spotlight

March/April 2021 \$5.00

american association of community theatre



Community
Theatre
Management
Conference

AACT Design Competition: Best of the Decade Virtual
AACTFest
2021

AACT Virtual
Youth Conference

How to Get the Most from a Virtual Conference





Chris Serface
AACT President

Can you believe it's been a year since our world changed drastically? I know I can't. At my theatre, we were one week into a four-week run of *A Chorus Line*—that, based on ticket sales, would have been our most popular and profitable show in the last seven years. The set is still standing on our stage, waiting for the 32 cast and crew members to reassemble and create that one singular sensation, when it is safe to do so.

Over the last year, community theatres like ours have learned new techniques and ways to engage our patrons. The creativity across the country has been simply amazing. From parking lot theatre to full-fledged productions, from physically distanced cabarets to Virtual Shakespeare, we haven't slowed down. This last year stands as a testament to how important theatre is to all the communities we serve.

Now is the time to get ready for our next act. As more and more citizens become vaccinated, we have the opportunity to establish a "new normal," by taking all that we've learned over the last year, and incorporating it into how we produce and approach theatre. One of the best opportunities for doing this is Virtual AACTFest 2021. We'll have the opportunity to see how 12 marvelous companies have navigated the pandemic,

and managed to produce mind-blowing theatre. We'll also have the chance to participate in a tremendous slate of workshops that will hone our skills for both virtual and in-person programming.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in June for AACTFest. Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland and her staff have been working day and night to make sure it will be a festival to remember. One of the best things you can do for your theatre now is to register for the festival. Think of it as an investment in your future—as well as helping us know how many attendees we'll have, and whether we need to expand our workshop offerings and events.

Stay healthy and stay safe!

CO: Derlone



March/April 2021

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On the Cover

A Colvin Theatrical camera operator records a live theatrical production. Colvin Theatrical crews will capture each live Virtual AACTFest 2021 National Company production, utilizing four professional Blackmagic 6K cinema cameras. See the cinematic broadcasts of the National Company theatre performances during Virtual AACTFest 2021, June 14-20

Photo: Cody Colvin

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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.



Post photos on Instagram







3 ESSENTIALS FOR POST-COVID TICKETING

Let patrons purchase with confidence with self-performed exchanges, refund requests, and even gifting tickets back to the theater.

Minimize contact and keep everyone safe with socially distanced seating, virtual events for those that cannot attend, advanced concession sales and touchless payments.

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VII Donna Fisher Casper, WY (2021)

VIII TBD

IX Jon Douglas Rake Tacoma, WA (2021)

X Dane Winters Germany (US Army) (2021)

Upcoming Events

Southeastern Theatre Conference Virtual Convention

March 3-7 convention.setc.org

USITT 2021 Virtually Anywhere

March 8–12

usitt.org/conference21

AACT Community Theatre Management Conference, Session 1

March 12-14 aact.org/ctmc

AACT Adjudication Seminar

March 20-May 8—six Saturday virtual sessions, two hours per session; plus virtual sessions during Virtual AACTFest 2021 aact.org/seminar

World Theatre Day 2021

March 27 world-theatre-day.org

AACT Community Theatre Management Conference, Session 2

April 9-11 aact.org/ctmc

National Arts Action Summit, virtually

April 5-9

Arts Advocacy Week, virtually

April 12-16

americansforthearts.org/events/ national-arts-action-summit

AACT Summer Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday, May 22

The AACT Board of Directors Meeting will be held May 22 via Zoom. The AACT Board, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams will meet virtually for the 2021 AACT Summer Meetings.

Virtual AACTFest 2021

June 14-20 aact.org/21

AACT Virtual Youth Theatre Conference 2021

July 12-16 aact.org/youth

Correction

In the listing of AACT Contributors 2019-2020 in the January/February 2021 Spotlight, Priscilla Althaus should have been included in the Producer category of donors. AACT greatly appreciates Pricilla and all supporters of AACT.

AACT Staff

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Spotlight

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Virtual AACTFest 2021 Celebrating Resilience, Strengthening Resolve

For the past year, community theatres around the country have had to make difficult decisions due to the pressures and restrictions imposed by the global pandemic, functioning in survival mode.

But theatre is resilient, and companies around the country are pivoting, redefining, and reimagining who they are, and how they will continue to serve their communities now and into a post-pandemic future.

AACTFest 2021 will celebrate those stories of resiliency, moving you from survive to thrive, as it showcases and celebrates the best of community theatre in America. Keynotes, workshops, educational programming, and special events will focus on supporting you through this evolutionary journey.

Plan now to join us for an exciting week in June, including:

- Theatre from around the country—12 Show Performances and Adjudications
- Workshops/training courses from theatre professionals around the country—in all, over 50 educational events, workshops, and roundtables to help move you into the new season
- Keynotes and special guests, including Chilina Kennedy (star of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, on Broadway), Phil Hernandez (Javert in the original New York production of *Les Misérables*), director Jeff Calhoun (Tony nominee for Disney's *Newsies*, Tony Honor for Excellence in Theatre Award for Deaf West Theater's *Big River*), and more to come
- Celebrity guest appearances
- Design Competition and Adjudications
- Monologue Competition Finals and Adjudications
- Online social networking, events, and games
- Virtual booths, exhibits, and industry demos



- Festival Award Ceremony
- Access to post-festival content

The virtual national festival will run June 14–20, 2021. Register Now, Early Bird Registration rate good until May 1. Details available at aact.org/21. AACT Member theatres can use their organizational membership to register up to three individuals at the member rate. Casts and crews of the National Companies can also register for the full festival at the member rate.

"We are particularly excited about the possibilities the festival offers to those who could not attend national festivals in years past, due to the cost of travel and accommodations," says AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland. "Virtual AACTFest 2021 is about illuminating and celebrating the power of art, artistic excellence, and most importantly, the value of community theatre in the country. I am so proud that we can expand on that message, and share the art of community theatre to the world!"

Twelve Virtual AACTFest 2021 National Company productions will be streamed during the week of the festival. Eleven of these will be selected from applications from 37 theatres around the country. A twelfth production will be presented from AACT Region X, which represents community theatres on U.S. military bases in Europe.



Our thanks to these companies that applied to be part of AACTFest 2021:

Theatre Name	City	State	Play Title
Actors Collaborative Toledo	Toledo	ОН	Natural Shocks by Lauren Gunderson
Ankeny Community Theatre	Ankeny	IA	Natural Shocks by Lauren Gunderson
Artists Collaborative Theatre	Elkhorn City	KY	Blood Song: The Story of the Hatfields and the McCoys by Chelsea Marcantel
Auburn Players Community Theatre	Auburn	NY	Antigone and Letters to Soldiers Lost adapted by Al Schnupp
Bellingham Theatre Guild	Bellingham	WA	The Harry and Sam Dialogues by Karen Ellison
Cheyenne Little Theatre Players	Cheyenne	WY	Mothers and Sons by Terrence McNally
Clark Youth Theatre Incorporated	Tulsa	OK	$R \mathcal{C} J \mathcal{C} Z$ by Melody Bates
County Seat Theater	Cloquet	MN	Do Not Go Gentle by Patricia Cornelius
Creative Dramatics Workshop, Inc.	Homer	IL	Strong Voices by Rodney Woodworth
Des Moines Community Playhouse	Des Moines	IA	Leaving Iowa by Tim Clue and Spike Manton
Duncan Little Theatre	Duncan	OK	Little Footsteps by Ted Tally
Elkhart Civic Theatre	Bristol	IN	Silent Sky by Lauren Gunderson
Highlands Lakeside Theatre	Sebring	FL	Little Girl Blou by Laura Wade
INNOVAtheatre	Cincinnati	ОН	Ordinary Days music and lyrics by Adam Gwon
Kokomo Civic Theatre	Kokomo	IN	The Guys by Anne Nelson
Newton Community Theatre	Newton	IA	Choices, Choices by Karen Schaeffer
Paramount Arts Center/Paramount Players	Ashland	KY	God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza
Players de Noc Inc.	Escanaba	MI	Jerry's Brain by J.R. Spalding
Proud Mary Theatre Company	Spartanburg	SC	The Pink Unicorn by Elise Forier Edie
Sand Springs Community Theatre	Sand Springs	OK	Only Scars Remain by Troy A Sartors
Shawnee Little Theatre	Shawnee	OK	A Doll's House, Part 2 by Lucas Hnath
South City Theatre	Pelham	AL	Collected Stories by Donald Margulies
Spark Theater Company	Dothan	AL	Steel Magnolias by Robert Harling
Stage Left Theater Association	Spokane	WA	Lonely Planet by Steven Dietz
The Actor's Charitable Theatre	Northport	AL	Hogwash! by Joey Lay
The Arts Council of the Twin Counties	Galax	VA	Andy Warhol's Tomato by Vince Melocchi
The Lexington Players	Lexington	MA	The Mountaintop by Katori Hall
The North Riverside Players	North Riverside	IL	Finding the Sun by Edward Albee
The Sauk	Jonesville	MI	Lord of the Flies adapted by Nigel Williams
The Studio Theatre	Little Rock	AR	Constellations by Nick Payne
Theatre Tuscaloosa	Tuscaloosa	AL	Love and Cheese Toast by Cooper Shattuck
Troy Civic Theatre	Troy	ОН	A Christmas Carol adapted Patrick Barlow
Tupelo Community Theatre	Tupelo	MS	The Seafarer by Conor McPherson
Twilight Theater Company	Portland	OR	A Feminine Ending by Sarah Treem
Untitled Pop Up Theatre	Elk City	OK	Love/Sick by John Cariani
Village Playhouse	Verona	WI	Salome by Oscar Wilde
Windham Actors Guild	Windham	NH	How to be a Good Son by Julia Cho

More Virtual AACTFest 2021 on the next page ▶





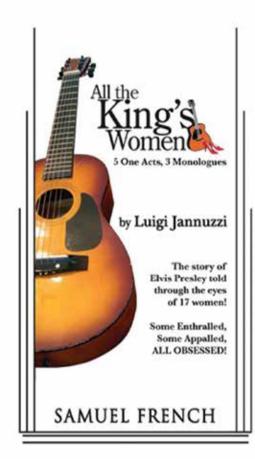
Colvin Theatrical, a professional video production company, will travel to the selected AACTFest 2021 National Companies, and record productions to be presented during Virtual AACTFest. They will shoot each show on four professional Blackmagic 6K cinema cameras (see *Spotlight* cover photo), with a mixture of close-ups, wide angles, and moving shots. Using live-editing and broadcasting technology, each performance video will emulate the theatrical experience each finalist would

have at an in-person AACTFest, while maintaining professional, high-quality cinematic standards.

Colvin has produced theatrical videos with artists all over the world. Since the beginning of the pandemic, they have helped theatres and other live-performance organizations produce digital livestreams that reach audiences dozens of times the size of their pre-pandemic houses.

AACT is looking forward to working with Colvin Theatrical to create an exciting, stimulating, festival experience, while providing a blueprint for community theatres to take advantage of these new technologies, and grow their digital audiences.

"FROM CALIFORNIA TO AUSTRALIA, this play rocks!"



- PUBLISHER: SAMUELFRENCH.COM
- PLAYWRIGHT: LUIGIJANNUZZI.COM

BROADWAY ON DEMAND

Broadway on Demand will broadcast the performances during festival week.

Broadway On Demand, considered the premier streaming platform, offering exclusive livestream events, and a wideranging library of video on demand content, offers AACTFest attendees two ways to view festival performances:

- 1. Aired at a specific show time, to watch and enjoy with other festival attendees
- 2. Attendees will also receive a one-time private, on-demand link to view shows at their convenience

AACT will be utilizing the **Whova laptop/mobile app** to keep you abreast of all activities during Virtual AACTFest 2021. This full-featured app will be available two weeks prior to the festival, so you can check out all events, and set your schedule accordingly. Registrants will be sent an invitation to the app as soon as it goes live.

A virtual festival eliminates the cost of travel and lodging costs, opening the festival experience to many people who haven't yet been able to attend a National AACTFest. Also, the thought and care that has gone into choosing companies and their plays, and the attention being paid to adjudicating and filming the productions, gives me confidence that we are in for an exciting week of theatre. It's a big wide world out there with lots of fresh ideas, styles, subjects, and staging. Opening new doors is always great fun!

- Ron Cameron-Lewis

Keynote Speakers

Throughout the week, Keynotes will share their experiences as performers and theatre makers. Chilina Kennedy, Phil Hernandez, and Jeff Calhoun are already scheduled; check aact.org/21 for additional keynote speakers, as they are confirmed.



Chilina Kennedy is the Artistic Producer of Toronto's Eclipse Theatre Company, but is best known for her work on stage. Her Broadway credits include the role of Carole King in Beautiful – The Carole King Musical for over 1200 performances, and Mary Magdalene in Des McAnuff's Jesus Christ Superstar. Off-Broadway, she originated the role of Binky in This Ain't No Disco. She also played Sophie in

the first National Tour of *Mamma Mia!*, and recently was Dina in the International Tour of *The Band's Visit*. Regional performances include Phoebe in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (San Diego Critics' Circle nomination), the title character in *Evangeline* (original production and album), Ross Petty's pantomime *The Little Mermaid* (Toronto Theatre Critics Award), and three seasons at the Stratford Festival and Shaw Festival. She is currently developing a show with Eric Holmes, *Call It Love*.



Philip Hernandez is the only actor in Broadway history to have played both Jean Valjean and Inspector Javert in Les Misérables. He made his Broadway debut in the original cast of the Tony Award-winning musical, Kiss of the Spider Woman, directed by Harold Prince. In Kiss, he created the role of Esteban, and later went on to play the impassioned revolutionary Valentin in

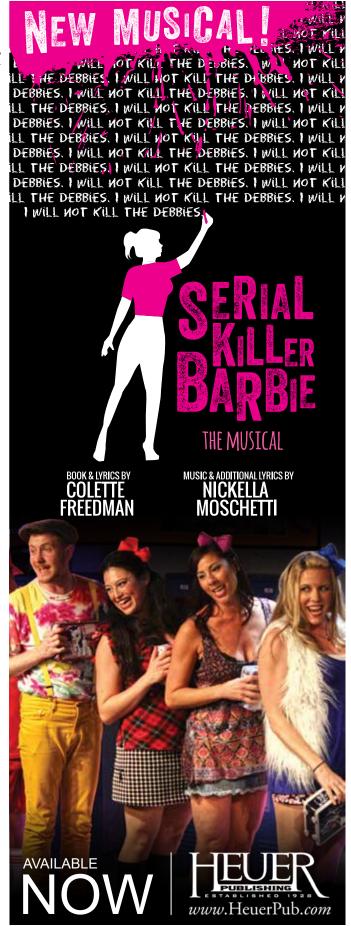
London and on Broadway. Philip created the role of Reverend Gonzalez in the original cast of Paul Simon's *The Capeman*, and played Juan Peron in Harold Prince's 25th Anniversary North American Tour of *Evita*. On the concert stage he has worked with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Leonard Bernstein, Robert Shaw, and Zubin Mehta, and with symphony orchestras throughout the United States. Philip teaches audition and performance technique in NYC, and master classes and workshops across North America.



