Community Theatre
Friday Harbor, Washington
sjctheatre.org

Moving On

Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest 2017

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival.

Region	Theatre	From		Production
II	Auburn Players Community Theatre	Auburn	NY	<i>Almost, Maine</i> by John Cariani
II	Rochester's Black Sheep Theatre	Rochester	NY	<i>Friends of the Deceased</i> by Jane Shepard
III	Monticello Theatre Association	Monticello	IL	<i>Love, Loss, and What I Wore</i> by Delia Ephron and Nora Ephron
III	North Riverside Players	North Riverside	IL	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> by William Shakespeare
IV	Wetumpka Depot Players	Wetumpka	AL	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> by Tennessee Williams
IV	Leeds Theatre and Arts Center	Leeds	AL	<i>Rabbit Hole</i> by David Lindsay-Abaire
IV	Theatre Winter Haven	Winter Haven	FL	<i>The Amish Project</i> by Jessica Dickey
IV	Spirit of Soul/Star Center Theatre	Gainesville	FL	<i>Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill</i> by Lanie Robertson
IV	Dalton Little Theatre	Dalton	GA	<i>The Last Train to Nibroc</i> by Arlene Hutton
IV	Paramount Players	Ashland	KY	<i>Cabaret</i> by John Kander, Fred Ebb, and Joe Masteroff
IV	Theatre Workshop of Owensboro	Owensboro	KY	<i>Who Am I This Time?</i> by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
IV	Mill Town Players	Pelzer	SC	<i>Of Mice & Men</i> by John Steinbeck
IV	Flowertown Players	Summerville	SC	<i>The Zoo Story</i> by Edward Albee
IV	Cookeville Performing Arts Center	Cookeville	TN	<i>The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens, and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord</i> by Scott Carter
IV	Landmark Studio for the Arts	Sutton	WV	<i>Dani Girl</i> by Christopher Dimond and Michael Kooman
IV	Buckhannon Community Theatre	Buckhannon	WV	<i>Always, Patsy Cline</i> by Ted Swindley
VI	The Studio Theatre	Little Rock	AR	<i>Buyer & Cellar</i> by Jonathan Tolins

Community Theatre Management Conference

The Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) is offered in tandem with (but separately from) the AACTFest National Festival, and is modeled after the renowned National Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference (often called the "Madison Conference"), and is for anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre.



This educational gathering brings together administrators from all levels of theatre--from the volunteer who "runs things around here" to the "just starting" part-time administrator to the full time professional manager. Learning is through a series of intensive, topic specific, roundtable discussions with participants

sharing experiences--both problems and solutions. Participants prioritize and suggest topics through a pre-conference questionnaire.


CTMC can send you home with ideas that will pay for your trip, a renewed enthusiasm for your work, and a nationwide network of colleagues.

CTMC is scheduled for June 2017, prior to the National Festival. The next national Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference is scheduled for November 2017. ♦



National AACTFest is the best vacation of my summer! From workshops that help my theatre grow, to fun evening events, to meeting folks from all over the USA who love theatre, plus fabulous shows every day, festival is such a wonderful week! See you in Rochester!

Sharon Burum
President, Duncan Little Theatre
Duncan, Oklahoma
duncanlittletheatre.com



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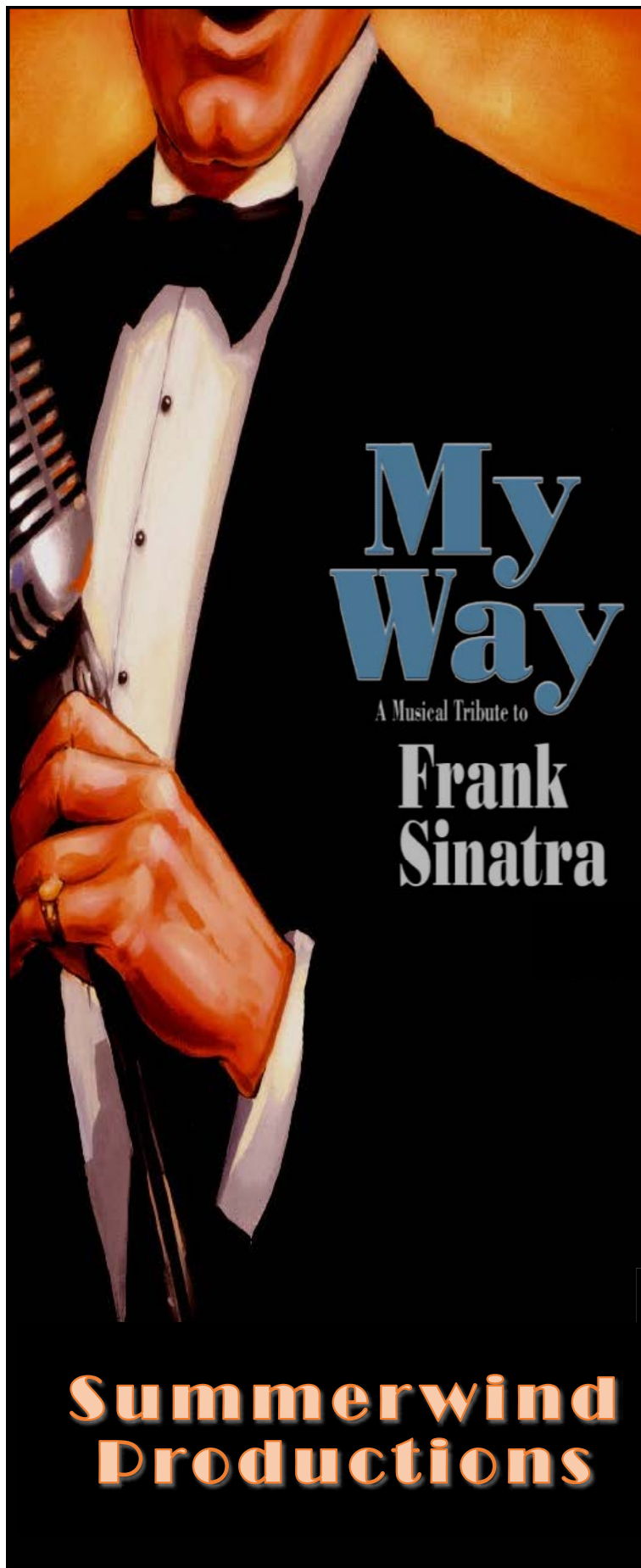
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Town Without Pity – Love Songs of Gene Pitney
Bonnie & Clyde
Club Morocco

PLAYS WITH MUSIC:

Queen Lear
12th Night: or the Gunfight at the Illyria Corral
Taming of the Shrew: Shake, Rattle, and Roll

PLAYS :

Dracula: The Case of the Silver Scream (Film Noir)
The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria
Casa Blue - The Life of Freda Kahlo
Vampire Monologues
War of the Worlds

**Scripts, Information, and
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Twin City Stage Premieres *Shades of Valor*



Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, North Carolina celebrated with the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Shades of Valor* by Karen L. Lewis. The production directed by Brook Davis opened October 28, 2016 and included an outstanding production, a festive opening night reception, and a check presentation from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation. The production ran through October 30.

