

# spotlight

July/August 2021 \$5.00

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american association of community theatre

**Make Your Re-opening  
a Grand Opening**

**AACT NewPlayFest 2022  
Plays Announced**

**National  
Managing  
Directors  
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**AACT Virtual  
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**2021  
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**Chris Serface**  
AACT President

Hello everyone—

I'm sure that you are all still reeling from how amazing AACTFest 2021 was—I know that I am. You're going to see all the highlights in the next issue, so I'm not going to go into details about it now, other than I'm so glad that it happened.

Instead, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to take the time this issue to recognize the driving force behind AACT—its staff. AACT would not have survived the pandemic without the dedication of these fine individuals. One wonderful thing that's happened over the last 16 months is that you've actually had the opportunity to see them in action, as they've led webinars, workshops, discussions, and roundtables.

**Quiana Clark-Roland**, our Executive Director, has been a driving force over the past four years, challenging us to be bigger and more dynamic than we ever were before.

**David Cockerell**, our Marketing Director, makes sure that our membership is always kept in the loop on everything that's happening within AACT, and across the nation, whether that be via email, social media, or *Spotlight*, which he designs and edits.

**Kathy Pingel** and **Ron Ziegler** are the amazing husband-and-wife team who have revolutionized our education programs in a shared role. In addition, Ron is a face that you may have seen on the festival circuit, in his role as Festival Coordinator. He's streamlined the process for how festivals operate, and has made all of our lives easier. Kathy has acted as the NewPlayFest Dramaturge, and helped guide member theatres on their journey with new playwrights toward world-premiere productions. We will miss them tremendously as they retire this year from some (but not all) of their duties.

**Karen Matheny**, our Membership Coordinator, is the person who makes sure that you, as members, are getting the most you can out of your membership. She's also there for you when you have questions about your membership and its benefits.

**Winston Daniels**, our Operations and Events Assistant, has been instrumental in making all of our webinars flow smoothly. His winning smile is always welcome as the first face we see when we log in to an event. He creates and maintains the many online forms necessary for events and activities, and helps other staff members when they experience computer problems that affect their work.

**Jill Patchin**, as the Corporate Partners Manager, has built and strengthened relationships with the many organizations who sponsor AACT programs and events. In particular, she has a direct line to the heads of performance-rights companies, and when she calls, they answer.

**Darlene DeLorenzo**, in her role as Vendor Services Coordinator, works with companies who offer products and services to community theatres across the country. She handles *Spotlight* advertising, and makes sure we have the best vendors exhibiting at our festivals.

**Stephen Peithman** has been AACT's Webmaster since we launched our first website in 1996. He's quick to update, create, and maintain content as needed (like our COVID-19 Resources page, and the many pages needed for AACTFest and NewPlayFest). He also assists David with editing *Spotlight*.

**Susan Austin** is the NewPlayFest Coordinator. She handles script submissions, and oversees the entire review process, working closely with both playwrights and reviewers. She's the first one who sees the over 200 scripts in each contest cycle, and she's there as a resource until the final production closes.

**Mary Jo DeNolf** has served this year as AACTFest Production Manager, making sure that all goes smoothly for every participant. Everywhere you turn, she's had a hand in ensuring that workshops, events, shows, and logistics are working exactly as they're supposed to.

**Keith Tomasek**, our AACTFest 2021 Social Media Coordinator, is an award-winning arts marketing consultant, and is the leader of the Arts Marketing Mastermind.

I want you all to take a moment and give a standing ovation to AACT's staff. They deserve it.

Best,  
Chris Serface



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This three-day, biennial conference will be held November 18-21 in San Antonio, Texas. It's designed for individuals who are employed full-time in an administrative or artistic position in a community theatre organization

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### Join AACT Now!

Enjoy the many benefits of AACT membership for 2021-2022! Monthly payments are available, and there are special offers for new members

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### AACT National Awards

These 2020 and 2021 AACT National Awards were presented during Virtual AACTFest 2021, Saturday, June 19

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### Make Your Re-opening a Grand Opening!