Jeff Calhoun is a Tony nominee for Disney's Newsies and Deaf West Theater's Big River. He directed both the world premiere and international productions of Disney's High School Musical: On Stage and Disney's High School Musical 2: On Stage. His work on Broadway's Grease earned him a Tony Award Nomination for Best Choreography. He also provided choreography for Xena: Warrior

Princess (The Bitter Suite), Downtown, Happy Together, and Weekend Warriors. He recently directed Cyndi Lauper & Friends: Home for The Holidays and A Night of Covenant House Stars on

continued on next page





Amazon Prime. Jeff is an associate artist at The Ford's Theater in Washington D.C., and serves on the Board of Directors for Covenant House International, a nonprofit organization that shelters and cares for homeless and trafficked youth in 31 cities, across six countries.

Educational Workshops Among the over 60 events planned for AACTFest 2021 are workshops and panels aimed at what we need most—revitalization. Reflecting the current global health crisis, with many performing arts organizations temporarily closed, workshops will include topics related to COVID-19 recovery, including outreach, reinventing productions, audience safety, and communications. There also will be a well-rounded roster of workshops for directors, actors, designers, administrators, educators, and marketers. Learn new technological advances, and participate in forums addressing inclusion, diversity, and accessibility, as well as other challenges brought into sharp focus in the past year.

Here's a taste of what's in the works:

Scenic Painting Techniques

Tim Wisgerhof, Venice Theatre Jenn York, Tacoma Little Theatre David Len, Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

Three talented artists will set up cameras in their own theatre scene shops to demonstrate standard scenic painting techniques, then show how to take each technique to the next level. Included will be a panel discussion addressing how to create a unified approach with the director and designers of a show, and how to maximize your budget.

A Director's Intensive

Dorinda Toner, Twilight Theatre

Glean the most from your script to communicate your vision effectively with your production staff and cast. Discussion topics include script analysis, practical exercises to promote growth, setting boundaries and expectations, and how to cocreate. The workshop will blend Dorinda's presentation with the experience and advice of other directors in the room.

Demystifying Dramaturgy

Kathy Pingel, AACT Staff

Traditionally, the job of the dramaturg is to learn as much as possible about the play—its structure, its language, its themes and the context surrounding its creation—to give the director, designers, and actors a clear idea of the world within the play. Learn a basic approach as well as a new facet: psychological dramaturgy. And hear how the dramaturg is an important role in AACT's NewPlayFest process.

I Really Need This Part

Rick Kerby, Manatee Performing Arts Center Rick has canvassed dozens of directors, music directors, and accompanists to discover their pet peeves when it comes to musical auditions—this workshop will help you avoid those mistakes. A dynamic video will be included that gives examples of what he has discovered. This will be followed by a discussion with actor, Brian Martin (*Bullets Over Broadway* National Tour, *Guys and Dolls* National Tour and *Mrs. Doubtfire*, produced at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre) about how to overcome stage fright and get yourself into the right frame of mind to audition.

Playwrights' Pitch Room: 30 Plays in 60 Minutes

Playwrights will highlight their unpublished works with twominute elevator pitches. It is a fresh approach to learning what's current, and how to tap into new material.

Progress After 2020

We're all eager to get back to business, but not without acknowledging what we've learned from responding to the pandemic, as well as other social challenges our country has faced. How will the role of boards change? How will your theatre enhance accessibility, inclusion, and diversity? How will you develop and maintain local, political, and economic allies? What strategies have you learned with Zoom-inspired communication and other cyber-communication tools to apply to your theatre as you reopen? These and other questions will be discussed at this illuminating workshop.

Visit aact.org/21 for a full listing of workshops to be presented during Virtual AACTFest 2021.

I am extremely excited to attend AACTFest 2021 as a virtual event this year, to see how friends and colleagues from around the country have adapted during the pandemic. I look forward to seeing companies that have taken the great challenge of mounting a production for the festival and adapted to new technologies. While it will be slightly different than previous years, I can't wait to see the faces of those people that I haven't seen since 2019.

- Chris Serface

Special Events

Providing theatres and designers an opportunity to shine, the **2021 Virtual Design Competition—Best of the Decade!** will showcase the best of community theatre creativity.

AACT-member theatres and their designers may enter projects occurring between July 1, 2011 and May 1, 2021, in any of five design categories, including Scenic, Lighting, Properties, Costume, and Special Design. An official entry form must be submitted online for each design by May 1, 2021, along with an entry fee of \$20. Entry instructions, requirements, virtual display specifics, adjudication criteria, and a list of adjudicators, are available at aact.org/design21. (See page 14 for more information on the competition.)

I am so excited to attend AACT's virtual festival and share the joy of theatre with friends from the comfort of my home. Nothing can get in the way of shared theatre experiences!

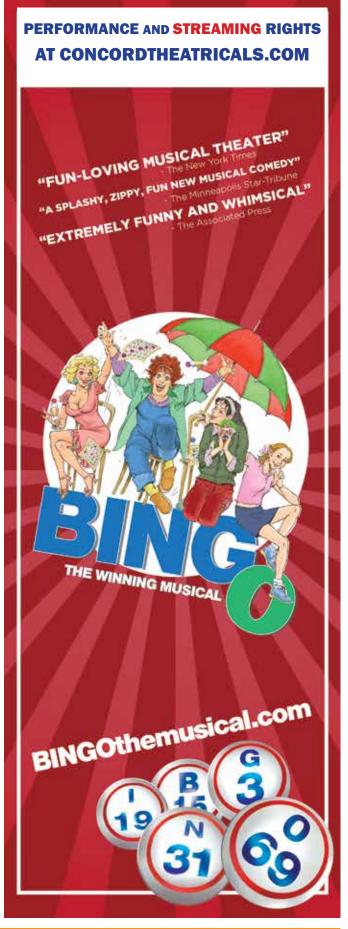
- Emily Anderson

Anyone registering for the festival can enter the AACTFest add-on Monologue Competition at the same time. Entrants will submit a video recording of their monologue for adjudication and feedback. The festival adjudicator will then select 10 finalists from the preliminary rounds to perform in the virtual Monologue Competition Finals. A cash prize will be awarded to the winner. For more details visit aact.org/monologue. Participant numbers are limited, so early registration is recommended. Deadline to sign-up is April 1, 2021.