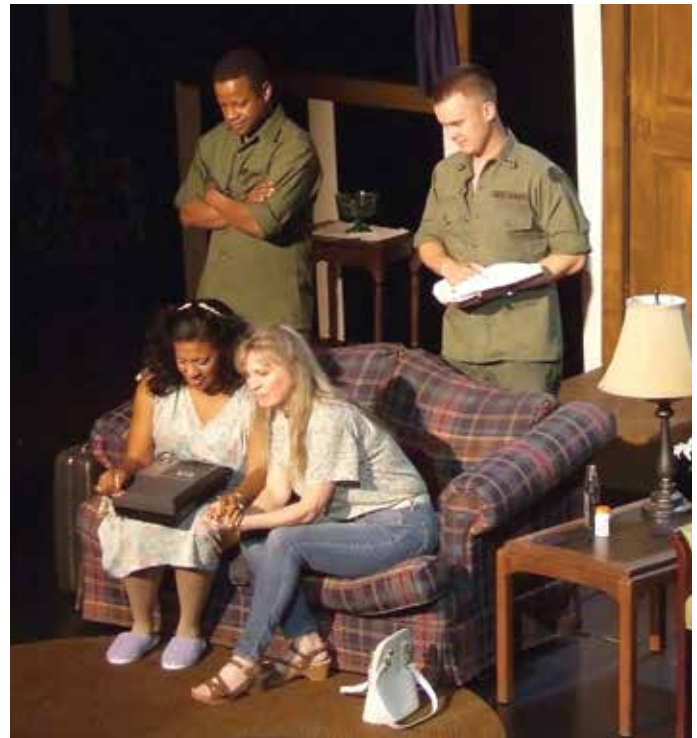
Playwright Karen L. Lewis attended the opening and said, "It was wonderful. The level of professionalism from the moment *Shades of Valor* was accepted as a finalist through the run of the play matched (or surpassed) that of any regional or NYC group I've encountered. I'll admit that I couldn't have been more pleased with the talented cast Twin City Stage assembled; and that the production values were impeccable; the fierce commitment to my play from every individual I met - ushers to artistic and executive directors to board members - made me want to draft a Tony acceptance speech. After opening night I wanted to stay a day or two longer in hopes of interesting Twin City Stage in future projects or simply to party with Julie of AACT, Janet & Linda from the Ayre Theatre Foundation, and Carrie of Dramatic Publishing Company."

Shades of Valor provides an intimate, personal exploration of military, race, and class warfare as the scenes slip back and forth between the mothers in 1981 and the sons in 1971.

Vietnam, 1971: Rick Marshall, a young lieutenant, is killed by Danny Preston, an equally young enlisted man. New Orleans, 1981: Rick's mother Barb arrives a day late to crash Danny's "Welcome Home" from prison celebration only to learn from Danny's mother, Kitty Preston, that Dan has not shown up. Barb's demand for answers launches the two women on a difficult journey of examination, discovery, and ultimately acceptance while they wait for the man whose actions forever changed their lives.

"Where are future audiences coming from?! The answer is as easy as AACT."

Karen L. Lewis grew up in Alexandria, Virginia where she spent many happy years working in every conceivable backstage capacity at Little Theatre of Alexandria. Her playwriting was interrupted by a career writing for soaps - primarily *All My Children*, which resulted in five Emmys and three Writers Guild awards. Her plays have been performed in regional theatres and off Broadway. Her play, *The Perfect Wife*, won the 2012 Stanley Drama Award, was a semi-finalist for both the 2012



Linda M. Lee

Kathryn Mobley (Kitty), Shelley Stolaroff Segal (Barb), Garry C. Wadell (Daniel), and Clint Blumenberg (Rick) in the AACT NewPlayFest 2016 world premiere of *Shades of Valor* by Karen L. Lewis at Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Eugene O'Neill Theatre's National Playwrights Conference, and 2012 Panndora's Box Festival, a finalist in the Actor's Theatre of Charlotte's 2013 nuVoices Playwriting Festival, and was premiered in NYC by The Ivy Theatre Company. The one-act that became *Shades of Valor* was nominated for the Susan Nims Distinguished Playwriting Award at the Last Frontier Theatre Conference, and was chosen for the 2013 Pittsburgh New Plays Festival. The full-length play *Shades of Valor* was a finalist in the 2014 Panndora's Box New Play Festival. A member of The Writers Guild of America and The Dramatists' Guild, Karen divides her time between New York City and Saranac Lake, New York.

Karen expressed her thoughts on AACT NewPlayFest, "Why should I tell playwrights my experience was wonderful? Personally, I don't want to write anything that might encourage other playwrights to enter future AACT NewPlayFests. I don't want or need the competition. Nope, all that can remain a little secret. It's fine with me if the number of AACT NewPlayFest submissions dwindles to about 20 - because my entry will be among them for as long as I am writing and AACT continues this gift to playwrights and theatres.



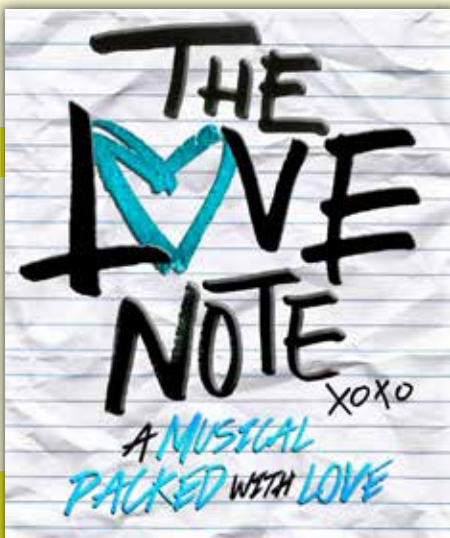
And seriously, I send out a big, BIG, thank you to all who are involved at every level. When people ask 'Where are future audiences coming from?!' The answer is as easy as AACT."

The world premiere of *Get Out of Dodge* by Jeanne Drennan at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida opened November 3, 2016. The production directed by Kathy Pingel ran through November 20. Information and photos from the opening will be in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

continued on page 20 ►

Opening Night of the AACT World Premiere of Shades of Valor by Karen L. Lewis at Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, North Carolina

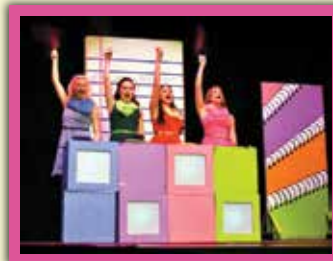
Front seated (left to right): Amber Jordan, Sound Board Operator; Kathryn Mobley, cast /Kitty; Karen L. Lewis, Playwright; Shelley Stolaroff Segal, Cast/ Barb; Linda M. Lee, Jack K Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation
Standing (left to right): Heather Sevy, Assistant Stage Manager; Suzanne Vaughan, Lighting Designer; Stephanie Guelzow, Stage Manager; Garry C. Wadell, cast/Daniel; Brook David, Director; Edwin H. Martinat III, Twin City Stage Artistic Director; Clint Blumenberg, cast/Rick; John T. Shea, Scenic & Sound Designer; Whitney Brown, Light Board Operator Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director; Carrie Blomquist, Dramatic Publishing; Janet Salters, Jack K Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation



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The 2016 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of *Lighthouse* by William Baer at the Windsor Community Playhouse in Windsor, Colorado 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 Vaparaíso, Indiana May 20 – June 4, 2016, *Gracefully Ending* by A.J. DeLauder at Theatre Arlington in Arlington, Texas July 1 – July 17, and *The Emperor of North America* by Thomas Hischak at Silver Spring Stage in Silver Spring, Maryland September 16 – October 1, 2016, *Shades of Valor* by Karen L. Lewis at Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and concluded with *Get Out of Dodge* by Jeanne Drennan at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida. A recap of all AACT NewPlayFest 2016 productions will be in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

Dramatic Publishing Company will publish the seven AACT NewPlayFest 2016 scripts 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 (aact.org/dpc) and licensing rights are available through Dramatic Publishing. ♦



Linda M. Lee

AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, Playwright Karen L. Lewis, and Dramatic Publishing's Carrie Blomquist enjoy the opening reception at Twin City Stage on October 28, 2016

AACT NewPlayFest 2018

Scripts have been submitted for AACT NewPlayFest 2018. Reviewers are currently reading plays and the winning plays and playwrights will be announced in the July/August 2017 *Spotlight*.

