

spotlight

A theatrical performance scene. In the center, a man in a white shirt and a woman in a grey top and white skirt are facing each other, holding hands. The man is kneeling on a large white cloth that is spread out on the floor. In the background, two other performers are suspended on swings, one on the left and one on the right. The scene is lit with dramatic stage lighting against a dark background.

January/February 2018 \$3.00

american association of community theatre

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2018**

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Carole Ries
AACT President
2017 - 2019

WHY I LOVE THEATRE...

When I was 16 years old I walked into my first audition. A small classroom in the back hall of the high school in Watertown, South Dakota. A one-act play, I'm a Fool by Sherwood Anderson. I was scared but for some reason I found the courage to try... to try-out. Maybe because my brother, Roger, had done it before me. Probably. I was a follower, not a leader. But apparently, deep inside I had a desire to be a leader. No one had ever asked me to run for class officer or anything like that, and I didn't know I could. I kept to myself and certainly wasn't popular. I had no idea the decision to try-out would be one of the most important decisions I ever made, one that was to change my life forever.

A few years later when it was time to go to college, I thought, "I want to change. I'm an actor. Not many people there will know I'm shy." So I decided to fake it. I used my theatre skills to make everyone think I was outgoing and perhaps even friendly. Eventually I found my feet as a leader and was elected to the student board of control when I was a senior.

For a long time, I thought I was an exception. I became involved in community theatre, but I didn't know many peoples' stories. I thought they did theatre for the usual reasons: a group to party with, an extended family, to meet new friends, to fulfill their need for artistic expression. When I became the Executive Director at the Fort Lauderdale Children's Theatre, I began to notice how the students there were affected by their theatre classes and roles. I found theatre helped children who were shy like me. But also it helped those who

had ADHD or other challenges learn to focus. It helped a little girl with autism succeed for the first time in a classroom situation, and the final class performance gave her so much joy, she exclaimed, "This is the best night of my life." It helped a deaf child interact with hearing children. It helped others improve their reading skills. I watched as it helped children to bridge cultural differences. And most of the children and youth said, "I never found any place I belonged until I found the theatre."

Still I believed it was only children that theatre helped. When I came back to community theatre at the Topeka Civic Theatre & Academy, my eyes were truly opened. I began to seek out and hear peoples' stories. One young man told me, "This theatre saved my life." And then he told me how. What a compelling story he had to tell. An older woman told me how she had become a recluse after her husband died until someone convinced her to volunteer at the theatre, after all she was good at sewing. She ended up doing every volunteer job at the theatre, except sewing, specializing in finding and making props.

So, don't underestimate the impact your community theatre has on you, your friends, and your community. We are so much more than a "frill." We improve lives and communities.

Carole

"He's funny!"

Michael G Wilmot
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comedy playwright

www.wilmotscripts.com

"Audiences love the show, ticket sales are fantastic!" Bell Tower Theatre, Iowa

"One of the sweetest and funniest scripts we've read in years!" Rainbows Comedy Playhouse, Pennsylvania

"What a brilliant script!" Script2Stage2Screen, California

Photo: 7-10 Split, Port Stanley Festival Theatre

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Take advantage of member discounts on a wide range of theatre-related services

On the Cover

Martyna Migacz and Mateusz Szaforz with Klaudia Mackowiak, Ewa Andrejszyn (background) in *The Stone of Patience* by Atiq Rahimi, produced by Zapadnia Theatre in Poland, directed by Agnieszka Wloch will be presented at aactWorldFest 2018 in Venice, Florida in June Photo by Jan Brylak

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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World Premiere
Meadow Brook Theatre
Rochester, Michigan September 2017

Photos: S. Carter



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- V Nancy Eppert
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- 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

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.
Hotel
Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk
105 South St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, TX 78205
Room Rate: \$140 plus tax, for single or double occupancy
Deadline for AACT room rate is January 21, 2018
Call 1-800-325-0720 or go to druryhotels.com, use group number: 2314010
Hotel amenities, parking, airline discounts, and details at aact.org/calendar

Arts Advocacy Day: The National Arts Action Summit

March 12-13, 2018
Washington D.C.
americansforthearts.org
AACT is a National Partner

World Theatre Day

March 27, 2018
aact.org/world-theatre-day

Corrections

To the November/December 2017 *Spotlight*:
In the AACT Board listing Allen Ebert was misspelled.
In "AACT Member 2017 Milestone Anniversaries" the location of Bay City Players was incorrectly listed. Bay City Players is located in Bay City, Michigan.

AACT Staff

Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director
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

Spotlight is published bimonthly by the American Association of Community Theatre for its members and is annually distributed to an expanded list of known community theatre organizations and interested individuals.

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Quiana Clark-Roland, David Cockerell, Laurie Colton,
Jim Covault, Julie Crawford, Winston Daniels,
Darlene DeLorenzo, Destination Gettysburg,
Donna Fisher, Linda M. Lee, Geoff Leonard-Robinson,
Beverly Lord, Twink Lynch, Karen Matheny, Linda Miller,
Dee Dee O'Conner, Jill Patchin, Stephen Peithman,
Carole Reis, Ken Roberts, Jim Walker,
Agnieszka Wloch, Hank Zappala, 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,
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610-362-8832 Fax
ken.roberts@usi.com

aactWorldFest 2018, "Festival in Paradise"

June 18 – 23, 2018

Venice Theatre, Venice Florida

aact.org/worldfest



Register NOW to enjoy theatre from around the globe at aact-WorldFest 2018! Venice Theatre, located on the beautiful Gulf Coast of Florida, is once again hosting this spectacular event that runs June 18 through June 23, 2018. The theatre's Executive/Artistic Director Murray Chase encourages you to visit aact.org/worldfest where you can find information about the event as well as register online in just a few clicks



Georgia's Experimental Theatre Everywhere will present MacBeth

The performances will be spectacular! Theatre troupes scheduled to perform:

Armenia *Thumbelina*
Yerevan State Puppet Theatre

Chile *Pichanga*
Corredor Latinoamericano de Teatro

Georgia *MacBeth*
Experimental Theatre Everywhere

Germany *Request Stop*
The Wild Bunch, Berlin

Israel *One of a Kind*
The Yoram Loewenstein Performing Arts Studio, Tel Aviv

Israel *Vital Signs*
Galgal Group

Italy *Michelangelo da Caravaggio*
Maner Manush

Nepal *Bakash*
The Khwapkimi Art Institution Nepal

Poland *The Stone of Patience*
Zapadnia Theatre

Russia *Chook & Gek*
Melting Point, Saint-Petersburg

Russia *Comedy of Love*
The Theatre of Plastique and Pantomime Grotesque, Surgut

Ukraine *George Orwell's 1984*
Splash Drama

United Kingdom *Bump!*
The Scrambled Egg Theatre Company

United States of America *The Addams Family, Act 1*
Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Tacoma, Washington

United States of America *Spirit & Sworded Treks*
Theatre Esprit Asia, Aurora, Colorado

Vietnam *The Golden Cockerel*
The Le Ngoc Theater Troupe

Zimbabwe *Who Is a Child?*
Chipawo Trust's Troupe "Girl Power"



Pichanga from Chile's Corredor Latinoamericano de Teatro

Also pending are productions from Australia and China. Productions listed are scheduled at time of publication; all performances are subject to change. Follow the festival at aact.org/worldfest, VeniceStage.com/international, and [Facebook.com/AACTWorldFest](https://www.facebook.com/AACTWorldFest).

In addition to enjoying dynamic performances from these groups, festivalgoers can expect a wide selection of interactive workshops, much socializing, and the chance to enjoy all that "the sunshine state" has to offer.

Lori Chase, Coordinator for aactWorldFest 2018, is still recruiting event sponsors, workshop leaders, volunteers, and vendors. Please contact her if you would like to participate at lorichase@venicetheatre.net.

You'll have the time of your life at this Festival in Paradise! Go to aact.org/worldfest to learn more and register today. ♦



Chiparwo Trust's Troupe "Girl Power" from Zimbabwe in Who Is a Child?



The Scrambled Egg Theatre Company from the United Kingdom will bring Bump

Early Bird Pricing

(Register before Feb. 1, 2018 and save \$25 off the full festival rate of \$363)

- \$225 for AACT members
- \$338 for non-members

Student pricing for full festival (Save \$100 off the full price anytime!)

- \$180 for student AACT members
- \$263 for student non-members

MainStage Only Pricing

- \$230 for AACT members
- \$313 for non-members

Student Pricing for MainStage only

- \$155 for student AACT member
- \$238 for student non-member

Special hotel rates are also available.

Please check aact.org/worldfest for details.