The festival will also include a **Virtual Exhibit Hall** through the Whova festival app, allowing attendees to network with theatre vendors for answers to theatre-related questions. The AACTFest Virtual Exhibit Hall will allow vendors to explain who they are and what they do, demonstrate their products and services through video and livestreams, and speak one-on-one with interested attendees.

The AACT Silent Auction will benefit the AACT Endowment Festival Support Fund, and the 12 companies participating in the national Virtual AACTFest 2021. Auction items can be viewed and purchased online, even by those not registered for Virtual AACTFest 2021. Item donations are currently being accepted—see page 15 for more information.

All good things must come to an end, and festival week concludes with the AACTFest 2021 Awards Ceremony, honoring the productions presented during the festival, and the actors, directors, designers and crew who participated. ◆



AACT 2021 Design Competition: Best of the Decade What Are the Adjudicators Looking For?

Richard Gannon, AACT Design Competition Coordinator

Designs for any production staged between July 1, 2011, and May 1, 2021, are eligible for consideration in the AACT 2021 Design Competition, held virtually in conjunction with Virtual AACTFest 2021, June 14-20.

Categories for the competition include Scenic, Lighting, Properties, Costume, and Special Design.

This year's competition, *Best of the Decade*, recognizes the impact the current epidemic has had upon productions this past year and has accordingly expanded the eligibility period of submitted designs to the past 10 years. Each entry must be a design created for an AACT-member theatre production, or be a design created by an AACT individual member and used in a realized production by a community theatre.

An entry form must be submitted online for each design entered into the competition by *May 1*, *2021*. There is a \$20 entry fee for each design

In the past, designers provided displays to show their work at AACTFest. This year, designers will submit all design display materials online, which will allow for an enhanced adjudication experience, since adjudicators will have more time to review entries and compose feedback comments. Each entrant will receive a detailed commentary about their design and competition display.

Criteria for adjudication, virtual display/design statement details, and additional entry information are available at aact.org/design21.

What are the adjudicators looking for? Bill Wallace, who served as an adjudicator for the AACT 2017 Design Competition, shared some valuable insight as to what were good designs and what were necessary characteristics of a successful design competition display. We share some of his notes to assist you in presenting the best display for your design:

How the Adjudicator Approaches Your Work

- 1. Sharing perceptions and reactions is the central purpose of a design adjudication. Artists grow by having the opportunity to hear different critical perspectives on their work. The value in the adjudication process is in discovering how your work on a particular show is seen by other informed viewers.
- 2. Adjudicators seek to provide clear and careful responses to your work. However, designers, including adjudicators, have their unique design biases. We all have colors, shapes, and visual arrangements that we find innately pleasing. As an adjudicator, I try to be aware of my particular biases, and account for them as I look at your work. It is important to remember that the adjudicator is only able to provide you with a single reaction to a single design. Comments about a specific design should never be interpreted as a universal judgment of your work.
- 3. Adjudicators react to the work through the frame that you provide. You should provide the contexts that shaped

your creative process. A design presentation should include both the director's concept/approach to the show and a statement from you about how you used that concept in realizing the work that is now on display.

Realizing the Display

- 1. First, make sure that your display conforms to all the requirements specified by the design competition organizers. Carefully review all guidelines, and don't hesitate to ask for clarification from the competition administrator. Remember that your ability to realize a thoughtful and visually interesting display is a key part of the evaluation process. Know that there is no prescribed "right way" to share your work--you make choices based on the show, your budget, and your time.
- 2. Good quality color images are essential. You may want to use a main photo as a baseline, then accompany that with a series of images that show changes in lighting or scene shifts.
- 3. Process shots of a build of a complex costume, prop, or effect can clarify the complexities involved in realizing your solution to a design problem.
- 4. Drawings, models, and renderings are very useful in understanding your intents. Ground plans, wall elevations, costume renderings, prop sketches, and light plots all add information that allows the adjudicator to add more detail to the commentary of your design.

Final Thoughts

Most community theatre designers are not working in multi-million-dollar facilities with five-figure production budgets. So, as an adjudicator, I am not looking for designs that exhibit the ability to spend money to solve problems. Throwing money at problems is not design. Rather, I am looking for work that shows the designer's ability to realize the overall vision of the show, fully and creatively. Obviously, a *Romeo & Juliet* costumed for \$750 is going to look quite different from the same show done with a \$7,500 costume budget. What really makes the difference between them is how the designer, given the available resources, found the essence of the show and created a design that successfully evokes the complex world of the play.

Awards for the AACT 2021 Design Competition will be presented at the Virtual AACTFest 2021 Awards Ceremony.

- A \$300 Outstanding Overall Design Award will be presented.
- \$100 Individual category Design Winners may be presented at the discretion of the adjudicators.
- Certificates will be presented to the winners. Honorable Mention certificates will be awarded at the discretion of the adjudicators.

An online talk-back session with the design adjudicators will be scheduled where the adjudicators will discuss 2-3 designs and virtual displays from each design category. Every entrant will receive an email with written feedback from the adjudicators on their design and virtual display.

AACT 2021Design Competition Adjudicators



William Wallace is Professor of Theatre Arts at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. He received an M.F.A. in Theatre Design and Technical Direction from the University of Minnesota. Bill has taught theatre in a high school and at a small college on the East Coast, has worked as a freelance designer, and has been the designer/technical director for a small repertory company. He served as

an adjudicator for the 2017 AACT Design Competition.



Ann R. Emo is Chair and Professor at the Theater Department at Buffalo State University in Buffalo, New York, where she teaches costume design, stage make-up, and technical theater. She received her M.F.A. from NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and worked in the New York City area for several years, designing costumes for stage, dance, film, and opera. She has also designed

for several theatres in Buffalo, New York, including Studio Arena Theatre, Theater of Youth (TOY), Shakespeare in Delaware Park, Kavinoky Theatre, Irish Classical Theatre Company, and the Jewish Repertory Theater of Buffalo, as well as the GEVA Theatre Center in Rochester, New York.

For further information on the AACT 2021 Design Competition, contact Bob Frame and Rich Gannon by email at designcompetition@aact.org. ◆



Navroz Dabu's Scenic Design entry in the 2019 AACT Design Competition at AACTFest 2019, for a production of Li'l Abner at Auburn Players Community Theatre in Auburn, New York. The 2021 Design Competition will include the same elements of photos, floor plans, elevations, design statements, etc., but will all be presented in a virtual format. Plan to visit the Design Competition as you participate in Virtual AACTFest 2021.

Donate to the AACTFest 2021 Silent Auction

Support the AACT Endowment Fund

Contribute to the fun of Virtual AACTFest 2021 by participating in the Silent Auction. Even if you're not registered for the festival, you are invited to contribute a special item to the auction. Donations are currently being accepted (more details below).

Auction items will be able to be viewed and purchased online, and you do not need to be registered for Virtual AACTFest 2021 to purchase them.

The AACTFest Auction benefits the AACT Endowment Fund, which was created with two purposes in mind:

- 1. The Festival Support Fund helps companies representing their regions to pay some of their travel expenses to the national festival, or to subsequent international festivals; and
- 2. The Mission Fund furthers AACT's mission of fostering the highest standards of excellence by community theatres.

Proceeds from the Silent Auction will benefit the Festival Support Fund and the 12 companies participating in the national Virtual AACTFest 2021—each of whom will receive a grant to help cover their expenses for the current festival. Proceeds also will assist future national festival participants with the expense of transporting a cast, crew, sets, and costumes.