For more information visit aact.org/newplayfest

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Kathryn Mobley (Kitty) and Garry C. Wadell (Daniel) in the AACT NewPlayFest 2016 world premiere of *Shades of Valor* by Karen L. Lewis at Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Every time I attend the AACT National Theatre Festival I come away filled with new, exciting, fresh ideas. The workshops are excellent, varied, and informative. And the shows, from all over the country, give me new script ideas for my theatre. It is always great to see other people's work, different approaches, and inspirational new thinking.



Pamela Livingstone
Artistic Director
Hickory Community Theatre
Hickory, North Carolina
hickorytheatre.org

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EVERYDAY
RAVE ON
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Julie Crawford Announces Retirement

Stating that “it’s time for the next generation,” AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford announced to the Executive Committee in October that she plans to retire next September. Julie is the only Executive Director that AACT has ever had, having worked in that position over 22 years. She notes about her experience: “This has been a great ride. And AACT is poised to achieve even greater heights as America’s voice of community theatre.”

Under Julie Crawford’s leadership, AACT has:

- More than doubled its membership
- Increased professional staff to meet increased services demands
- Developed and expanded educational services through multiple seminars, workshops, and roundtables held throughout the United States
- Expanded AACTFest, America’s national community theatre festival
- Dramatically improved community theatres’ linkage with each other, through website info, newsletters, listserve, resource rosters, and other means of connecting organizations for mutual benefit.
- Developed NewPlayFest, establishing community theatre’s empirical contribution to America’s literary canon and serving dozens of burgeoning playwrights.

- Earned corporate recognition and funding support through aggressive solicitation.

President Murray Chase notes, “Any new board member of AACT actually needs a couple of years just to become familiar with all the ways AACT benefits its constituents. Julie has been an integral agent of change and continuing growth for this national organization.”



Julie Crawford

What’s next for AACT? President Chase has appointed a national search committee, which posted the job in November. The committee is vetting candidates and plans to recommend Julie’s successor in February. The new executive director will be in place to meet the membership at AACTFest in June, then to work alongside Julie and her staff to effect a smooth transition.

It’s a time of change, but that is nothing new. Julie’s work with AACT’s board and volunteers leaves a legacy of a dynamic organization, ready to move forward and welcome a new staff leader. ♦

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TEAM Conference 2017

August 17-19, 2017

Hosted by Theatre Arlington, Arlington, Texas

AACT is again offering an expanded educational conference with four tracks, focusing on theatre education programs, artistic direction of a theatre, development and marketing, and technical theatre.

Come as an individual or a team: Select the track that best suits your individual needs. Get even more out of the conference by putting together a group--the four tracks will be held simultaneously, so participants can share rides and rooms. The insights you gain will pay for the conference registration many times over.

Educational Programing Directors Track

Boost your theatre's education program, exchange ideas and experiences, and learn skills to better manage your programs. The Educational Programing Directors track will give you skills to tackle theatre education issues, a renewed enthusiasm to build your educational programs, and provide you with a network of colleagues from all over the country. The Educational Programing Directors track is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for their theatre's education program.

Directing the Theatre's Artistic Vision Track

Choose the right plays for your next season; learn solutions for choosing directors, recruiting actors, and solving technical problems; and examine long-range planning. Discover and re-envision exciting ways to produce high quality theatre as you exchange ideas and experiences with fellow producers and artistic directors. Directing the Theatre's Artistic Vision track is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for the overall artistic direction of their theatre.

Development/Marketing Skills Track

Discover strategies and tactics to increase your fundraising and marketing abilities, and learn ways to create loyalty to your organization and its place in your community. The Development/Marketing Skills track will help you understand methods for small, medium, and large sized arts groups to enlist donors and sponsors, build audiences, and to use marketing and branding in today's changing social media world. The Development/Marketing Skills track is for anyone from board members to staff who raises funds or promotes their theatre.

Technical Theatre Skills Track

The Technical Theatre Skills track is for those who work behind the scenes. Learn to master the challenges you face as you work within the amenities of your theatre. Experts will give hands-on training in several areas of technical theatre. This

track will help you find resources and supplies you can utilize in your theatre, increase your excitement in the magic of technical theatre, and provide you with a nationwide network of fellow techies! No technical theatre training is required, but even experienced techies will benefit. ♦

Visit aact.org/team for details and more information.



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A Modern Broadway-Style Rock Musical



Music by STEVEN W RODGERS
Lyrics by WENDY CHRISTOPHER
Book by ANTONINA RODGERS
Artwork by MIKYONG RODGERS



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Musical Numbers: 17
Cast: 20 (7m, 6w, 1 boy, 6 kids)
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Join today and start the fun and savings with AACT!

Benefits include great discounts on scripts, materials, and royalties from Buddy Worldwide, Dramatic Publishing Company, Great Stage Publishing, Heuer Publishing, Music Theatre International, Plays for Young Audiences, Samuel French, Steel Spring Stage Rights, Tams Witmark, Theatrical Rights Worldwide, and more. There are discounts on ticketing systems, membership management programs, graphics and web design, costumes, and many supplies and services such as Sherwin-Williams Paint. The discounted ASCAP community theatre license (aact.org/ascap) is a great benefit of your AACT membership.



See a full list of AACT member discounts and special offers at aact.org/discounts.

Membership also includes

- Subscription to *Spotlight*, our bimonthly magazine about theatre around the world (aact.org/spotlight)
- Affordable insurance policies tailored specifically to the needs of your organization (aact.org/insurance-program)



- Advocacy activities and materials to enhance the visibility of theatre (aact.org/advocacy)
- Networking at AACT events and the AACTList email discussion group between people who are very active in theatre (aact.org/aactlist)
- Access to the AACT Resource Roster to help solve every imaginable problem from renovating a historic structure to forming a Board of Directors (aact.org/resource-roster)
- Educational programs such as our National Community Theatre Directors Conference (aact.org/conf), the TEAM Conference which includes Educational Directors, Artistic Directors, Development and Marketing, and Technical Theatre Skills (aact.org/team)
- Plus AACTFest (aact.org/aactfest), AACT NewPlayFest (aact.org/newplayfest), AACT WorldFest (aact.org/worldfest), and on and on...

Join the FUN that is AACT! Join now at aact.org.

I have attended the last six AACTFest National Festivals beginning in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 2005. I have been involved in all facets of the event and have found that the every other year festivals are one of the most stimulating opportunities for our members to get to know one another. From the Executive Director meeting and technical meetings to the opportunity to see outstanding theatre by companies from all over the country, the atmosphere lends itself to allow participants to find a niche in the organization. I encourage all members to attend AACTFest 2017 in Rochester.

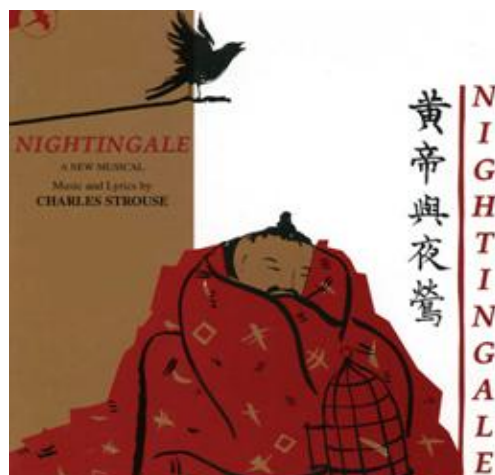
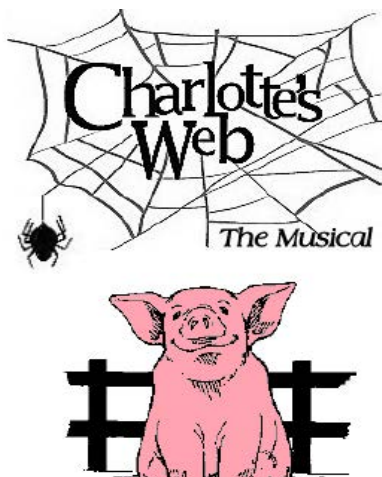


*Dennis Gilmore
Indio, California, retired
Chair of AACT Accreditation
Task Force
AACT Resource Roster
Administrator*

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Putting It Together: 8 Tips for a Successful Musical

By Stephen Peithman

A musical is not simply a play with songs added. It is a theatrical form all its own, and demands its own directorial approach.

