

# spotlight

May/June 2020 \$5.00

american association of community theatre



**AACT  
NewPlayFest  
World Premieres**

**AACTFest 2021**

**National  
Awards**

**Theatres  
Collaborating**

**Meeting the Challenge  
of COVID-19**

**Unconventional  
Performance  
Spaces**



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TO BE WICKED



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**Rick Kerby**  
AACT President

Even in the best of times, creating and funding theatre can be difficult. Add a pandemic, and suddenly we are all passengers on the *Titanic*, fighting for a place in a lifeboat.

The truth is, we don't know what will happen from here. As I write this, my own theatre is closed, indefinitely, as are museums, opera companies, ballets, movies, and stages here and across the country. While we currently have cash reserves to keep payroll going for a few weeks, we are facing layoffs and worse, possible terminations. From where I sit at the moment, there is simply no end in sight.

This situation serves as a stark reminder to all of us that we should not, and cannot, take our arts communities (or communities in general) for granted. The virus, combined with the harsh effects suffered by the stock market, will make fundraising and capital campaigns challenging, to say the least. And when the virus panic finally subsides, we will have to work hard to reassure patrons that it is safe to return to their seats.

What we need now is more than patience and hope. We need contingency plans for both the present and the future. One idea that has been discussed is to live-stream some performances, although the logistics remain challenging. In response, the hard-working staff at AACT have been advocating and

mediating with licensing companies on this issue, as well as trying to negotiate more sympathetic and flexible royalty payments.

One thing I do know for sure: of all the art forms, community theatre knows how to survive. We know how to stay afloat with the tightest of budgets. We know we can depend on our talented volunteers to provide artistry and a work staff. We know how to share resources with fellow theatres. We know how to create onstage magic with little more than paint and cardboard.

Together, we are a community of theatres, ready to help each other get through this difficult time. We will thrive again.

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**Jailhouse Frocks**  
3 Female, 2 Male | Two Acts  
Shattering dimwitted Officer Dwayne's tranquil evening is the arrests of three unlikely women; the mayor's wife, the local mad cat-lady, and a dangerous looking New Yorker. The already chaotic situation descends into mayhem with the arrival of a New York gangster, disguised as an FBI agent, hell-bent on exacting revenge on his wife. By the end of the night, the ladies have formed a gang, sang some songs, escaped from jail and locked up the gangster leaving Officer Dwayne wondering how on earth he's managed to make the arrest of a lifetime. Featured songs include "Respect" and "Monster Mash".

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After seeing *Silent Sky* at AACTFest 2019, Linda Miller realized she knew a perfect place to produce it - a planetarium

## On the Cover

Anne Connors (*Thelma*), Keegan Oxley (*Mitchell*), and Trinity Bird (*Curtis*) in the world premiere production of *On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell, at The Sauk, in Jonesville, Michigan Photo: Patrick Cook/Expressions Photography & Design

## Contacting AACT

AACT  
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Fort Worth, TX 76185  
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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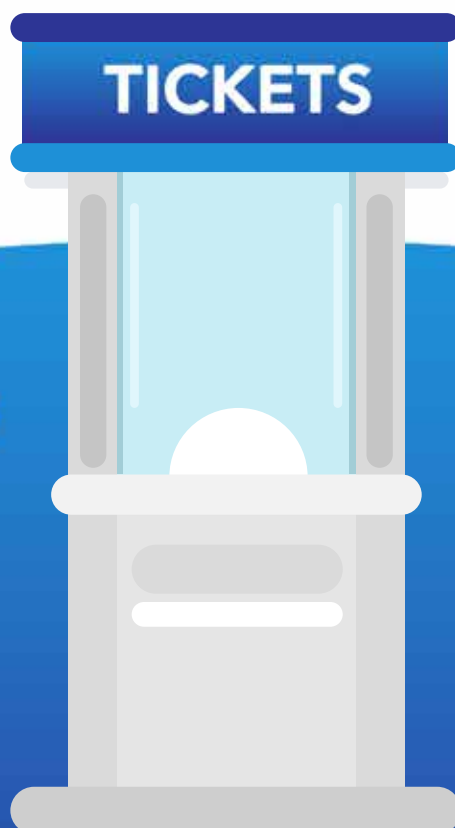
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Listed are 2019-2020 Officers

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Jim Walker, *VP Festivals*  
Aberdeen, SD (2019)  
Frank Peot, *Secretary*  
Sun Prairie, WI (2019)  
Michael D. Fox, *Treasurer*  
North Salt Lake, UT (2021)

## Members at Large

Emily Anderson  
Midland, MI (2019)  
Tom Booth  
Tupelo, MS (2022)  
Sharon Burum  
Duncan, OK (2021)  
Steven Butler  
Gainesville, FL (2022)  
Ron Cameron-Lewis  
Ontario, Canada (2022)  
Chad-Alan Carr  
Gettysburg, PA (2020)  
Martha Cherbini  
Leander, TX (2021)  
Michael Cochran  
Paducah, KY (2019)  
Allen Ebert  
Madison WI (2019)  
Bob Frame  
Skaneateles, NY (2021)  
Richard Gannon  
Naperville, IL (2021)  
Kristofer Geddie  
Venice, FL (2022)  
Lucinda Lawrence  
Champaign, IL (2021)  
Carolyn McCloskey  
McMinnville, OR (2021)  
Kristi Quinn  
Dakota City, NE (2020)  
Carole Ries  
Topeka, KS (2022)  
Judy Rozema  
Kearney, NE (2021)  
Chris Serface  
Tacoma, WA (2022)

## Region Representatives

I Beverley Lord  
Foxborough, MA (2019)  
II Joan Luther  
Naples, NY (2021)  
III Christi Thomas  
Sidney, OH (2020)  
IV-A Lynn Nelson  
Tupelo, MS (2019)  
IV-B Kristy Meanor  
Wetumpka, AL (2022)  
V Jamie Ulmer  
Beatrice, NE (2019)  
VI Sally Barnes  
Broken Arrow, OK (2021)  
VII Donna Fisher  
Casper, WY (2019)  
VIII Dennis Gilmore  
Indio, CA (2019)  
IX Jon Douglas Rake  
Tacoma, WA (2019)  
X Dane Winters  
Germany (US Army) (2019)

## Upcoming Events

### AACT Summer 2020 Board Meetings

The AACT Board, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams will meet virtually for the AACT Summer 2020 Meetings. Most meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for more details.

**Board of Directors Meeting** – Saturday, June 6 - 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM (Central) via Zoom. RSVP at [aact.org/zoom](https://aact.org/zoom) by May 15, 2020

**AACT Annual Membership Meeting** – Saturday, June 6, via Zoom, in tandem with the AACT Board Meeting. Details at [aact.org/calendar](https://aact.org/calendar)

**Committee Meetings** will all be held virtually before May 1, 2020. AACT staff will coordinate with each committee chair to set up meeting times. To view the list of meetings please see the AACT events calendar [aact.org/calendar](https://aact.org/calendar)

**Committee Reports** – Due May 15, 2020. Please submit your report using the following webforms:

- Report on Region form - [aact.org/report-region](https://aact.org/report-region)
- Board/Committee Report form - [aact.org/board-report](https://aact.org/board-report)

More information and meeting links: [aact.org/summer](https://aact.org/summer)

**NOTE:** Before joining the meeting, please review the AACT Virtual Meeting Rules and Procedures. ([aact.org/virtual](https://aact.org/virtual))  
Questions regarding Meetings? - Contact Quiana Clark-Roland at [quiana@aact.org](mailto:quiana@aact.org) or call 817-732-3177

### AACT Staff

Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director  
David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director  
Kathy Pingel, NewPlayFest Dramaturge,  
Education Coordinator  
Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator, Education Coordinator  
Karen Matheny, Membership Coordinator

Winston Daniels, Operations and Events Assistant  
Jill Patchin, Corporate Partners Manager  
Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator  
Stephen Peithman, Webmaster /  
*Spotlight* Assistant Editor  
Susan Austin, 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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## Meeting Our Greatest Challenge Head-On

### Connecting and sharing in a time of viral threats

Quiana Clark-Roland  
Executive Director

Dear AACT Community,

I am writing this message to you in the middle of the COVID-19 shutdown. Like most of the country, my mind is racing with questions of what is going to happen next. I know by the time you read this, it will be May, and we will either be in the thick of it, or coming out of the storm. I pray it is the latter.

Regardless of what happens, please know that AACT will be here for you. Our decision to move to a virtual office last fall, has serendipitously kept us ahead of the curve in mastering and utilizing virtual technologies and communications to keep you connected. Paired with a strong and diverse network of board members and staff, we have used those strengths to continue providing the services you need.

We understand the financial restraints you are under, and believe that AACT's ability to connect you to others and to vital resources, is one of your most viable assets. You are making some tough decisions, and we are working hard to make sure you don't have to go it alone.

Here are a few of the resources we're providing to keep you informed, engaged, and connected.

- On the AACT website, our COVID-19 Response page ([aact.org/covid](http://aact.org/covid)) provides links to resources that can provide answers for your challenges in production, finances, personnel, and more.
- Hosting Virtual Town Halls by state and region.
- Moving and restructuring the Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) and TEAMS Conference. (More details soon.)
- Re-evaluating the National Festival cycle and ways we can make it easier for theatres to engage and participate.
- Region Reps and State Contacts will be doing member check-ins. If you receive a call or email, please reply; we want to hear your story and learn how you are doing.
- Launched the AACT COVID-19 Response page ([aact.org/covid](http://aact.org/covid)). Page provides links to resources that can provide answers for your challenges in production, finances, personnel, and more.

- AACT has also set up a Facebook page, the COVID-19 Community Theatre Resource Group, to help connect the theatre community, and share resources. This is open to both member and non-member theatres. Please let us know if you need any help finding the page, and we will send you an invite to join. Our AACTList email discussion group is another way for member companies to seek—and offer—help and guidance. If your theatre hasn't subscribed, you'll find details at [aact.org/aactlist](http://aact.org/aactlist).
- AACT is also providing open access for all theatres to our Resource Roster ([aact.org/resource-roster](http://aact.org/resource-roster)). Tell us what advice or help you need, and AACT will connect your theatre with a professional or expert in community theatre who can help you navigate these difficult times.
- Launched COVID-19 Community Theatre Survey [aact.org/survey](http://aact.org/survey).
- Hosting and sharing of COVID-19 Response Webinars.

Amid all the crisis coverage, I came across a resurfaced Oscar Wilde quote, shared by colleagues on social media. I am sure many of you have seen it, too: "I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being."