Michael D. Fox offers thoughts on how to make the return of your theatre family more than a simple re-opening

## On the Cover

Heather Dupree as Hillary in *The Studio Theatre* (Little Rock, Arkansas) production of *Hillary and Clinton*, by Lucas Hnath, presented at Virtual AACTFest 2021. See more about all National Company productions and more features of Virtual AACTFest 2021 in the September/October 2021 Spotlight. Photo: Colvin Theatrical ([colvintheatrical.com/](http://colvintheatrical.com/))

## Contacting AACT

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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at [david@aacct.org](mailto:david@aacct.org) to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at [darlene@aacct.org](mailto:darlene@aacct.org) for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone number above.



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# THE SPONGEBOB MUSICAL

by Kyle Jarrow and Tina Landau

Credit: Joan Marcus



# PEERLESS

by Jiehae Park

Credit: Joan Marcus



# THE THANKSGIVING PLAY

by Larissa FastHorse

Credit: Joan Marcus



# THE LIGHTNING THIEF

by Joe Tracz and Rob Rokicki

Credit: Jeremy Daniel

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Wetumpka, AL (2022)

V Jamie Ulmer  
Beatrice, NE (2025)

VI Sally Barnes  
Broken Arrow, OK (2021)

VII Donna Fisher  
Casper, WY (2021)

VIII TBD

IX Jon Douglas Rake  
Tacoma, WA (2021)

X Dane Winters  
Germany (US Army) (2021)

**Upcoming Events****AACT Virtual Youth Theatre Conference 2021**

July 12-16

[aact.org/youth](http://aact.org/youth)

**AACT Fall Webinar Series**

September – December

[aact.org/webinars](http://aact.org/webinars)

**AACT National Managing Directors Conference 2021**

November 18-21

Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk

San Antonio, Texas

[aact.org/mdc](http://aact.org/mdc)

**Thanks**

For their participation in Virtual AACTFest 2021, AACT would like to thank Colvin Theatrical, Broadway On Demand, and the festival tech staff: team leaders Winston Daniels and Mary Jo DeNolf, Intern Marcus Chapman (Grand Rapids, MI), and tech staff members JR Bornemann (Midland MI), Chuck Goddeeris (Royal Oak, MI), Geoffrey Baker (Hanover, PA), Ashley Parks (Charlotte, NC).

**Look for a complete listing of Virtual AACTFest 2021 happenings, including National Company productions, festival awards, keynotes, workshops, design competition awards, and many more thanks in the September/October 2021 Spotlight.**

**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

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Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator

Stephen Peithman, Webmaster /  
Spotlight Assistant Editor

Susan Austin, NewPlayFest Coordinator

Mary Jo DeNolf, AACTFest Production Manager

**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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# Festival Workshops Continue Online

*Pick up vital new skills, fine-tune those you already have*

Virtual AACTFest 2021 offered exceptional online educational workshops and panels from Broadway, professional and community theatre artists, as well as industry leaders. If you missed out on these presentations, AACT is making them available online for a limited time.

AACT is doing so because AACTFest 2021 workshops included such a well-rounded roster for directors, actors, designers, administrators, educators, and marketers. With many performing arts organizations temporarily closed, festival workshops reflected the current global health crisis, and focused on topics related to COVID-19 recovery, including outreach, reinventing productions, audience safety, and communications. Participants were able to learn new technological advances, and participate in forums addressing inclusion, diversity, and accessibility, as well as other challenges brought into sharp focus over the past year.

The success of these presentations has prompted AACT to offer anyone access to an exclusive collection of outstanding workshop and keynote videos. The bundled package is \$150, and allows viewing on one device by individuals or groups between June 20 and July 20, 2021.

For more info on workshops available and pricing visit [aact.org/21](https://aact.org/21)

Note: Festival attendees can still access post-festival workshop content through July 20 on the Whova mobile app, or the desktop app at [aact.org/app](https://aact.org/app). Go to the sessions in the Whova agenda, the recording of each session is available in the session where it initially broadcast. Click the View Session box to view the recorded session.