If you're directing a musical for the first time, or do so only occasionally, consider the following suggestions. They come from more than 30 years as director, performer, student, and teacher of musical theatre.

1. Choose Carefully

If you don't have strong experience with musicals, choose one with fewer technical demands, a small to medium-size cast, and a relatively simple structure, so you won't overtax yourself or your technical resources.

Musicals take more planning than plays because there are more elements.

Novice or not, don't take on a show unless you genuinely like and *respect* it—which means staging it in a way that supports its creators' original intent. A musical is a fragile construct, and if you don't believe in the show as written, neither will your actors or the audience.

2. Play to Your Strengths

Focus on what you do well, and delegate the rest.

Theatre is a collaborative art form, and the musical even more so. Along with set, lighting, and costume designers, you'll be working with a musical director, and probably a choreographer as well. It's the director's responsibility to communicate an overall vision of the show to these folks, then rely on their skill and experience to support that vision. A close working relationship with the musical director is especially important, so that story, music, and dance are an integrated whole. (If a separate conductor is used for performances, you and the musical director will need to make sure they understand and support your vision, as well.) Expect some give-and-take with your production team. You can learn much from them.

Much of your time may be spent working with the ensemble, for even if a scene isn't choreographed in the usual sense of the word, effective stage movement and placement is important. Most choreographers seem to thrive on working with groups, so take advantage of this for the big picture, so you can take time to work more closely with the principal players on their scenes.

3. Plan Carefully

Musicals take more planning than plays because there are more elements (dialogue, movement, acting, singing) and more people involved. It not only takes longer to stage a musical, but you'll need time for re-blocking, adjusting the balance between singers and orchestra, and working out music and lighting cues.

And, unlike a play, you won't have the performers all to yourself. Your musical director will need time to work with them on songs, and your choreographer will want to stage dance numbers. (Make sure they give you a realistic estimate of the time needed.) The good news is that you can often schedule two rehearsals at the same time—working a dialog scene with the principals, for example, while the musical director takes the chorus through their songs.

Six weeks is a minimum rehearsal time if you rehearse five days a week. The larger the cast, or the more complex the technical demands, the longer the rehearsal period. If it's your first show, you may want more. It's better to allow too much time than too little—and it's a great morale booster to announce a night off because things are going so well!

A Shakespearean director once told me that he always looked for dramatic moments in a comedy that he could emphasize for contrast.

4. Keep It Simple

Keep your direction simple—too much business impedes a musical's natural flow. Novice directors sometimes think they have to provide flash and glitter, but you'll get better audience response if you parcel out the big moments, so they stand out more.

5. Emphasize Character

Characters in most musicals are presented as recognizable types (and sometimes stereotypes). This kind of theatrical shorthand strikes some critics as shallowness, but could just as easily be called efficiency. We know early on who these characters are and what they want or need.

However, even types must be played with empathy. It might be tempting to portray Sarah Brown, the missionary in *Guys and Dolls*, as being *only* prim and repressed. But for the gambler, Sky Masterson, to fall in love with her, there must be some fire underneath the otherwise cool facade.

A Shakespearean director once told me that he always looked for dramatic moments in a comedy that he could emphasize for contrast. He went through the script looking for places where he could have the characters play against the obviousness of the text. This, he explained, gives greater dimension to the comedy, and keeps it believably human. It's an effective tool in rounding out characters in a musical, too.

**It's hard, but try
not to let film
versions scare you
or influence you.**

6. Keep It Moving

Typically, musicals use the first act to introduce the characters, set up the situation, and create a conflict, with a crisis point normally placed just before the first-act curtain. The second act is usually shorter, and focuses on resolving the conflict. Thus, pacing is most crucial in the first act, which benefits from a seamless flow, from dialog to song and back again.

7. Avoid the Hollywood Trap

It's hard, but try not to let film versions scare you or influence you. You're putting on a *stage* production, after all. Don't try to copy the film—you'll only look bad by comparison. Instead, work to create a unique look and feel that your audience can appreciate on its own merits.

8. Happily Ever After

Most musicals tell us that good people are rewarded, bad people are punished, and life is worth living. With a few notable exceptions, they create a well-ordered illusion that sends people home happy, satisfied that all loose ends have been tied up.

It's an illusion built on a solid script and score, plus weeks of planning and rehearsal, as well as the cast's energy and focus in performance. There's hard work involved, but if the audience feels you're laboring on stage, the illusion is destroyed. Maintain the illusion and they will leave the theatre feeling that you've done a good job.

And they'll be right. ♦

Stephen is an award-winning director and founding editor of Stage Directions magazine. He has directed a wide range of productions, from comic opera and operetta to classic stage musicals and contemporary revues, and has taught musical theatre at the university level.

Platte Valley Players were honored and excited to participate in our first AACT National Festival in 2015. The event exceeded our greatest expectations. From the top-notch productions presented by the other regional community theatres, the incredible feedback from the adjudicators, the workshops, and networking with other theatre people and vendors—it was an amazing resource for us. We learned so much and have applied what we learned to our 2016 season and beyond. The highlight was performing our own show, of course. It was such a high! The crew was so professional and the audience was so supportive. We cannot wait for the opportunity to attend again!

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What's Trending: The Board's Role in Fundraising

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.

The Board's role in fundraising was the subject of a Trends survey distributed in September. Responses were received from board members and staff who work directly with the boards of 75 theatres in 33 states. A wide range of theatres responded, with budgets from \$4,000 to almost \$4 million, but most were small; the median budget was \$90,000. Not surprisingly, almost 55% of the surveys were completed by volunteer board members, with staff completing 45%. Perhaps a surprise is that only 40% of theatres responding are entirely volunteer; 60% have some paid staff. (Previous Trends surveys have explored staff: full-time, part-time, per show, etc.)

An article by BoardSource* on the "Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards" states, "One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission." Theatre boards do this in many ways.

It begins with planning. The BoardSource article also says, "The board must assist in developing the annual budget." Board approval of the annual budget happens in 78.67% of the surveyed theatres. Unearned income, such as contributions and fundraisers, are included in the budgets of 85.33% of the theatres.

"While we do not require board members to make an annual financial contribution, most do."

Individual board members are often required to illustrate their support of the theatre by making personal contributions or generating revenue through specific activities. Just over half (52%) require a financial gift, although 12.82% of the theatres that require giving allow it to be recruitment of a gift (give or get) and only a third require a specific minimum

size gift. Some commented that gifts are not required, but are encouraged. Kokomo Civic Theatre in Indiana wrote, "While we do not require board members to make an annual financial contribution, most do."

Board members in 70% of the theatres are responsible for generating revenue in other ways. Board members are responsible for selling program ads (in 34.67% of theatres responding), selling tickets to shows (30.67%), buying gala tickets (33.33%), and selling gala tickets (28%). Theatres also mentioned requirements of being a member or season ticket

Although close to two thirds of theatres set goals, only 46% have an annual plan for how to reach those goals.

holder, selling/recruiting members, seeking donations or corporate sponsorships, obtaining grants, selling raffle tickets, and selling concessions. Others noted selling is not required, but is encouraged, and others that many board members, although not required, do participate in these activities. Spotlighters Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland explained, "Board members are responsible for bringing in new audience members, creating discussions with patrons about becoming donors." In Vineland, New Jersey, in the Cumberland Players "there is not a quota for board members to sell, but it is expected that all board members 'cheerlead' any events/shows."