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Community Theatre Management Conference 2018

June 17 - 19, 2018, prior to aactWorldFest 2018

Register now for the 2018 Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC)! Modeled after the renowned National Full-Time Community Theatre Directors Conference (often called the "Madison Conference"), this conference is for anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre.

This educational gathering brings together administrators from all levels of theatre ranging from the volunteer who "runs things around here," the "working" board member directly involved in management of an all-volunteer theatre, to the "just starting" part-time administrator, to the full-time professional manager. All are welcomed. 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.



Ron Ziegler

The Community Theatre Management Conference will be held Sunday, June 17 – Tuesday, June 19 just prior to aactWorldFest 2018 at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida.

The conference will be facilitated by Educator and Director Ron Ziegler. Ron was the first Artistic/Managing Director for the Des Moines (IA) Playhouse's Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. He founded and managed the Iowa Fringe Festival and was the first Executive

Director for Orlando (FL) Repertory Theatre. He has directed productions for Venice (FL) Theatre, Ocala (FL) Civic Theatre, and for Iowa's Des Moines Playhouse. He is a past president of the American Association of Community Theatre, was named an AACT Fellow, and has served previously as facilitator for the National Artistic Directors Conference.

The Community Theatre Management Conference will send you home with ideas that will pay for your trip, a renewed enthusiasm for your theatre management role, and a nationwide network of colleagues! And because the CTMC will be held immediately preceding aactWorldFest in Venice, you can attend two events in one trip! CTMC attendees also receive a \$50 discount on their aactWorldFest registration. ♦

AACTEd Hours: AACT will provide you with documentation of your participation in quality educational activities through AACT. Full participation in CTMC earns 20 AACTEd Hours.

REGISTER NOW at aact.org/management-conference.

Registration:

AACT Member

by June 1 - \$260

after June 1 - \$290

Non-member

by June 1 - \$335

after June 1 - \$365



30

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TEAM Conference 2018

August 17-19, 2018, in Salt Lake City, Utah
Hosted by Hale Centre Theatre

AACT is again offering an expanded educational conference with four tracks, focusing on

Technical Theatre Skills

Educational Programming Directors

Artistic Direction Vision

Marketing/Development Skills

Come as an individual or a team: Select the track that best suits your 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.

Technical Theatre Skills Track

The Technical Theatre Skills track is for those who work behind the scenes. 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.*

Educational Programming Directors Track

Boost your theatre's education program, exchange ideas and experiences, and learn skills to better manage your programs. This 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 Programming Directors track is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for their theatre's education program.*

Artistic Direction 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. *Artistic Direction Vision track is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for the overall artistic direction of their theatre.*

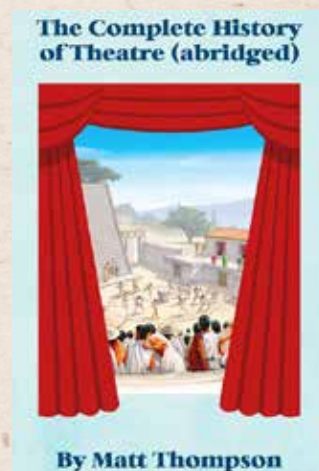
Marketing/Development Skills Track

Discover strategies and tactics to increase your fundraising and marketing abilities, and learn ways to create loyalty to your organization and promote its place in your community. This 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.* ♦

AACTEd Hours: AACT will provide you with documentation of your participation in quality educational activities through AACT.

Registration, Conference Schedule, and Hotel Information will be posted at aact.org/team-conference soon.
For general information contact the AACT Office: 817-732-3177, or by email at info@aact.org.

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Two AACT NewPlayFest 2018 World Premieres in January

Two AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere productions are opening in January 2018.

The world premiere of *TBD (To Be Determined)* by Paul Elliott opens at Lincoln Community Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska on January 19. The production will run through January 28. Tickets can be reserved at lincolnplayhouse.com.

TBD (To Be Determined) is a suspenseful play with gripping twists that will leave you breathless. When two isolated sisters take in a troubled teenager, their world is completely upended. Secrets are revealed, veneers stripped away, and the three must band together when evil arrives on the doorstep.

Eternity by Michael Cochran opens at Stage III Community Theatre in Casper, Wyoming January 26. The production runs through February 11. Tickets can be reserved at stageiiiitheatre.org.

Eternity tells the story of Abe who decides to move a client appointment in favor of getting an ice cream sandwich. The problem is Abe is the angel of death and his “appointments”

are to greet the newly deceased and take them to the next stop. Things spiral out of control when Abe’s repeated attempts to “bump off” his delayed appointment fail and he keeps collecting additional “clients” as he makes a desperate plan to set things right. Abe and a collection of the living and the dead all end up in a Vegas Wedding Chapel where a surprise visit from the Boss helps Abe rediscover what the real meaning of life and death are all about.

The 2018 AACT NewPlayFest calendar also includes

Mynx and Savage by Rebecca Gorman O’Neill
The Vortex Theatre, Albuquerque, New Mexico
April 27 - May 13, 2018
vortexabq.org

Treehouse by Joe Musso
Cottage Theatre, Cottage Grove, Oregon
August 10 - 26, 2018
cottage theatre.org



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Sweet by Denise Hinson
County Seat Theater Company, Cloquet, Minnesota
September 28 - October 7, 2018
countyseattheater.com

The 2018 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of *Finishing School* by Elaine Liner at Elkhart Civic Theatre September 8 – 17, 2017.

Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest winning plays in anthologies and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. Visit aact.org/dpc for direct links to Dramatic Publishing anthologies and plays and to learn more about discounts and special offers for AACT members.

AACT NewPlayFest 2018 is made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.



Submit a Script for AACT NewPlayFest 2020

Script submission dates for AACT NewPlayFest 2020 will be from March 1 through April 30, 2018. Details for script submission are available at aact.org/newplayfest-call-scripts. Non-musical, full-length plays only. Scripts must be unpublished and must not have received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre's production is to be a world premiere.) Dramatic Publishing Company will publish winning plays in an anthology. Only one script per playwright accepted. No fees required for AACT member playwrights, \$10 script processing fee for nonmembers. For more information and script formatting guidelines, visit aact.org/newplayfest.

Be a Reviewer for AACT NewPlayFest 2020

Individuals are asked to volunteer to read and score the scripts. Reviewers evaluate scripts in several rounds of reviews. Join this exciting AACT festival by being a Reviewer. Apply now; applications will be accepted throughout the reviewing process. Application form and more information at aact.org/aact-newplayfest-reviewer-application. ♦

AACTFest 2019 Coming to Gettysburg

June 16 – 22, 2019

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

aact.org/19

AACTFest 2019 National Festival in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania will be the culmination of a two-year cycle of festivals across the country—with 12 community theatre productions, a theatre management conference, a youth leadership conference and youth festival, educational workshops, top vendor displays, the design competition, a monologue competition, social events, sightseeing, and networking opportunities, all ending with a festival awards presentation.

Gettysburg College's gloriously renovated 800 seat Majestic Theater is literally right behind the Gettysburg Hotel (est. 1797) on historic Lincoln Square. Some suites of Gettysburg Hotel are actually on the theatre building side and some face Lincoln Square.

With so much to do in this town, you will definitely want to be here at least the entire week!

A Majestic History

On November 14, 1925, the doors of the Majestic Theater opened for the first time, welcoming audiences to the largest vaudeville and silent movie theater in south-central Pennsylvania. Built by Henry Scharf



Destination Gettysburg

The Gettysburg Hotel, established 1797, with the Majestic Theater just behind to the left

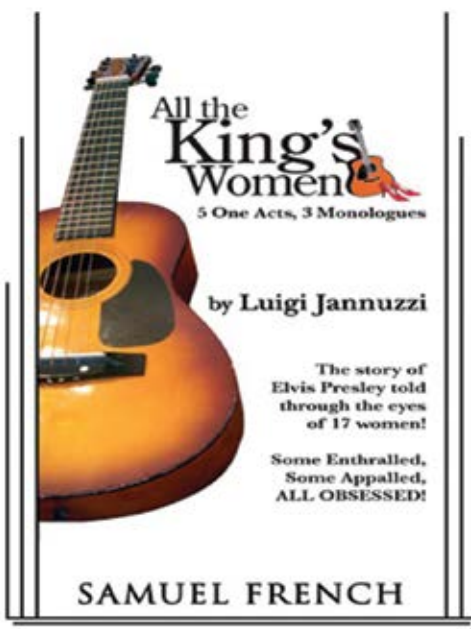
as an annex to the historic Gettysburg Hotel, the theater seated 1,200 patrons and proudly served as the cultural crossroads of commerce, college, and community.