How to Donate

To enhance the event's success, the Endowment Committee is seeking a minimum value of \$100 per item, basket, or items grouped to be auctioned together. The committee is asking for items with wide appeal as well as significant value, that are unique and theatrically themed.

For details, deadlines, instructions, and a link to the online Auction Contribution Form, visit aact.org/auction.

The committee sends its thanks to those who have already donated. \blacklozenge



AACT National Adjudication Seminar 2021

If you have always wanted to learn how to adjudicate, or receive more in-depth training in adjudication, here is your chance!

The AACT Adjudication Seminar educates future adjudicators for AACTFest cycles. Participants learn to accurately reflect to performing companies what has been successfully achieved, outline reasonable steps that might be taken to enhance interpretation of the story being told, and select which of the companies will receive awards. The seminar reassures that adjudication's purpose is to both educate and illuminate.

"Since AACT's National Festival is virtual this year, so is the Adjudication Seminar," says Kathy Pingel, Adjudication Seminar instructor. "In this cycle, for the first time, trainees will be able to spread the training over six sessions, via Zoom, prior to the festival. The benefits are so appealing, it will likely be the format going forward."

The Adjudication Seminar is an add-on to AACTFest 2021. Registration to Virtual AACTFest 2021 is required. Register for the training when you register for the festival.

What are the new dates?

Virtual seminar dates are March 20, April 3, April 17, April 24, May 1, and May 8, 1:00-3:30 Central Time. Participants are also required to attend two additional training sessions during the virtual festival itself, view the National Festival's showcase performances, and deliver 3-4 practice adjudications.



Who takes the Adjudication Seminar?

Many participants want to learn so they can adjudicate in their state or region. It has also been useful for those who have adjudicated before, but want a fresh vocabulary. Some theatre directors have signed on for an insiders' point of view. Actors, designers, executive directors, and anyone who appreciates theatre from onstage, backstage, or the house have profited from the course, as well.

What are the benefits of the online course?

The curriculum is the same, but there is now the opportunity to bring in nationally recognized adjudicators as guests, as well. There is also more time to digest information between sessions. There is no need to travel, nor reason to miss out on the rest of the festival.

How do I sign up?

The AACT Adjudication Seminar is an add-on to Virtual AACTFest 2021 registration. Cost for the seminar is \$135, and there are scholarships available. To enroll, visit aact.org/seminar.

What topics are included in the curriculum?

The curriculum is designed to cover everything from adjudication philosophy to practical application. There are far-ranging discussions, like exploring an effective balance between cool and warm feedback, as well as an emphasis on specific skills, such as note taking and crafting a useful opening statement.

Who is teaching?

Kathy Pingel and Kristi Quinn are co-instructors. Both have adjudicated at state, regional, and national levels. They will be joined by other nationally recognized adjudicators, who will drop in for coaching and to address specific topics.

What are the major outcomes of the course?

Those who complete the seminar will learn how to:

- understand and apply the rules and guidelines of AACT adjudication
- formulate a method for taking notes while watching a performance
- demonstrate the ability to speak extemporaneously within a time frame, from a set of notes organized around a theme
- comprehend and evidence ways of collaborating with fellow adjudicators to reach consensus regarding awards
- develop an individual approach to adjudication

"I learned how to hone my focus, look for common themes to address, and leave the company feeling supported. When it is done right, adjudication is masterful." – Jenn York, scenic designer and director

"I took away the strategy of how to turn around a "3-Minute Miracle"—responding to acting, directing, and tech with an emphasis on what succeeded, as well as what needs work, and putting in as many specific examples as possible." — Stephen Carver, director

AACT Virtual Youth Theatre Conference 2021:

Building the next generation of arts leaders through the power of theatre July 12-16, 2021

The AACT Youth Theatre Conference is a week-long opportunity for youth to discover paths to leadership in their community theatres. The path could be through acting, directing, technical theatre, stage management, marketing, or another avenue of interest. Unlike other conferences, this one cultivates individual interests as well as connecting youth from across the nation. The conference is open to students ages 12–18, and activities will be held in large-group and small-group sessions as well as through individualized instruction.

The goal of this exciting conference is to instill confidence, knowledge, and team-building skills in an exhilarating and stimulating atmosphere.

- Brainstorm ideas about how theatre should respond to recent world challenges and become more diverse, more inclusive, more aware, and then present those ideas to AACT leadership
- Create a customized learning experience based on your curiosity and skill level
- Meet someone new, learn something new
- See innovative theatre from around the country
- Share your theatre experiences with other youth leaders from across the U.S.
- Learn from an interactive panel of experienced AACT theatre professionals
- Create scenes as an actor, or director, or both

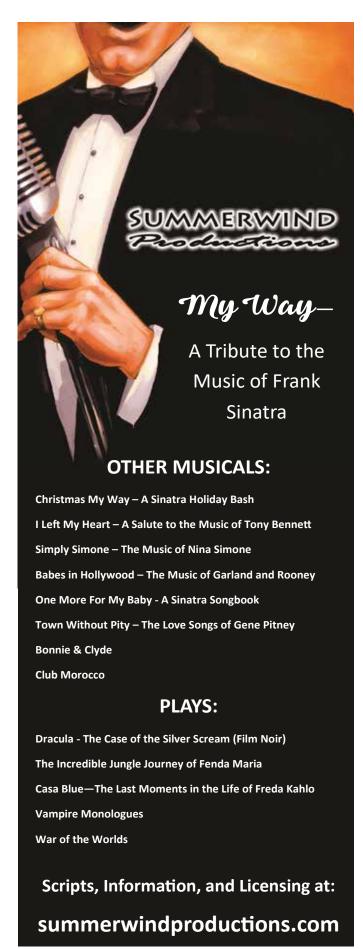
This dynamic youth festival will be led by Jennifer Hamilton and Chad-Alan Carr.



Chad-Alan Carr is the Founding Executive/ Artistic Director for Gettysburg Community Theatre in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Chad received a BFA in Musical Theatre from Sam Houston State University, which also awarded him a Distinguished Theatre Alumni Award for Achievement in Professional Theatre.

Chad holds the honor of being the Chair of the first-ever AACT National Youth Festival at AACT fest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota, and then again at AACT fest 2019 in Gettysburg. He directed the Eastern States Regional Premiere of The Penguin Project (theatre for youth with special needs), chartered the International Thespian Troupe #7640 for Gettysburg Area High School, and has served as a board member for Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres, Eastern States Theatre Association, and AACT.

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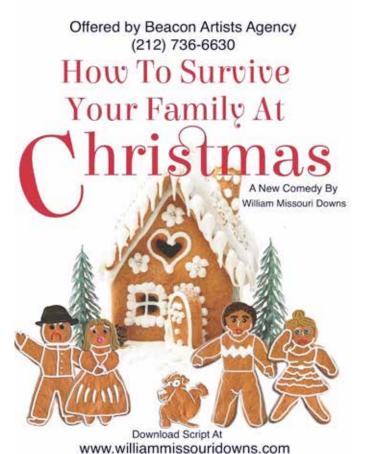


Jennifer Hamilton served as Education Director for Topeka Civic Theatre and Academy in Topeka, Kansas, from 2002 until 2014, where she administered year-round classes for ages four through adult, helped to create a teen improvisation performance troupe, developed outreach programming for area schools and underserved communities, and directed over 50

youth and theatre for young audiences productions. She currently works in partnership with the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts, providing after school theatre classes for area youth. Jennifer earned a BA in Theatre from Sterling College and a MA in Theatre and Film from the University of Kansas.