Almost all boards are involved in fundraising or development activities. Only 8% of theatres checked "Board is not involved." 49.33% of boards in the survey are directly responsible for solicitation efforts; 48% for fundraising events, such as galas. 73.33% provide connections to possible donors or resources. 56% assist committees in these efforts and 42.67% assist staff. The boards of 72% of the theatres set or help to set the fundraising/development goals. Staff are involved in setting these goals for 42.67% and 29.33% have a finance or development committee participating in goal setting. Shreveport Little Theatre in Louisiana has a women's Guild

that raises funds and helps set fundraising goals. First City Players in Ketchikan, Alaska involves volunteers/members in the process.

Although close to two-thirds of theatres set goals, only 46% have an annual plan for how to reach those goals. Of those that do have plans, 55.88% charge staff with responsibility for writing the plan. A committee has responsibility in 32.35% of theatres, and for 29.41% a board member has responsibility for writing the plan. You might notice that adds up to more than 100%; in about 20% of the theatres, it is a joint responsibility: staff and a committee, staff/board member, board member/committee.

Although most boards, by necessity, solicit funds, many board members find it difficult.

The survey asked about participation in various types of financial solicitations. In those types listed, the majority of theatres reported revenue as either “important” or “minor.” Only a few don’t solicit. More theatres checked that the board has “some responsibilities for soliciting” than checked staff, a committee, or other volunteers. See the sidebar on the next page for results. The Chattanooga Theatre Centre in Tennessee reported its “Board is very involved with both corporate and individual solicitation.”

Fundraising events are conducted by 82.67% of theatres with 53.33% reporting such revenue as “important.” Unlike solicitations, staff in more theatres (48.39%) have responsibilities for conducting the events than theatres with the board having responsibilities (41.94%). (Perhaps this is because staff often handle registration, contracts for venues/catering/supplies, etc.) A committee handles some responsibilities in 30.65% of theatres and 27.42% assign some responsibilities to other volunteers.

A few theatres manage with little fundraising. They often focus on earned income.

Although most boards, by necessity, solicit funds, many board members find it difficult. Central Wisconsin Children’s Theatre in Wausau, Wisconsin admits, “Our board is not very good at helping raise funds.” In Spokane Valley, Washington,

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Ignite Community Theatre shared, “Organizing our board to think about fundraising has been one of the biggest struggles our organization has had. If we need an item, we’re confident asking for a tangible thing, but fundraising so that we can operate has been more difficult.”

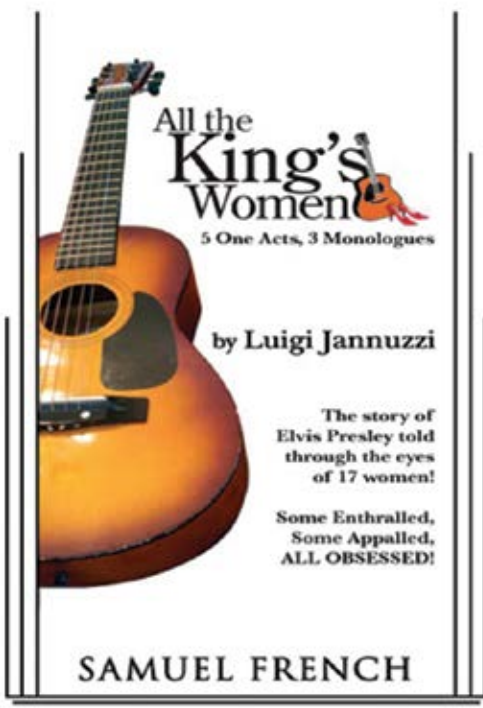
A few theatres manage with little fundraising. They often focus on earned income. Artesia Community Theatre in New

Mexico, “Our primary sources of income are membership dues ... and ticket sales....” In Washington state, the Music Theatre of Wenatchee’s “Board produces, directs, assists in theatrical productions which pay for themselves with a profit which helps operate the theatre.” (Both these theatres are all volunteer with small budgets.) Sometimes an opportunity for growth pushes a board into fundraising. The Kettle Moraine Players, Inc. in Campbellsport, Wisconsin (also a small, all volunteer theatre)

Financial Solicitation by Theatres

	Revenue is (% of theatres responding)			Have some responsibilities for soliciting (% of theatres soliciting)			
	important	minor	not solicited	board	staff	committee	other volunteers
Contributions - Individuals	69.33	21.33	9.33	61.76	30.88	22.06	19.12
Corporations/Businesses	49.33	34.67	16.00	57.14	30.16	19.05	20.63
Production Underwriters	40.00	13.33	46.67	47.50	42.50	22.50	15.00
Program/Event Sponsors	45.33	37.33	17.33	45.16	35.48	14.52	12.90
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shared a dream, "If we are successful in purchasing the church we made an offer on, then fundraising will move to the front and the board will become involved." Way to go and good luck to them!

Two areas of forward-looking revenue are not a part of the picture for about three-fourths of theatres. 72% of theatres that completed the survey do not have endowment funds. Of those that do, staff have solicitation responsibilities in 50% of theatres and the board has responsibilities in 45.45%. Planned giving programs are in place for only 25.33% of theatres. Staff has responsibilities in 42.11% and the board in 31.58% of theatres. A committee has planned giving solicitation responsibilities in 21.05% of theatres.

Capital campaigns don't happen often in the life of a theatre, and the survey shows that, as 66.67% have not conducted a capital campaign recently. However, one might expect that figure to be higher. 25.33% of theatres are currently or have recently conducted a campaign; 8% are planning one. That's a positive sign! Capital campaigns require much of the organization to be involved. Responsibilities are carried by the boards of 76% of theatres and staff have responsibilities in 48%. A committee takes on responsibilities in 40%; 8% have hired a fundraising consultant.

Most community theatre boards take the responsibility of funding the organization seriously. Those that are most successful have board members who may not be directly active in the theatre's productions or other activities, but who share their passion for the theatre's mission in ways that tap into financial support. ♦

Next up in "What's Trending" is attracting a younger audience. Check it out in the March-April issue of *Spotlight*.

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

* www.boardsource.org is a national organization focused exclusively on nonprofit governance.

"Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards":
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Attending the AACT National Theatre Festival was an amazing experience. Kokomo Civic Theatre's production of *Freud's Last Session* was honored to be able to represent Indiana at the 2015 Festival. It was a great opportunity to see quality theatre from throughout the country. The support we experienced from all the participants was overwhelming. James Craig, who played Freud, has become friends with a playwright he met at the Regional 3 Festival, and was able to see her at the National Festival. One of our crew members has maintained contact with a theatre from Arkansas which participated in the National Festival. I would strongly encourage everyone to attend a National Festival if possible.