In the 1950's, the Majestic Theater stepped onto the world stage when President Dwight D. Eisenhower and First Lady Mamie Eisenhower regularly attended performances, often in the company of world leaders. The theater's ballroom/gymnasium, always a popular spot for young people, was often used by the White House press corps for news conferences whenever President Eisenhower was in residence at his Gettysburg farm.

In November 2005, the Majestic, beautifully restored to its original grandeur, once again welcomed audiences with an extraordinary showcase of the performing arts and cinema.

Join us at the Majestic, the grandest small-town theater in America! ♦

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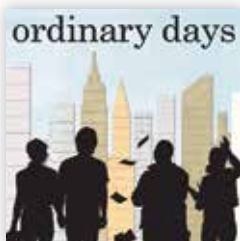
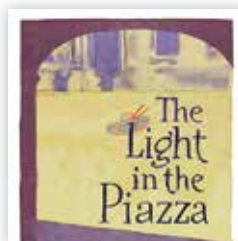
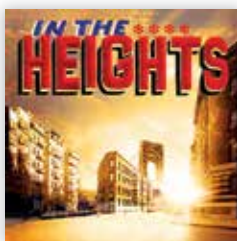
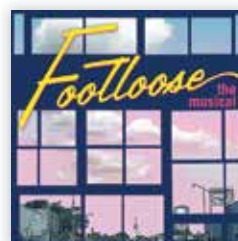
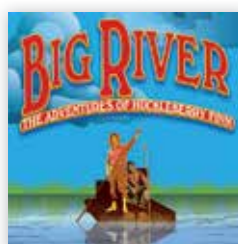
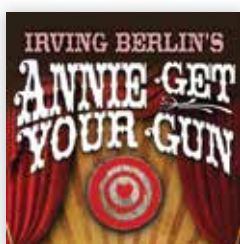
Getty Images

President Dwight D. Eisenhower and First Lady Mamie Eisenhower regularly attended performances at the Majestic Theater in the 1950's.



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New AACT National Award

AACT announces a new AACT National Award, the AACT Shining Star Award.

This award will recognize an individual AACT Member who has made a significant impact to the advancement of AACT and its mission through their leadership and service on a national level.

This new award, open to all ages and years of service, will compliment AACT's growing outreach to younger participants at the national level and will provide a way of encouraging and recognizing the service of those who may not yet qualify for any of the existing awards for more long-term contributions.

The AACT National Awards are selected from nominations made by members of the community theatre community.

Nominations for all AACT National Awards are due **January 20, 2018**.

Criteria for AACT National Awards and link to Online Nomination Form at aact.org/national-awards.

AACT bestows ten major types of recognition, each focused on a different area of service, to honor those who have contributed significantly to community theatre nationwide.

- Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award
- David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award
- Diamond Crown Organization Award
- Distinguished Merit Award
- Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award
- Mort Clark International Achievement Award
- Shining Star Award
- Special Recognition Award
- Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award
- Corporate Award

The AACT Awards Committee is encouraging community theatres to consider nominating individuals of all ages for existing awards whose criteria are based on merit rather than age or length of service. ♦



Being a member of AACT has been invaluable to me. Their conferences are top-notch with fabulous workshops and networking opportunities.

Dee Dee O'Conner
Bellingham, Washington

"It turns a cast into a family. Filled with love and magic that touches everyone involved."

*Lorelei Chapman, Asst. Director
Liberty Showcase Theatre*

"The Santa Diaries is a funny, touching, popped-culture spin on an old roasting chestnut of a tale."

Brent Lewis, Author



A contemporary romantic comedy about a self-absorbed Hollywood star who's forced to return to his small hometown and direct the community holiday play where he rediscovers the joy of Christmas, a lost love, and learns to embrace his inner Santa.

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by Laura Ambler and Mala Burt

Watch the trailer!

www.amblerburt.com/the-santa-diaries
Contact us at santadiariesplay@gmail.com

How Google AdWords Can Help Your Theatre Succeed

By Quiana Clark-Roland

Although not new to the scene, it is still one of the most under-utilized free advertising tools for nonprofit theatres and arts organizations. Google donates \$10,000 USD of in-kind advertising every month from AdWords to qualifying organizations. That is \$10,000 a month in free advertising folks! Who wouldn't want that, right? However, with so little time and so much to do, community theatres as well as other smaller nonprofit institutions don't feel like they have the time, expertise, or energy to dedicate to improving their online presence.

I would argue that you do, and in this day and age you cannot afford not to. Like a garden, it does take some time to plant and cultivate the seeds, but once you have an idea of what it takes to make it grow, you will find the end result much more rewarding and easier to manage. You will also find that there are people willing to share their expertise and knowledge to help you succeed.

Google Ad Grants gives up to \$10,000 per month to qualifying nonprofits to use for AdWords advertising.

With a little time and investment you can...

- Increase marketing and awareness
- Advertise and expand audition reach and volunteer recruitment
- Improve visibility and fundraising efforts
- Promote events and shows

Getting Started

So let's start with Google AdWords. What are they? What do they do? AdWords is an online advertising service developed by Google where advertisers pay to display brief advertising copy, product listings, and video content within the Google ad network to web users. Ad results may come in the form of Display Ads, Video Ads, Search Ads, and App Ads.

Google Ad Grants gives up to \$10,000 per month to qualifying nonprofits to use for AdWords advertising. To qualify, a nonprofit must first:

- Begin by applying to Google for Nonprofits -<https://www.google.com/grants/>
- Hold valid charity status
- Acknowledge and agree to Google's required certifications regarding nondiscrimination and donation receipt and use
- Have a live website with substantial content

By putting a little more effort into your AdWords and how they appear during searches, you will be able to target the right audience faster and optimize your online presence, audience reach, and fundraising efforts.

Setting Up AdWords

Setting up your adwords can be a lengthy process depending on how in depth you want to be. But for those new to the program, Google has AdWords Express, an online tutorial and set-up wizard will walk you through the process of determining and selecting your ad goals, creating your ads, and setting ad budgets.

Rules of Thumb

When crafting your Ad copy there are a few rules of thumb to consider...



Wayne State University Theatre and Dance, Detroit, MI
Photo credit: Alesyn McCall

By Claudia Haas
Based on the African fable of Anansi

Anansi, the Clever Spider

"This play was fantastic-- funny, engaging, fast-moving."

"Intelligent, fun theatre for young people."

"...A delightful children's show, warmly embraced by the young audience (and their older relatives and friends)."

- Audience Members



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Selecting keywords - Use long-tail keywords and phrases for web searches.

Don't waste time on common and generic keywords – such as "theatre" or "play." The result will most likely have you in competition with other performing theatres and local movie theatres. Instead, you want to minimize the amount of competition for your organization or event by being specific. For example: comedy theatre in Fort Worth, musical theatre near me, Christmas play tickets, Children's theatre near me, cheap theatre tickets. And don't forget to include alternate and misspellings in your keyword searches.

You can also try pairing it with an event, play title, or specific theme within your upcoming show. It will take some trial and error to discover what keywords are most effective at connecting your messaging with your audience, but when one sticks you will see a positive correlation. To come up with keywords, get input from your staff, volunteers, or board to build a list surrounding your events.

Make sure your navigation is clear and that the landing page allows the user to do what they came for in under 15 seconds.

Make sure there is a call to action! - Make sure you are directing the user to perform a specific action when they visit the website. For example: Book your tickets, Sign-up to volunteer, Subscribe to our Newsletter.

Quality landing page – Not only should the page be aesthetically appealing, but your landing page should directly tie back to your "Call for Action." Landing pages should clearly be 'about' the search query which led to the search ad. Google monitors Adwords to make sure that there is no false advertising involved.

Navigation – Location, location, location! There is nothing worse than going to a webpage to do something and not having a direct path to do it. Make sure your navigation is clear and that the landing page allows the user to do what they came for in under 15 seconds. According to CEO Tony Haile of Chartbeat.com, an online analytics company, 15 seconds is all we have to capture our audience's attention online.

Use multiple ads - Diversify your reach by diversifying the amount of ads and keywords you create. To test ad reach, create multiple ads for the same event to see which one has the most click-throughs. This will inform you of which keywords and call to actions resonate with your audience. Also try building an ad for each event or play you are producing that year.

For more tips and guides, visit adwords.google.com/home/resources/ or do a quick google search. There are a plethora of blogs and tutorials on the web to help you.

continued on next page ►

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Getting Help with your AdWords

As noted before, AdWords does take some time to learn and requires some regular maintenance and updating to see results. You can recruit a volunteer or staff to do it. There are a lot of online tutorials and guides on how to get started. The beauty of this process is that something is better than nothing. Unlike a dead Facebook or Twitter page, all the work is done behind the scenes so your audience is none the wiser. You can decide the frequency of your AdWords and how much time you are able to dedicate to it. Once you get the hang of it, you can build your way up from there.