His words are a reminder of the fundamental need that the arts address. In times of crisis and hardship, people tend to seek out the arts more, and artists become even more inspired and bold in their endeavors. I look forward to this new renaissance in our own art form as well. And as we are seeing online, those that have never participated in the arts before are being more inspired to try. This lends us to new opportunities for further community engagement in the future. As community theatres, we will have the privilege of being first in line to greet and welcome back Americans, as they—and we—seek that human connection.

AACT is working hard to provide those connections for you—our AACTList discussion group and Facebook groups are buzzing with activity and resource-sharing. It's a positive sign of our organization's health and relevance in today's uncertain world.

Keep in mind these services—and AACT's mission to help theatres thrive—as we move forward into the next year. ♦



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By Laura Ambler and Mala Burt

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The Sugar Creek Players, IN  
The Encore Theatre, TN

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[www.amblerburt.com/the-santa-diaries](http://www.amblerburt.com/the-santa-diaries)



## A Christmas Wedding

By Laura Ambler and Mala Burt

"When I attended The Merlin Players' performance of The Santa Diaries four years ago at the Paradise Center for the Arts, I laughed. And I cried. Playwrights and performers brought a moving message coupled with comedy to the stage.

And now they've done it again in A Christmas Wedding—The Santa Diaries II. The play focuses on a Hollywood couple returning to their hometown for their desired small town Christmas wedding. Except others have other ideas, including making the wedding a reality TV event. So the story evolves with humor aplenty, conflict and discerning what's most important in life. Choose fame and fortune? Or love, happiness and contentment??"

©Audrey Kletscher Helbling  
*Minnesota Prairie Roots*

**A Christmas Wedding World Premier:**  
The Merlin Players, MN



**Contact us at: [santadiariesplay@gmail.com](mailto:santadiariesplay@gmail.com)**



# aactWORLDFEST 2020 Cancelled

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, Venice Theatre and AACT have cancelled aactWORLDFEST 2020, originally scheduled for June 22-28, 2020, in Venice, Florida.

"We are so deeply saddened by this," said AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland, "and understand that this decision was not made lightly."

aactWorldfest Festival Coordinator Lori Chase explains "With travel bans and visa uncertainties, it had become apparent that we would not be able to get theatre troupes here for the festival."

Venice Theatre, as with almost all other theatres, has cancelled or postponed all of its own upcoming performances—at their busiest time of year, for a loss estimated at \$750,000.

"If you have registered for aactWORLDFEST 2020, please consider your registration fees as a donation to the theatre," Clark-Roland suggests. You can also transfer your registration to the next world festival, which will take place at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida, June 20-26, 2022.

"If you need a refund, please do not call the Venice Theatre box office," she adds. "Instead, send your donation and exchange information or your refund request to Lori Chase at [lorichase@venicetheatre.org](mailto:lorichase@venicetheatre.org). Please give Venice Theatre staff some time to respond, as they are dealing with all refunds and exchanges for their own theatre, as well. We thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter."

"We look forward to seeing you at aactWORLDFEST 2022!" ♦



Renee McVey

*The Maner Manush troupe representing Italy exclaims their passion of the arts in an impressive production of Michelangelo da Caravaggio at aactWORLDFEST 2018*

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# AACT Summer Conferences Rescheduled

Due to the COVID-19 Crisis, the Community Theatre Management and TEAMS Conferences have been postponed, and are undergoing restructuring so we can make it possible for those to attend who could not for the originally scheduled dates. We appreciate your patience and understanding in this matter. We look forward to seeing you at one or both of the rescheduled conferences.

Updates and details can be found:

Community Theatre Management Conference - [aact.org/ctmc](http://aact.org/ctmc)

TEAMS Conference - [aact.org/teams](http://aact.org/teams)

David Cockerell




*The Community Theatre Management Conference 2018, held in conjunction with aactWORLDVEST 2018 in Venice, Florida, was invigorating and informative for all who participated*

David Cockerell



*Tim Jebson, Executive Director of Midland Community Theatre in Midland, Texas leads the Artistic Direction/Vision track at the TEAMS 2019 conference held at the Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City/Sandy, Utah. There was a vacant seat just waiting for you – join us next time*



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**Scripts, Information, and Licensing at:**  
**[summerwindproductions.com](http://summerwindproductions.com)**



# AACTFest 2021

June 14 - 19, 2021  
Louisville, Kentucky  
[aact.org/21](http://aact.org/21)

Mark your calendar to join your AACT theatre family for a great time—and great theatre.

## AACT YouthFest

AACT will be hosting its youth festival during AACTFest 2021—once again providing an opportunity for community youth groups and programs to perform, receive professional adjudication feedback, network, and learn from one another. The festival week will also be filled with workshops, activities, and social events just for youth.

Five youth theatre companies will be selected to perform at the 2021 AACT YouthFest, June 14-19, 2021 in Louisville, Kentucky. Travel and lodging grants will be available to the groups selected.

Applications are now open. For more information on applying visit [aact.org/youth](http://aact.org/youth). Deadline to apply is May 15, 2020

Directors interested in YouthFest can email their inquiries to Chad-Alan Carr, AACT YouthFest Chair, at [Chad@GettysburgCommunityTheatre.org](mailto:Chad@GettysburgCommunityTheatre.org).



AACT YouthFest 2021 is made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.



*Louisville's state-of-the-art Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts will be home to AACTFest 2021, AACT's national theatre festival, June 14-19, 2021*



Paola Nogueras

*Workshop Theatre in Willis, Texas presented 1984 by George Orwell, adapted by Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall, Jr, and William A. Miles. Jr. at AACT YouthFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania*



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AACT is working hard and diligently with its Corporate Partners to make sure that AACTFest continues to be a memorable experience. (For more information on becoming a Corporate Partner, contact Jill Patchin at [jill@aact.org](mailto:jill@aact.org))

“AACTFest is not only a celebration of theatre, but of life and the connections and friendships we make along the way—something we need now more than ever,” says AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland. “Please keep AACTFest 2021 on your calendars, and come celebrate with us next year.”

The 12 National Companies to perform in Louisville will be decided in the next 15 months. In response to COVID-19 and the restrictions that may still be imposed on theatres and festivals in the upcoming year, AACT Staff and Board will be exploring ways to ensure that entry and participation into the festival process is still both accessible and economical for all involved. We are committed to the mission of presenting and celebrating the diversity and quality of American Community Theatre.

“AACTFest is not only a celebration of theatre, but of life and the connections and friendships we make along the way—something we need now more than ever.”

Meanwhile, planning has begun for other national festival events, including the Monologue Competition, sponsored by Dramatists Play Service, and AACT’s National Design Competition, sponsored by USITT, which celebrates community theatre designers from across the country. Exhibitors will also be on hand with information on products and services to make your theatre the best it can be.

The Hyatt Regency Downtown is the festival’s host hotel, with special discounted rates for festival attendees. The Regency is also the location for AACTFest special events, workshops, exhibits, and conferences. This four-star hotel is within walking distance of the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts and Actors Theatre of Louisville, as well. (A trolley will also be available to transport those staying at the hotel to the festival theatre.) The Hyatt is also near the Fourth Street Live District, Louisville’s premier dining and entertainment destination.

More information about the national festival will be posted soon on the AACT website ([aact.org/21](http://aact.org/21)). AACTFest 2021 registration will open June 1, 2020. ♦

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**Licensing feedback:**  
 "Our production of Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story was the second production of the work within a five-year span. Both productions were huge hits for our theatre, but the second one shattered all records, gained new patrons, and created a fantastic buzz for our theatre in the community. It's a fabulous work that audiences just love"  
 Jared Sakren, Producing Artistic Director  
 6th Street Playhouse, Santa Rosa, California

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# Two AACT NewPlayFest World Premieres

## *Goat Song Revel* opens at Manatee Performing Arts Center

The AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Goat Song Revel*, by Dan Borengasser, opened on February 6 at the Manatee Performing Arts Center in Bradenton, Florida, and ran through February 23.

*Goat Song Revel* builds on the biblical story of Job, and is given a theatrical twist. God and Satan have devised a plan to test Job's faith, but to complicate matters, Dionysus and his one-person Chorus, Doris, enter the situation and are perplexed as to whether the story is a comedy or a drama. Doris, an eager advocate of Job's, pleads with Dionysus to intercede. While Job endures one indignity after another, all the while confounding Satan, Dionysus remembers an observation by Lord Byron: "All tragedies are finished by a death; all comedies are ended by a marriage." To make this happen, he must reveal himself to God who, despite herself, does find him amusing.

Playwright Dan Borengasser attended the opening, calling the production of *Goat Song Revel* by Manatee Performing Arts Center "a genuinely singular experience. From the initial workshoping of the play to the actual performance, everyone involved—theatre management, board, staff, director, actors, and crew—couldn't have been more professional and accommodating. I feel particularly indebted to AACT and the NewPlayFest for giving me the opportunity to witness the evolution of my play, from just a bunch of words on the page to a fully developed theatrical event. It was a truly formative moment, and one I'm not likely to ever forget."



Diane Broda

*Job (Jason Lipton) and Doris the Chorus (Catherine Burke) are celebrated by Satan (Joseph Smith), God (Carolyn Zaput), and Dionysus (Daniel Pelissier) in Manatee Performing Arts Center's production of Goat Song Revel*

Kathy Pingel directed Manatee Performing Arts Center's world premiere production of *Goat Song Revel*. The cast featured Catherine Burke, Jason Lipton, Daniel Pelissier, Joseph Smith, Carolyn Zaput, and Michael Herring. The production crew included Artistic Director Rick Kerby, Production Manager Kristin Ribble, Stage Manager Sophia Coscia, with set design by Ralph Nurmela, light design by



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Nick Jones, sound design by Mark Toeppen, costume design by Susan Sajec, and mask design by Larry Engler.

Director Kathy Pingel shares her insights:

*“Goat Song Revel, by Dan Borengasser, was a perfect fit for Manatee Performing Arts Center’s blackbox space, the Kiwanis Theatre. It is spattered with clever word play and inside theatre jokes. Its irreverence is also aimed at religion, while never making a fool of the true believer. Audience members came back two and three times to discover how they could laugh at God and yet revere her at the same time—or just appreciate the word volley between Job and Dionysus.”*

The workshop process, three weeks before opening, afforded the company an opportunity to ask questions of Dan and show him the framework we use—blocking, evolving character choices, and relationships. He generously offered support and encouragement, and adjusted text to support the production.

The cast and production team of *Goat Song Revel* found the story multi-leveled, subtly and broadly humorous, and a hit with audiences. We are confident other theatre companies will echo our enthusiasm.”

