

spotlight

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2018**

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Carole Ries
AACT President
2017 - 2019

ROCKING IN ROCHESTER

I'm just back from one of the most exciting and inspirational festivals I've ever attended. I had a lot of hopes that all of the new events we're adding would up the ante. They did... it went so far beyond my hopes that I hardly know where to begin to describe the experience.

So I'll start with the first ever Youth Festival and the Youth Leadership Conference. We shared the 12 national festival companies' plays and all they entailed with the energy and excitement of the young people who participated. On the other hand, their presence enriched the experience for us, the national festival companies, and audiences. I loved being able to see and share the work that is being performed by youth companies around the country. It made me so proud of the many community theatres dedicated to support youth programming. What a joy to talk to the kiddoes and share their thoughtful questions about AACT and potential careers in theatre and/or theatre management. And they were surrounded by so many strong role models, doing the work they hope to pursue.

Amazing, heart-warming, challenging were just a few words I heard describing the plays and events.

The twelve national festival companies who performed in Rochester showed me skill, precision, imagination, great

production values, and acting chops...even in the youngest of the actors. I was thoroughly in awe of a couple of 10 year old actors!

This was the first festival that was fully produced by AACT. Job well done! Props to all who worked to make AACT 2017 such a terrific event. And very special thanks to the Education Committee who worked so hard to draw the youthful members of AACT into the fray! They brought vigor, joy, and inquisitive minds, reminding each of us of the path we follow chasing the love of theatre.

And lastly, let's not overlook the parties. Welcome, After Glows, and Awards. Any excuse for a party really!

Don't miss aactWorldFest 2018: Festival in Paradise in Venice, Florida next June! The AACTFest cycle begins again soon after a thorough review of our Festival Handbook. It culminates in AACTFest 2019's National Festival in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Be there or be square!

Carole Ries

A New Dramatic Comedy by Will Holcomb

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AACT Design Competition - Totally Worth Doing!

Tracy Anderson on her great experience as an entrant in the AACT Design Competition - plan now to enter in 2019

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aactWorldFest 2018

Now is the time to register! The Festival in Paradise will be here before you know it

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Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison in November, for individuals employed full-time in an administrative or artistic position in a community theatre organization

On the Cover

The Addams Family, Act 1 from Region IX, Tacoma Musical Playhouse in Tacoma, Washington was recognized with the Outstanding Production Award at AACTFest 2017 National Festival in Rochester, Minnesota. Pictured left to right: Jonathan Bill, Shelleigh-Mari Ferguson, Savana Masako Smith, Rafe Wadleigh, Linda Palacios, Callan Barth, and John Kelleher.
Photo by Stephen Bird

Contacting AACT

AACT
1300 Gendy Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-732-3177
info@aact.org

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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THE CHARITABLE SISTERHOOD

By Bo Wilson

CHRISTMAS
SPECTACULAR



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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

Irascible 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 YOUSTRA

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.

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Tulsa, OK (2019)

Kristi Quinn
Dakota City, NE (2020)

Chris Serface
Tacoma, WA (2019)

Jamie Ulmer
Beatrice, NE (2019)

Region Representatives

- I Beverley Lord
Foxborough, MA (2019)
- II Marsha Amato-Greenspan
Wilmington, DE (2019)
- III Steve Hughes
Kokomo, IN (2019)
- IV Lynn Nelson
Tupelo, MS (2019)
- V Nancy Eppert
Independence, MO (2019)
- VI Sally Barnes
Broken Arrow, OK (2019)
- VII Donna Fisher
Casper, WY (2019)
- VIII Dennis Gilmore
Indio, CA (2020)
- IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA (2019)
- X Dane Winters
Germany (US Army) (2019)

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences**National Community Theatre Managing Directors Conference**

November 3 - 6, 2017
Madison, Wisconsin
Co-sponsored by AACT
University of Wisconsin - Madison Continuing Studies

AACT Executive Committee

November 2 - 3, 2017
Madison, Wisconsin
Hosted by University of Wisconsin - Madison Continuing Studies

AACT Winter Meetings 2018

February 22 - 24, 2018
San Antonio, Texas
The AACT Board, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams will meet in San Antonio, TX for the AACT Winter Meetings 2018. Most meetings are open.
aact.org/calendar for details

AACT Staff

Julie Crawford, Executive Director
Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director (incoming)
Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Member Engagement Director
David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director
Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator

Karen Matheny, Office Support Manager
Winston Daniels, Office/Festivals Assistant
Jill Patchin, Corporate Partners Manager
Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator
Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator

Spotlight

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Tracy Anderson, Stephen Bird, Blake Carlson,
Chad-Alan Carr, Quiana Clark-Roland,
David Cockerell, Laurie Colton, Jim Covault,
Julie Crawford, Winston Daniels, Danny Danisch,
Darlene DeLorenzo, Cranston Dodds, Bob Frame,
Rich Gannon, Kristofer Geddie, Jennifer Hamilton,
Twink Lynch, Craig Madsen, Karen Matheny,
Renee McVety, Jill Patchin, Stephen Peithman,
Frank Peot, Sara Phoenix, Carole Ries,
Ken Roberts, Emily Stein, Natalie Taylor,
Ron Ziegler

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325-486-5150
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ken.roberts@usi.com

AACTFest 2017

The AACTFest 2017 National Festival was held in Rochester, Minnesota June 26 – July 1, 2017. Theatre enthusiasts along with the performing national companies participated in the National Community Theatre Festival. All the performing theatre companies at AACTFest advanced from their state and region festivals to present their productions at the National Community Theatre Festival. Each production was unique and exhibited the excellence being achieved in community theatre across the country and in the U.S. Armed Services overseas.

Participants of AACTFest 2017 experienced excellent productions, educational workshops, knowledgeable exhibitors, fun, and networking with theatre enthusiasts.



2017 National Companies



The Most Massive Woman Wins

by Madeleine George

Region I

Windham Actors Guild

Windham, New Hampshire



Photos by
Stephen Bird

The Glorious Ones

Book and Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens,

Music by Stephen Flaherty,

Based on the novel by Francine Prose

Region II

Eric Playhouse

Erie, Pennsylvania



Venus in Fur

by David Ives

Region III

Center Stage Theatre

Midland, Michigan



Passing Notes

by Joe Cameron

Region III

Kokomo Civic Theatre

Kokomo, Indiana



The Amish Project (Ensemble Version)

by Jessica Dickey

Region IV

Theatre Winter Haven

Winter Haven, Florida



Vanya and Sonia and Mascha and Spike

by Christopher Durang

Region IV

Starkville Community Theatre

Starkville, Mississippi



The Voice of the Prairie

by John Olive

Region V

Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/FungusAmongus Players

Dassel-Cokato, Minnesota



On the Road to Verona

by The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company
Region V
The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company
Rochester, Minnesota



Answers

by Tom Topor
Region VI
Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center
Katy, Texas



Coming to America

by Maria Cheng and Peter Trinh
Region VII
Theatre Esprit Asia
Aurora, Colorado



The Adams Family, Act 1

Book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice,
Music and Lyrics by Andrew Lippa, Based on
characters created by Charles Addams
Region IX
Tacoma Musical Playhouse
Tacoma, Washington



Counting the Ways, A Vaudeville

by Edward Albee
Region X
SHAPE Performing Arts Centre
Mons, Belgium

More AACTFest on next page ►

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AACTFest 2017 Awards

The AACTFest 2017 Awards Evening was spectacular. The Awards Show, with script, musical arrangements, orchestra conducted by, and Master of Ceremonies Jim Sobre was a delight. The show was produced by Ron Ziegler and choreographed by Jon Douglas Rake. The cast along with live musicians entertained all, and provided a great introduction to each award being presented.



AACTFest Awards Show Master of Ceremonies Jim Sobre



Jonathan Bill, Shelleigh-Mari Ferguson, Lindsay Enbysk Hovey, Kathy Kluska, John Miller, Linda Palacios, and Rafe Wadleigh entertained with a rousing opening number and introduced each award being presented.



Steve Williams, Dan Waugh, Warren Bandel, Kevin Wulff, Jim Sobre, Tony Boldt, and Jerry Spencer orchestrated the evening.