**Look for a complete listing of Virtual AACTFest 2021 happenings, including National Company productions, festival awards, keynotes, workshops, design competition awards, and much more in the September/October 2021 *Spotlight*.**



## Picture-Perfect Recordings



Dustin Poisson

*AACTFest 2021 National Company productions were recorded by professional video company Colvin Theatrical. Each show was professionally shot on four Blackmagic 6K cinema cameras, and carefully edited to bring viewers a theatrical experience with a mix of close-ups, wide angles, and moving shots.*

*AACT enjoyed working with Colvin Theatrical, and is appreciative of the dedicated crew that traveled to each National Company to capture the exciting productions.*

*Left to Right: Tyler Grimm, Camera Operator; Grant Floering, Sound Recordist, Audio Editor; Chris Kotcher, Director of Photography, Camera Operator; Ron Ziegler, AACT Festivals Coordinator; Cody Colvin, Executive Producer, Production Director; Zachery Renauldo, Assistant Director, Camera Operator; Dustin Poisson, Camera Operator, Behind the Scenes Lead*



# AACTFest National Choir

The AACTFest National Choir was recruited especially for Virtual AACTFest 2021 from AACT member theatres around the USA and from US Military community theatres in Europe. After the principals were recruited, they were asked to help recruit quartets for the chorus. The song, "One Day More" from *Les Misérables* was chosen specifically because of its determined, forward-looking message as we return to a new normal for community theatres following the pandemic.

The project was conducted and engineered by Christopher Powell. Special thanks to Music Theatre International and John Prignano for performance rights and orchestral tracks.

View the AACTFest National Choir performance at [facebook.com/AACT.org/videos/301840484983049](https://facebook.com/AACT.org/videos/301840484983049)

Company members:

Valjean: Brian Bonde, Sioux Falls, SD

Javert: Chris Serface, Tacoma, WA

Cosette: Emily Black, Paducah, KY

Marius: Bill Anderson, Grand Rapids, MI

Enjolras: Kristofer Geddie, Venice, FL

Eponine: Kate Marley, Seattle, WA

Thenardier: Dane Winters, Kaiserslautern, Germany

Mme. Thenardier: Vikki Hanrahan, Ansbach, Germany

Chorus:

Fowler Black, Paducah, KY

DaNiesha Carr, Atlanta, GA

Cody Colvin, Grand Rapids, MI

Winston Daniels, Fort Worth, TX

Liz Hammons, Paducah, KY

Katy Merriman, Des Moines, IA

Chris Powell, Chicago, IL

Charlie Reese, Des Moines, IA

Mason Rice, Paducah, KY

Joya Richmond, New York City, NY

Brett Spahr, Clive, IA

Meredith Toebben, Omaha, NE

Dorinda Toner, Portland, OR

Nethaneel Williams, Brandon, FL

Jill Ziegler, West Des Moines, IA

Sara Ziegler, New York City, NY

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Elena Victoria Feliz (Paul) | Red Tape Theatre (Chicago, IL) | Photo by Austin D. Oie

# AACT Virtual Youth Conference 2021

*Building the next generation of arts leaders  
through the power of theatre*

July 12–16, 2021, 10–2pm daily, (Central Time)

The AACT Youth Theatre Conference is a week-long opportunity for youth to discover paths to leadership in their community theatres. That 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. This dynamic virtual conference is open to students ages 12–18.

## Work with other youth from around the country

Attendees will be divided into subgroups and work with an AACT intern to develop unique ideas on inclusion and equity within their home theatres, and around the country. These ideas/proposals will be presented to the other groups, and a representative from each will be invited to present the proposal to the AACT Board of Directors.

## Watch and discuss selected performances from AACTFest 2021

Each day, conference attendees will watch one of the shows performed at Virtual AACTFest 2021, and discuss. Since AACTFest 2021 was completely virtual and all 12 AACTFest National Companies were filmed, youth attendees will have the opportunity to see some of the best community theatre from around the country.