Playwright Dan Borengasser lives in Springdale, Arkansas, and most of his plays have been produced or have received staged readings. His plays have been produced in theatres across the country from New York to Los Angeles, as well as in Canada, Mexico, India, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Three plays—*A.R@Uni. Gov*, *The Kindness of Strangers*, and *Sense & Insensibility*—have been

Diane Broda



*Satan (Joseph Smith) and God (Carolyn Zaput) engage Dionysus (Daniel Pelissier) to test the faith of Job*

continued on next page ►

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*-Bert Miller, Artistic Director,  
ACT Theatre Company (Topeka)*

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April	ABSOLUTELY DEAD	Pompton Lakes, NJ	Rhino Theatre
May	ABSOLUTELY DEAD	Boylston, MA	Calliope Productions
July	ABSOLUTELY DEAD	Bowie, MD	Bowie Comm Th.
March	LA FIN du SILENCE	2020 Winchester, VA	Winchester Little Th.

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Patrick Cook/Expressions Photography & Design

*At the premiere of On Pine Knoll Street at The Sauk*

*Seated on floor (l-r): Spencer Jones (set painter), Allison Cleveland (production stage manager/Sauk board), Andrew Esterline (set painter), Shannon Chen (assistant stage manager), Barbara Cliffe-Miller (Sauk board Secretary).*

*Middle row/seated (l-r): Tim Bowman (Jonesville City Councilman), Anne Connors (cast/Thelma), Mark Cornell (playwright), MJ Dulmage (cast/Marilyn), Andrea Ortell (cast/Kristie), Keegan Oxley (cast/Mitchell), Trinity Bird (Sauk Executive Director, production director, cast/Curtis), Kathy Pingel (AACT Dramaturge), Linda M. Lee (Jack K Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation)*

*Standing (l-r): George Humphries Jr. (Jonesville City Councilman), Cyndi Baldermann (Sauk board/set dressing), Jerry Drake (Jonesville City Councilman), Josh McCullough (lighting crew), Tracy McCullough (Sauk board/lighting designer), Bruce Crews (Sauk board Vice President/set designer), Emily Crews (set crew), Jeff Gray (Jonesville City Manager), Roene Trevisan (costume designer), Aaron Guest (Sauk board), Gerald Arno (Jonesville Mayor), Tim Ambrose (Sauk board), David Trippett (Sauk board President), Ron Boyle (master carpenter), Rickie Freeman (Sauk board), Brandi Tippner (set painter), Angela Forant (light board operator), Joella Hendrickson (sound designer), David Cockerell (AACT Marketing/Communications Director)*

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- Moira Bengochea, actress, Reno Little Theater

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published. In addition, several of his short screenplays have been produced, as well as a feature-length film he helped write, titled *The Donor Conspiracy*. Three radio plays have been produced and broadcast nationally. In addition to stage plays, Borengasser has written science fiction stories, screenplays, radio plays, and children's fiction, and was a syndicated humor columnist.

## On Pine Knoll Street opens at The Sauk

The AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell, opened on February 7 at The Sauk in Jonesville, Michigan. The opening included a festive reception attended by the Jonesville mayor and many city councilpersons. The production ran through February 16.

In Cornell's *On Pine Knoll Street*, Thelma, a colorful and quick-witted 87-year-old woman, is battling with her memory. Her devoted daughter, Marilyn, with whom she now lives, is trying to make the best of the situation. Curtis, their neighbor, is a writer and stay-at-home father of a special-needs child. His wife, Kristie, struggles to balance family and work. When Marilyn asks Curtis to care for her mother and her beloved cats while she is at the beach, a friendship is set into motion that tethers two families. Set in a small town in North Carolina, *On Pine Knoll Street* is an intimate look at the joy and fragility of life, the meaning of home, and the things we do for love.

Playwright Mark Cornell was at the opening and shared:

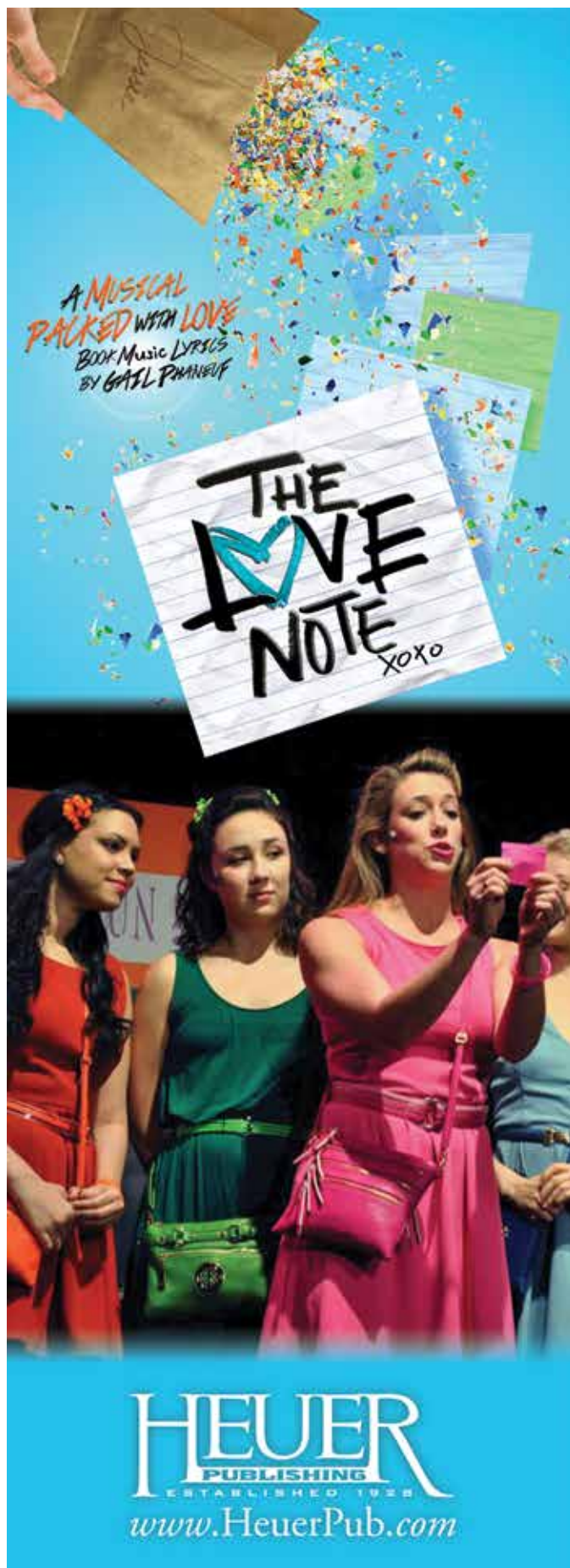
"Everyone, from AACT, to Kathy Pingel, to the people at The Sauk, especially Trinity Bird, helped make my NewPlayFest a wonderful new play experience. The support, the encouragement, the respect, the desire to collaborate and be open to ideas, the great attitudes, were all any person/playwright could hope for in a theater relationship.

We first did a short week of rehearsals and two readings last summer in a workshop setting. I felt so welcomed by Trinity Bird, The Sauk theatre, staff and artists, and the entire Jonesville/Hillsdale community. I immediately felt like family. With the actors, Trinity as director, and Kathy Pingel as dramaturg, it was truly a collaborative experience. We all made the play better. I was able then to go home and spend some time working on the play.

During rehearsals for the production, Trinity kept me involved. He set up a play page on Facebook where ideas and images were shared.

When I returned to The Sauk in February for the show, wow, I was treated like a king. They honored the play, and were so appreciative and proud to be part of this process. Trinity was the best director any playwright could ask for, and the actors gave everything they had. They all really connected with the material.

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*Thelma (Anne Conners) struggles with realities as her daughter Marilyn (MJ Dulmage) begins to realize the complexities of their situation*

Since the production finished, Kathy and I have been working more on the play, and there is no way I could have gotten it to this point without the NewPlayFest experience of work hands-on with a group like The Sauk, and Kathy.”

Trinity Bird directed The Sauk’s world premiere production, with a cast that featured Anne Conners, MJ Dulmage, Trinity Bird, Andrea Ortell, and Keegan Oxley. The production crew included stage management by Allison Cleveland, dramaturgy by Kathy Pingel, scenic design by Bruce Crews, costume design by Roene Trevisan, lighting design by Tracy McCullough, sound design by Joella Hendrickson, properties design by Travis Blatchley, and set dressing by Cyndi Baldermann.

Director Trinity Bird was particularly upbeat about his experience with the premiere production:

“It was such an honor to work on this brilliant new play. We take new play development very seriously here at The Sauk. We host an annual Plays-in-Development program each summer.

The bond between this cast and crew was immediate. We felt privileged to tell a story based on real people, and the responsibility to be truthful to them. When Mark arrived, it was like adding an old friend. He was open to suggestions, thoughts, and questions. Even our youngest cast member, Keegan, contributed to lines and moments that are

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now in the final version of the script. This process was theatre collaboration at its finest.

I am grateful to our entire Sauk family (board, volunteers, donors, patrons, cast/crew), the City of Jonesville (City Manager Jeff Gray and several city council members attended the opening night), our show sponsor (Southern Michigan Bank and Trust) and AACT for making such a rewarding, challenging, and theatrical experience happen."

Playwright Mark Cornell lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and has had more than 75 of his works produced in theatres around the world. His plays include *Sprucehaven B*, *Two Turtle Doves*, *All the Answers*, *Theater More Like Baseball*, and *The Other Half*, which won the 2019 Getchell New Play Award. He has an MFA in English and Creative Writing from UCLA and is an ensemble member with Moonlight Stage Company in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is also partner with Paul Newell at Full Nelson Theater, and co-creator of Marked Men Films with Mark Jantzen. He has taken master classes with playwrights Jon Robin Baitz, Terrence McNally, Alan Ayckbourn, and Doug Wright. While at UCLA, he studied screenwriting with Lew Hunter, Richard Walter, Hal Ackerman, Oliver Stone, Ernest Lehman, and Ron Bass.