Photos by Stephen Bird

OUTSTANDING PRODUCTION

Nominees:

The Amish Project, Theatre Winter Haven
Answers, Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center
Venus in Fur, Center Stage Theatre

Winner:

The Addams Family, Act 1
 Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Tacoma, Washington
 Region IX



Cast and Director Jon Douglas Rake accept the Outstanding Production Award from AACT President Carole Ries



Joshua Schorejs accepts the Outstanding Achievement in Direction Award from AACT Immediate Past President Murray Chase



Trenton Stephenson, James Duncan, and Gregory Magyar in the Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center's production of Answers

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN DIRECTION

Nominees:

David Metcalf for *The Voice of the Prairie*,
 Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/FungusAmongus Players
 Jon Douglas Rake for *The Addams Family*,
 Tacoma Musical Playhouse

Winner:

Joshua Schorejs, *Answers*,
 Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN A LEADING ROLE: ACTRESS

Nominees:

Olivia Belfie as Mae in *Passing Notes*,
 Kokomo Civic Theatre
 Maria Cheng as Woman in *Coming to America*,
 Theatre Esprit Asia

Winner:

Emily Anderson as Vanda in *Venus in Fur*,
 Center Stage Theatre



Emily Anderson accepts the Outstanding Achievement in a Leading Role: Actress Award from AACT Vice President of Festivals Jim Walker





Rafe Wadleigh accepts the Outstanding Achievement in a Leading Role: Actor Award from AACT Vice President of Festivals Jim Walker

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN A LEADING ROLE: ACTOR

Nominees:

Shawn Clerkin as Flaminio Scala in *The Glorious Ones*, Erie Playhouse

Gregory Magyar as Frank in *Answers*, Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center

Winner:

Rafe Wadleigh as Gomez Addams in *The Addams Family*, Tacoma Musical Playhouse

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN A SUPPORTING ROLE: ACTRESS

Nominees:

Kate Amatuzzo as Isabella Andreini in *The Glorious Ones*, Erie Playhouse

Cerriah Delgado as America in *The Amish Project*, Theatre Winter Haven

Winner:


Savana Masako Smith as Wednesday Addams in *The Addams Family*, Tacoma Musical Playhouse



Director Jon Douglas Rake accepts the Outstanding Achievement in a Supporting Role: Actress Award for Savana Masako Smith from AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford



More AACTFest Awards on next page ►




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OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN A SUPPORTING ROLE: ACTOR

Nominees:

Kris Lee as Vanya in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*,
Starkville Community Theatre
Trenton Stephenson as Ed in *Answers*,
Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center

Winner:

James Duncan as Suspect in *Answers*,
Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center



James Duncan accepts the Outstanding Achievement in a Supporting Role: Actor Award from AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford



Eva Martin accepts the Outstanding Achievement in a Featured Role: Actress Award from AACT Immediate Past Vice President of Festivals Kay Armstrong

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN A FEATURED ROLE: ACTRESS

Nominees:

Shara Marquez as Frances in *The Voice of the Prairie*,
Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/FungusAmongus Players
Rebekah Novinger as Clothilda in *On the Road to Verona*,
The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company

Winner:

Eva Martin as Velda in *The Amish Project*,
Theatre Winter Haven

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN A FEATURED ROLE: ACTOR

Nominees:

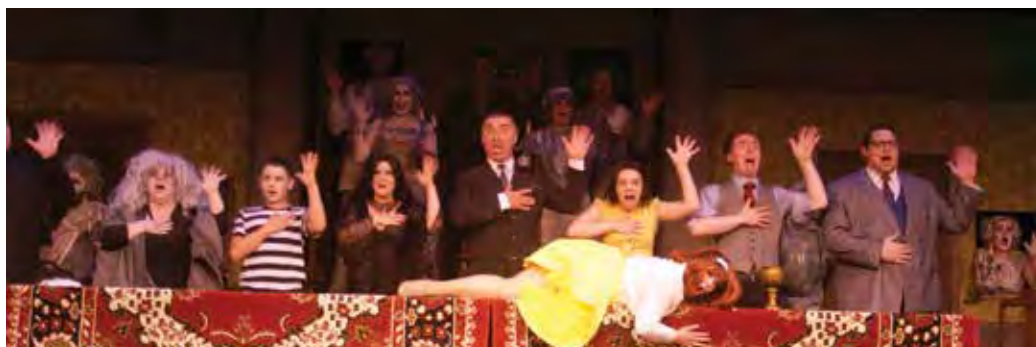
Aidan Driscoll as Mike in *On the Road to Verona*,
The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company
Kurt Schulz as Poppy in *The Voice of the Prairie*,
Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/FungusAmongus Players

Winner:

Jonathan Bill as Lurch in *The Addams Family*,
Tacoma Musical Playhouse



Jonathan Bill accepts the Outstanding Achievement in a Featured Role: Actor Award from AACT Immediate Past Vice President of Festivals Kay Armstrong



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE

Nominees:

The Glorious Ones, Erie Playhouse
On the Road to Verona, The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company

Winner:

The Addams Family, Tacoma Musical Playhouse



Jon Douglas Rake accepts the Outstanding Achievement in Ensemble Performance Award from AACT Past President and AACTFest 2017 Company Coordinator Ron Ziegler



Jon Douglas Rake accepts the Outstanding Achievement in Set Design Award from AACT Incoming Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SET DESIGN

Nominees:

Thon Altman for *The Amish Project*, Theatre Winter Haven
Patty Archer & Kris Lee for *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, Starkville Community Theatre

Winner:

The Addams Family, Tacoma Musical Playhouse

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN LIGHTING DESIGN

Nominees:

The Addams Family, Tacoma Musical Playhouse
Tom Altman for *The Amish Project*, Theatre Winter Haven

Winner:

Answers, Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center



Kari Perez accepts the Outstanding Achievement in Lighting Design Award from AACT Past President and AACTFest 2017 Coordinator Jill Patchin



Jon Douglas Rake accepts the Outstanding Achievement in Costume Design for Jocelyn Fowler from AACT Board Member Chris Serface

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COSTUME DESIGN

Nominees:

Sarah Harrington for *Venus in Fur*, Center Stage Theatre
Linda Metcalf for *The Voice of the Prairie*, Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/
FungusAmongus Players

Winner:

Jocelyne Fowler, *The Addams Family*, Tacoma Musical Playhouse

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUND DESIGN

Nominees:

The Voice of the Prairie, Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/FungusAmongus Players
Francis Fortin for *The Amish Project*, Theatre Winter Haven

Winner:

The Addams Family, Tacoma Musical Playhouse



Jon Douglas Rake accepts the Outstanding Achievement in Sound Design Award from AACT Board Member Kris Geddie

BACKSTAGE SPECIAL AWARD

The Amish Project, Theatre Winter Haven



Theatre Winter Haven Technical Director Derek Wyatt and Production Stage Manager Charlene Getz accept the Backstage Special Award from AACT Executive Vice President Rick Kerby

More AACTFest on next page ►

AACT YouthFest 2017



All AACT YouthFest 2017 participants were recognized at the AACTFest Awards Show

Photos by Stephen Bird

By Chad-Alan Carr, AACT YouthFest 2017 Chair & Commissioner

Last year I was given the task to contact Youth Theatre groups from across the country to invite them to perform in AACT's first ever National Youth Theatre Festival. I was excited! Three different AACT organizational members with youth theatre programs accepted the invitation and presented youth cast productions at the AACTFest 2017 National Festival. What a journey this was for them and for AACT as well.

AACT YouthFest 2017 productions were required to have an all youth cast with the exception of one adult (if necessary), could be any genre, must be 45 minutes including set-up and strike, and just like AACTFest National Companies - any sets, props, lights, sound, etc. must fit within a 10x10 square offstage.

AACT was very proud to present Clark Youth Theatre from Tulsa, Oklahoma

presenting *Snow Angel*, Venice Theatre Education and Outreach Department from Venice, Florida presenting *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, and The Minnesota Sky Vault Theatre Company Youth Troupe from Rochester, Minnesota, presenting *Book Travelers*. Each company performed once during the week of AACTFest, and performed again on Saturday afternoon with adjudication immediately following. Adjudicators were Bill Anderson, Jr. from Midland, Michigan, Ron Cameron-Lewis from Ontario, Canada, and Penelope Notter from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Congratulations and thank you again to all who participated this year! The energy and excitement of AACT YouthFest 2017 was exhibited at the Awards Show on Saturday night when the combined youth companies gathered on stage. The display of camaraderie was an example that the youth of AACT are indeed ready to become a bigger and brighter part of AACT.

Here's what some of the AACT YouthFest 2017 cast members shared about their experience:

"AACT YouthFest 2017 was an amazing experience and opportunity. I had so much fun, and learned so much about community theatre. I met extraordinary people and saw great live theatre. It was so

cool to interact with people from all over the nation that were interested and involved in the same things." - Sophie Kimery, age 16, Clark Youth Theatre

"Youth Fest 2017 was absolutely the most fantastic experience of my theatrical career. I couldn't even begin to explain how much fun I had, and everything I learned from the other amazing performers."