## Meet with professionals in the industry

Each day, students will have opportunities to hear from directors, set designers, costume designers, playwrights, and current Broadway performers. In the May/June 2021 *Spotlight*, you were introduced to Darren Canady, Nikki Renée Daniels, and Jeff Kready as presenters at this Youth Conference. Also sharing experiences in theatre:



**Ron Cameron-Lewis** is a teacher, adjudicator, writer, and workshop coach, who has adjudicated productions at AACT Festivals at State, Regional, National, and International levels. His travels on behalf of AACT have taken him to most of the 50 States. Born in Ontario, Ron taught and coordinated the Music Theatre Department at Sheridan College in Oakville since its inception. Many of his former students



Renee McVey

*Virtual conference sessions will be fun. They will include hands-on exercises, and will strive to be similar in education and experience to in-person workshops*

work on Broadway, the West End in London, on cruise ships around the world, and at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and Shaw Festival in Canada. Ron's textbook, *Acting Skills for Life*, is in its third printing. His most recent work, *Willow Quartet Musical*, was shortlisted by the Tom Hendry Award as one of the top three Canadian musicals in 2018.

Check for more presenters and updates at [aact.org/youth](http://aact.org/youth).

**Registration:** \$100. Space is limited, registration deadline is July 11.

Registration and more information is available at [aact.org/youth](http://aact.org/youth).





The Youth Theatre Conference will be led by Jennifer Hamilton.

**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 B.A. in Theatre from Sterling College and an M.A. 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 the 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 serving on both the AACT Education and Workshop committees. ♦

## 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 Théâtre, World Festival for Amateur Theatre, the international theatre festival that takes place every four years. Studio de Monaco has confirmed that the 2021 festival is moving forward with live, public 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](http://aact.org/mondial). ♦



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# AACT NewPlayFest 2022 World Premieres

AACT NewPlayFest continues its success, with original plays being produced as world premieres across the country. Listed here are the winning plays of the 2022 cycle.

All winning plays are available for production through Dramatic Publishing Company, following each play's NewPlayFest premiere.

## *Escaping the Labyrinth*, by Thomas S. Hischak

A classics graduate student, American Bud Schliemann is touring Greece in 1951, when in Delphi he encounters a man who mistakenly reveals that he is the god Hermes, still alive centuries after people stopped believing in the Greek deities. Over the next 58 years, Bud encounters other gods living in disguise in the modern world, in particular the goddess Artemis, with whom he falls in love. But the never-aging goddess eludes him for decades until they are finally reunited in Delphi, where the story began. A romantic comedy that travels through time, *Escaping the Labyrinth* is a fantasy with heart.



**Thomas S. Hischak** is the author of over 40 published plays, which are performed in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. His playwriting awards include the Stanley Drama Award (New York City) for *Cold War Comedy*, the Julie Harris Playwriting Award (Beverly Hills, California) for *The Cardiff Giant*, and winner of the AACT 2016 NewPlayFest for *The Emperor of North America*. Hischak is also the author of 32 non-fiction books about theatre,

film, and popular music, including *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical*; *1939: Hollywood's Greatest Year*; *The Disney Song Encyclopedia*; and *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*. He was Professor of Theatre at the State University of New York at Cortland for 33 years, and a Fulbright scholar who taught and directed in Greece, Lithuania, and Turkey. He now teaches theatre and film at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. Website: [thomashischak.com](http://thomashischak.com)

**OPENING: October 15, 2021**

### **Des Moines Community Playhouse**

Des Moines, Iowa

The Des Moines Community Playhouse, using all-volunteer casts and crews, presents a full season of musicals, dramas, comedies, and family shows each year. The shows represent the best of Broadway—present and past—with professional-quality sets, costumes, and acting, at a price nearly everyone in the community can afford.

But the Playhouse isn't merely an entertainment venue. A commitment to education extends beyond opportunities for the com-



munity to get involved, behind the scenes, with the shows. The Playhouse also has an extensive education department, providing classes for all ages, and outreach programs for schools and community centers.