Sign-up for a Free AdWords Performance Grader. Systems like wordstream.com will monitor your AdWords and provide you with a detailed report on how your AdWords are performing.

Find a Google certified professional through Google Partners. Many will donate or provide a discounted rate to nonprofits.

Unfortunately, community theatres are sometimes the last to integrate new technology due to time constraints, budgets, and lack of expertise. However, this is a tool that is accessible to all, free for nonprofits, and could enhance your current marketing efforts. To begin, try tying it into the time spent on social media marketing. Whether you dedicate one hour a week or more, it is a free tool that could have a positive impact on how new audiences find you. ♦

Plan Now to Participate in World Theatre Day 2018



World Theatre Day was created in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI). An international non-governmental organization for the performing arts, ITI was founded in 1948 by UNESCO and the international theatre community. World Theatre Day is celebrated annually on the **March 27**. Various national and international theatre events are organized to mark the occasion, but many events are local with the purpose of drawing attention to theatre and international harmony.

Find information on how you can participate in the celebration of World Theatre Day at world-theatre-day.org/

Each year, a World Theatre Day International Message is circulated through which, at the invitation of International Theatre Institute (ITI), a figure of world stature shares his or her reflections on the theme of Theatre and a Culture of Peace. The first World Theatre Day International Message was written by Jean Cocteau (France) in 1962. You can read messages from previous years at world-theatre-day.org/ ♦



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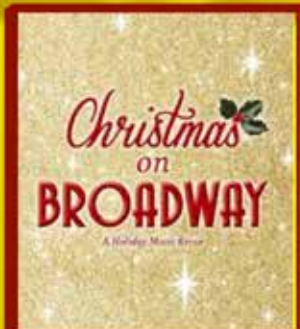
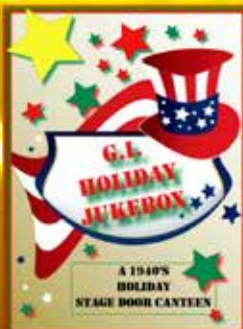
That data includes purchase histories for tickets, **products** and **eGift cards** for use with **integrated marketing** to advertise upcoming events.

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In Memory of Betty Wills

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Thanks to the AACT Board and other AACT volunteers

who pay their own travel expenses to attend meetings, and to those theatres that help with their travel expenses

Thanks to all our contributors!

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Your support of AACT benefits theatres all over the country.

Please consider making a donation online at aact.org or send your contribution to AACT
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Fort Worth, TX 76107

Make A Legacy Gift

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.

To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit aact.org/legacy

or contact the AACT office at info@aact.org

AACTEd Hours - The Time Has Come

By Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Member Engagement Director

Several years ago, a group of AACT volunteer leaders came together to develop a system for recognizing the time that members invested in honing their skills and increasing their knowledge through participation in AACT educational opportunities. The main purpose was to acknowledge AACT members for demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning.

The initial fruit of their labors was a proposal, later approved by AACT's Board of Directors, which awarded AACTEd credits for attendance and participation in educational conferences and workshops. At the same time, the AACT office began recording and tracking the accumulation of those credits for AACT members.

A few years later, the system of credits transitioned to a more clearly understood system of awarding hours—one AACTEd Hour credit for each hour of instruction/presentation/discussion during educational activities. At that time, previously earned credits were converted to hours in the AACT database. AACTEd Hours are awarded for all educational opportunities offered by AACT (currently including TEAM Conference, Community Theatre Management Conference, Full-Time Community Theatre Directors Conference, Adjudication Workshop, AACTFest workshops, etc.).

While educational hours were being awarded and recorded, no tangible recognitions of cumulative hours attained were being provided to members. With the joint efforts of founders of the program, Education Committee leaders, and AACT staff, that oversight is now being addressed in the following ways:

1. AACT member accumulated AACTEd Hours have now been uploaded to individual profiles on the AACT website under "Participation"
2. Certificates acknowledging AACTEd Hour accumulations sent to members achieving accumulated hours at 25 hour increments (25, 50, 75, and 100)
3. A listing of all AACT members with accumulated hours at each level published in an issue of Spotlight each calendar year (see page 25)
4. A letter of recognition/congratulations sent to the Board of Directors at the home theatre of each member who accumulates 100 AACTEd Hours

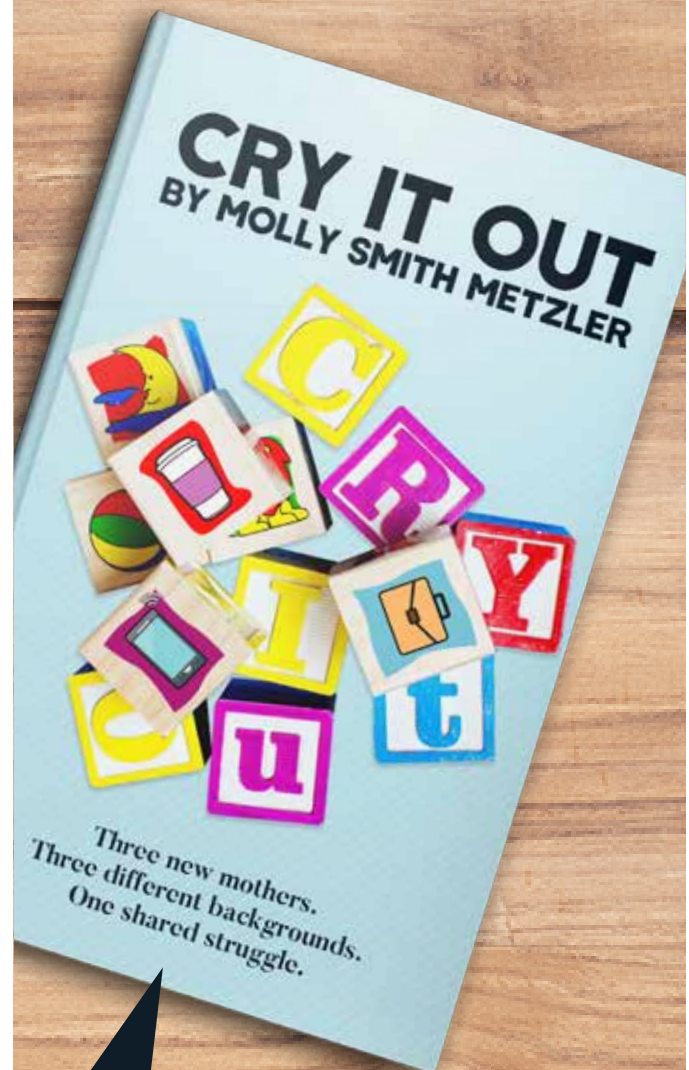
The program currently does not provide "certification" or include CEUs (Continuing Education Units) from an institution of higher learning. The challenges, impacts, additional costs, and benefits of pursuing such an arrangement continue to be explored for future consideration. So, some may ask, "What's the point? Isn't this just a pat on the back?" The short answer is, "Yes." And the follow up question might be, "So?" There are a number of benefits (both current and potential) to the program as currently designed:

- a. Some employers with a requirement for their employees to complete some type of lifelong learning or career enhancement training may accept an official recognition of AACTEd Hours completed from the national office of AACT as fulfillment of their particular requirements.
- b. Individuals not only gain insight, knowledge, camaraderie, and increased skills through participation in educational

continued on next page ►

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Photo: Carol Rossegg

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programs; but also have the gratification of knowing that the national organization of which they're a member notices, recognizes, and congratulates them for their time and effort. (While this might be viewed as "just a pat on the back," let's not forget that the majority of our actors, tech crews, and other volunteers do what they do primarily for the personal satisfaction, applause, and other kudos they receive. Monetary gain is not the currency that defines their self-worth.)

- c. Various potential funding sources may view the continuing education work of a theatre's staff and volunteers as an indication that the organization would be a sound investment of their grant or scholarship support. Including documented AACTEd Hours awarded in grant applications can be financially beneficial to a theatre.
- d. Recognition from a national organization of their continuing educational efforts can increase a theatre employee's perceived value by senior staff and/or Boards of Directors (potentially also having monetary gains attached).