- Darrien Scott, age 14, Clark Youth Theatre

"It's good to see what other groups are doing and to think about how they make their decisions. We keep trying, every time, to get things better. This kind of spurs us on to do things even better ourselves."

- Morgan Guo, age 12, The Minnesota Sky Vault Theatre Company Youth Troupe

"I loved being able to experience the business side of community theatre, a side I've never been able to experience before." - Casey Berkery, age 15, Venice Theatre Education & Outreach Department

"How many people can say they've seen 15 shows in five days? Many of them were much different than anything I had ever been exposed to, such as abstract theatre. I especially liked attending the adjudications and took away pointers that I will use in my own acting."

- Natalie Taylor, age 15, Venice Theatre Education & Outreach Department

"AACTFest was a wonderful experience where I not only learned and grew as a performer, but I interacted with other artists nationwide."

- Haley Rosenthal, age 17, Venice Theatre Education & Outreach Department

It was thrilling for so many of us on the AACT Education Committee who, along with many AACT board members long before us, have been urging AACT to move forward in providing an outlet specific to Youth as part of AACT. AACT YouthFest 2017

certainly provided that and in its first year, I'd say we passed with flying colors. Performing to nice size houses during the week and then all three youth shows performing again on Saturday afternoon to a practically

Continued on page 16 ►



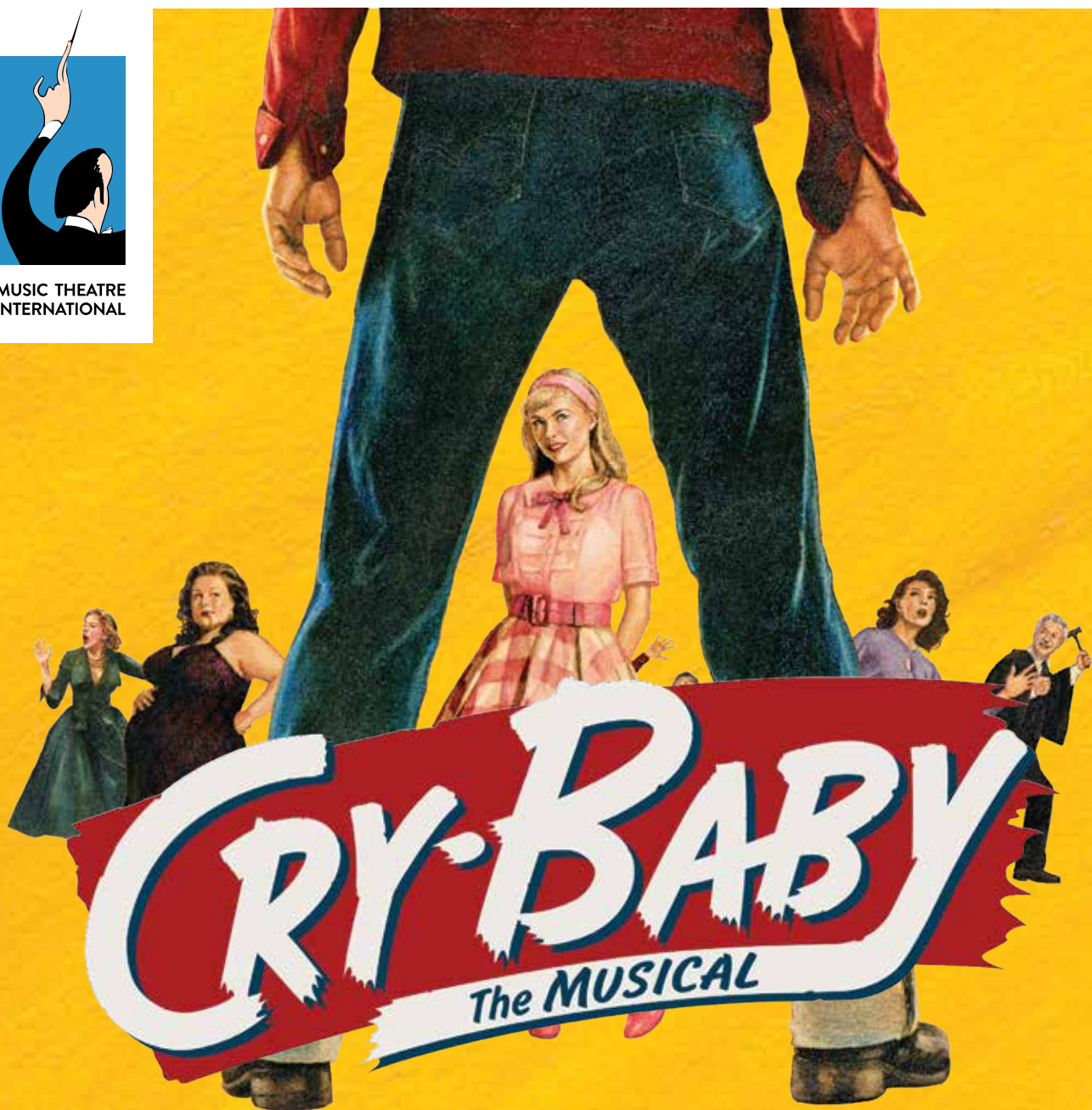
Minnesota Sky Vault Theatre Company Youth Troupe in *Book Travelers*



Clark Youth Theatre in *Snow Angel*



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AACT YouthFest *continued from page 14*

full house, was exactly what we hoped would happen. The youth found an even bigger place to belong in AACT, were exposed first hand to AACTFest and how it can help them as young theatre artists, and also showed AACT members and festival attendees that the future is bright for AACT with such incredible, energetic, and talented youth in AACT.

Onward to the future of AACT with YouthFest...our future is bright! ♦



AACT YouthFest Award Outstanding Achievement In Acting – *Sophie Kimery & Lenora Martin, Snow Angel, Clark Youth Theatre, Tulsa, Oklahoma presented by AACT Education Committee Chair Sara Phoenix and AACT YouthFest Chair and Commissioner Chad-Alan Carr*



AACT YouthFest Award Outstanding Achievement In Acting – *Haley Faye Rosenthal & Casey Berkery, I Never Saw Another Butterfly, Venice Theatre's Education & Outreach Department, Venice, Florida presented by AACT Education Committee Chair Sara Phoenix and AACT YouthFest Chair and Commissioner Chad-Alan Carr*



Venice Theatre Education and Outreach Department from Venice, Florida presenting I Never Saw Another Butterfly



AACT YouthFest Award Outstanding Achievement In Acting – *Isaac McCullar & Entire Ensemble Members of Book Travelers, The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company Youth Troupe, Rochester, Minnesota, presented by AACT Education Committee Chair Sara Phoenix*

Photos by Stephen Bird



"If the Good Lord's Willing and the Creek Don't Rise"
Comedy by Pat Cook

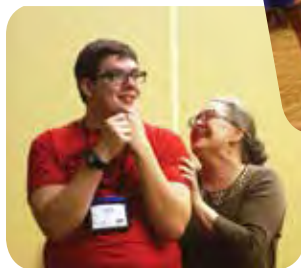

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AACTFest Workshops

The workshops at the national festival were held in the Mayo Civic Center and offered a wide variety of educational and networking experiences. The presenters creatively provided participants knowledge and skills in many different aspects of theatre.



Photos by Stephen Bird

continued on the next page ►



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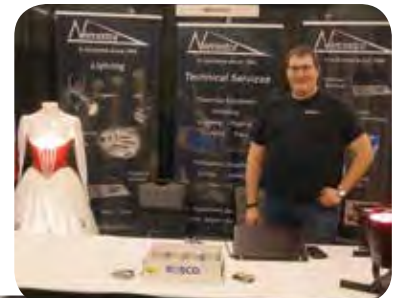
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Photos by
Stephen Bird



AACTFest Exhibitors

The AACTFest Exhibit Hall was full of vendors giving expert information to all theatre-related questions. These are only a few of the many exhibitors that participated in the national festival in Rochester.



Hilarious Comedy Plays!

The Supermarket Sisterhood 7 Female, 2 Male | Two Acts

As if the daily skirmishes with farcical customers and the dim-witted men in their lives, wasn't enough, the women who operate the checkouts at the Discount Co supermarket are now facing a new boss and the prospect of losing their jobs due to newly installed automated checkout aisles. If the women are going to endure these challenges they're going to have to fight together and take things to a whole new level. Hilarious, madcap humor to tickle your funnybone and stir your heart.

'Twas the Fight Before Christmas! 4 Female, 2 Male | 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.

The Old People Are Revolting! 5 Female, 2 Male | Two Acts

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

My In-laws are Outlaws!