Colburn Lambert, who played C.S. Lewis, said: "Attending nationals was amazing! When I first stepped on stage at the state level in 2008 I swore I'd go to Nationals. Nothing prepared me for the amount of talent that we'd be competing with getting there. It was truly humbling how talented us "amateurs" are and how underestimated we are as well. The organization held an outstanding event and I was honored to

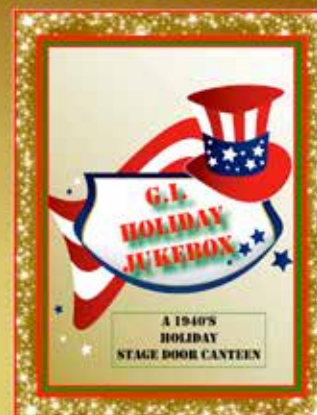
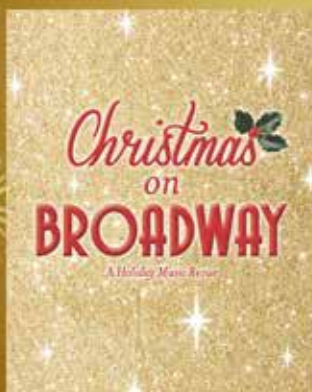
present our show and share the same stage with all the talents. Can't wait to be part of hosting this event at the state level in 2017!"



left to right, Colburn Lambert (Cast/C.S. Lewis), Steve Hughes (Director), James Craig (Cast/Sigmund Freud) at AACTFest 2015 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*Steve Hughes
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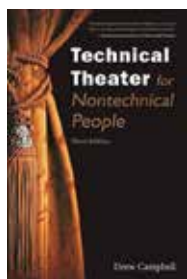
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The AACT Shaw Fest Adventure 2017 will start on Tuesday, September 19 with a night in Niagara Falls, Ontario at the beautiful Marriott Niagara Falls Hotel Fallsview & Spa. Tuesday evening will be free to enjoy awesome Niagara Falls, experience amazing restaurants, sightsee, and visit the fabulous casino next to the hotel. The adventure continues Wednesday through Friday at Queens Landing Niagara-on-the-Lake Hotel and Spa where participants will attend two Shaw Festival productions. The AACT Shaw Fest Adventure also includes backstage tour, post show chat, and more! Ground transportation on Wednesday from Niagara Falls to Niagara-on-the-Lake and Friday return will be provided.

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The Shaw Festival is a major nonprofit Canadian theatre festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, the second largest repertory theatre company in North America. Founded in 1962, its original mandate was to stimulate interest in George Bernard Shaw and his period, and to advance the development of theatre arts in Canada. ♦



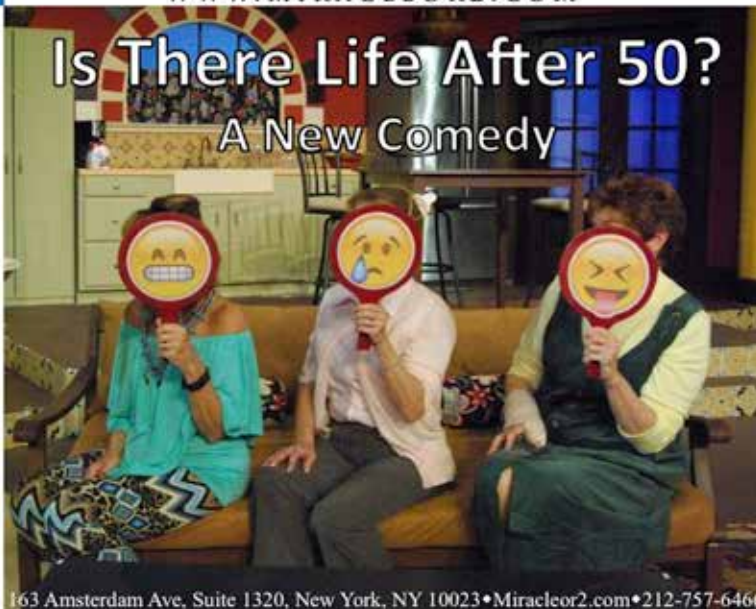
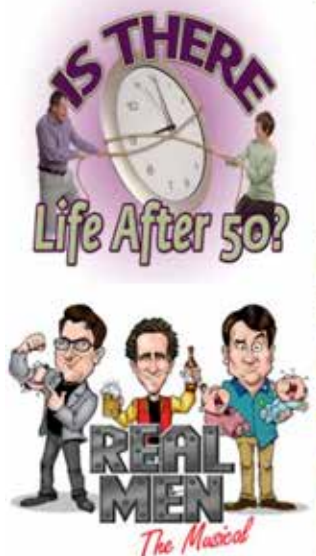
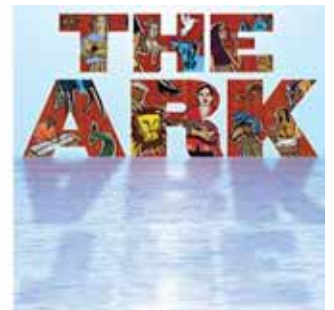
Options for arriving in Niagara Falls on Tuesday afternoon:

- A chartered bus from Grand Rapids, Michigan
\$95 additional fee for round-trip transportation from/to Grand Rapids, Michigan (includes 3 meals on the bus)
- A shuttle from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BUF)
\$40 additional fee for round-trip transportation from/to Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Guests plan their own travel to Niagara Falls

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Shaw Festival
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news.shawfest.com/2016/08/18/shaw-festival-announces-2017-season/





Cran Dodds, Member Engagement Director for AACT visiting with Wesley Saucier, Assistant Program Director of Cite des Arts in Lafayette, Louisiana on September 3, 2016



Steven Landry, Artistic Director of Acadiana Repertory Theatre in Lafayette, Louisiana and AACT Louisiana State Contact enjoys a wonderful meeting with Cran Dodds, AACT Member Engagement Director on September 3, 2016



Cran Dodds, AACT Member Engagement Director, shares the Shreck set with Dana Reed, Artistic Director of Opelousas Little Theatre in Opelousas, Louisiana on September 3, 2016



Bastrop Opera House Executive Director Chester Eitze (right) explains some of the history of the beautiful refurbished facility to AACT Marketing/Communication Director David Cockerell at Bastrop Opera House in Bastrop, Texas September 9, 2016

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Temple Civic Theatre Office Manager Hope Brown visits with AACT Marketing/Communication Director David Cockerell at Temple Civic Theatre in Temple, Texas September 9, 2016



Playhouse 2000 Executive Director/AACT Region VI Rep Jeffrey Brown and Boerne Community Theatre Artistic Director Patty Loftis meet with AACT Marketing/Communication Director David Cockerell at Boerne Community Theatre in Boerne, Texas September 10, 2016

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Cran Dodds, AACT Member Engagement Director takes a moment to enjoy Spotlight with Joanna Fritz, Board Member of the Corsicana Community Playhouse in Corsicana, Texas on September 15, 2016



While in Waco, Texas on September 16, AACT Membership Engagement Director, Cran Dodds spends time on the set of Sweeney Todd with Waco Civic Theatre Artistic Director Eric Shephard



Visiting Ennis Public Theatre in Ennis, Texas on September 16, 2016, Artistic Director Shelly Aubrey shows off their facility to AACT Member Engagement Director Cran Dodds



Jody Powell, Volunteer and former Board member of Eunice Players Theatre in Eunice, Louisiana spends a post show celebration with AACT Adjudication Development Task Force member Wanda Schenk on September 17, 2016

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For more information visit aact.org/madison

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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 julie@aact.org