**JKA** Jack K. Ayre  
**FAL** Frank Ayre Lee  
Theatre Foundation

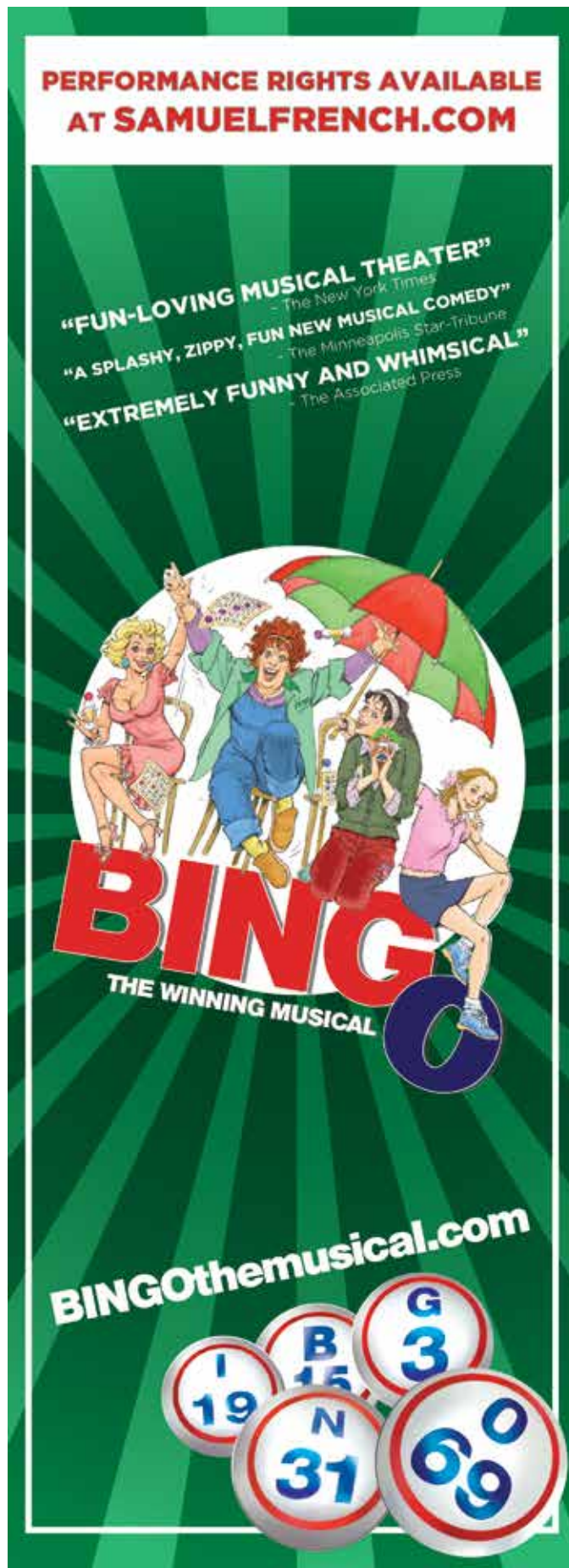
The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation provides a grant that helps make AACT NewPlayFest possible. The Foundation was created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin and friend, Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through AACT NewPlayFest, presenting and promoting new theatre works. For more information, visit [aact.org/newplayfest-2020](http://aact.org/newplayfest-2020).



Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest's winning plays in anthologies, and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. Visit [aact.org/dpc](http://aact.org/dpc) for direct links to Dramatic Publishing Company's NewPlayFest anthologies and plays, plus information about discounts and special offers for AACT members.

The 2020 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of *Casserole*, by Pamela Harbaugh, at **Boise Little Theater** in Boise, Idaho, October 18 – November 2, 2019; continued with the world premiere productions of *Shattering*, by Pat Montley, at **Tacoma Little Theatre** in Tacoma, Washington, January 24 – February 9, 2020; *Goat Song Revel*, by Dan Borengasser, at **Manatee Performing Arts Center** in Bradenton, Florida, February 6 – 23, 2020; and *On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell at **The Sauk** in Jonesville, Michigan, February 6 – 16, 2020.

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## Upcoming World Premieres

The 2020 NewPlayFest cycle continues with the two productions listed below. For more information about each play, visit: [aact.org/premieres](http://aact.org/premieres). These productions have been rescheduled from their original dates; the dates listed here are as of *Spotlight's* production schedule. Winning plays will be available for production through Dramatic Publishing Company, following each play's NewPlayFest world premiere.

*The Cayuga Canal Girls* by Laura King  
**Phoenix Stage Company**, Oakville, Connecticut  
rescheduled: June 12 - 21, 2020  
[phoenixstagecompany.org](http://phoenixstagecompany.org), 860-417-2505

*Proprioception* by Marilyn Millstone  
**Rover Dramawerks**, Plano, Texas  
rescheduled: October 2-17, 2020  
[roverdramawerks.com](http://roverdramawerks.com), 972-849-0358

Since 2014, AACT NewPlayFest has worked to select and promote 25 original plays to be produced as world premieres across the country (plus the two listed above scheduled in the 2020 cycle). Yearly anthologies of winning plays are published by Dramatic Publishing Company. ♦

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## AACT NewPlayFest 2022 Submit Scripts Now!

Pam Harbaugh, Playwright

Playwrights around the country need to take note. The American Association of Community Theatre has something wonderful: AACT NewPlayFest 2022.

Finish that original play on your computer's desktop now, because the submission window is May and June, 2020. And you do not want to miss out on what could be the opportunity of a lifetime.

I know, because my play, *Casserole*, was honored as one of the six winners of the 2020 American Association of Community Theatre's NewPlayFest. It had its world premiere in October, 2019 at Boise Little Theatre (BLT).

I will be forever grateful to AACT for that award. It brought me the incredible privilege of working with AACT's world-class dramaturg Kathy Pingel, and the rare opportunity to workshop the play at the Boise Little Theatre. Moreover, it will be published in an anthology with the five other winners.

with the dramaturg and playwright to find and solve problems and then accepted daily changes to the script. Everyone was on a mission – to make *Casserole* the best it could be.

I sat in on early evening rehearsals, conferred with Ms. Pingel, then did my rewrites. Ms. Koepl shared the rewrites with the cast at the beginning of the next rehearsal.

*continued on next page* ►



Strickly Photography



Brad Wm Ooley as Leonard Wilson and Jeanna Vickery as Clair Wilson in the Boise Little Theatre AACT NewPlayFest world premiere production of *Casserole*, by Pam Harbaugh at Boise Little Theatre this past October

Confession here: I couldn't believe my own eyes when the notice came that *Casserole* was a winner. I had to call a girlfriend, read the email to her and ask, "Does this say what I think it does?"

She said "yes" and I got ready for something so very exciting for any playwright, and a first for me: Working with a dramaturg!

Ms. Pingel was extraordinary. In pre-workshop conversations, she helped me smooth out some problematic points. Her suggestions were incisive, sensitive, and respectfully shared.

The workshoping session at BLT was both crucial and fun. Wendy Koepl, the generous director, and her talented cast worked

One crucial moment for me as playwright was realizing the stage was left empty too long in a particular beat. I hadn't noticed the agonizing problem until the play was "up on its feet."

Fortunately, by that time we had all become theater pals and felt free enough to throw ideas against the wall. Ms. Pingel, BLT production manager Patti O'Hara, and I began noodling and came up with a fun and perfect solution.

A loving atmosphere prevailed from the get-go. Pies play a role in the final moment of *Casserole*, so, after the last workshopping rehearsal, I brought a sweet feast to the company as a final thank you.

Three weeks later I returned to Boise for the opening and gala of *Casserole*. Idaho Association of Community Theatre membership vice president Deborah Herzog, along with Ms. O'Hara, made me feel like royalty.

Wanting to sneak in to leave opening night "break a leg" presents to the company, I tiptoed into the green room only to find them all about to have their circle. They opened their arms and invited me to join them. Yes, it was that love-filled.

At the opening, I delighted in hearing people laugh at the jokes, choke up at the deeper moments, and cheer on characters. They even gave out an audible murmur when it looked like the "bad guys" were going to bully the lovable main character. That meant the audience was really invested in the emotional arc of the play. Now *that* was satisfying.

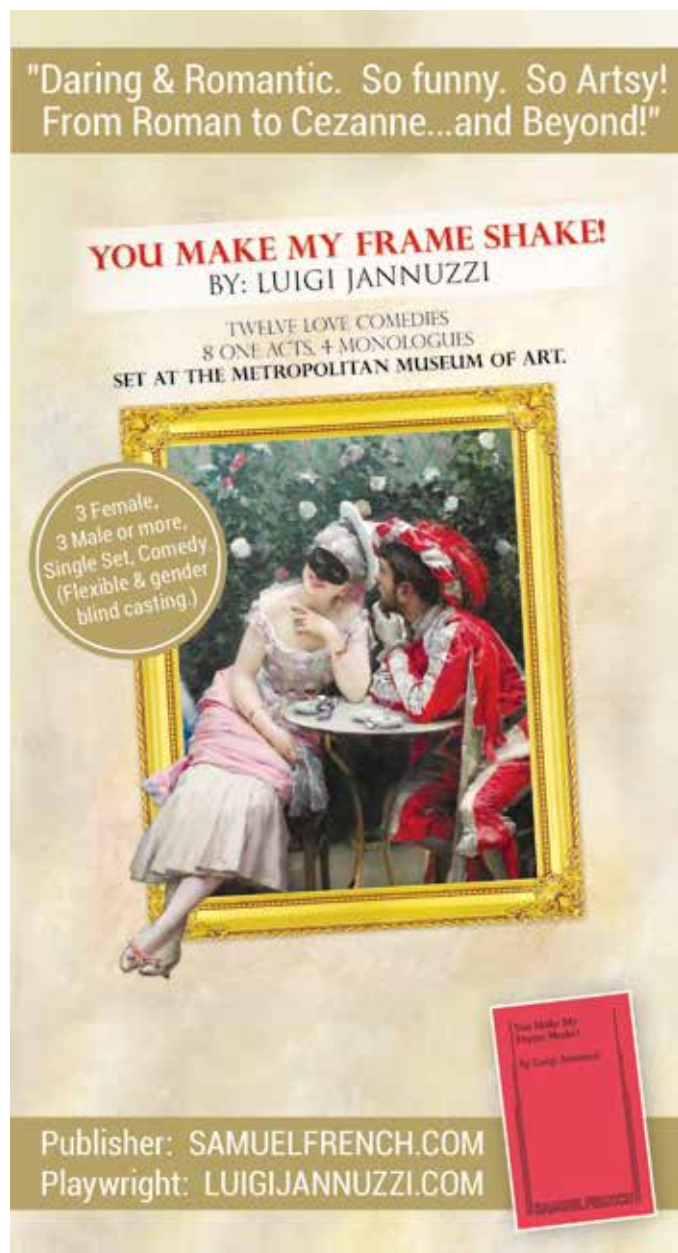
It was especially so because I was sitting next to Carrie Blomquist, editor from Dramatic Publishing, which will be publishing *Casserole* along with the other winners.

The next morning, I attended a spirited Town Hall meeting led by AACT's talented Marketing Director David Cockrell, who works tirelessly promoting live theater. At the Town Hall, which was attended by theater representatives from around Idaho, he introduced Linda Lee, the passionate theater person running the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation, the charitable organization so importantly funding AACT's NewPlayFest.