4 - 6 Female, 2 - 4 Male | 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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Monique Maldonado (Theater Business Manager, Theatre of Northeastern Connecticut at the Bradley Playhouse, Putnam, CT)

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AACT National Awards

The annual AACT Membership meeting included the presentation of the AACT National Awards and the introduction of the AACT Fellows class of 2017.

All photos by Stephen Bird



AACT Fellows gathered at the annual AACT Membership meeting during AACTFest 2017 National Festival in Rochester, Minnesota and welcomed the Class of 2017. Front row, l-r: James Carver, Kathie Maldonado, Bill Muchow, Ron Cameron-Lewis, Lori Chase, Nancy Eppert, Sue Ellen Gerrells, Linda Miller, Kathy Pingel, Joanne Berry, Carole Ries, Gary Walker

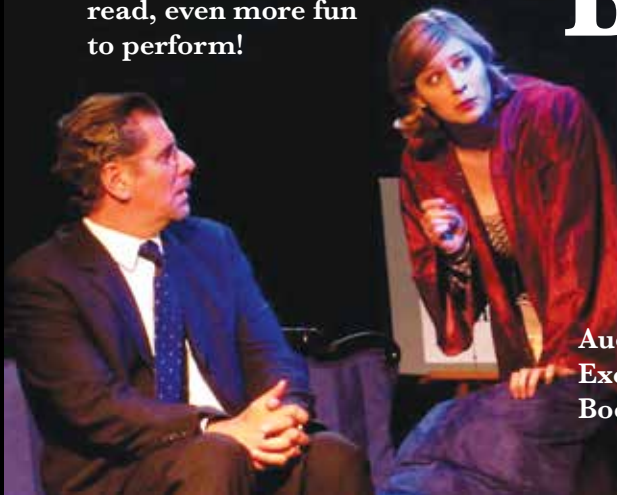
Middle row l-r: Kristi Quinn, Kay Armstrong, Morrie Enders, Linda M. Lee, Jim Walker, Harv Thompson, Tom Cowley, Beverley Lord, JoAnne Nissen, Ron Ziegler, Penelope Notter, Patricia White

Back row, l-r: Julie Crawford, Scott Bloom, Norman Small, Rod McCullough, Jill Patchin, Eugene Irby, Dennis Gilmore, Tim Jebson, Mary Doveton, Stephen Peithman, Rick Kerby, Frank Peot, John Viars, Jim Sobre, Murray Chase



AACT Fellows welcomed the class of 2017. New members were introduced by AACT Fellows (l-r) Ron Cameron-Lewis inducted by Scott Bloom, Lori Chase inducted by Murray Chase, Nancy Eppert inducted by Dennis Gilmore, Sue Ellen Gerrells inducted by Kay Armstrong, Linda Miller inducted by Kristi Quinn, and Kathy Pingel inducted by Ron Ziegler

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AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford receives the Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award



Texas Nonprofit Theatres Executive Director Linda M. Lee receives the Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award



Chester Eitze, Austin, Texas, receives the Special Recognition Award



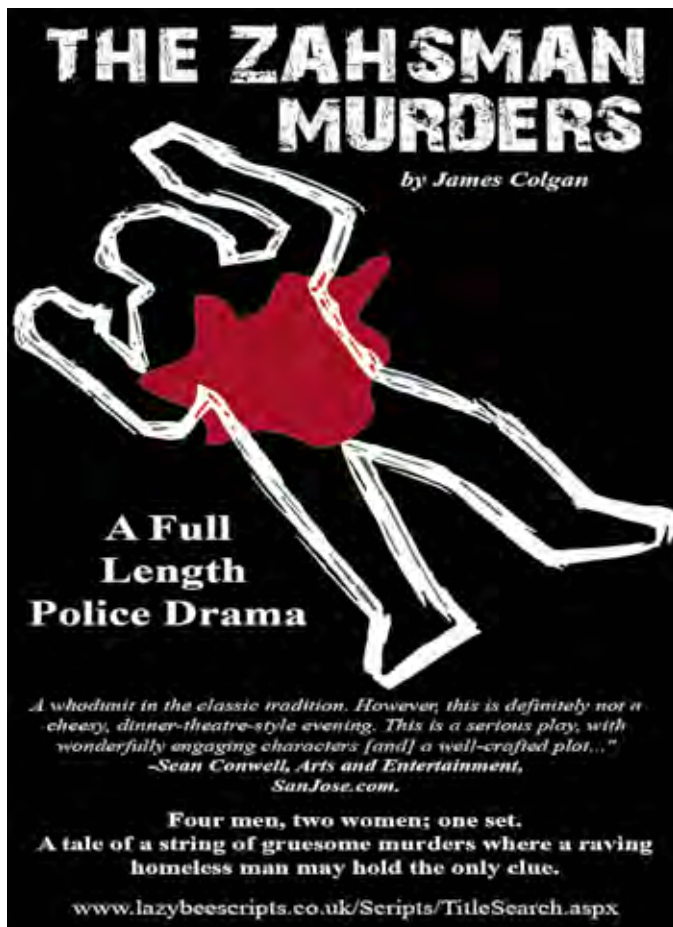
Linda M. Lee and Janet Salters receive the Special Recognition Award for their family and the Jack K. Ayre & Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation



Tacoma Musical Playhouse Executive Director Jon Douglas Rake accepts the Distinguished Merit Award for Tacoma Musical Playhouse



Sally Barnes receives the Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award



Gloria Filean receives the Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award



Joan Luther receives the David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award



Jon Douglas Rake receives the David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

National Awards continue on page 32 ►►



AACTFest 2017: A Year of Many Firsts!

By Quiana Clark-Roland

For many communities around the country and world, theatre is the backbone and heart of civic engagement, education, enlightenment, and entertainment. For over 30 years, AACT's purpose has been to serve as a resource and platform for those theatre groups to "Thrive" within their own communities. As the incoming Executive Director, I am honored and proud to be a part this mission. I look forward to building upon the groundwork my predecessor has laid and expanding on the vision and mission of the organization in collaboration with AACT staff, Board, and membership.

Community Theatre is a reflection of who we are and the communities that we serve. This year's National Festival demonstrated this so clearly as we strive to improve on our services to our members and constituency. AACTFest 2017 marked a year of many firsts and milestones on its mission to "Help Theatres Thrive" by launching new programs such as the Youth Theatre Festival, monologue competition, and headliner series. This was also the first time AACT self-produced the National Festival! Here are few highlights from the 2017 National Festival year's festival and a few new initiatives to look out for in the future.

support of partners such as USITT and Rodgers and Hammerstein, members were able to hear from notable presenters such as Barry Hughson, the Executive Director of the National Ballet of Canada; Michael John LaChiusa, Tony Award nominated composer, lyricist, and librettist; and David Stewart, Director of Production at the Guthrie Theater.

Online Workshops: To increase accessibility to those workshops and educational resources, AACT is excited to announce that a select group of workshops and presentations will be available online. Videos are expected to be posted early this fall and can be accessed via your AACT online account. More details on which workshops will be available in the fall 2017.

Exhibitors/Corporate Partners: The Festival also hit a high note in the level of participation from our Corporate Partners and exhibitors. AACT gives Special Thanks for their participation and support. As our membership and programming grows, AACT continues to strive to develop and grow year-round exposure based programs to provide corporate partners with the publicity and exposure they so seek.

To learn more about our 2017 exhibitors and how to sign up for 2019 please visit aact.org/festival-exhibitor-list or contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org.

To learn more about our Corporate Partners and opportunities please contact Jill Patchin at jill@aact.org.

Design Competition: With Special Thanks to our organizational partner USITT, we had over 55 Design Competition entries showcasing exceptional design work from community theatres all over the country! This year set a record high for design entries. The Outstanding Overall Design received a \$300 cash prize and Category Design Winners each received a \$100 cash prize (see the list of Design Competition winners on page 26). We are excited about growing and integrating the craft of technical theatre more into our programming. We look forward to seeing what 2019 brings us. If you are interested in submitting for 2019, contact us at info@aact.org.

AACT YouthFest: For far too long, one of the missing links within the national festival has been its youth programming. With sponsorship from AACT Corporate Partner The Musical Company,

Stephen Bird



Headliners Barry Hughson, Michael John LaChiusa, and David Stewart (l-r)

Workshops/Headliners: 2017 marked the largest selection of workshops and speakers ever offered at an AACTFest National Festival. Over 40 workshops were presented that covered a variety of focuses and disciplines in theatre ranging from Acting, Musical Theatre, Stage Movement, to Arts Administration, Stage Production, and more. AACT thanks all of the presenters and facilitators who dedicated their time, expertise, and energy this year.