The time has come for AACTEd Hours to step out of the shadows and shine a light on AACT members, recognizing you for your commitment to learning all that you can, sharing all the knowledge and experience you have, and playing your role in your local theatre to the best of your ability. So, check out your profile on the AACT website, the listing of achievers included in this issue of Spotlight, and if you haven't received it already, be watching for your certificate of achievement for 25 or more AACTEd Hours already earned. If you've not yet started your own personal AACTEd Hours portfolio, plan to join one or more of the educational programs AACT will offer this year and beyond. ♦

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AACTEd Hours Recognized

Congratulations to all who have demonstrated their dedication to lifelong learning and the advancement of knowledge and skills through participation and collaboration in AACT educational conferences and workshops as demonstrated by your cumulative AACTEd Hours earned as of December 31, 2017:

100 hours+

Carr, Chad-Alan
Livingstone, Pamela
Phoenix, Sara

75-99 hours

Britt, Mary H.
Chase, Murray
Cope, Lisa
Driscoll, Daved
Dunn, Jeffrey
Kalanick, A.J.
Kilpatrick, David R.
Logsdon, Vanessa
Maki, Jennifer
Poole, Kal
Tinker, Bruce
Willis, Elizabeth (Betsy)

50-74 hours

Ballard, Jenny
Beukema, Sue
Clark, Amanda
Cochran, Michael
Crow, James
Doveton, Mary
Dray, Deena
Elwell, Joan
Engel, Jacqueline
Fox, Michael D.
Geddie, Kristofer
Geiger, Melissa
Goes, Susan
Jebsen, Tim
Jones, Sal S.
MacDonald, Scot
Martin, Dwight T.
McCullough, Rod J.
Meanor, Kristy
Murphy, Phil
Notter, Penelope
Rake, Jon Douglas
Rambo, John
Ratkowski, Ben
Schmad, Tim
Serface, Chris
Shephard, Eric
Spicer, Michael
Thomsen, Brandon
Ulmer, Jamie
Ursone, Lou
Ussery, Norman
Wilcox, Sharon

25-49 hours

Anderson, Ainsley
Anderson, William (Bill), Jr.
Armstrong, Kay
Armstrong, Paul
Bakody, Rebecca
Barnes, Bruce
Bart, Lenny
Becker, Sandra
Beneke, Helen
Berger, Tom
Bianchi, Michelle
Booth, Tom
Bowling, Karen
Brooks, Kathy
Burchill, Scott
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Caviness, Dr. Susanne
Cherbini, Martha J.
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Crenshaw, Janet
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Haun, Ted

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Loftis, Patty
Lord, Beverley
Lydic, Liz F.
Mayo, Andrew
Meyer, Jon
Miller, Brian
Mitchell, Dr. Garry
Moore, Brad
Morris, Scot
Mullen, Barbara
Nelson, Cat
Nelson, Elizabeth
Nelson, Lynn
Newsome, Eric
Paveglio, Patricia
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Schatz, Susan
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Sibbitts, Terry
Spencer, Terie
Stavrou, Gregory
Sykes, Peggy C.
Syverson, Nikki
Tattershall, Julie
Tiffany, Tracy
Uhlarik-Boller, Marge
Wahamaki, Kirk
Walker, James
Warshauer, Paul
Whipple, Dennis
Wutzke, Michael


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Enter the AACTFest 2019 Festival Cycle

By Jim Walker

10/60/10

10 X 10

That's really all you need to know to get started. Your production is allowed 10 minutes to set up, 60 minutes to perform, and 10 minutes to strike; and basically, everything you use in your production needs to fit in a 10' x 10' area. That's it. So go for it!

Of course, there are lots of clarifying rules in the handbook, and everyone interested in festival participation needs to read the entire *2019 Festival Handbook* (aact.org/festival-handbook), but that's the basics and don't let anything else scare you from festival participation. It's that easy and even more rewarding. There are lots of people in AACT to help you through the process. You can start with your state contact for AACT. Go to aact.org/statecontacts. That's what I did.



Aberdeen Community Theatre

Honk!, 2007, left to right: back row Kandi Sampson, Melanie Hoffman, Kellyanne Kirkland, Brian Schultz, Elias Rostad, Trent Deyo, Mark Anderson. middle row: Isaac Seaton, Joey Wagner, Emily Magera, Kirstyn Polasky. front row kneeling: Irene P. Mickelson, Curt Campbell

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I never thought I'd be here, AACT VP for Festivals. What a rewarding time it has been. Aberdeen Community Theatre (ACT) did its first show in the summer of 1980. In 1981 we participated, the first time we were eligible in the South Dakota theatre festival, with two short one acts, "I'm Herbert" and "On the Footsteps of Doves" from *You know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running*. To my surprise and delight, we were selected to advance to the AACTFest regional festival in Topeka, Kansas. I thought, OMG, how are we going to do this? We could hardly manage to get the 250 miles from Aberdeen to Sioux Falls for our state festival. We had nothing. Well, it turned out to be easier than I thought. The community really got behind its fledgling community theater and we quickly raised the funds to get to Topeka. The production did not advance from there, but what a thrill and boy, did we learn a lot. That was 36 years ago.

Since then, Aberdeen Community Theatre has participated in every biennial festival, 19 festival cycles in all, advancing to regional's many times and nationals twice - with *Honk!* in 2007 and *How to Talk Minnesotan* in 2009. We also represented the United States with *Honk!* at the International festival in Toyama, Japan.

With each festival I have learned more from watching other productions, adjudicator comments, and discussing shows with other festival attendees. Just like, as an actor, I've always learned much more from listening to directors give notes to other actors than those notes directed to me. I've learned just as much, if not more, from productions other than my own at each festival. And where do you get to see 12 shows in a three-day period, AACTFest National Festival, of course!



How to Talk Minnesotan, 2009, left to right: Curt Eisenbeisz, Brian Schultz, Trent Deyo, Susie Ewinger, Kurt Smith, Nicole Christiansen.

It seemed scary at the beginning. How do we raise the funds to participate? I've found patrons are always willing to help a community theater grow and increase their skill set. I've done shows with two actors and with 20 actors. Actually, I've found the larger shows more rewarding and they have helped so many more of my actors learn through the festival process and be better at their craft, which helps with all productions at home. I have always been able to raise the funds to pay for each actor's travel, meals, and lodging at every festival in which we've participated. That has been accomplished by making the case for the educational value of festival participation to our local community and they have supported our

festival participation for 37 years. And you know what, each time it has actually gotten easier to raise the money.

So, don't be afraid, dive in, participate in AACTFest. You will never regret what you learn and the terrific theatre contacts you'll make. Come be a part of the AACT family. ♦

Jim Walker is the Artistic/Managing Director of Aberdeen Community Theatre in Aberdeen, South Dakota. aberneencommunitytheatre.com. He currently serves as AACT's Vice President for Festivals.

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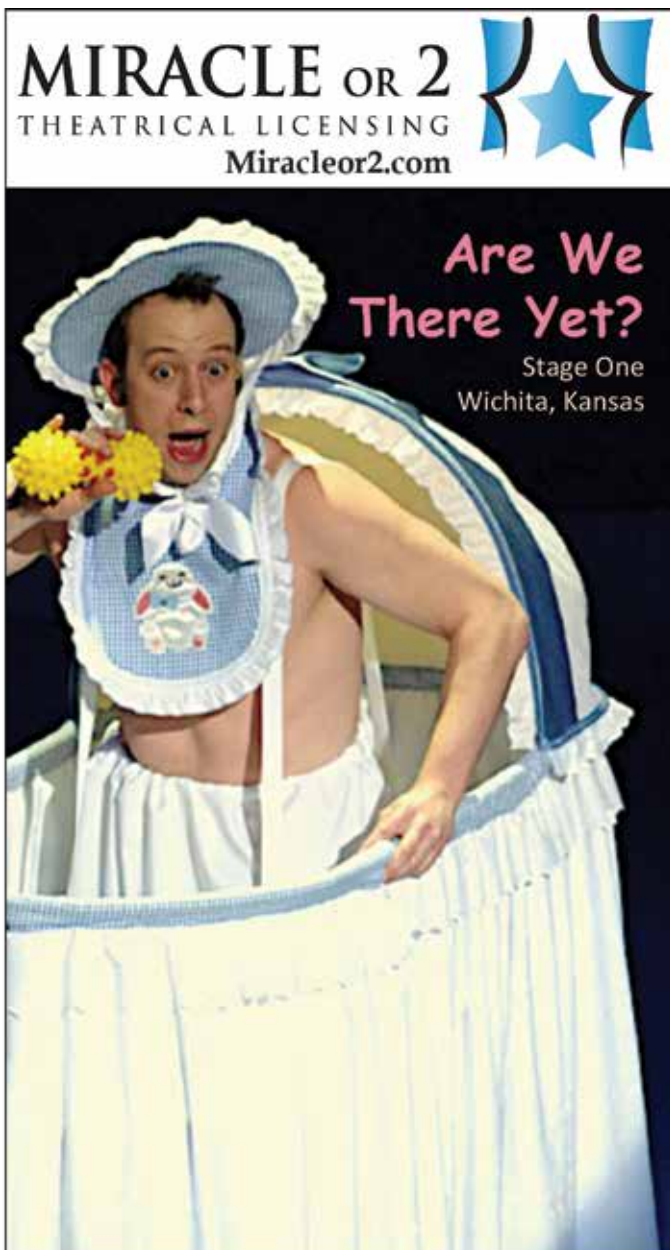
Beverley Lord received the 2017 **Marie Phillips Memorial Award** at the New England Theatre Conference (NETC) Awards Banquet Saturday, October 21 at the Cromwell Radisson in Cromwell, Connecticut.