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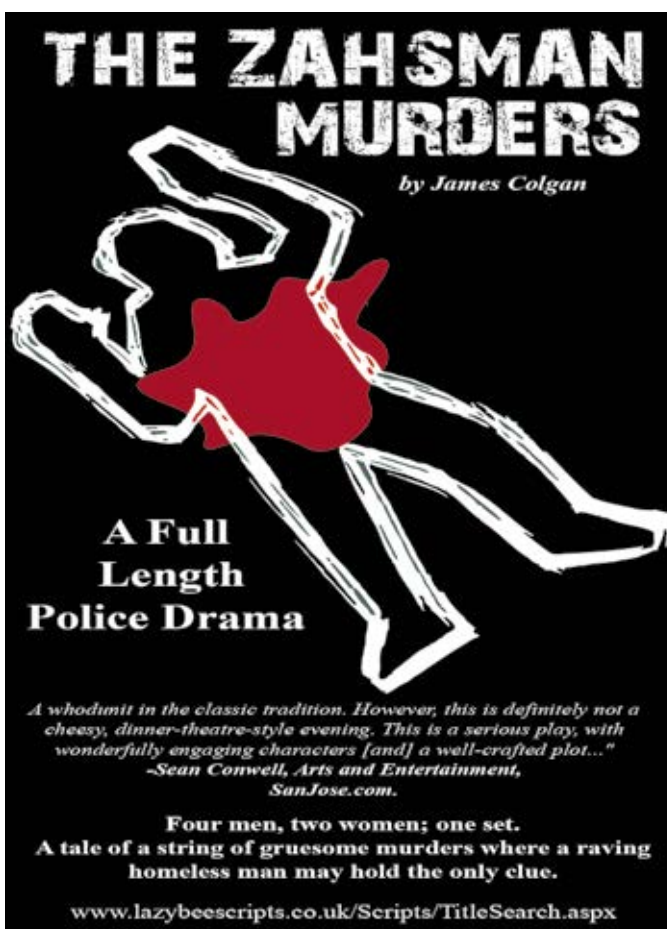
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What has been your most successful fundraiser? What made it a success?

Responses from AACTList

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

BEYOND A DOUBT - Dancing with the Stars! Our tenth annual event is scheduled for May 2017. To date, we've raised (net) just under 1 million dollars. The key factor in its success is picking community leaders who have ego and drive to "win" in fundraising. And they bring an audience of 800+ each year, most of whom have never been to one of our shows. So it's fundraising and friendraising at its best.

Lou Ursone
Curtain Call / The Kweskin Theatre / The Dressing Room Theatre
Stamford, Connecticut
curtaincallllinc1.com

Each summer we do downtown living history tours. We research famous people who made our town what it was in early 1890's, and put together a route which includes where things took place with actors portraying the individuals. We charge \$25 per person. In the fall we do a cemetery tour with portrayals of people who made a difference in our town. We represent them at their gravesite with information on tombstone symbols, cemetery history, and strange happenings seen by the sexton. We usually make about \$1000 per weekend for each one, and run it two or three weekends. We also do a ghost tour of haunted buildings in the downtown area. We plan a route and stop outside the businesses of which we have interviewed employees who have seen weird things inside. We charge \$25 for this one, too. We usually do two or three of these

tours each summer. We like to alternate them every other year, however the cemetery tour is different characters each year. We have a Sand Bar tour down by the river set in the 20s and 30s when things were corrupt during prohibition. We portray gamblers, prostitutes, bootleggers, telling their stories of why they did what they did, and add a sheriff who deputizes each audience member to find who killed "Shorty McCoy" whose body was found at the beginning of the tour. Audience members ask questions of the actors, and find out who committed the crime. So it is a murder mystery tour and sells well, too!

Donna Fisher
Casper Theater Company, Casper, Wyoming
caspertheatercompany.net

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the unique partnership between the Prescott Center for the Arts (PCA) and the West Yavapai Guidance Clinic (WYGC) and their presentation of *Ghost Talk - Where Legends Come Alive* in Prescott, Arizona.

Ghost Talk is a one hour show of locally written and produced vignettes highlighting Arizona tales/yarns/myths/stories of a ghostly or interestingly unusual nature. The event is typically scheduled the weekend prior to Halloween.

Patrons gather in the theatre courtyard lined with "tombstones" specifically created for each \$100+ sponsor. Patrons then enjoy a one hour fully produced show in the theatre including music and special effects.

There are five performances. Tickets are \$15 for Adults and \$12 for Children. The stories are geared toward adults and not recommended for children under seven. The theatre seats 194 and this year's total attendance was around 900.

The event has been expanded to "Week of the Dead" and is partnered with organizations who also have events around Halloween or Day of the Dead (museums, historical, cemetery



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organizations). These added partnerships have expanded grant opportunities and allowed us to promote the event throughout the state.

Net proceeds have grown to \$18,000 which is split equally between the two organizations. Both organizations use the funding to support children's programming within their respective groups. In addition to ticket sales, revenue is produced through:

- Sponsorships ranging from the \$100 tombstones to \$1,000 for acknowledgement on all printed materials and sponsor name incorporated into one of the ghostly vignettes
- A raffle for denim jackets painted/decorated by local artists with Day of the Dead designs
- And a Ghost Feast partnered with a local restaurant

The Ghost Talk Committee consists of volunteers from both PCA and WYGC. Duties are distributed with the theatre taking responsibility for the production and WYGC handling co-ordination and a bulk of the sponsor/donor responsibilities.

Linda Miller
Prescott Center for the Arts, Prescott, Arizona
pca-az.net
wygc.org

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Your theatre can play a key role in uniting and connecting with local partners to address community needs and make your community more healthy, vibrant and equitable.

Work with your public schools, the Convention and Visitor Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, cultural planning, health and human service providers, colleges and universities, disaster preparedness and response, and all of your city and state government agencies.

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Liquor Liability: A Few "Tips" About Serving Alcohol

by Ken Roberts



More and more theatres are offering pre-show and intermission cocktails, beer, and wine in an effort to entice more patrons to frequent their venues, thereby increasing their revenue, but with this added exposure, comes added responsibility. Much like any other establishment that serves alcoholic beverages, theatres will be expected to have their beverage servers certified regarding alcohol awareness and safe serving techniques and procedures. Without the proper training and/or certification, those theatres will find it difficult to procure liquor liability insurance to protect them in the event that an over-served patron leaves their facility and subsequently causes bodily injury or property damage.

Most, if not all, companies that offer liquor liability now require that all servers have certification

The commercial insurance industry has been tightening down on this requirement for the past several years, to the point that most, if not all, companies that offer liquor liability as an optional endorsement to the general liability policy, now require that all servers have certification through some form of state-approved alcohol awareness course. The underwriters typically refer to this training as "TIPS" training, or *Training for*

Intervention Procedures. There are certainly many other different courses offered that vary by each state's alcohol awareness requirements, but the point is that if a theatre expects to have the proper insurance to sell/serve alcoholic beverages, it will need to be prepared to get each and every server certified.

Many theatres attempt to avoid the liquor liability exposure by not selling beverages, but instead, they give away a glass of wine, beer, champagne, etc. and keep a donation jar near the service area. In these cases, their exposure is covered by *host liquor liability*, which is a part of every general liability policy, unless it is specifically excluded. Many theatres are under the impression that as long as they control the number of drinks available, or limit the time that they are available, their exposure is too small to warrant the liquor liability insurance. That is not the case. The driving factor that governs the need for liquor liability is whether the alcoholic beverages are being sold or if they're being given away.

Depending on the course and which states approve it, the cost to certify any server, even if a volunteer, varies from \$25 to \$40, which is a very small price to pay to gain access to the appropriate insurance program. Even if a theatre is not selling alcoholic beverages, but is required by local ordinance to have a license or permit to give away free drinks, it is a great idea to have the servers properly trained to intervene for those who don't know when to say when. ♦



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Careers in Theatre

Highlighting Professional Staff Changes in Theatre

Bismark, North Dakota – **Dakota Stage** is pleased to announce the recent appointment of **Emmalee Riegler** as Theatre Director. Emmalee is a 2008 graduate of Wesleyan University. She became involved with Capital Shakespeare in 2009, joined the Board of Directors in 2010, and served as President in 2012. Emmalee has been engaged with Dakota Stage as a committee member, director, designer, and volunteer. “Dakota Stage has given me so much. It has provided me with a place to help create theatre, and most importantly, it has introduced me to a wonderful community of artists and supporters. I am thrilled to join Dakota Stage in this role, so I may give back to this community.”