It was also the inaugural year for the headliner series. The headliner series is a premier speaking event that features some of the industry's most prominent leaders and thinkers in the arts community. With the

this year marked the inaugural year for AACT YouthFest! Three companies from community theatres around the country joined us in Rochester, Minnesota to showcase their skills and talent. Companies included Venice Theatre's Outreach and Education Department from Venice, Florida, The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Youth Troupe from Rochester, Minnesota, and Clark Youth Theatre from Tulsa, Oklahoma. The showcase provided the youth with an opportunity to travel, network, perform, and learn from one another. Participants were also welcome to take advantage of the other programs happening at the festival such as the workshops, headliners series, youth leadership conference, monologue competition, design competition, and AACTFest performances. We thank these groups for their participation and the communities that supported them. AACT looks forward to seeing what is in store for our youth in the future.

Monologue Competition: With Special Thanks and support from our Corporate Partner Samuel French, the Monologue Competition was another fun event added this year. Attendees had the chance to perform a monologue, receive one-on-one feedback, and network with other actors. There were two categories of winners, Youth and Adult. Winners received a \$100 prize.

Board Highlights: And lastly, AACTFest also serves as a time for the AACT Board to get together, conduct business, network with

one another, and most importantly, put into action future goals and initiatives of AACT. Here are few highlights from the week's meetings. For a full detail of the board minutes and all action items please visit aact.org/minutes.

Board Appointments: The Nomination and Election Procedures in the revised Bylaws call for the nomination of Board Members at Large, and members of the Nominating and Endowment Committees to be made by the Nominating Committee with election by the Membership. Board officers will be elected annually by the Board. However, the transition from the previous Bylaws to the revised Bylaws resulted in vacancies on the Board, Endowment Committee, and Nominating Committee. The revised Bylaws allow the President to fill such vacancies.

AACT welcomes the following board members in their new appointments!

Board Members at Large Appointments:

Allen Ebert, Frank Peot, Jamie Ulmer

Elected to the Executive Committee:

- Secretary - Frank Peot
- Kris Geddie, Dennis Gilmore, Chris Surface



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Outgoing AACT President Murray Chase hands over the gavel to Carole Ries, who took over as President at the AACT Membership Meeting

Committee Chair Appointments:

- Audit Committee - Bill Muchow
- Education Committee - Sara Phoenix
- International Committee - Tim Jebesen

Committee Member Appointments:

- Endowment Committee -Tom Cowley, Jon Douglas Rake, Stephen Bird, Rick Kerby, Linda Miller, Frank Peot, Kristi Quinn
- Nominating Committee - Emily Anderson, John Davis, Eugene Irby
- Awards Committee - Lynn Nelson, Jon Douglas Rake, Tom Cowley, Kristi Quinn

Board Meetings:

- 2017 Fall Executive Meeting: November 2-3, 2017 in Madison Wisconsin
- 2018 Winter Meetings: February 22-24, 2018 in San Antonio, Texas

Hosting Future Meetings: Site selection and dates of the winter meetings has now been moved from the President to the Executive Committee. The board is currently accepting proposals from theatres interested in hosting future winter meetings starting with 2019 and up. If interested, please submit your proposal 18 months prior to when you would like to host. Proposals should be received in the early fall season 18 months prior, as winter Board meetings must be decided upon a year in advance. The proposal will first be received and reviewed by AACT Staff and then presented in the Fall to the Executive Committee to be decided upon. If you are interested in hosting an AACT meeting, please contact the AACT Office at info@aact.org.

State Contacts: AACT is still looking for a few more State Contacts to serve as liaisons between the state associations and the Regional Reps. If you are interested or know of someone who would be, contact your state's theatre association. If you do not have a state theatre association then contact your state's Regional Rep. Contact information for your Regional Reps can be found at aact.org/regionreps.

What's Next?

The Full-time Community Theatre Directors Conference takes place in Madison, Wisconsin, November 3-6, 2017. For more information and to register - aact.org/ctdc.

Next year, will be the eighth year for aactWorldFest! Dates are June 18-23, 2018. aactWorldFest is a world-wide week-long community theatre festival in Venice, Florida, USA on Florida's beautiful southwest coast. Shows from Italy and Zimbabwe have already been confirmed! For more information - aact.org/worldfest.

And lastly, **Save the Date** for AACTFest 2019! The next National Festival will take place in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania at the beautiful Majestic Theater, June 16-22, 2019! For more information- aact.org/aactfest-2019.

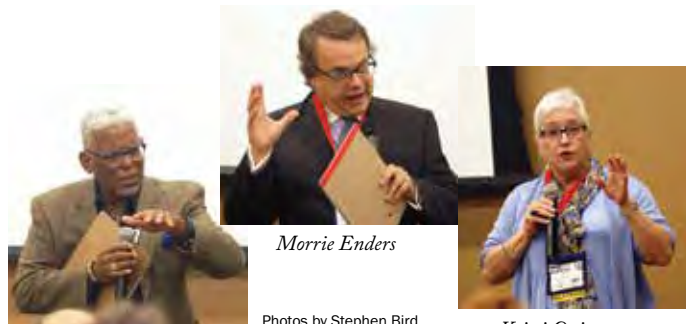
Community Theatre is for everyone at all skill and talent levels! I look forward to expanding AACT's outreach and opportunities for community theatres here and abroad. If you have ideas or thoughts on how we can improve AACT services or programs I would love to hear them. Please feel free to contact me at Quiana@aact.org. I look forward to seeing you at our next event! ♦

AACTFest Adjudications



Stephen Bird

The Adjudication sessions were standing room only as adjudicators Benny Sato Ambush, Morrie Enders, and Kristi Quinn gave valuable insight to each production, and educated all who participated in their comments.



Benny Sato Ambush

Morrie Enders

Photos by Stephen Bird

Kristi Quinn



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Design Competitions Are Worth It – Trust Me!

By Tracy Alexander

I thought AACTFest was all about actors and directors – until I discovered the AACT Design Competition! Designers from all across the country display their work during the AACTFest National Festival. I had assisted the Set and Costume Designers at Midland Community Theatre with their entries before, but this year I took the plunge and entered just for me.

Alathea Blischke, my assistant, and I chose the props from our 2016 production of *Sweeney Todd* to enter in this year's competition. We had worked for weeks on the designs and wanted to share them. Most of the time we pull from stock, haunt estate sales, or buy crap on Amazon, but this show was truly hand-crafted. We sewed three-dozen meat pies, twelve napkins with pockets (to hide the "eaten" pies); created eight bottles of Pirelli's Miracle Elixir, six shaving bibs, twelve towels, and six razors.

As Props People, we don't get the gift of an intricate show every year. Sometimes it is just one particular item – like the rabbits built for *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* or a Christmas Turkey and Leg Lamps for *A Christmas Story*!

How do you enter the AACT Design Competition? Start by selecting something that challenged and excited you, something you had to figure out from the bottom up, something that showcases your craft. There are all kinds of logistics to overcome for the Design entries – a 30" by 36" display space, shipping options or lugging everything through the airport. But it was worth every penny spent on transportation and every moment agonizing over selections. We wanted people to poke at the ball of dough and shudder at the gory meat grinder, to see the inspiration for the meat pies and note how they worked in an action photo from the show, to grip a razor and know how the blood traveled easily to the throat without harming a single actor . . .

Getting feedback from the adjudicators was incredible! This was an unexpected delight after working for 30 years in show business. To know how others saw my designs – the attention to detail, planning out how actors would work with them, and the appreciation for the craftsmanship. It was heaven.

Best of all, though, was talking with other creative people about what they did or how they did what or what choices might have been made differently – all the fabulous give and take between designers and builders. Now I know where to go to find a marvelous Dragon for *Shrek* or who to contact with questions about prosthetics, and everyone knows they can call on Midland Community Theatre for a working set of razors – or Leg Lamps – or eight matching rabbits.