Jennifer has been involved with AACT for over a decade, leading the Education Directors track for 2018 TEAMS conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, facilitating the Youth Leadership Conference at AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota, facilitating the 2008 Education Directors Workshop in Kansas City, Missouri, and has served on both the AACT Education and Workshop committees.

The AACT Virtual Youth Theatre Conference will be held **July** 12 – 16, with sessions meeting daily from 10 am – 2 pm (Central). Registration is \$100. Registration and more information is available at aact.org/youth. ◆



AACT 2021 Virtual Management Conference

Join us as we gather together virtually to share successes, seek new answers, and re-energize our roles in ensuring the growth of community theatre, at the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC).

AACT's 2021 CTMC will offer a choice of two convenient virtual conferences, so you can attend from the comfort and safety of your own home and without travel-related expenses.

When you register, you're invited to express which highpriority issues your theatre is facing. Using those priorities, facilitators Ron Ziegler, Chad-Alan Carr, and Dorinda Toner will set an agenda, and ensure your voice is heard and your questions are answered through large-group and small-group discussions, breakout sessions, and questions submitted in real time via the Zoom chat function.

Taking into account time-zone differences across the country, one conference will be held Friday, March 12, through Sunday, March 14, for attendees in the eastern United States. A second one will be offered Friday, April 9 through Sunday, April 11, for participants in the western United States. Each session will be limited to 50 participants, in order to facilitate brainstorming, dynamic sharing, and building idea upon ideas. Since session hours will be different for those in the east or west, you should enroll in the conference that best suits your ability to participate fully.

CTMC brings together administrators from all levels of theatre—from the volunteer who "runs things around here" to the "just starting" part-time administrator, to the full-time professional manager. Participants learn through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, large-group and small-group discussions that speak directly to your unique challenges and experiences within your own theatre and community.

Schedules, Information, and Registration at aact.org/ctmc

AACT Member \$150 Non-Member \$175

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Scholarships are available: aact.org/scholarship. ♦

Praise from Previous Attendees

"My favorite part of the experience? Hands down, the networking. Getting to know other theatre practitioners was rewarding and fulfilling. There are so many other community theatre leaders across the nation doing the same kind of work as me, and making a difference in their communities." - Dorinda Toner, Producing Artistic Director, Twilight Theatre Company, Portland, Oregon.

"I was blown away by the scope, quality, productivity, and professionalism of the organizations represented. 'Community' means 'service' and these amazing theatre companies provide meaningful services and quality of life for their hometowns and beyond." - Susie Prueter, Executive Director, Southeastern Theatre Conference.

Getting the Most from a Virtual Conference

Stephen Peithman, AACT Webmaster

Virtual conferences have come into their own in recent months. Health concerns about in-person events have played a part, but it's also became clear that the online format offers tangible benefits of its own.

Among other things, it allows you to attend conferences you might not have been able to before, due to the cost of travel and accommodations. These new opportunities mean you can network with (and learn from) a wider range of people.

In addition, most virtual events now offer content designed specifically for online presentation. And many (including both AACTFest 2021 and the AACT Adjudication Seminar) may go a day or two longer, but with fewer hours each day. That's significant, since studies show that we learn better when we have time to reflect on what we've seen and heard.

One thing hasn't changed, however—it's still up to you to get the most from any conference, whatever its format. The following tips, gleaned from conference experts, will help you prepare, stay focused, and ensure your time is well spent.

Before the Event

Clear your calendar. As much as possible, block off your calendar with no projects, meetings or appointments scheduled while you're attending the event.

Download the app. This can be a great tool to encourage deeper engagement and connection. Download the app on your phone, even if the conference is Web-based—many apps have at least some functionality that works only on mobile. Also, as explained below, the phone app becomes your communication line, freeing up your computer for full-screen viewing of sessions and presentations. While you're at it, check the app to see if you can sync your personalized schedule to the calendar on your phone or laptop.

Consider attending "with" others. Participating with friends or colleagues is a good way to boost your motivation, and keep you engaged with the content. In a virtual setting, you can communicate with each other between sessions, or schedule a Zoom or Skype meeting afterward to share key takeaways, or discuss how the information you've learned might impact your work. And if one person has missed a particular speaker or workshop, someone else in the group can fill them in.

Download and review the event schedule. Knowing when sessions are offered means you'll be sure to hear the speakers and attend the workshops most important to you. The schedule will also tell you when breaks will occur throughout the day. And for a virtual festival like AACTFest, you'll also want to know when performances are scheduled. Be sure to check what content must be viewed in real time, and what can be watched at your convenience. Print a copy of the program or schedule, make notes on it, and keep it handy.

Eliminate Distractions. Choose a quiet, comfortable space where you can set up your computer. Tell anyone who might be tempted to call, text, or drop by, that you're involved in something that requires your full attention. Set important tools nearby (your laptop charger, earbuds, phone, notepad, pen, etc.). On the day of the conference, close unrelated tabs and windows on your computer, and shut down your email and non-conference-related messaging apps to minimize distractions while you attend sessions.

Test your equipment. Make sure that you have run all of the updates on your computer before the conference, so it doesn't try to update in the middle of a presentation. On the first day of the conference, log in early to make sure that your Internet connection, web camera, and microphone are working properly. Familiarize yourself with the conference app on your phone, as well. The more familiar you are with the technology and tools available to you, the more you'll be able to engage with the content. To watch AACTFest performances on your television, you'll need access to the Internet to use our provider, Broadway on Demand. You can do this on a Smart TV, or on any TV by using an add-on device such as an Amazon Fire TV Stick. (We'll have more on this in the next issue of Spotlight.)

During the Event

Take notes—on paper. Experts advise watching the conference in full-screen mode, and taking notes with pen and paper, so you won't have to toggle between different windows. Use the mobile event app to network and communicate with attendees, or answer live polls, leaving your computer screen free for viewing. Since many conference presenters share slides from presentations, you may not need to write down every detail—instead, take notes only when you find the information (or performance) especially enlightening. Set aside some time at the end of each day of the conference to review your notes, so you can digest what you've seen and heard.

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Harris Cashes Out!

by Londos D'Arrigo

writer for JOAN RIVERS, PHYLLIS DILLER and LILY TOMLIN

Another hilarious, proven comedy from the author of SPREADING IT AROUND

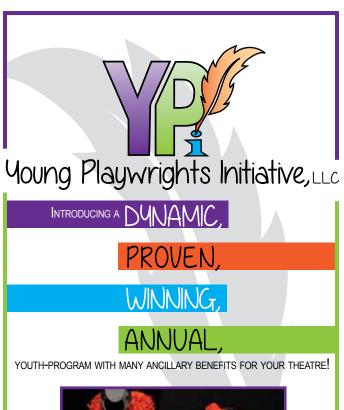
Reviews and photos: www.londos.net

Publisher: www.canadianplayoutlet.com



Reach out. Networking is often as important as the educational sessions—even in a virtual setting. If the conference app has a chat room, use it; if not, there's always social media (or your phone, if you're attending along with friends or colleagues). During breaks, share your favorite takeaway from a session, or start a discussion thread about one or more key points. If the event has a hashtag, you can tweet or post using it, and share your experience. You can also search for the hashtag to see what others are saying, and comment on their posts. Many conferences offer a Facebook or similar group; if they do, you'll have another opportunity to network.