Working with Dakota Stage’s Board of Directors, Artistic Committee, and Season Selection Committee, Riegler will lead the organization administratively and artistically.

Prescott, Arizona – **Robyn Allen** has recently been named Executive Director for **Prescott Center for the Arts (PCA)**. Ms. Allen has worked as a professional in theatre for the past twenty-five years. She received her education at Arizona State University under the direction of Marshall W. Mason and at the New Actors Workshop in New York. After serving as Director of Education for Phoenix Theatre, she joined Theater Works in Peoria, Arizona, as their Artistic Director. Ms. Allen’s work experience encompasses all areas of theatre including producing, acting, and directing. She is a proud member of Actors Equity and a founding member of The Algonquin Theater Company. She was honored and featured in the Arizona Republic’s Who’s Who of Women in Theater.

Of her new position as Executive Director at PCA, Ms. Allen says, “I am thrilled to be given this new opportunity to keep Prescott Center for the Arts moving forward and remain at the top of the list of outstanding community theaters in the country. I believe my entire career has not only prepared me but also led me to this position. It is a perfect fit! I am prepared for my inaugural season as full time Executive Director for this beloved organization’s 47th Season.”

Athens, Texas – **C. David Hill** has accepted the position of Executive Director for the **Henderson County Performing Arts Center (HCPAC)**. Prior to joining HCPAC, David served as the Director of the Corsicana Children’s Company at the Warehouse Living Arts Center in Corsicana, Texas. He has also worked for Brookhaven Community College, New Theater Company, and Bravo!! Productions. David holds a Bachelors degree from the University of North Texas. Directing credits include *Disney’s The Little Mermaid Jr.*, *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, and Roald Dahl’s *James And The Giant Peach*. He received the Spotlight Award from Texas Nonprofit Theatres in 2016 for his commitment and innovative programming at the Corsicana Children’s Company.

Winston-Salem, North Carolina – **Edwin Martinat** stepped in as Education Director at **Twin City Stage** on July 11 – straight into summer camps working with dozens of energetic young actors! “I am thrilled to be working with new and old faces,” Edwin says, “and I’m excited to bring innovative programming to Twin City Stage.”

Edwin is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and has worked with students there as the Assistant Director of High School Residence Life, as an Admissions Counselor, and as the Summer Intensive Events and Activities Coordinator.

At Twin City Stage Edwin has stage managed *Annie*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, and *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill*, and was a member of the Board of Directors last season. Edwin’s theatrical experience also extends to stage management with the Piedmont Opera, Spring Theatre, and in NYC for Blue Man Group Productions, Disney’s Theatrical, Playwrights Horizons, and as Operations Coordinator for the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. ♦

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The Top Ten Ways to Kill Off Board Members

by Twink Lynch

Everything was looking good for our theatre at the beginning of a new fiscal year. We'd held our annual meeting, elected new Board Members, and chosen our officers for the year. An exciting new season was about to begin!

Fast forward. It's a year later. Our most promising new Board Member has missed the last three meetings, has not yet attended a single production, and skipped the annual Board retreat. What happened here?

Could it possibly be that we — the rest of the Board — contributed in some way to this turn of events? Could we have caused a (gasp!) "annus horribilis" for our prodigal Board Member? Maybe. Sad to say, most of us know how.

As a checklist, I've put together—

Twink's Top Ten Ways to Kill Off New Board Members

10. ***Don't ask — don't tell.*** Don't ask what new Board Members are good at, what kind of time commitment they can make, and why they want to serve. Don't tell them the theatre's history, accomplishments, financial condition, and your expectations of them regarding attendance at meetings, and at productions and special events. (Scolding is good when they don't show.) Above all, don't tell them they have to fundraise — surprise them!

9. ***Don't assign them to an appropriate working committee*** where their skills and experience can be put to good use and where they can get a real feeling of belonging and contributing to the group. Tell them the staff or the executive committee does all the work.

8. ***Don't start meetings on time or keep focused on the agenda*** or try to develop consensus on major issues, and don't ever send materials out ahead of time so they can prepare to participate effectively. Adjourn meetings promptly in four hours.

7. ***Don't deal with conflict in a productive way.*** Let angry outbursts, personal attacks, and hidden agendas dominate your meetings.

6. ***Don't communicate with new Board Members between meetings*** to keep them in the loop. Keep all good news to yourself. Let them find out the bad news "on the street" — preferably from a donor.

5. ***Don't explain any theatre jargon to them.*** A little confusion is good for the soul. Let them wonder why you're having labor problems with the upcoming strike; what a fly gallery or a tormentor is; and why in the world the people doing the blocking don't look more like the Kansas City Chiefs.

4. ***Never explain the financials,*** especially "unrealized income" or an "historic debt." Instead, drone on and on in endless detail about the cost of each running foot of lumber or yard of muslin until their eyes glaze over.

3. ***Never ask their opinion.*** About anything. If they offer an opinion, ignore it.

2. ***Don't have a current mission and long range plan to guide your decisions*** and measure your accomplishments. Better yet — don't accomplish anything.

1. ***Don't say thank you.*** Not even once.

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Surely I jest. Not completely. Sad to say, every one of those things has happened in our theatres, more often than most of us would want to admit. Since many of us are now beginning our new seasons/fiscal years, perhaps it's time to take another look at how we bring new members "on Board." Why not ask current members what would have made it easier for them to hit the road running? Then do it.

Remember that Board Members are a key resource for our theatres. Let's set new Board Members up for success. Welcome them. Encourage them. Teach them. Treasure them. They are our future. ♦

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight, page 77

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardmanship 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.

The AACTFest 2015 national festival in Grand Rapids was Tupelo Community Theatre's first opportunity to present a show on the national level. Our production of *Lone Star* was a labor of love for all involved. It was produced in our new black box space, TCT Off Broadway, but the director moved to Scotland after its original run, and Lynn Nelson and I took over for the festival circuit. We had great success at the state and regional levels. But we had many questions and concerns, even nervousness, about the AACTFest national festival. Everyone at AACT made every aspect of the "competition" a pleasure and took away all concerns. From the social aspects, the workshops, the crew backstage, and leadership of the festival; I have nothing but positive comments about our experience. Of course there is one problem! Now we want to work even harder to have that opportunity to represent Mississippi and SETC at another AACTFest national festival. I hope to see you at AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota as a spectator or participant. We are all winners either way!

Tom Booth, Executive Director
Tupelo Community Theatre
Tupelo, Mississippi
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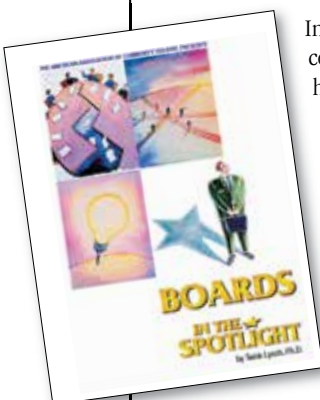
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When	Who/What	Where	Information
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Jan 20-21	Texas Quad II Festival*	TX Lewisville	817-731-2238 texastheatres.org/
Feb 3-4	Texas Quad IV Festival*	TX Baytown	817-731-2238 texastheatres.org/
Feb 9-12	AACT Winter Meetings 2017	NV Las Vegas	817-732-3177 aact.org/calendar
Feb 10-12	I-ACTFest* Idaho State AACTFest 2017	ID Boise	208-297-9689 encoreetc.org/iaact
Feb 16-19	Wisconsin State AACTFest 2017*	WI Stevens Point	715-423-7406 cwact.org

* Indicates festival in the 2017 AACTFest Cycle

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

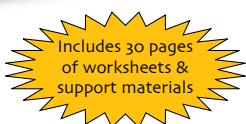
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