David Cookrell

Adjudicator Todd F. Edwards gives an adjudication of the AACT Design Competition to participants

I am already talking with Alathea about what upcoming shows might have interesting props or challenging design work to enter in the 2019 AACT Design Competition . . . because we will be back. Oh yeah! We wouldn't miss the opportunity to share what we do for the world. And we would love to have designers – in all disciplines. Plan now to enter your technical designs in the 2019 competition. Designs must be for an AACT member community theatre production, and any design work from now until the AACTFest 2019 National Festival will qualify. Stay up to date on details for the 2019 Design Competition at aact.org (2019 information will be available soon). Join us in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania for another celebration of all things theatrical! ♦

Tracy Alexander is the Production Manager at Midland Community Theatre in Midland, Texas and received an Honorable Mention in Scenic Design: Props for her entry in the AACT 2017 Design Competition in Rochester, Minnesota

AACTFest 2107 Design Competition Awards

Best of Show: Excellence in Scenic Design

Lauren Lusk, *Sweeney Todd*, Midland Community Theatre, Midland, Texas

Excellence in Scenic Design

Evan Lewis, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, Center Stage Theatre/Midland Center For The Arts, Midland, Michigan

Excellence in Costume Design

Jane Montgomery, *Sweeney Todd*, Theatre Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Excellence in Technical Achievement in Costume Design

John Baxter, *Shrek the Musical*, Northwoods Players, Phillips, Wisconsin

Excellence in Lighting Design

Robert M., *Of Mice And Men*, Auburn Players Community Theatre, Auburn, New York

Excellence in Graphics Design

Elizabeth Zanter, *Fox Fire*, Monroe Actors Stage Company, Waterloo, Illinois

Honorable Mention in Scenic Design

Judd Vermillion, *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, Playhouse 2000, Kerrville, Texas

Honorable Mention in Scenic Design: Props

Tracy Alexander, *Sweeney Todd*, Midland Community Theatre, Midland, Texas

Honorable Mention in Lighting Design

John Andzulis, *Billy Elliott*, Venice Theatre, Venice, Florida

Honorable Mention in Sound Design

Mark Toeppen, *The Hobbit*, Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, Des Moines, Iowa

AACTFest 2107 Design Competition Gallery

Photos by Stephen Bird, David Cockerell, Bob Frame



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AACTFest 2017 Peoples Choice Awards

The AACTFest 2017 Peoples Choice Awards were selected by AACTFest audience members and by online voters across the country. Voters made a contribution to the AACT Endowment Fund for each vote submitted.

Favorite Production

Passing Notes by Joe Cameron
Kokomo Civic Theatre



Director/Playwright Joe Cameron accepts the People's Choice Favorite Production Award from AACT Board Member Jon Douglas Rake and Chris Boucher of AACT Corporate Partner benefactor.org

Favorite Actress

Emily Anderson in *Venus in Fur*
Center Stage Theatre



Emily Anderson accepts the People's Choice Favorite Actress Award from AACT Board Member Jon Douglas Rake and Chris Boucher of AACT Corporate Partner benefactor.org

Favorite Actor

Josh Peduto in *Passing Notes*
Kokomo Civic Theatre



Joe Cameron accepts the People's Choice Favorite Actor Award for Josh Peduto from AACT Board Member Jon Douglas Rake and Chris Boucher of AACT Corporate Partner benefactor.org

Speak the Speech Monologue Competition

Speak the Speech, the AACT Monologue Competition, was a great success and was enjoyed by all who watched the over 30 entries.

Awards for outstanding monologues

Youth Category: **Grace Brixia**

Adult Category: **James Craig**



Grace Brixia receives the Speak the Speech Youth Award from AACT Board member and Monologue Competition Coordinator Kristofer Geddie



James Craig receives the Speak the Speech Adult Award from AACT Board member and Monologue Competition Coordinator Kristofer Geddie



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Meant to Be: My Adventures as an AACTFest Intern

By Blake A. Carlson

"Is anybody sitting here?" said Julie Crawford referring to the chair next to me during the lunch session of the workshops at Americans for the Arts' *Arts Advocacy Day Summit* in Washington D.C. in late March 2017. This empty seat prompted meal conversation that eventually led to my discovery of AACT and the AACTFest 2017 internship program.



Julie handed me her business card as I excitedly scribbled down my information on a sheet of notebook paper. One of my mentors growing up (who I met through my local community theatre) gave me this incredible opportunity to go to D.C. and now I have, by fate it seems, stumbled upon the perfect internship for the career field I am pursuing. To say I am feeling blessed would be an understatement. Fast forward to mid-June 2017 and little do I know how fortunate I truly am. I arrive in Rochester, MN knowing little about who I would be working with or what I would even spend the week doing. What would follow would be a whirlwind of filling many, many blue festival participant bags to loading a giant red dragon into a

trailer on the streets of downtown Rochester and just about everything imaginable in between. Not to mention getting to experience incredible youth and national company performances from across the nation. However, the absolute highlight was that I got to document the entire adventure on the official AACTFest 2017 Snapchat, as I also watched our followers have a blast with the official event geofilter. Working with David Cockerell to develop this addition to the festival's already scheduled social media happenings was a real treat. While interning with the folks at AACT, one truly gets the whole experience. Not only did I put in 25,000 steps a day making laps around the Mayo Civic Center, but these people are just truly genuine human beings who I feel honored to have encountered, even if only for a short time. In his headliner workshop, Barry Hughson of the National Ballet of Canada said something along the lines of "I didn't get my life out of a book...I got

my life because people shared what they knew with me." This message resonated with me, as it is what my week at AACTFest 2017 really became. I left Rochester (after being trapped for a short time in the hotel

parking ramp) with a brain full of newfound knowledge, a heart filled with a renewed sense of meaning, and a wallet full of business cards. As I sat in a booth with a small gathering of people over drinks at Chester's after the awards evening on Saturday, I recounted how I came to this internship opportunity and reflected on the irreplaceable experience I had throughout the week in Rochester. As I paused, someone asked "do you believe in meant to be?" and I responded "yes, and that's just what this was...meant to be." ♦



AACTFest interns Emily Stein and Blake A. Carlson with Intern Coordinator Mary Jo DeNolf (center)

Blake A. Carlson is a sophomore at Simpson College in Indianola, Indiana majoring in Theatre and Public Relations with a minor in Arts Management. He has been a native of theatre since he first stepped on stage at the age of nine years old, and his ultimate career goal is to manage a community theatre to give children and adults alike the welcoming environment of creativity he has come to know and love.

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AACT Youth Leadership Conference 2017

by Natalie Taylor



I had the honor of performing in AACT's first Youth Festival at AACTFest 2017. My company was from Venice Theatre's Education and Outreach Department in Venice, Florida and I was one of a cast of eight to perform in *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. As if that wasn't enough fun, I was also one of four teens, chosen by Murray Chase, my theatre's artistic and executive director, to also participate in the Youth Leadership Conference.

For an entire wonderful and exhausting week, I was in theatre paradise.

Going into it, I didn't know what to expect. I knew there were going to be award-winning shows from all over the country and workshops given by phenomenal teachers, but I had no clue that every member of AACT would be so welcoming and kind. We were always greeted with a friendly face, and you could tell they were so passionate about what they were doing. I took a Speaking Shakespeare workshop that taught me tricks on how to more easily memorize Shakespeare.

The youth leadership conference and the workshops were extremely educational, but the best part of the whole festival were the shows. How many people can say they've seen 15 shows in five days? Many of them

great way to promote youth theatre because it not only allowed youth to be exposed to a variety of shows; it also gave us a chance to learn from one another. I hope to return to AACTFest National Festival someday, and I think there are many more who would agree. ♦

Natalie Taylor will be a high school sophomore this year. She has been singing, acting, dancing, and taking camps and classes at Venice Theatre since she was 4 years old. She has been in more than twenty Venice Theatre productions, and lists favorite roles as Jane in Mary Poppins, Enid in Legally Blonde, and Toffee (her first lead) in this summer's Zombie Prom.



Jennifer Hamilton

Youth Leadership Conference participants (l-r) Serenity Dunn, Lowell Irby, Jillian Alexander, Ava Podewitz, Facilitator Jennifer Hamilton, Tessa Cope, Ben DeSpain, Knox Blakely, Casey Berkery, Drew Stutz, Emily Geise, Natalie Taylor, with (in front) AACT Board Member Chris Serface, AACT YouthFest Chair and Commissioner Chad-Alan Carr, AACT President Carole Ries, and AACT Education Committee Chair Sara Phoenix. Participants not pictured: Jessy Rehmann, Dylan Smith, Juliette Rose, and Audie Pritchett

Stephen Bird

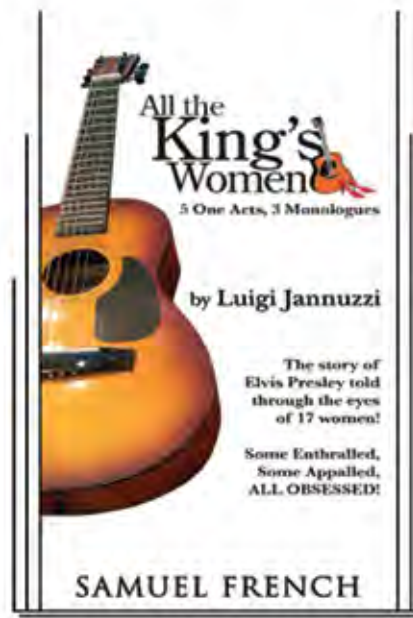


The AACT Youth Leadership Conference included many different workshops focusing on coordination, trust, and dramatic expression led by Facilitator Jennifer Hamilton (right)

were much different than anything I had ever been exposed to, such as the abstract theatre of *Counting the Ways*. I especially liked attending the adjudications and took away pointers that I will use in my own acting. One of my personal favorites was *The Amish Project*. All the actors were so present in the moment, and it was really an amazing show to witness.