Indeed. There's no way such a big, national program could exist without the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.

I have many wonderful memories of this unique experience. I've made friends, seen more of the country, improved my play, and found that much needed positive reinforcement to keep writing.

Moreover, the play ended up better thanks to Ms. Pingel, the wonderful, lovable volunteers at Boise Little Theatre, and the visionary leadership at the American Association of Community Theatre. This is such a great experience. I urge playwrights out there to take advantage of it. ♦



## Submit a Script for AACT NewPlayFest 2022

AACT is accepting script submission for AACT NewPlayFest 2022 during May and June, 2020. Details for script submission are available at [aact.org/new2022](http://aact.org/new2022). Non-musical, full-length plays only. Scripts must be unpublished and must not have already received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre's production is to be a world premiere.) Only one script per playwright will be accepted. No fees are required for AACT-member playwrights; there is a \$10 script processing fee for nonmembers. For more information and script formatting guidelines, visit [aact.org/new2022](http://aact.org/new2022).

## Be a Reviewer

Dedicated volunteers read and score the scripts, evaluating them in several rounds of reviews. Join this exciting process by being a Reviewer. You'll find application form and more information at [aact.org/new2022](http://aact.org/new2022).

Chris Serface, Director of Tacoma Little Theatre's AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere, *Shattering*, by Pat Montely, says, "If you have the opportunity to be a part of the NewPlayFest as an author or a producing theatre, I highly recommend it. It will breathe new life into how you approach a project."





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**If you or your theatre are having financial difficulties, reach out to Karen at [karen@aact.org](mailto:karen@aact.org) to discuss payment plan options.**

**\*\*** If your organization has previously not paid electronically, we ask that you start doing so online at [aact.org](http://aact.org). This will minimize exposure of our team by avoiding physical presence at the post office box and bank locations. If you require assistance, please let us know. AACT will be moving all membership join/renew processes online by 2021- 2022. Paper invoicing will be available by request.



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## AACT's Washington State Town Hall: Creative Community Leadership

Lori Hardin  
Stage West Community Theatre

Representatives from theatres in the State of Washington (and one from Oregon) came together in January to discuss challenges and successes in local theatre, and to learn what benefits and resources are offered by AACT as part of its mission to help theatres thrive.

Hosted by AACT and the Washington State Community Theatre Association (WSCTA), the town hall was held at the historic Tacoma Little Theatre, which had opened Pat Montley's *Shattering* (an AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere) the night before.

"The collaborative atmosphere could be felt as soon as one entered the lobby," says AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland. "Seeing old friends and meeting new ones is one of the constant benefits of any AACT or WSCTA workshop. Everyone leaves feeling recharged and ready to put that energy into their own company."

Attendees represented all aspects of theatre, from artistic and managing directors, to board members and actors, and from educators and technical designers, to the ever-present "those who do it all." Playwright Pat Montley was there as well, offering insight from her own perspective and experiences.

**While many specific challenges were raised, there were also many success stories**

Discussion topics included how community theatres can find new works, manage their business, create safe environments, and utilize the strength of national representation. Rising costs of royalties brought about a conversation of how AACT might

*continued on next page* ►



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(l-r) Jennifer Van Bruggen Hamilton, Consultant at Oregon Coast Council for the Arts; Jon Douglas Rake, AACT Region IX Rep/Tacoma Musical Playhouse Founder and Managing Artistic Director; Keith Gebbrig, Edmonds Driftwood Players; and John Munn, Lakewood Playhouse Managing Artistic Director enjoy networking at the AACT/WSCTA Washington Town Hall at Tacoma Little Theatre, January 25, 2020

Washington Town Hall continued from page 25

use its considerable national presence as a bargaining tool to help keep costs down, especially for smaller companies.

Many theatres were interested in how and where to find permanent spaces for their work, while others touted the flexibility of moving around and collaborating with other organizations. Several nonprofit agencies were introduced as resources for information and guidance in the area of operations, including 501 Consultants in Cashmere, Washington, at 501Commons.org, and WANonprofits.org.

While many specific challenges were raised, there were also many success stories—the welcome acquisition of a space, a fundraiser that exceeded its goals, a board that actively works for its company. Not surprisingly, as ideas and solutions poured out, attendees were busily taking notes.

“Ideas that work for companies are always appreciated,” Clark-Roland observes, “as are all those things that make our time in theatre worthwhile.”

The meeting was attended by approximately 40 people, representing 12 theatres. It was facilitated by AACT’s Clark-Roland, along with AACT Region IX Representative Jon Douglas Rake, NewPlayFest Dramaturge and AACT Education Director Kathy Pingel, Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation representative Linda M. Lee, and WSCTA President Ted Miller.

Miller was particularly pleased with the event, noting there are “between 70 to 80 community theatres in Washington, which gives us a large base for the sharing of resources.”

Chris Serface, Managing Artistic Director for host Tacoma Little Theatre, adds: “We want to thank everyone for participating in this town hall, and hope to see more of this type of meeting in the future. We appreciate what AACT offers all of us.” ♦

*Lori Hardin is the Secretary of the Board at Stage West Community Theater in Ocean Shores, Washington. She enjoys the practical side of theater by keeping minutes and producing newsletters to keep members informed. As a director, she enjoys working with diverse casts and crews. She is always looking for ways to help the theater grow and succeed, and loves working with the many committed volunteers that make up Stage West Community Theatre. She is especially proud of taking a show to the AACT Region IX AACTFest in 2019, the only company in Grays Harbor to do so.*





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Jamie Peterson

After theatres begin to reopen, it may be necessary for us to think about how to shore up programming by collaborating. Here's how we did it.

Like many theatres, we at Players de Noc of Escanaba, Michigan, focus on what we are doing now, and what we are producing next. Before our collaboration, we were creating theatre from the only model we had ever known, and were not growing technically or artistically. This could have been a recipe for stagnation or decline, had it not been for our involvement with AACT.

In 2005 we began to make connections across the state of Michigan and beyond. With each passing year, we cultivated meaningful relationships with other theatres and professionals all over the country. It was through these relationships and connections that we began to forge a new future.

Those relationships were never more important than when, in 2019, Players de Noc undertook the immense task of bringing musical theatre back to the stage of our local college.

Bay College had been without a musical theatre program for five years, and desperately wanted to make this amazing art form available again to its students. Without a curriculum to support such an endeavor, the college opened its doors to the community—and Players de Noc stepped in. Since 2019 was the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the film, *The Wizard of Oz*, staging the musical seemed the perfect way to bring the community together, and return musicals to the Bay College stage.

But how to bring such a large production to life in a college theatre without the needed resources or staff? The answer came

through the relationship that we had built with the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, through our mutual involvement with AACT.

Although over 380 miles and the Mackinac Bridge separate our two theatres, you would never know it by the relationship we've forged. When Players de Noc was faced with the challenge of producing a grand scale musical in a new space, with a cast of 60 actors ranging in age from 8 to 70, we knew help would be ready when needed—in this case, from the Grand Rapids Civic costume and prop shops. A phone call and a few emails later, our truck and trailer were in route to Grand Rapids, and met with hugs, smiles, and helping hands. The staff of Grand Rapids Civic loaded over 300 different costume and prop pieces into the trailer and vehicles for the trip back to Escanaba. Their generous act of support and kindness made *The Wizard of Oz* possible. And it continued on a more personal level, when members of Grand Rapids Civic made the journey all the way to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to attend the opening weekend



Michael Hall

*Toto captivated the audience in the Players de Noc production of The Wizard of Oz. The fully robotic Toto was designed, built, and operated by RoboMos, the Escanaba High School Robotics Team*



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*The production crew of the Players de Noc production of The Wizard of Oz in the Besse Theatre on the campus of Bay College*

*Kneeling (l-r): Heather Grimes, Jamie Peterson, Jenny Heller*

*Standing middle row (l-r): Jessie VanZile, Ashley Westlund, Chris Perryman, Lindsey Hazzlett, Alex Reynolds, Jack Peterson, Gabe Kluka, Laura Kluka, Pete Ammel, Annie Kluka, Lou Reynolds, Pete Dzanbozoff, Jacquelyn Troutman, Isiah Trent, Nick Troutman, Josiah Lawrence, Kaitlyn Millan, Jeff Woerpel, Lisa Glish, Beth Peterson, Mariah Lee, Kim Rabitoy, Sally Flippin, Mackenzie Niswonger, Abby Hill, Laura Haagensen, Theresa Lemire, Sema Deeds*

*Elevated back row (l-r): Thomas Kluka, Braden Beauchamp, Adam Miller, Kathy Woodbury, Jessica Houle, Brennan Richardson, Sam Komay, Meredith Seppanen, Bridget Bichler, Amanda Norkoli, Jenny Knauf, Katie Zorza*

performances of the show. The cast of *The Wizard of Oz* even had the opportunity of having their performance adjudicated by an AACT Adjudicator who was also a member of the Grand Rapids Civic family.

Yet another relationship was forged when Players de Noc and Bay College partnered with the Escanaba High School Robotics Team, known as the RoboMos, who designed, built, and operated a fully robotic version of Dorothy's beloved dog, Toto. The remote-controlled Toto captivated the audience with its life-like movements and reactions on stage. This partnership between the community theatre and high school robotics engineering was the first of its kind, and has made a lasting impact on our entire community.

It is the continuing efforts of AACT in bringing together community theatres that has made these connections and relationships possible. We've proved that by reaching outside our own groups, we can help make community theatre stronger and more vibrant, expanding our horizons and motivating each other to improve and advance our art. ♦

*Jamie Peterson is a 27-year veteran of Players de Noc Theatre in Escanaba, Michigan. He is an award-winning actor, designer, and accredited AACT Adjudicator. Jamie also serves on the executive board for the Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM).*



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# 5 Actors and a Space Scientist Walk into a Planetarium...

Flying home from a national AACTFest with my head full of images, thoughts, and ideas is nothing new. I've been attending these festivals for 23 years and always return better educated, happier, and more inspired.

After the 2019 festival hosted by Gettysburg Community Theatre, my thoughts kept returning to the production of the drama *Silent Sky*, performed by the Salina Community Theatre



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of Salina, Kansas. I kept thinking about the story, the visuals—and the Jim and Linda Lee Planetarium located on the campus of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU), located in my home town of Prescott, Arizona.

The idea of utilizing the planetarium to perform this piece just wouldn't leave me—and so the universe became our theatre. With ERAU Professor Sean Jeralds as the producer, we were able to form a partnership with the university, and create a palpable fusion of art and science.