The Playhouse is proud to be one of the largest and oldest continuously-operating theatres in the United States.

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## *The Cafe Mocha Murders*, by Deanna Strasse

Despite the raging storm outside, it seems like a perfectly normal night for an employee meeting at the local coffee shop, The Bean Shack. That is until the lights go out, and someone winds up dead. In this over-the-top whodunit, it's all about latte art, cafe-fine content, and the imminent threat of death.



**Deanna Strasse** is a Milwaukee-based playwright, actress, and director. Her plays have been produced and workshopped through Windfall Theatre, The Box Theatre Co., Wisconsin Lutheran College, The Chameleon Theatre Circle, Sidecar Theatre, Spark Creative Works, and more. Stay up-to-date on Deanna's adventures by checking out [DeannaStrasse.com](http://DeannaStrasse.com).

**OPENING: March 25, 2022**

### **Golden Chain Theatre**

Oakhurst, California

Founded in 1967 as a summer melodrama troupe, Golden Chain Theatre is a thriving nonprofit community theatre located in Oakhurst, California—not far from Yosemite National Park. In 1972, founding board members each put up their own homes as collateral in order to purchase what had been a bowling alley, and



convert it into a theatre. In 1999, the mortgage was fully paid, and Golden Chain Theatre now owns its facility, outright.

Today, the theatre strives to present a wide variety of quality live entertainment, promote fine arts education, and continue making a vibrant contribution to the community's economy, culture, and spirit.

Golden Chain Theatre presents a season of six productions each year. Programming also includes the Jr. Players youth performance troupe, Summer Melodrama and Traveling Troupe, Platinum Players senior performance group, 10x10 Play Festival, children and teens summer workshops, and dinner theatre events.

### ***Unpacking Mother*, by Karen Schaeffer**

Cassie and Kathryn are sisters who have had little communication since Kathryn left for college. Upon their mother's death, long-absent Kathryn returns home to help Cassie, the primary caregiver, sort through their mother's hoarded possessions. As they unpack boxes, they encounter their younger selves and unearth truths about their mother's illness and father's secrets. Unpacking allows each sister to exorcise the demons that shaped their adult lives, so they can meet on the other side, open to a new relationship.



**Karen Schaeffer** is a playwright and actress in Des Moines, Iowa. Her plays include *Girls' Weekend*; *Girls' Weekend 2 – The Bachelorette Party*; *Choices! Choices!*; *Funny How She Forgets*; *Temporary Insanity*; *Recompense*; *All the Gravities*; and *Prolog*. Karen's work has been produced/and or developed in the United States, Canada, and Germany. She received the 2015 Cloris Leachman Special Recognition Award for *Girls' Weekend*. Karen is a member of

the Dramatist Guild, the Theatre Communications Group, and the American Association of Community Theatre.