Another part of the festival I enjoyed was the youth conference. I enjoyed participating in the round-table discussions about what we had just watched on stage. The team building exercises were fun and we learned new improv games to bring back to Venice. I think it was a

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Theatre Lawrence Executive Director Mary Doveton accepts the Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award for Theatre Lawrence in Lawrence, Kansas



Joanne Berry accepts the Diamond Crown Organization Award for Bay City Players in Bay City, Michigan



Center Stage Theatre Managing Director Dexter Brigham accepts the Corporate Award for the Dow Chemical Company



Jim Sobre accepts the Mort Clark International Achievement Award for Brid McBride

Backstage at AACTFest 2017 National Festival was successfully coordinated and controlled by Festival Commissioner Eugene Irby and AACT Technical Liaison Bob Frame. Their dedication to each performing company was greatly appreciated.



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

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

Years of Service

30 Years

Frank Peot (Sun Prairie, Wisconsin)

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10 Years

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Susan Harrington (Roslindale, Massachusetts)

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<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">CONCEALING JUDY HOLLIDAY</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">by Wendy Johnson</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">"Fun, informative and sad. Great theatre." —stagequippers</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">A WITTY & WACKY ADVENTURE FROM THE AUTHOR OF "PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE"</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 4em; font-weight: bold;">ALICE IN WONDERLAND</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">BY MARK LONDON SMITH</p>
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Have you registered yet for aactWorldFest? If you attended the national community theatre festival in June, chances are someone from Venice Theatre convinced you to sign up on the spot. If not, now is the time! aactWorldFest will be here before you know it - June 18-23, 2018, to be exact.

What is aactWorldFest? A worldwide weeklong community theatre festival in Venice, Florida, USA on Florida's beautiful southwest coast. You'll spend the week delighting in performances from around the globe, learning new skills at a variety of workshops, and becoming life-long friends with other theatre lovers from around the world.



Renee McVety

Armenia created stunning visuals in their production of *The Winged*, aactWorldFest 2014



At the time of this writing, theatre troupes from Italy, Zimbabwe, Armenia, Germany, Nepal, Israel, The Ukraine, and the country of Georgia have committed to perform at the festival. Two troupes from the U.S. will also be participating - one from Colorado and another from Tacoma, Washington.



Danny Danisch

Lori Chase, Coordinator for aactWorldFest 2018, is currently recruiting more productions, event sponsors, workshop leaders, and vendors to participate in this exciting event. Please contact her if you'd like to participate at lorichase@venicetheatre.net.

Scheduled for aactWorldFest 2018, Request Stop by Harold Pinter produced by The Wild Bunch from Berlin, Germany. Don't miss this and more at aactWorldFest 2018

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Renee McVety

Love endures over money in Kanjush (The Miser) from Bangladesh, aactWorldFest 2014

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Careers in Theatre

Highlighting Professional Staff Changes in Theatre

Akron, Ohio - **Weathervane Playhouse** is excited to announce that award winning theatre artist **Richard Morris, Jr.** will be joining the staff as resident technical director and scenic designer. Mr. Morris comes to Weathervane after designing over 104 productions, many for Cleveland's seminal Karamu Theater. "I was drawn to Weathervane's amazing feeling of family. I had designed there several times, and from the volunteers to the staff, there is an incredible sense of working together that I have not experienced in my many years as a theatre artist," said Mr. Morris about taking the job. "I'm delighted to welcome Richard to our staff at Weathervane. We are fortunate to add a designer of his skill and expertise to our team!" said Melanie Pepe, Weathervane's Artistic Director. Mr. Morris was the recipient of the 2011 National Black Theatre Festival award for "Outstanding Achievements in Scenic Design." In 2013, Mr. Morris was a keynote speaker at Alabama State University on "African Americans In Scenic Design." During the 2015-2016 theatre season, Mr. Morris was the recipient of the Cleveland Critics Circle award for superior achievement for his scenic design for *Blues in the Night* and lighting design for *Rasheeda Speaking*, both for Karamu.

Spokane, Washington - **Spokane Civic Theatre** is proud to announce the appointment of **Lenny Bart** as the new Artistic Director. Lenny has worked in professional, community, and educational theatres. Last year, he was director, stage manager, and actor for Bluff City Theatre, a small professional theatre in Hannibal, Missouri. Prior to that, he was Managing Artistic Director for Quincy Community Theatre in Quincy, Illinois. He was Artistic Director for 12 Miles West, and was an actor, director, stage manager, and ultimately, Artistic Director for Pushcart Players (both professional theatres in New Jersey). He has toured Europe twice, performed in 47 states, and worked with Tony-winners, Emmy-winners, and stars of stage, screen, and TV.

Murfreesboro, Tennessee - **The Center for the Arts** is pleased to announce the appointment of **Taiisha Bradley** as its new Marketing and Production Manager. Taiisha has a Master of Arts in Communication Arts with a specialty in Advertising and Public Relations from New York Institute of Technology Old Westbury, and a Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communication from Winthrop University. She comes to The Center with more than 11 years of experience in nonprofit communications. Taiisha is excited about helping The Center maintain its high production standards while implementing innovative marketing strategies that attract new patrons, and retain and deepen relationships with current patrons. ♦

Visit the Job Postings on the AACT website at aact.org/jobs. Job postings are frequently added, so check back often. Have a job to post? Visit aact.org/jobs to post your job opening for FREE!

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

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

Deadline: October 31, 2017

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Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference

Community theatre managing directors will gather at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Friday, November 3 – Monday, November 6, 2017, to share stories of challenges and solutions, learn about other theatre operations, and meet colleagues from across the country.

This three-day, biennial conference is held exclusively for individuals employed full-time in an administrative or artistic position in a community theatre organization.



John Viars

John Viars, Artistic Director of the Des Moines Playhouse, will facilitate and guide the group through managed but vibrant discussions of various topics including marketing strategies, fundraising challenges, staffing issues, outreach activities, and systems for selecting a season.

Cost: \$300 individual, or \$275 each for groups of 3+ until November 1. After November 1, fee increases to \$350 individual or \$325 each for groups of 3+. Meals and breaks included in fees.

For more information go to aact.org/ctdc

Questions about this conference?

Contact Sarah Marty at sarah.marty@wisc.edu, 608-263-2790
or Maureen Friend at maureen.friend@wisc.edu, 608-263-7055. ♦



Ron Ziegler

The biennial National Community Theatre Managing Directors Conference was last held at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in November 2015. Community theatre professionals from around the country assembled to share and gain knowledge from their peers. Join them in 2017!



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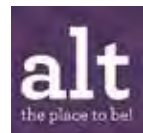
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Full Disclosure – You're Doing What?

by Ken Roberts



While fielding several requests to add exposures to existing policies recently, it occurred to me that we in the theatre business are truly a wonderfully unique lot. The insurance companies that protect our theatres usually know and understand the unusual exposures that they might encounter when covering us, but in many instances, there may be risks that even the most astute underwriter wouldn't associate with theatre operations. As a result, it is imperative that we disclose *all* aspects of our operations to avoid any possibility that a claim could be denied because an uncommon exposure wasn't divulged to the insurance company.

Our job is to make sure that our agents and our insurance carriers are fully aware of everything it takes for us to do what we do.

Theatre insurance underwriters might expect to see claims related to ladders, stairs, ropes, construction tools, live animals, and pyrotechnics, just to name a few. While they expect the varied and atypical aspects of our operations, it is crucial that we make our agents and insurance companies aware of every single facet. Community and civic theatres provide many examples

of exposures that would be considered extraordinary to any underwriter who is accustomed to protecting indoor venues. For example, the average theatre sells tickets to the public for live performances, which is fully contemplated in the typical liability class code that is used on their policies. However, many theatres teach classes and workshops, and some even engage in film production. Some of the larger outdoor theatres provide golf carts to deliver patrons from the parking lots to the venue. Neither of those would automatically come to the mind of an underwriter, which makes it vital for us to make them aware of the exposure. Claims can be denied and policies can be non-renewed if a patron is injured in a workshop that the underwriter didn't even know we had. Some outdoor amphitheatres require a fair amount of maintenance equipment that is not typical to indoor venues, such as tractors, mowers and ATV's, all of which constitute additional liability exposures.