Performing theatre in such a unique space had its challenges, but the rewards were immense:

**1. Time constraints:** Performances in the space usually last about an hour.

**Solution:** Get permission to use the Salina Community Theatre's beautiful one-hour festival cutting of the show, and secure permission from Dramatists Play Service to perform the cutting.



*Joanne Robertson, Sean Jeralds, Karen Murphy, Melanie Ewbank Snyder in the ERAU production of Silent Sky in the Jim and Linda Lee Planetarium*

**2. Performing area 18X7 feet**, with no separation between performing area and first row of seats.

**Solution:** No audience in the first row of seats, and keep those seats folded for added space and quick access to props and minor costume pieces. Although this reduced available seating to



101 per performance, it did increase performance space and solve some lighting issues. We also kept set pieces small and props and costumes to a minimum.

**2. Limited lighting:** The planetarium is traditionally used for lectures, or to project visuals on the overhead dome. Other than the dome, there are two static lights, stage right and stage left, used to light presenters in the performance area.

**Solution:** Borrow two pole lights traditionally used for small traveling shows. Since the traveling light board was not compatible with the Planetarium equipment, it was operated independently but in coordination with the Planetarium's dome features. We used a mixture of static and moving images, designed to enhance but not interfere with the action of the play.

Karen Murphy



Dr. Lara Ismert and Joanne Robertson in the ERAU production of *Silent Sky*

I worked with Planetarium Director Eric Edelman to find graphics that helped establish a sense of place, and enhance educational aspects of the show. When appropriate to the script, other projections made full use of the planetarium dome and highlighted the glorious universe in light, movement, and sound.

ERAU paid royalty expenses and handled ticket sales, while the Women in Aviation Group provided interactive flight experiences in the lobby.

## Results & Rewards

We've learned there's no need to be afraid of performing in non-traditional spaces. The use of the planetarium dome more than made up for the challenges of the limited performance space, and our production was met with great enthusiasm, and 92% capacity ticket sales for the four-performance run. All proceeds benefited the ERAU Science, Technology, Engineering and Math's outreach efforts. The audience was a great mix of the general community, theatregoers, and ERAU students and staff (including nationally known ERAU Physicists).

One of the best compliments was from an ERAU professor and Harvard alum.

"Seeing these images and hearing this story," he said, "the memories of Harvard and the work came rushing back...wow!" ♦

*Linda Miller has served community theatre on the local, state, and national level for 30 years as an actor, director, State Contact, and board/committee member. She is a Founding Member of the AACT Legacy Endowment and in 2017 was honored to be named an AACT Fellow. Linda recently created Get AACTing Arizona, helping underwrite costs for individuals from Arizona Organizational Member theatres to attend AACT National festivals or conferences. "Community theatre is like magic....it can happen anywhere".*

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# Theatres Sought to Represent U.S. at 2021 Mondial du Theatre

Tim Jebesen, AACT International Committee Chair

Since 1957, the Mondial du Theatre has been hosted by the Studio de Monaco every four years in Monte Carlo, as an international theatre festival, with the support of AITA/IATA, the international amateur theatre organization. Also taking place during the 10-day festival, are the World Forum and General Assembly, both important events in the AITA/IATA calendar.

Since the first festival, organized by Princess Grace, the United States remains one of only four countries represented at this international event every four years. With that in mind, AACT—as the national representative of the USA for AITA/IATA—is currently seeking applications from theatre companies to represent the U.S. at the Mondial du Theatre in late August, 2021.

Productions must be 60 minutes or less, and be accessible to audience members who do not speak English. In the past, pieces with movement or music have performed particularly well for this international audience. Thus, companies with shows that don't rely entirely on dialogue are especially encouraged to apply.



Tim Jebesen

*Audiences await a production in Monte Carlo at the 2017 Mondail du Theatre Festival*

Companies interested in representing the USA should contact Tim Jebesen at [tim@mctmidland.org](mailto:tim@mctmidland.org), prior to August 1, 2020, as applications are due to Monaco in September 2020. Performance troupes for the 2021 festival will be selected by the Mondial prior to January 1, 2021. ♦

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# AACT Announces 2020 National Awards

AACT is proud to announce the recipients of the 2020 AACT National Awards.

## Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award

*Honors a lifetime of leadership in community theatre by members of AACT who have provided leadership at the national level, in addition to local and/or regional levels*



**Kathy Pingel** (North Port, Florida) served as the Director of Education and Youth Programming at the Des Moines Community Playhouse for 10 years prior to her retirement in 2015. She also served as the Artistic Director of the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. Kathy wrote the curriculum for the AACT Adjudication Workshop and has adjudicated theatre at the state, regional, national, and international levels. She facilitated

the AACT's Theatre Education Directors' Conference, and is currently the dramaturge for the NewPlayFest competition, and AACT's Co-Cordinator for Education. Kathy holds an M.A. in performance studies and teaching from Northwestern University, and has taught and directed in Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Iowa, Michigan, and Ansbach, Germany. In 2017 Kathy was named an AACT Fellow by her peers.

## Diamond Crown Organization Award

*Recognizes longevity and vitality of AACT member theatres that have expanded programming and/or facilities in the past ten years and have the administrative leadership to remain vital to their communities for the next ten years. Recipients must have been in continuous operation for 75 years, and organizational members of AACT for the past ten years*



**Theatre Memphis** (Memphis, Tennessee) will celebrate its 100th anniversary of continuous operation with the 2020-2021 season. Emphasizing consistent artistic excellence, strong leadership, and financial stability, the theatre's long-range strategic plan is focused on meeting current and future programming, as well as facility needs. As a charter member of AACT, Theatre Memphis was the winner of the AACT International Festival in 1974 and hosted the national AACTFest in 1991. In January 2020, Theatre Memphis was named Best Community Theater by Regional Broadway

World. Executive Producer Debbie Litch and her staff of 15 average 10 years with the company, and shepherd the 700 volunteers supporting the theatre's expanding activities. Company President Dabney Coors says, "Our mission—to provide outstanding theatrical experiences to enrich the lives of our audiences, participants, and diverse community—has led to record-breaking ticket sales and attendance, as well as an outreach program that reaches up to 30,000 underserved students through theater education, playwriting, and productions."

## Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award

*Recognizes AACT member theatres for successfully completing major steps in new directions, expanding services to their community, or moving to the next level of organizational development*



**Shawnee Little Theatre** (Shawnee, Oklahoma) began in the summer of 1967 as the brainchild of two college students home for the summer, and their energetic former drama teacher. Now in its 53rd year and over 225 productions later, the great, great grandchildren of its charter members carry on the tradition. In 2015, the

Oklahoma Center for Non-Profits chose SLT to receive a ONE Award for Excellence and Community Service for its dedication to providing theatre arts to the area. Alliances with Oklahoma Baptist University and the Shawnee Public Schools drama departments allow the theatre to support local youth activities through workshops, scholarship funds, support with their productions, and the creation of "town and gown" productions that offer university students coursework in all phases of community theatre musical production. This past January, SLT teamed with a local non-profit, Safe Events for Families, to produce *The Marvelous Wonderettes* at the historic Ritz Theatre. Staffed totally by volunteers, SLT continues to enrich, entertain, and educate its community into a sixth decade.

*continued on next page* ►

## David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

*Recognizes individual members of AACT for significant, valuable, and lasting service to community theatre*



**Norm McPhee** (Racine, Wisconsin) holds B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees in theatre arts from Utah State University, and served as the Managing/Artistic Director of the Racine Theatre Guild (RTG) for 32 years until his retirement in 2001. Norm directed more than 200 shows while at the helm, and under his guidance, the Guild became the largest community theatre in Wisconsin. He is a founding member of AACT, and served for many years

on its International and Festival committees. Norm also oversaw construction of the Guild's million-dollar theatre facility, developed a season ticket program, and began an educational outreach program for school children from four countries. He has received numerous awards, including the AACT 1993 Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership, Wisconsin Theatre Association's Life Service Award, the Cultural Achievement Award from the Theatre Society of the Republic of Georgia, and the Wisconsin Governor's Award.

## Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award

*Presented to individuals above the age of 65 who have faithfully served community theatre on a non-paid basis for over 25 years*



**Susie Polito** (Midland, Michigan) is "a force to be reckoned with," according to the Midland Center for the Arts. "In our region, her name is synonymous with community theatre. She is one of those volunteers who comes around once a generation, and when she wants something done, she does it." In addition to her time on stage, which began 40 years ago, Susie has directed numerous productions, including a 2009 production of *To*

*Kill a Mockingbird* that fostered a relationship with Northwood University and the Dow Chemical diversity network. She serves as a mentor to young artists, giving them encouragement and confidence, and has served on theatre committees, task forces, and the Board of Directors. In addition to her many volunteer efforts, Susie also ran the theatre program at Northwood University, in Midland, Michigan.



**Debra Robison** (Tupelo, Mississippi) attended an audition at the Lyric Theatre, home of Tupelo Community Theatre (TCT), in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1994 for *Hello Dolly!*—and was cast in the chorus. Little did anyone know at the time, that her tenure with TCT would last more than a quarter of a century, and that she would mean so much to the organization. A talented pianist and singer, Debra found TCT a perfect outlet. She served as a volun-

teer music director for many musicals, occasionally stepping in when another musical director had to step out of the show. She was first elected to the board of TCT in 2000, and has served a total of more than 15 years, currently completing her second year as President. Debra has served on every committee and has been a driving force in TCT's success and phenomenal growth. As a paralegal with a local law firm, Debra lends that expertise to TCT as well – volunteering countless hours, writing and procuring much-needed grants.



**Charles Wilson** (Lynn Haven, Florida) formed the Kaleidoscope Theatre in 1971, with fellow Bay High teacher Anna Kelley. Charlie wrote the company's first production, using mostly students from his class as actors. There were 13 people in the first audience, and 18 actors on stage. To date (nearly 50 years later) his company has mounted nearly 300 productions. Although Kaleidoscope Theatre's building was destroyed by Hurricane

Michael in 2018, the rebuilding was accelerated significantly because Charlie had already designed a new facility with plans both on paper and as a physical model. His continued involvement included directing, acting, designing and building logos, sets, and costumes, while serving on the Board of Directors. "Charlie Wilson has been the heart of Kaleidoscope for all these years," says its Board of Directors. "When we needed a show, he wrote one; when we needed costumes, he learned to design and sew; when we needed a set, he designed and built it. Charlie has done it all."