Don't just sit. Build in breaks in-between sessions to take a short walk, stand and stretch, use the bathroom, or have lunch. Don't feel confined to your chair. If your focus begins to slip, feel free to stand. (If you're on camera in a Zoom session, you can always turn off your camera for a minute or so.) Activity—even something as small as standing or walking in place—can help you refocus on the content at hand.





Inaugurate your own Young Playwrights Festivall

Call: 717- 489-2372, email: jon@youngplaywrighters.com or visit: www.youngplaywrighters.com to learn more about his exciting, rewarding opportunity, now!

Connect with Vendors. Sometimes a conference is the only opportunity you have to put a face with a product. More than that, conference vendors often have a solution or a suggestion to solve your organization's needs. They may also offer free or low-cost trials, services, or tutorials to help you and your theatre succeed. Seek them out on the conference website or app, and see what they can offer.

After the Event

Review your notes from the sessions you attended, and type up a summary of the things you've learned, and the questions that came up, to share with your colleagues or theatre team.

Revisit the content. If the conference provides access to recordings after the event, you can review sessions to ensure you've got all the information you need—or catch up, if you had to miss a session because you were watching another. Many presenters may provide an email address, so let them know why you enjoyed their session and what you learned from it. This is also an opportunity to ask a follow-up question, especially if you've thought of something after the session ended.

Build on what you've experienced. Reach out to people you connected with during the conference, and schedule a Zoom or phone call. The relationships you've built, and the knowledge you've gained, are the ultimate value of any conference. If you can add to your network, and put your newly gained skills to work, weeks (or even months) later, you'll know you've gotten your money's worth.

Call for AACT Board Nominations -Volunteer or Suggest!

The AACT Nominating Committee needs your help to identify persons who would be good candidates to serve on the AACT Board. If you are interested, and/or know persons you would like to see serve, visit aact.org/nominations.

Submit your suggestions by March 20.

The role of the Board Member at Large is to provide leadership, direction, and oversight to AACT through support, development, and review of policies and goals for the association.

For 2021-2022, Members at Large will be elected to the board from a slate of nominees submitted by the Nominations Committee, which will meet this spring and make its recommendation at that time. The board will then cast votes for those on the ballot in April, and the new board members will be installed at the Summer Board Meeting, scheduled to be held virtually May 22, 2021. Look for the election results in the July/August 2021 *Spotlight*.

For more information on the structure, responsibilities, and requirements of the board, please read the AACT Bylaws and Operational Guidelines at aact.org/nominations. •

AITA/IATA International Theatre Festival Monte Carlo, Monaco August 17 - 22, 2021

Theatre people from around the world will gather in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in August for the Mondial du Theatre, the international theatre festival that takes place every four years. The 2021 festival has been shortened, due to the pandemic, but Studio de Monaco is moving forward with performances from 15 countries, August 17-22, plus five colloques (discussions of the performances), and two workshops.

AACT is proud that the United States has been represented at every Mondial since its inception in 1957. At the 2021 Mondial du Theatre, the USA will be represented by the Lexington Players production of *Who Will Sing for Lena?*—named Outstanding Production at the AACTFest 2019 national festival, and a fitting representative of amateur theatre in our country.

AITA/IATA (International Amateur Theatre Association) is the festival sponsor. For more information about the festival, visit: aact.org/mondial. ◆



Spotlight on Discounter



Heuer Publishing was established in 1928, and today is one of the oldest publishing houses serving the educational and community theatre markets. Heuer is a pioneer in licensing unique works from a broad range of playwrights, which are entertaining, yet thought-provoking, family-appropriate, yet edgy, and which provide a standardized formula for technical production, with flexibility for directors desiring a greater challenge.

Heuer Publishing offers AACT members a collection of free eScripts for perusal, with script selections changing monthly.

hitplays.com

DISCOUNTED PLAY ROYALTIES!

Popular playwright Joe Simonelli is offering up to a 50% discount on all his non Samel French titles including OLD RINGERS

and

THE GHOST IN THE MEADOW

For details on this offer visit his website at www.joesimonelli.net

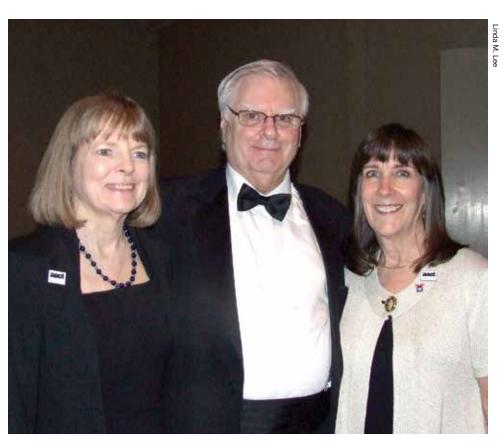


Friends We'll Miss

Linda M. Lee and Julie Crawford

Dennis A. Gilmore, age 74, died quietly at his home in Indio, California, January 26, 2021, after an extended hospitalization for a non-coronavirus acute illness. As the news of his passing spread, his Facebook page began to fill with tributes and memories posted by students, friends, and colleagues whose lives were deeply influenced by this extraordinary man. Though shock and tears accompanied the words, the overarching sentiment was a deep gratitude for the role Dennis played in each of their lives. His impact was life-altering.

A native of Kansas, Dennis's career began in nonprofit management with the National Foundation March of Dimes, where he oversaw a wide array of fundraising programs, volunteer recruitment and training, event planning, event promotion, and leadership development. While working for the Chicago March of Dimes Chapter, he was asked to serve on the board and raise funds for a professional theatre in Chicago, an endeavor at which he proved very successful. It was his first experience working with a theatre company, but would certainly not be his last.



Dennis is surrounded by Julie Crawford, then AACT Executive Director and Linda M. Lee, then TNT Executive Director, celebrating Dennis' retirement from HCPAC at a reception held in his honor in Athens, Texas, April, 2014

Later, Dennis switched careers to become the general manager of a country club in San Antonio, Texas. This led to his being recruited to manage one in Athens, Texas. There, he was introduced to Athens Little Theatre, and rediscovered his passion for theatre. In 1989, he became the theatre's first Executive Director, for which he drew upon all his previous professional experience. He added programs to engage people of all ages in live theatre, including summer musicals for teens, youth summer camps, Youth Excellence on Stage (YES), afterschool theatre classes, Community Actor Senior's Theatre, touring performance troupes, Broadway theatre trips, and more. The theatre's expansion of programs and its geographic reach prompted its renaming as the Henderson County Performing Arts Center (HCPAC) in the 1990s.

As a testament to his boundless energy, Dennis completed the requirements for a Master's Degree in Theatre, with an emphasis in Directing, from Stephen F. Austin University—while working full-time for HCPAC and teaching technical theatre at Trinity Valley Community College.