My point to all of this is that we should never wonder how to cover these kinds of exposures or even whether they are covered or not. Our job is to make sure that our agents and our insurance carriers are fully aware of everything it takes for us to do what we do, then let them get it covered properly. We can not afford to adopt a "don't ask, don't tell" policy when applying for our insurance if we expect every accident to be fully insured. Without a doubt, full disclosure will always be the best policy to ensure peace of mind when it comes to our theatres. ♦

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AACT Web Power

If you ever find yourself trying to find the right words, the AACT website just might be the help you need. "Theatre Terms" provides over 1000 definitions of theatrical terms, from Aside, Beam Angle, and Camlock, to Upstaging, VU Meter and Wagon. Fully searchable, our glossary is helpful for anyone wanting to better understand the inner workings of theatre. (On the drop-down menu, go to Making Theatre, then Production.) Our site's "Theatre Quotes" feature allows you to find great quotations relating to all aspects of theatre, including Acting, Backstage, Directing, Critics, Fundraising, Lighting, Playwriting, Set Design, and more. (On the drop-down menu under "Networking.")

Watch for Web Power in every issue of *Spotlight*—and learn how to get the most from the AACT website.

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Spotlight Award Honors Reverend William Dunn

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

A Repertory Theatre (ART), Banning, California, honored Reverend William Dunn with the AACT Spotlight Award on Sunday, April 30, at the end of a performance of *In the Garden of the Selfish Giant*, a fundraiser for the Cancer Society Relay for Life. Cast member Brianna Urban presented the award.

Reverend William Dunn, Presiding Vicar over St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Beaumont, California, became involved with ART in 2010. When Rev. Dunn arrived at St. Stephen's Church, he became aware that the lovely stage in the church fellowship hall was not being used. Congregation member Michael Owen informed the Vicar that A Repertory Theatre had to close its doors, and was in need of performance space. Rev. Dunn was thankful that St. Stephen's Episcopal Church could provide a place to rehearse and perform! Since that time, he has served the theatre building sets and helping wherever he is needed!

When the Reverend was presented the Spotlight Award he expressed, "I have been involved with theatre in some capacity all of my life as my mother and my late sister were accomplished actors, and my family helped build one of the finest community theatres on the Gulf Coast. I am not an actor, but a patron, and someone who deeply appreciates the value of theatre. I am especially pleased that ART is encouraging young people to participate in theatre. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is proud of its partnership with A Repertory Theatre and the theatre's continuing commitment to support area charities, such as the Cancer Society Relay for Life."

In keeping with ART's mission, all productions support charitable causes including college scholarships, the Make A Wish Foundation, local food banks and housing programs, and the Seeing Eye Dog program. ♦



Reverend William Dunn with (l-r) Jennaleigh Wheatley, Eliana Romero, Gloria McCafferty, Meghan Berris, and Brianna Urban



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Photo by Diane Sobolewski

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Is Anybody There? Does Anybody Care?

by Twink Lynch

A question put to me recently was “just where does a Nominating Committee find Board Members skilled in management, governance, and fundraising, who are also passionate about the theatre’s mission — especially in a small city or town?”

It’s been my experience that Board Members of younger community theatres and those that are functioning at Level 3 or below are primarily production people: actors, directors, set designers, costumers, music and dance-related people, who want to do shows and are willing to serve on the Board in order to keep the organization alive, so that productions can be mounted and paid for. These “doers-of-theatre” are often not particularly knowledgeable about nor skilled in management tasks and responsibilities, let alone policy development, fundraising and institutional advancement. But they are passionate about the need for a theatre in their town, particularly *their* theatre, and they will do anything to keep it going.

So where are these paragon Board Members we need?

Their passion is inspiring, but at some point in the life of their theatre the need for greater resources — people, facilities, money — may be beyond the “doers” capacity to deliver. Some groups will fail to diagnose the problem correctly. Their groups will struggle on, never really growing and some ultimately failing. Other groups will recognize the need but not know how to solve it. Sometimes they will be stuck “inside the envelope,” thinking they must always find Board Members from within the theatre community.

Not so, in my opinion. Good Board Members can be found many places, and I believe we cripple our organizations unnecessarily by insisting they be chosen only from the “family.” If good candidates who have the skills we need are not current members of the theatre, they can join. Then it is the job of the “true believers” among us to nurture them with orientation and training and good experiences, so that they become

passionately committed advocates of our programs. I realize this is an ideal and may not work in every single case, but I have personally seen it happen. I definitely feel it’s worth it to try.

So where are these paragon Board Members we need? Let’s be strategic rather than ad hoc. First, we should review/develop our theatre’s mission statement and long range plan (does this sound familiar?). Then we should list all the skills, training, and experience that will be needed on the Board to implement the long-range plan and immediate objectives. Next, we should analyze the current Board to see what skills are available for the next 1 to 3 years. Then we identify the gaps. What’s missing? Do we need someone with skills in marketing, PR, accounting, nonprofit law, strategic planning? Do we have a couple of Board Members who can help with future Board development (a primary Board responsibility)? Do we have people to spearhead (not “do all”) the fundraising? How diverse are we? Do we have anyone skilled in running effective meetings, trained in group dynamics and Robert’s Rules? Do we have the *leaders* we need?

Next, we prioritize. Which jobs/skills will make the biggest difference right now on the Board? Then we list all the places people with those needed skills can be found: Corporations? Small businesses? School systems? Real estate agencies? Bank trust departments? Universities/colleges (including technical colleges)? CPA firms? Civic clubs? Neighborhood associations? Unions? Insurance agencies? Churches? Political groups? Other nonprofit Boards like United Way, YMCA/YWCAs?

At this point, for the first time, we list all the real people we can think of in a category of skill-needs — all the lawyers, bankers, teachers, accountants. We need to be methodical. We need to find out which of them can make things happen in collaboration with others, and get those people on our radar screens. Have any of them served on other

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Boards, especially in a leadership position? Remember, a good President is often hard to find, so if we identify a potential President through this process, we need to pay particular attention.

Determine, also, if any of these prospective Board Members already have a connection to the theatre (at this point, it should not automatically disqualify them if they don't). Are they volunteers, season members/ticket holders, donors, past members, parents or grandparents of children in our classes, employees of companies which underwrite our productions, neighbors, vendors?

Take a hard look at personal characteristics, too. Are any of these prospective Board Members especially effective working in groups, respectful of others' ideas and opinions? Can they see the big picture? Are they willing to learn new skills, including how to fundraise? Are they dependable?

Based on all the above information, we need to choose our top candidates and strategize the best person to visit each one. If the person is outside the "family," who knows her well enough to tell the theatre's story in a compelling way? If there is no easy connection, remember the theory that we're all only "six degrees of separation" from reaching anyone in the world. List all the places where the potential recruit spends time. Whom do we know in those circles? A fraternity brother/sorority sister? A fellow church member? A teacher at their child's school? Once a contact is selected, set up a face-to-face interview to see what interest might exist and to see if our information about the person's skills is accurate. This is not the time to ask the person to serve. Remember, Board Members have to be cultivated, just like donors. This is the time to see what her interests are, if she might want to serve, and when she might be available. Sometimes theatres have had to wait for several years, but the time investment is worth it to get the right person. Provide the person with a packet of information and determine when a follow-up contact will be made.

Now, put your potential candidate on your mailing list and keep him in the loop. If something noteworthy happens to a potential recruit or his company/family, write a brief note of congratulations (or sympathy). If targeted recruits are not yet members, bring them to a show and encourage them to affiliate with your theatre.

When the time is right, ask the appropriate potential candidate to serve. If he says yes, great! If no, try to find out why, but respect the decision. The last thing we need on our Boards is someone who was "talked into it." If your targeted recruits are really among the best candidates, tell them you'll follow up next year (or when the next vacancy occurs) — then do it! It can take 3 to 5 years to build the Board we need, so we need to include this goal in our long-range plan.

A very wise person has said "The enemy of Great is Good." If we want a great Board, we need to think "outside the box." We need to be assertive in seeking candidates. When we get them, we need to educate and nurture them and help them grow along with our organizations. This process will build friends for the theatre and turn some of the candidates into "true believers." It is the most awesome task of the Board, because, when done well, this intentional recruitment of Board Members assures the future of our theatres. What could be more important than that? ♦

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight, page 87

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.

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