## Distinguished Merit Award

*Presented to individuals and organizations in recognition of contributions made to promote and develop the highest standards for community theatre*



**Kristi Gautsche** (Hillsdale, Michigan) has been involved with Hillsdale Community Theatre (The Sauk) since 1983, when she began accompanying rehearsals and productions. In 1991, she served as musical director for the first time, and since then has been responsible for the musical direction of almost all of The Sauk's musical productions. Kristi has served on the theatre's Board of Directors multiple times, and has been the chair of the

theatre's play selection committee for the past three seasons. She has been named Hillsdale County Artist of the Year, and given the Hillsdale Exchange Club's Book of Golden Deeds Award, for which she received two special tributes from the state of Michigan. "For me, being involved with community theatre has been a privilege," she says. "I not only get to work in an art form I love, but I get to do it with a group of people who are multi-generational, from different cultures and lifestyles, and who come together as family."



**Steven Helsel** (Altoona, Pennsylvania) was for 31 years, until his death in 2018, Altoona Community Theatre's "Mister ACT," playing a number of roles. "From Box Office Manager to full-time Operations Manager, to flagship Executive Director, to the most beloved artist in our troupe, Steve carried us," says the nomination. "Beyond our organization, he provided leadership and outstanding service to the local arts community,

going far above and beyond his job description—making sure that ACT had a presence at the Blair County Arts Festival, the Altoona Curve, and the Mishler's Family Theatre season." Statewide, Steve was instrumental in building the Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres, and was the driving force behind ACT's presence at the state and ESTA regional theatre festivals. He was also responsible for bringing a piece of Altoona to the Third Yakumo International Theatre Festival in Japan in 2007. "Thousands admired his talents and creativity, his generosity of spirit, his work ethic, his integrity, and his ineffable presence and humor," say those who nominated Steven.

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**Pamela Livingstone** (Hickory, North Carolina) has worked as an actor, writer, teacher, and director in professional theatre, but found community theatre the place she calls home. During her time as the 'artistic vision' of Hickory Community Theatre (HCT), she created the RugBug Theatre and Hickory Community Theatre Endowment fund, and survived an extensive theatre remodeling. Because of her longtime passion for both new works and classic theater, new

plays and Shakespeare are now regular offerings on the HCT stage. Pamela will be retiring after 20 years with HCT, noting that "Twenty years ago, there were virtually no people of color entering the theatre. Any script that wasn't absolutely safe was not really considered, and our building was essentially the same configuration it was since it was built in 1921. Today we have a broad diversity of people participating at all levels, an incredibly wide variety of shows presented, and a renovated building that supports our needs and those of our audiences. We keep persisting because we know that theatre changes lives when nothing else can."

## Make A Legacy Gift

Please consider including the 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 AACTFest national festivals.

To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit [aact.org/legacy](http://aact.org/legacy)

or contact the AACT office at [info@aact.org](mailto:info@aact.org)

## Special Recognition Award

*Presented to individuals and organizations in recognition of contributions made to promote and develop the highest standards for community theatre*



**Richard Roberts** (Stuttgart, Germany) is the Theatre Center Director at the Stuttgart Theatre Center, Germany, part of the U.S. Army IMCOM Europe Entertainment program. He began his career with Army Entertainment as a contracted director at the Heidelberg Roadside Theater. In 2005, Richard officially joined the theatre staff as a paid Theatre Specialist, and in 2009 he became the Artistic Director of the Stuttgart Theatre Center. He is known as a

talented director, designer, and performer, whose attention, concern and support of the volunteers and staff has greatly increased the impact of the program on U.S. citizens serving their country overseas. He has received many U.S. Army TOPPERs and One-Act Play Festival awards, and has taken part in several national AACTFest events.

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**Dane Winters** (Kaiserslautern, Germany) is the Entertainment Program Manager, IMCOM Europe. AACT's Region X is comprised of the community theaters on military bases spread throughout Europe and over the late winter and early spring, Dane travels out to each base with two others to adjudicate performances. Last summer, Dane participated in AACT's Adjudication Seminar, a 40-hour class, to bring the best adjudication possible to the region. Although

it is a large region, the theatres would operate in isolation were it not for Dane's steadfast commitment to participation in the AACT festival cycle and providing everyone with top-notch adjudication, extended education opportunities, and the support it takes to run a theatre on a military base. Not only does he travel out, he makes opportunities for the theatres to come together twice a year. Dane inherited this successful program from his predecessor, Jim Sohre, but put his own stamp on the program by inviting performance luminaries to participate in the Region X awards dinner, Toppers, by having them tape the awards announcements. Can you imagine the thrill of having your name and award announced by Kristin Chenoweth, Ben Stiller, or Lin-Manuel Miranda?

## Mort Clark International Achievement Award

*Recognizes individuals and organizations for significant achievement in the promotion of excellence in international community theatre*



**Tim Jebsen** (Midland, Texas) has been an integral part of the international community theatre scene for many years—including serving as an active member of the AACT International Committee. Tim and Midland Community Theatre (MCT) hosted the AACT International Festival in 2006, and he directed MCT productions that performed at international festivals in both Ireland and Norway. He has served as an AACT representative for several meetings of IATA,

the international theatre organization, and in 2015 was elected IATA Vice President, participating on committees to spearhead the 2017 theater festival in Monaco, as well as a committee charged with reorganizing the organization to comply more with today's digital age. Tim completed his VP term in 2019, but continues to advise IATA as needed.

## Shining Star Award

*Recognizes an individual AACT member of any age who has had a significant impact on the advancement of AACT and its mission through leadership and service on a national level*



**Chad-Alan Carr** (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania) is currently the Founding Executive/Artistic Director for the Gettysburg Community Theatre. He was honored to co-facilitate the first two Youth Summits for AACT, and to chair the first-ever Youth Festival at AACTFest 2017, in Rochester, Minnesota. Chad-Alan has directed the Eastern States Regional Premiere of the Penguin Project (theatre for youth with special needs), chartered the International Thespian Troup

#7640 for Gettysburg Area High School, and has served as a board member for the Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres, Eastern States Theatre Association, and AACT. In the summer of 2019, Chad-Alan and the Gettysburg Community Theatre hosted the National AACTFest, prompting glowing praise for the week-long event.

## Artie's Advocacy Tip

*Advocates and state and local arts agencies took action to contact representatives, and your advocacy has been effective.*



Legislation has passed on the COVID-19 response relief package. It offers direct support for both nonprofit cultural organizations and state and local arts and humanities agencies, as well as economic relief provisions for independent contractors, "gig economy" workers and artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses working in the creative economy.

AACT encourages you to stay active in arts advocacy efforts at your local and state levels.

Keep up-to-date on arts-related items to address the continuing damage caused by the COVID-19 virus at [aact.org/covid](http://aact.org/covid) and learn more about the passed Legislation at [aact.org/relief](http://aact.org/relief).

# Spotlight on Discounter



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Courses can be taken for CEU's (Continuing Education Units), and start at just \$79 each. AACT will also provide 1:1

## AACT Web Power

There's so much great information on the AACT website that you may not know where to start. That's one reason that Web Power highlights key features in each issue of *Spotlight*, calling attention to those that AACT members find most helpful.

We've also provided an **updated quick-find list** of these features on our website, including information on networking with other AACT members, incorporating as a nonprofit, basic job descriptions, theatre terminology, our exclusive Play Finder, and much more.

Here's how: On the AACT home page, under the headline "Welcome to AACT," click on "Website Tips," or go directly to [aact.org/power](http://aact.org/power).

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



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[aact.org/mindedge-learning](http://aact.org/mindedge-learning)



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## AACT AACT NewPlayFest 2020

AACT is accepting script submission for AACT NewPlayFest 2022 during May and June, 2020.

Non-musical, full-length plays only. Scripts must be unpublished and must not have already received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre's production is to be a world premiere.) Only one script per playwright will be accepted.

No limit on number of characters. No restrictions on subject (although excessive offensive language, sex, or violence might limit the play's appeal for some community theatres).

The winning plays will be produced by American community theatres between June, 2021 and December, 2022. Producing Theatres are committed to a production of at least three performances with full production values. Submission of a script includes acceptance of production, if selected.

The Producing Theatre will pay the playwright a royalty of \$50 per performance.



AACT has contracted with Dramatic Publishing Company to publish an anthology of the winning plays. Submission includes acceptance of publication in the anthology.

Productions will be publicized locally and nationally as World Premieres. Winning playwrights will be invited to travel to the respective Producing Theatres for a workshopping of the script with an AACT selected dramaturge and a performance.

No fee for AACT members  
\$10 Submission Fee for non-members

Submission Deadline: June 30, 2020

Details: [aact.org/new2022](http://aact.org/new2022).

## Southeastern Theatre Conference Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest

The Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest is dedicated to the discovery, development, and publicizing of worthy new plays and playwrights. One winning script will be selected.

To be eligible for the contest, the submitting playwright must be a current member of SETC, reside in the SETC region (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), or attend a college or university within the SETC region.

One winning playwright receives a \$1,000 cash award and an all-expense paid trip to SETC's annual convention, where both a critique and staged reading of the winning play are held. The winning play is also considered for online publication and a feature in *Southern Theatre* magazine.

Submitted work must be by one playwright only. No collaborations or adaptations will be considered. Submitting a jointly written play under the name of only one author, or a play that was developed in collaboration with other artists such as a collaboratively produced devised work, adaptation of another writer's work, or in conjunction with librettists and/or composers will not be considered. One submission per playwright only.

Submitted work must be either a full-length play or thematically related one acts which constitute a full-length play when performed together; no musicals or children's plays.

Plays must be unproduced (no professional productions; readings and workshops are acceptable) and unpublished. Any play which has had more than one consecutive performance by a

non-college or university theatre which charged admission and/or had a review will not be considered. Plays submitted in prior years may not be resubmitted.