The Marie Phillips Memorial Award recognizes service to NETC by individuals who demonstrate extraordinary, sustained support for NETC programs and/or goals.

In his presentation of the award, Hank Zappala gave a brief history of Bevie's livelihood, "Beverley Lord majored in theatre in college and during her junior year abroad studied acting at the Ecole De Rene Simon in Paris. Later, her career as a high



Chris and Beth Hart congratulate Bevie Lord, AACT Region 1 Representative, for receiving the Marie Phillips Memorial Award at the NETC Convention, Oct. 31, 2017.



school French teacher included directing musicals. It stood to reason then, that after her retirement, a colleague suggested she get involved with the New England Theatre Conference. So in 2001, Beverley attended her first NETC meeting serving the Community Theatre Division. When not serving NETC, Bevie has been a performer, producer, make-up artist, prop person, and costumer for the Weston Friendly Society in Weston, Massachusetts, and she has served on the Foxboro, Massachusetts Arts Council and the Foxboro School Committee."

Bevie serves on the AACT Board as Region I Representative. In addition to attending AACTFest state, regional, and national theatre festivals, she has served as a delegate to the International Amateur Theatre Association World Congress and Festival in Monaco. ♦

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Much of the work of the American Association of Community Theatre would not be possible without the generous support of our Corporate Partners, who are listed below. We thank each of them for their commitment to AACCT--and to the work of community theatres everywhere.

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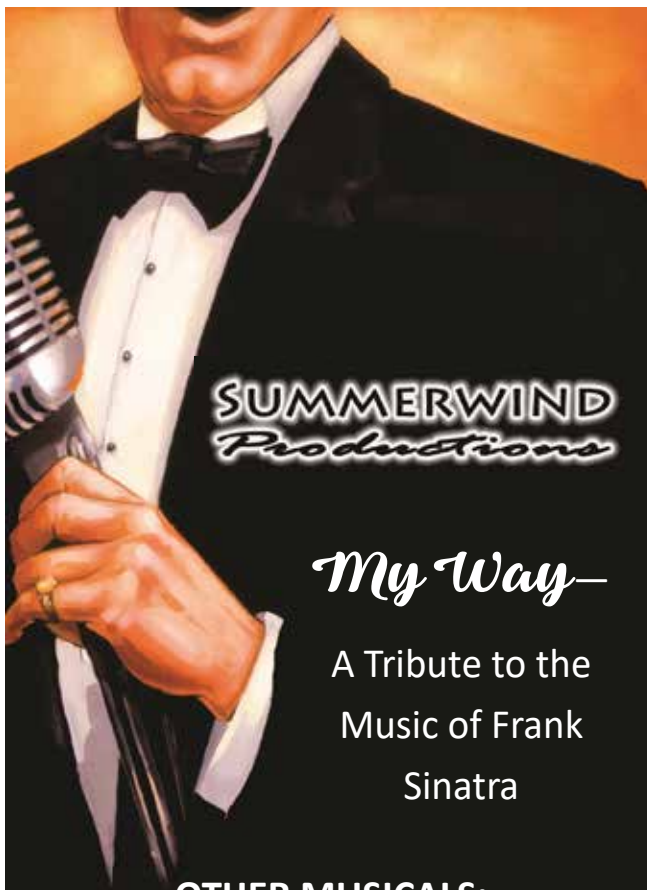
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Spotlight Award Goes to Nancy Wollenburg

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. The AACT Awards committee encourages community theatres to consider nominating individuals of all ages for the AACT Spotlight Award.

Billings (MT) Studio Theatre honored Associate Director, **Nancy Wollenburg**, with the AACT Spotlight Award on June 26, 2017, at the Theatre's Annual Awards Program. The Program was the grand finale held at the end of the production season, and highlighted the best of what Billings Studio had accomplished during the year. The Event, which began with a complimentary dinner, drew a crowd of well over 200! A video compilation of the past season, as well as a preview of the upcoming season, provided the evening's entertainment.

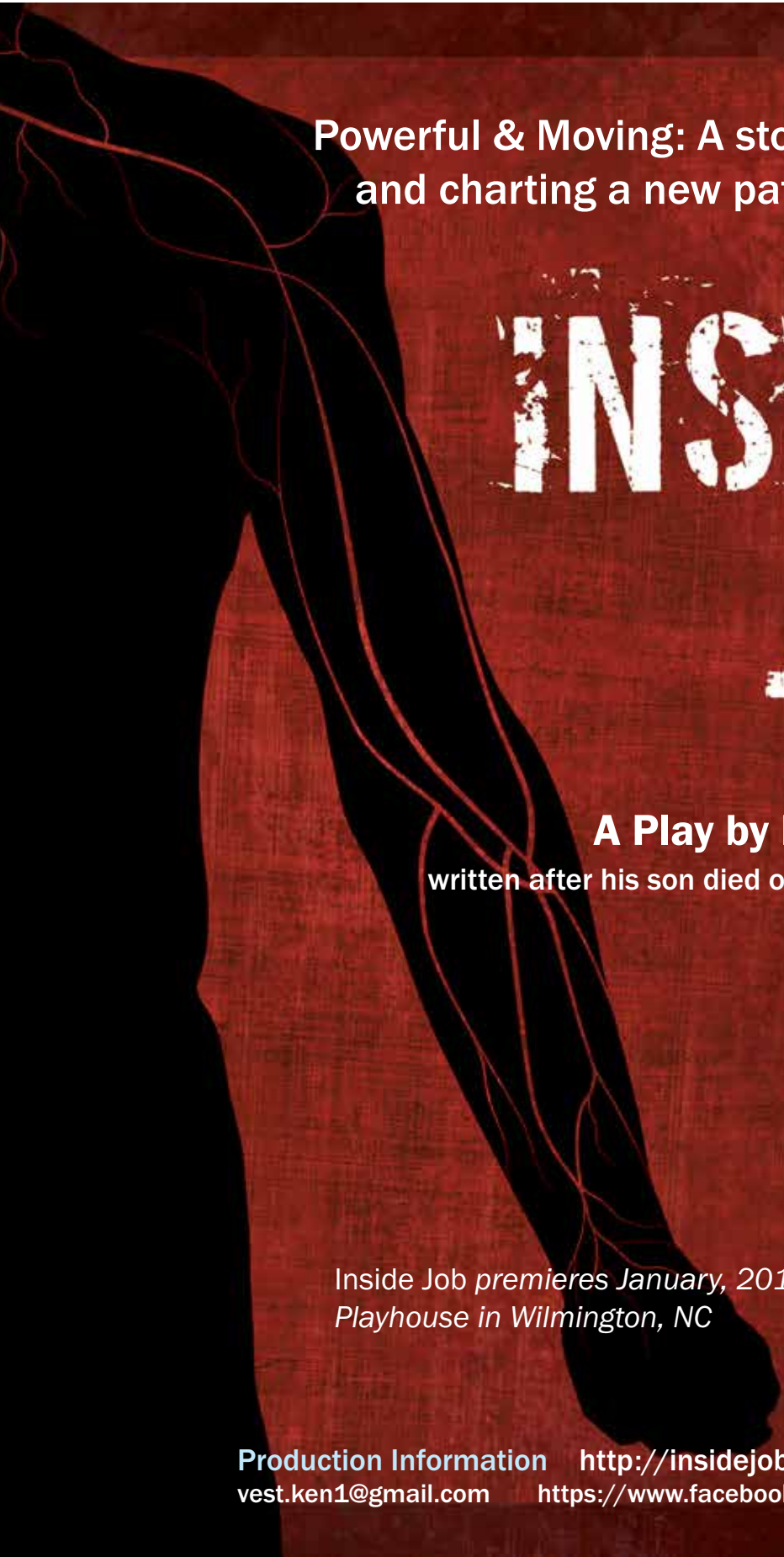


Nancy Wollenburg

Nancy was very involved in the planning of the Annual Awards Program, which included several other awards. But, she had no idea that she would receive one, and was completely surprised when Executive Director, A.J. Kalanick, presented her with the AACT Spotlight Award.