Dennis worked to position HCPAC on a larger stage by becoming an active member of Texas Nonprofit Theatres (TNT). He served on the TNT Board of Governors—as Secretary, then Treasurer, and eventually Vice President of Finance. He was instrumental in creating the annual TNT Youth Conference in 1996, and the TNT POPS! New Play Project in 2008, both projects in which his own theatre participated fully.

In the 1990s, Dennis became involved in AACT, serving on the Education Committee, which he later chaired, before becoming Vice President of Education in 2008. A quick look at Dennis' time at AACT shows a growing involvement in leadership roles in strategic planning, convention planning, the early development of the TEAMS conferences, the Resource Roster, the Festival Commission, AACT Ed Hours, the Accreditation Task Force, AACT NewPlayFest, and the AACT National Directors Conference. After retiring to California, Dennis continued his AACT service as a California State Contact, and then AACT Region VIII Representative.

Dennis was recognized by TNT with its Ovation Award (2004) and Spotlight Award (2013), and was inducted into the Texas Playwriting Hall of Fame for his active support of new works. His AACT Awards included the David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award in 2011, and the 20-Year Service pin, presented in August of 2020. He was named an AACT Fellow in 2011.

The list of activities and accolades is impressive, but does not fully reveal the character and humanity of Dennis Gilmore. He valued commitment, and exemplified it in his own actions. He listened carefully, the better to understand and contribute when needed. He gave others room to grow, while offering a supportive hand. He created opportunity and provided tools to reach for excellence. And he cared deeply – for his students, his friends, his theatre, and his community.

His wife Karen wrote, "He would do anything to raise money for live theatre and to make people laugh. His other personality traits: stubborn, tenacious, proceeding with absolute certainty and commitment to a decision made, even when questioning or doubting it himself. He made a place for everyone who stepped into the HCPAC circle. And then there was the fundraising and the unbounded energy and enthusiasm to grow a community-wide organization in such a small town, in a largely rural setting."

Former AACT President and TNT Executive Director Emeritus Linda M. Lee said, "The shock of Dennis' passing is profound, but the gratitude I feel for having known him as a colleague and friend is deeper still. Years ago, the youth theatre where I worked did a production of *The Bluebird of Happiness*. In it is a scene where the young protagonists reconnect with their deceased grandparents. When questioned about their presence, the grandparents explain, 'Every time you think of us, we live again.' I hope—and expect—that Dennis Gilmore will live forever through the memories of those whose lives he touched."

k%%

Karen Gilmore says that her husband would be pleased if individual members would consider a donation to AACT in his memory/honor. "He loved this organization, his colleagues in community theatre across the country, and the opportunity to grow and advance the operational strength of the organization." Donations may be made in Dennis's name to AACT Programs and Services, or the AACT Endowment Fund, at aact.org/donate. On the donation form, click on "In Honor of/In Memory of" to add Dennis's name.

Messages to the family may be sent via email to Karengilmore580@gmail.com

AACT Web Power

A recent addition to AACT's website is **Production Notes**, offering news and updates from play publishers who are also AACT Corporate Partners. Currently, those include Music Theatre International, Disney Theatrical Group, Stage Rights, Dramatists Play Service, Dramatic Publishing Company, Heuer Publishing, and Concord Theatricals [Samuel French, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Tams-Witmark, and Andrew Lloyd Webber].

Recent news items have covered a wide range of topics, from streaming rights and remote performances, to new titles and online editions.

Visit the page at aact.org/production-notes. Or, use the site's drop-down menu: *Making Theatre > Production > Production Notes*. You might want to bookmark the page, so you can easily check back for the latest information on plays and musicals for production—live or streaming.

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



AACT Corporate Partners

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 AACT—and to the work of community theatres everywhere.

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Become an AACT Corporate Partner

For information on becoming an AACT Corporate Partner, visit aact.org/partner



The Young Playwrights Initiative

Produce a Young Playwrights Festival at your theatre through the Young Playwrights Initiative. Promote Arts Education and involve youth from throughout your community.

A typical Young Playwrights Festival produces from 8 to 12, 10-minute plays, written by youth from your community. Students, regardless of where or how they attend school (the home-school community is strongly encouraged), are given the opportunity to write an original play (10-minute limit). These young playwrights are included in the entire production process from auditions to rehearsals to performances.

Festival produced scripts are eligible for a Grand Prize and Audience Choice Awards. Your community will enjoy voting for the Audience Choice Awards, as it gives them a bit of ownership in the Festival.

Create an amazingly positive impact on the lives of the youth of your community and your community at large. This program incorporates literacy, creativity, originality, theatre, storytelling, teamwork, trust, and perhaps most importantly, the possibility of a student seeing their own work produced on stage!

A Young Playwrights Festival is a magnet for grants, sponsorships, and donations when your community recognizes the positive impact the festival has on your community.

youngplaywrighters.com

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

or contact the AACT office at info@aact.org

National Playwriting Competition Theatre Rocks!

Ennis, Texas

Open to U.S. residents. Full length plays in English; no musicals.

Script should not have had a professional production, but previous non-professional productions are okay.

No limit on number of submissions per playwright.

First place award \$500

plus option for production in June 2021 at Theatre Rocks! Second and Third place winners may receive options for future productions at Theatre Rocks!

Deadline: Midnight, April 21, 2021 (Central)

Entry fee: \$30

Electronic submission preferred, but hard copy also accepted.

Information & Details: DirectorBillRhoten@gmail.com

theatrerocks.com/nationalplaywritingcompetition/

When	What/Who	Where	Information
March 3-7	72 Annual SETC Convention	Virtual	336-265-6148 setc.org
March 8-12	USITT21 - Virtually Anywhere	Virtual	315-463-6463 usitt.org/conference21
March 12-14	AACT CTMC 2021 Session 1	Virtually via Zoom	307-631-9253 or 307-638-6543 aact.org/ctmc
March 20-May 8	AACT Adjudication Seminar	Virtually via Zoom	817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/seminar
April 5-9	Virtual National Arts Action Summit	Virtual	DC: 202-371-2830, NY: 212-223-2787 aact.org/summit
April 9-11	AACT CTMC 2021 Session 2	Virtually via Zoom	817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/ctmc
April 12-16	National Arts Advocacy Week	Virtual	DC: 202-371-2830, NY: 212-223-2787 aact.org/arts-week

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

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Your help is needed in writing to your Senators, ASAP, in support of advocacy efforts to modify wording in the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) to include community theatres.

A component of the Save Our Stages Act (associated with CARES Act 2), the grant was created in part to help live performing arts organizations that had a 25 percent or greater drop in gross earned revenue during any quarter of 2020, as compared to the same quarter of 2019.

However, the wording of the grant also specifies that to be eligible, an organization must be paying its performers—which effectively shuts out most community theatres.

Since many senators assume that community theatre artists are paid, AACT asks that you write your U.S. Senate representatives today, asking them to change the current wording that requires paid performers. Remind them that the more than 7,000 community theatres across the country act as economic engines in their respective communities, including yours. And explain that, while stipends may be offered to directors, musicians, designers, and technicians, almost all community theatre performers are volunteers.

Time is running short, and we must act quickly. Please help make our voices heard.

A sample letter, and a list of Senate members to contact (including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer), is available on the AACT COVID-19 Resources webpage: aact.org/covid.

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