Submissions (email attachment only) to:  
[info@setc.org](mailto:info@setc.org)

Deadline: June 1, 2020

Details: [setc.org/scholarships-awards/awards/getchell-new-play-contest/](http://setc.org/scholarships-awards/awards/getchell-new-play-contest/)



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Director of Theatre at **Cayuga Community College** (New York)/AACT Board Member at Large/AACT Design Competition Coordinator **Bob Frame** visits with **USITT** Executive Director **David Grindle** about the AACT Design Competition at the Upstate New York **USITT Winter Meeting** in Syracuse, New York, February 1, 2020. **USITT** is an AACT Corporate Partner and sponsors the AACT Design Competition held during the AACTFest national festival



David Arnelino

Alex Crescenti



**Manatee Performing Arts Center** Producing Artistic Director/AACT Board President **Rick Kerby** and AACT Executive Director **Quiana Clark-Roland** enjoy the opening of the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Goat Song Revel* at **Manatee Performing Arts Center** in Bradenton, Florida, February 6, 2020

Enjoying a pre-show dinner before the opening of the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *On Pine Knoll Street* at **The Sauk** in Jonesville, Michigan (l-r) AACT Dramaturge **Kathy Pingel**, AACT Corporate Partners Manager **Jill Patchin**, AACT Past President/**Jack K Ayre** and **Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation** representative **Linda M. Lee**, **Grand Rapids Civic Theatre** Director of Volunteers and Operations/AACTFest Volunteer Coordinator **Mary Jo DeNolf**, AACT Marketing and Communications Director **David Cockerell**, and **The Sauk** Executive Director **Trinity Bird**, February 7, 2020



David Cockerell

continued on next page ►

# Harris Cashes Out!

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Publisher: [www.canadianplayoutlet.com](http://www.canadianplayoutlet.com)



*AACT Region I Representative **Bevie Lord** visits with the cast and AACT Dramaturge during the workshop of the AACT NewPlayFest production of *The Cayuga Canal Girls* by **Laura King** at **Phoenix Stage Company** in Oakville, Connecticut, February 12, 2020*

*Seated (l-r): cast members **Teresa Alexandru**, **Debbie Goodman**, **Lori Poulin***

*Back row (l-r): playwright **Laura King**, AACT dramaturge **Kathy Pingel**, cast members **KC Ross** and **Cheyenne Walent**, AACT Region I Rep **Bevie Lord***



Ed Bassett



Chad-Alan Carr

***Gettysburg Community Theatre** (Pennsylvania) Founder and Executive Director/AACT Board Member at Large **Chad-Alan Carr** visits the new offices of AACT Corporate Partner **Music Theatre International (MTI)** and said hello to his MTI Rep/Amateur Licensing Representative **Kaitlin Stern** in Manhattan, New York, February 18, 2020*

Quiana Clark-Roland



*AACT Executive Director **Quiana Clark-Roland** and AACT Vice-President of Festivals **Jim Walker** visit with SETC Community Theatre Festival Adjudicators during the **SETC Convention** in Louisville, Kentucky, February 28, 2020*

*(l-r): AACT Executive Director **Quiana Clark-Roland**, SETC Community Theatre Festival Adjudicator/Head of Directing at Western Illinois University **Hadley Kamminga-Peck**, SETC Community Theatre Festival Adjudicator/Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at Western Illinois University **Tammy Killian**, AACT Vice-President of Festivals/**Aberdeen Community Theatre** (South Dakota) Artistic Managing Director **Jim Walker***







*AACT was well represented at the SETC 2020 Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, February 26-29, 2020.*

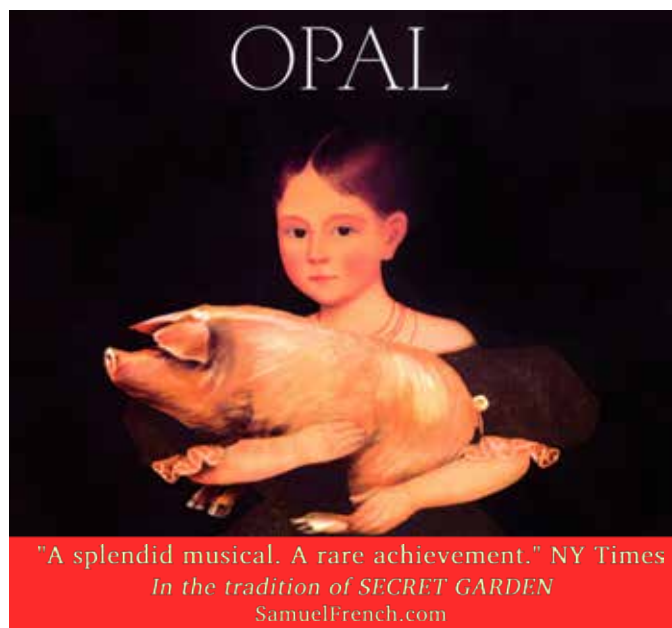
*(l-r): Wetumpka Depot Players (Alabama) Executive Director/ AACT Region IV-B Representative Kristy Meanor, Tupelo Community Theatre (Mississippi) Board Member/AACT Region IV-A Representative Lynn Nelson, Aberdeen Community Theatre (South Dakota) Artistic Managing Director/AACT Vice President of Festivals Jim Walker, AACT Corporate Partners Manager Jill Patchin, AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland, Tupelo Community Theatre (Mississippi) Executive Director/AACT Board Member at Large Tom Booth*



Frieda Austin

*AACT Texas State Contact/TNT Quad 2 Liaison Susan Austin hosted the Quad 2 meeting at Texas Nonprofit Theatres' (TNT) Annual Conference at Playhouse 2000 in Kerrville, Texas, March 14, 2020*

*(l-r): James Nicholson (East Texas Heritage Theatre [Henderson]), Olamide Oladeji (University of Texas at Arlington/TNT Intern finalist), Olivia Andrade (Texas Woman's University [Denton]/TNT Intern finalist), David Hill (Warehouse Living Arts Center [Corsicana]), Susan Austin (AACT Texas State Contact), Wanda Schenk (Lamp-Lite Theatre [Nacogdoches]/TNT Board Member), Melanie Brumit (Tyler Civic Theatre), Zeferino Ramirez (Texas Woman's University/TNT Intern finalist), D'Kameron Edmonson (Tyler Junior College/TNT Intern finalist), Tyler Baker (Tyler Junior College/TNT Intern finalist), Jonathan Vineyard (Stephen F. Austin State University [Nacogdoches]/TNT Intern finalist)*



# Creating A Brave New World

## A Message from USITT

Empty space. At least at this writing, we all have it: small community playhouses, intimate regional theatres, grand Broadway palaces. Empty space is a great leveler.

All of that emptiness can be soul-crushing and overwhelming. Empty, says the thesaurus, is synonymous with meaninglessness and purposelessness. These are not exciting propositions.

On the evening of March 11, 2020, the USITT Board of Directors made the unanimous decision to cancel our 60th Annual Conference & Stage Expo, scheduled to begin in less than a month. Everyone knew it was the correct choice, even though the sense of emptiness was palpable.

As USITT was experiencing this tectonic shift, so was the world around us. A week later, non-essential businesses in New York state were shuttered.

By that time, USITT's National Office staff had already moved operations to our home offices and living rooms. The staff worked in two camps: the first, trying to build a plan to refund registrations for the thousands of would-be attendees and exhibitors; and the second, developing out of thin air a complex matrix of online educational and informational programming for the benefit of our members and our industry.

We had never done either before. There were a few hiccups, but we learned a lot. We learned that banking and credit card systems are not as nimble as most people think; we learned patience is important even when everyone seems to want everything from you yesterday; we learned that you can have

ideas, set up programming, move mountains, and hit deadlines under conditions that could realistically be defined only as "battlefield."

We didn't learn it from this crisis. We learned it from spending our lives in the theatre.



As USITT mobilized a coast-to-coast army of volunteers and staff to put on an online show—multiple, daily online shows—we solicited designers to share their work on cancelled productions so that we could showcase it on our social channels, and we developed a weekly e-newsletter for our industry.

When theatres – and concert halls, intimate gathering spaces, opera houses, municipal auditoriums, and convention centers – turn on their lights again, one important aspect of that return are the designers and technicians who will help create the places to which our audiences will be eager to escape.

Creating programming for multiple audiences, in multiple disciplines, and at multiple skill levels, is something that USITT once did almost exclusively in person. We now have a program that we plan to carry forward and expand online, even when we can gather again.

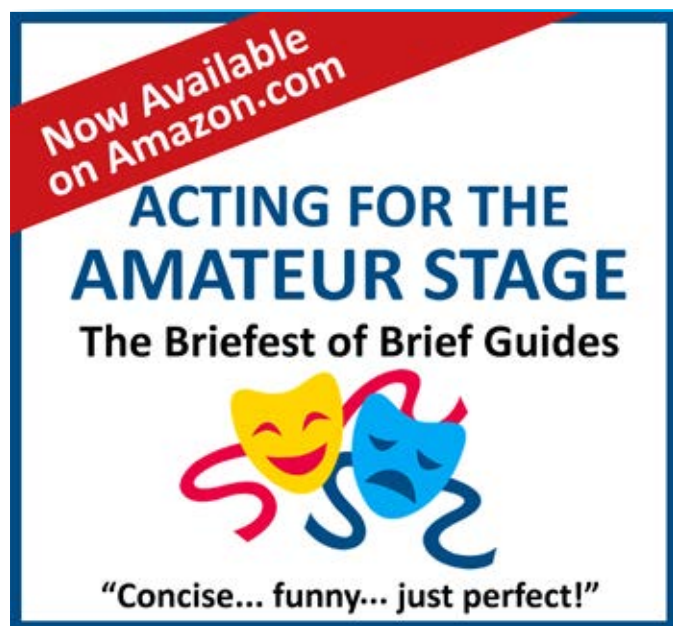
As the great theatre writer and director Peter Brook wrote, "No fresh and new experience is possible if there isn't a pure, virgin space ready to receive it."

A blank canvas. A clean slate. A better idea. A brave new world. The overwhelming nature of emptiness instead becomes exhilarating when we think about what we can create to fill the void. Sometimes when we receive a gift, we don't immediately recognize it as such. ♦

As an organization, USITT is dedicated to the professional development of those who are an integral part of the performing arts and entertainment industry. USITT is an AACT Corporate Partner.

To take advantage of USITT's online education and training opportunities, visit [www.usitt.org](http://www.usitt.org).

To view the designs of cancelled productions, visit USITT's Instagram channel, @USITT. To submit a design of a cancelled production for inclusion in this series, email David Armelino at [david.armelino@usitt.org](mailto:david.armelino@usitt.org).







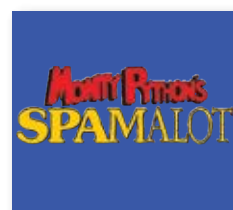
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When	What/Who	Where	Information
May 8	AACT International Committee Meeting	Virtual	817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/calendar
June 6	AACT Board Meeting	Virtual	817-732-3177 x2 aact.org/calendar
June 6	AACT Annual Membership Meeting	Virtual	817-732-3177 x2 aact.org/calendar
June 12-21	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>The Cayuga Canal Girls</i> by Laura King at Phoenix Stage Company	CT Oakville	203-632-8546 phoenixstagecompany.org
June 22-27	International Thespian Festival	IN Bloomington	513-421-3900 schooltheatre.org/itf

For dates further ahead, check the website: [aact.org/calendar](http://aact.org/calendar)

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We need your input.

AACT is a resource and advocate for you and your theatre. We need to know about the impact this is having on your operations, so we can work to address these issues and assist you best.

**[aact.org/survey](https://aact.org/survey)**

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**April 17 - May 15, 2020**