Nancy has served Billings Studio Theatre as a staff member for over 25 years, first as Box Office Manager, then Office Manager, and currently Associate Director. She oversees the design and execution of the Theatre's fundraising, marketing, and advertising campaigns!

continued on page 32 ►



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Spotlight Award *continued from page 30*

Nancy also contributes her time as a volunteer. She really enjoys serving on the play reading committee. And in every department, she does whatever is needed to get the job done. Somehow, the "To Do" list is magically completed, and Nancy never takes credit! She will jump in to hem a skirt or mend a pair of pants when the costume department is behind schedule. She will grab a shovel when the snow crew doesn't arrive on time, always greeting every patron with a smile.

Executive Director Kalanick wrote in his nomination letter, "As Associate Director of Billings Studio Theatre, Nancy is my right hand. She is a part of the foundation and strength of our theatre, and a loyal supporter of the arts. Nancy Wollenburg is most deserving of the AACT Spotlight Award!" ♦

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Artie's Advocacy Tip



Anyone can advocate for the arts and have an impact. Lawmakers want to hear from voters, and they expect "regular people" to lobby, not political or technical experts.

Join arts supporters from across the country at Arts Advocacy Day: The National Arts Action Summit, March 12-13, 2018 in Washington D.C. Hosted by Americans for the Arts in partnership with over 85 national arts organizations (AACT is a National Partner), Arts Advocacy Day is the largest gathering of its kind, bringing together a broad cross section of America's cultural and civic organizations. Registration is open at americansforthearts.org

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The Barley Sheaf Players, Lionville, Pennsylvania
Black Hills Community Theatre, Rapid City, South Dakota
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Tennessee Theatre Association, Cookeville, Tennessee
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The Supermarket Sisterhood 7 Female, 2 Male | Two Acts

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4 - 6 Female, 2 - 4 Male | Two Acts
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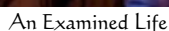


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FunBirds (5 F, 2 M) Roger Coyne, recently divorced, swears that, in the modern age, monogamous relations are obsolete. "In an age of abundance," he says, "a man can have two of anything—including women." His FunBirds, Edna and Desiree, compete with each other, then agree to cooperate. They devise a plot to teach Roger a lesson. Obsession matches obsession leading to ludicrous ruin.



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It presents the best unpublished full-length drama of the year with a full production as part of the BPP's Mainstage season, along with travel reimbursement. The top 10 finalists will be announced at the end of May with the winner announced in June 2018.

\$10 submission fee

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No email submissions

Details: newplays.org

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The play must cater for a performance time of 10-20 minutes.
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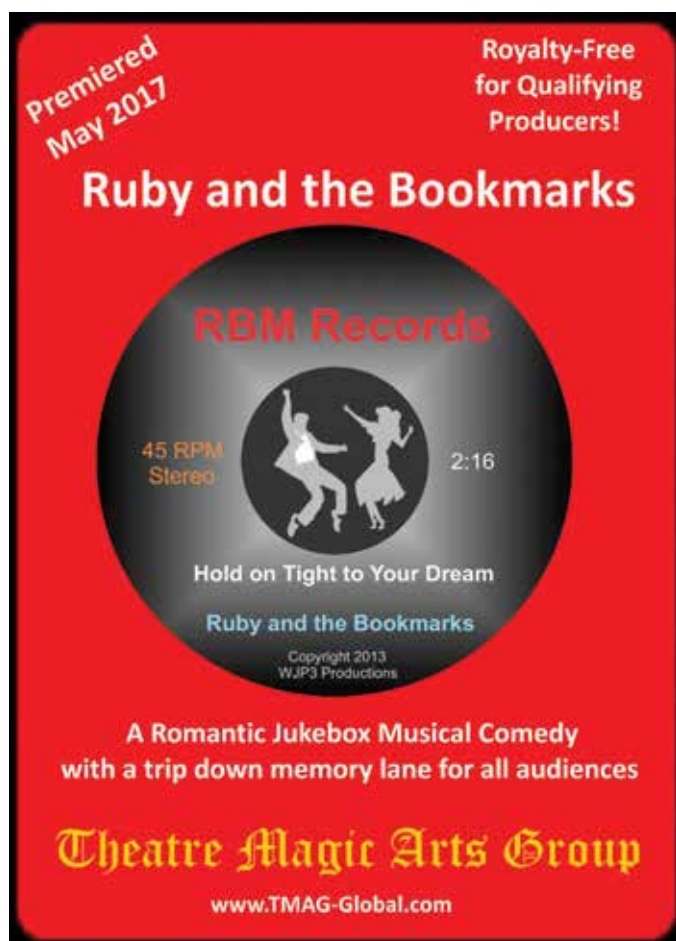


*Ed Bassett, Executive Director of Phoenix Stage Company was congratulated on the theatre's 7th Anniversary Celebration in Oakville, Connecticut on September 30, 2017 by Region I Representative **Bevie Lord**.*



*AACT Education Committee member **Joanne Berry** received an award on behalf of the **Bay City Players** from Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM) Awards Committee Chair **Terry Jolink** celebrating the theatre's 100th Anniversary. The presentation was made at the CTAM Conference in Cadillac, Michigan September 23, 2017.*

Jill Patchin



*CTAM Workshop Presenters holding a wrap-up session at the Community Theatre Association of Michigan Conference in Cadillac, Michigan September 24, 2017. Presenters included (L to R): **Steven Carver**, **Leeds Bird**, **Bonnie Grooters**, and AACT Education Committee Member **Jim Carver**, facilitated by CTAM At-Large Board Member **Ben Zylman**.*

Jill Patchin



*AACT staff and members honored retiring Executive Director Julie Crawford at a surprise reception at AACT Headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas on September 29, 2017. Attendees pictured left to right: **Preston Isbam** (Texas Nonprofit Theatres Program Coordinator), **Quiana Clark-Roland** (AACT Executive Director), **Karen Matheny** (AACT Office Support Manager), **Dennis Yslas** (TNT Executive Director), **Frieda Austin** (TNT Managing Director), **David Cockerell** (AACT Marketing/Communications Director), **Jim Covault** (Spotlight Designer), **Linda M. Lee** (AACT Past President), **Winston Daniels** — kneeling (AACT Office/Festivals Assistant), **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** (AACT Member Engagement Director), and **Julie Crawford** (AACT retiring Executive Director). Attending remotely were AACT Board Member At-Large **Chad-Alan Carr**, AACT Corporate Partners Manager **Jill Patchin**, AACT Festivals Coordinator **Ron Ziegler**, and AACT Vendor Services Coordinator **Darlene DeLorenzo**.*

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Dan Goggin was congratulated by Bevie Lord, Region I Representative, for receiving a Special Award "For Outstanding Achievement in the American Theatre" at the NETC (New England Theatre Conference) Convention, Cromwell, Connecticut, October 21, 2017.



AACT Member Engagement Director Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Motion Picture, TV series actor, and musician Tyler Hilton, Verona (WI) Area Community Theatre (VACT) founder and treasurer Dee Baldock and AACT Executive Secretary Frank Peot enjoy a visit and tour of VACT's new theatre facility on November 4, 2017.

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Monroe (WI) Theatre Guild Board of Directors members **John Jewell** (L) and **Mary Soddy** (R) provided a theatre tour and history to AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** on November 4, 2017.

Where's My Member Engagement Director Been?

September 2017

Texas Nonprofit Theatres
Fort Worth Fringe Festival

October 2017

Tarrant Actors Regional Theatre (TX)
(non-member)

Laura performance
Theatre Arlington (TX)
Bus Stop performance
Onstage in Bedford (TX)
Corpse! performance

November 2017

AACT Executive Committee Meeting in
Madison, Wisconsin
Verona Area Community Theatre (WI) visit
Monroe (WI) Theatre Guild visit
Beaver Dam Area Community Theatre (WI) visit
Watertown (WI) Players Theatre visit
Full-Time Community Theatre Directors'
Conference in Madison, Wisconsin



Beaver Dam (WI) Area Community Theatre Managing Director **David Saniter** (L) and Beaver Dam Production Support and Volunteer Coordinator **Kim Doyle** (R) welcomed AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** on November 4, 2017 for a tour of both their current theatre home and the facility that will be their new home in 2018 following completion of a \$2.6 million renovation project (for which they've raised over \$2 million over the past seven years).



Watertown (WI) Players Board of Directors members welcomed AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, sharing their history and a tour of their theatre spaces, on November 4, 2017. Pictured (L-R): **Jim Steffl** (Vice-President), **Bill Jannke** (founder and President), **Linda Exwert** and **Lisa Steffl** (Board Members), **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, and **Annette Weirick** (Treasurer). Not pictured: **Juanita Edington** (Board Secretary).



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Imagine if your national organization, AACT, had no success in contacting you regarding services, benefits, or to check on your group following a natural disaster?

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As we begin a new year, please take a moment to go on the AACT website and check your contact name, mailing address, phone numbers, email addresses, and website information as listed in your member profile and update as necessary. That action will drive an email to staff so that the database can be updated as well.

This will help ensure that no one loses contact with you.



My theater company joined AACT as a new theater seeking education and direction from the experts. I have been in theater for over 35 years and every time I attend an AACT function, I am only in awe by what I don't know.

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The 2018 USITT Conference will feature workshops with half-day, full-day, and two-day technique-specific programs with hands-on opportunities using state-of-the-art tools for creating live entertainment. Intensive training by manufacturers and industry experts on the latest products offer the opportunity to learn new techniques and product features hands-on, and attendees can choose from more than 300 sessions across 13 tracks of learning over 4 days.

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Theatre Insurance – Sometimes the Grass Is Greener!

By Ken Roberts

Over the years, I have discovered that many of the best prospects that contact me exploring insurance options are the ones that have been insured with the same insurance company for several years. I attribute that to two constants in the industry – first, that every insurance company attempts to get a small increase in premium every year regardless of whether any claims have been filed, and second, the underwriters for most insurance companies will price their policies more competitively for new accounts than they will for existing accounts being renewed. For these reasons, it's a good idea to consider possible alternatives every few years, either through your current agent or broker, or through another broker if your current representative doesn't have access to additional theatre insurance companies.

It's a good idea to have an agent or broker who will challenge those increases for you every year.

Insurance companies run their business just like every other for-profit entity. When costs increase it's usually for the same reasons that every business has, including increasing salaries and the skyrocketing costs of employee benefits. In addition, insurance companies are required to maintain cash reserves to pay any potential claims, no matter how small or how catastrophic, and the level of that capitalization helps to dictate their financial strength ratings with agencies like AM Best or Standard & Poor's. The stronger those ratings are, the more appealing those companies are to both for-profit and nonprofit entities across the country. That's a long way of saying that even without paying out any claims on behalf of any particular theatre organization, the insurance companies will attempt to get a small increase in the insurance premiums, typically 3% to 5% per year. It's easy to see how the total premium paid can increase by 15%

continued on next page ►

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Points to Ponder *continued from page 45*

or more over a 3-year period if those increases aren't challenged by some healthy competition. It's a good idea to have an agent or broker who will challenge those increases for you every year. It won't always get the premium back to where it was, but there is usually some compromise available.

It's a painful reality that the underwriters for those same insurance companies will price a policy that is new to their company more competitively than they would price a renewal of the exact same policy. It's their way of enticing new customers to the company so that they can begin the vicious cycle of gradual increases that I referred to earlier to support their profitability going forward.

In short, it pays to have your insurance representative check the markets for you every few years (if they're not already doing that), because sometimes the grass is greener on the other side of the insurance fence! ♦

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Look Out World — Here We Come!

by Twink Lynch

Leaders in our community theatres are important. They are the people who make things happen, and without whom our theatres cannot survive. Some years ago, at a volunteer management workshop, I learned to differentiate among the roles of “doer,” “manager,” and “leader,” by identifying the activities most often associated with each role. In community theatres, “doers” seem to do the following: act, direct, choreograph, accompany, design, build, find, sew, sell, or usher. “Managers” plan, organize, staff, supervise and evaluate (remember those five little words in the management cycle!). Doers like directors and crew chiefs also “manage,” and managers like stage managers also sometimes “do” — find props, paint sets, or hang lights. Leaders can also be managers and/or doers, but in their leadership capacity their activities include these: dreaming, pushing, causing to grow, problem-solving, and inspiring. Their qualities of intelligence, imagination, commitment, perseverance, and passion are the very qualities that invite the rest of us to say “Yes!”

I suspect many of us in community theatre have had difficulty persuading people to take on the designated leadership role of President. This is not just because of a lack of time, but often because the responsibilities seem so overwhelming. Some people feel inadequate in running effective meetings; keeping the group focused on chosen goals; inspiring the best efforts of the rest of the Board; representing the theatre in the community, especially when there is no paid staff; attracting resources (people and money) to the organization; and generally “making things happen.”

The good news is that the elected President doesn't have to do all that (and more!) by him/herself. The bad news is many of us don't know how to share the load, not just by delegating certain tasks to subordinates, but by building a true partnership among other

available leaders. John Gardner, founder of Independent Sector, wrote, “Most leadership involves a number of individuals acting in a team relationship. Teams have leaders, of course, and most ventures fare better if one person is in charge, but not as a solo performer, not as a giant surrounded by pygmies. Team leadership enhances the possibility that different styles of leadership — and different skills — can be brought to bear simultaneously. If the leader is a visionary with little talent for practical steps, a team member who is a naturally gifted agenda setter can provide priceless support. The important thing is not that a single leader cover all bases but that the leadership team collectively do so.”

Now no one energy can be collapsed, bumped off course, attacked into destruction.

I, too, happen to believe leadership is a team sport. One of the best models of shared leadership I have run across is called a “multiplet.” Once again, as with the “force field” model, we are borrowing the term from the world of physics. There is no need to be intimidated, though. We can definitely understand and use this concept to our advantage.

A multiplet, according to Dr. Ross Snyder of the Chicago Theological Seminary, is “a family of energies that — as they become a family of energies — speed each other up to the speed of light.... They mount up intense power [and] mutually reinforce each other from the inside. Now no one energy can be collapsed, bumped off course,

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attacked into destruction. Reinforcing energies flow in [and] the entire structure refuses to collapse, to be de-natured." Dr. Snyder believes that only a human society can adequately be this kind of multiplet.

I am intrigued with the way Snyder applies this concept to the pilgrim community of Massachusetts Bay, to show how a leadership multiplet in that struggling colony enabled the group to survive and ultimately thrive in a very hostile environment. He identified four basic functions of leadership existing in the four men, William Bradford, John Robinson, William Brewster, and Henry Ainsworth, who guided the colony through that first harsh New England winter. I have adapted his concepts somewhat to fit the world of theatre (although I believe we share many traits with religious communities — after all, Thespis, the first "actor," emerged from the chorus of religious ceremonies!).

The "Enterprise Leader" is the person who can organize, delegate, follow up, and act. This person is a communicator and is able to share the goals and tasks to be done in such a way that others are inspired to do them. Robert Greenleaf used to speak of a "primus inter pares," a "first-among-equals" in his inspiring book, *Servant Leadership*, and I believe it describes this function well. The Enterprise Leader is sometimes the symbol of the whole enterprise and excels in the ability to identify opportunities for growth and in guiding his/her peers on the leadership team to work together, solving the problems that face them.

Part teacher and part historian, the "Visionary" is the person who understands the big picture — not only where the organization has come from, but also where it has the potential to go. They understand the significance of the arts and theatre and is able to communicate this vision to the group and to the greater community. The Visionary is a learner and synthesizer and keeps trying to use past experience to enlighten present problems and to develop a sense of perspective and of manifest destiny.

The "Nurturer" is a person whose instincts and skills are concerned with the psychological and physical well being of the group — with caring, healing, and growth. This role is proactive and intentional. Its purpose is to affirm the gifts each member brings to the group and to the leadership team.

The "Celebrator" is the person who enables the group to develop appreciation of the good work it is doing and provides "expressive opportunities" (opening night parties, volunteer appreciation day) for such celebration. This enables the members to keep centering on the purpose of their existence, to treasure the things that matter, and to re-kindle their memories so they may be in touch with their roots and their accomplishments.

If it is true, as Snyder suggests, that when all these roles are present at the same time in an organization, they tend to operate synergistically in the manner of a multiplet, then the first thing we ought to do is to examine our theatres to see if all the leadership functions are currently being covered, on and/or off the Board. One of the hardest things I know of is to be a leader among badly recruited, half-committed, over-extended, non-producers of results. A leadership team, in which all the necessary functions are being carried out, satisfies the need of leaders for continual support from those who understand the territory, and for plugging the gap when one of the leaders is unable to function up to par. I have had the sublime experience of being part of such a multiplet in my own theatre organization, not once but twice, and can testify to its headiness and its propensity for success. I can also testify to the fact that if attention is not paid to those renewing energies that must be fed into the system (through the nominating process), the multiplet will ultimately falter and the system will suffer as a result.

It is a key Board responsibility to provide the needed leadership for our theatres. Perhaps we should be asking our Nominating Committees to focus their search on people who can bring one or more of the above skills to the leadership table. Just think what we could accomplish if we all developed leadership multipliers! As we continue to move forward, I think our motto should be: "Look out world — here we come!"

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight, page 95

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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Feb 9 -10	Maryland Community Theatre Festival 2018	MD La Plata	301-751-2736 www.mctfa.org
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