**OPENING: February 10, 2022**

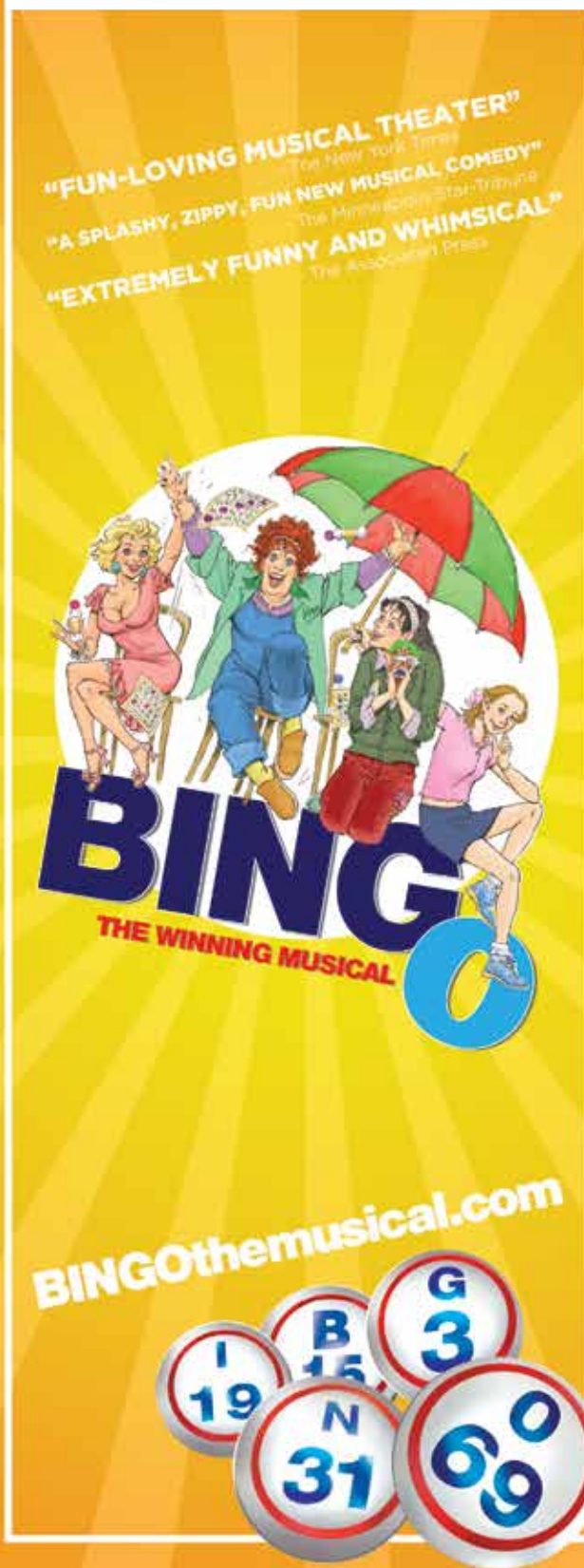
**Market House Theatre**  
Paducah, Kentucky

Founded in 1963, Market House Theatre (MHT) is celebrating its 56th season.

MHT produces annually a Signature Season of six plays and a Family Series of three or four plays. In addition, its touring company, Story Theatre, performs in four states, and produces five

*continued on next page* ►

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Playtime productions each year—early-childhood immersive plays with original scripts. MHT has also won state and regional awards, participating in AACTFest festivals.

The current budget for MHT is just over \$1 million a year. It has a full-time and part-time staff of 16, including an artistic staff of three, and a technical staff of five. Last year MHT served over 35,000 participants in its educational outreach and on-campus programming.

The company has initiated an estimated \$5 million project to renovate nearly 44,000 square feet of historic space, and make significant upgrades to all 10 of MHT's historic buildings.



## ***MLM is for Murder (Or, Your Side Hustle is Killing Us)*, by John Bavoso**

Side hustles--it seems like everybody has at least one these days. For Minerva Ross, the way to escape the doldrums of her graphic design job in Washington, DC, is to write and narrate her own feminist true-crime podcast about how and why women commit murder. Meanwhile, across the country, Felicity Evanston, a Mormon stay-at-home wife and mother (and Minerva's high school nemesis) has just started selling ridiculously patterned leggings for a company called Linen & Fate—as much as to have something that's just hers as it is to supplement her husband's income. The two women haven't crossed paths in years, but when the bubbly and unassuming Felicity snaps, she realizes the only way to get ahead in a rigged pyramid scheme is to literally start killing off the competition. Both women suddenly experience the kind of overnight success they've been so desperately craving—but risk losing their families, freedom, and very souls in the process.



**John Bavoso** (he/him/his) is a Washington, DC-based playwright, book and theatre reviewer, marketer, and aspiring wrangler of unicorns. He mostly writes plays about women and queer people who are awkwardly attempting (and generally failing) to engage with serious subject matter, using only their dry wit and impeccably timed combative taunts. John is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, a Pinky Swear

Productions company member, a 2019 Lambda Literary Fellow, and recipient of District of Columbia FY18 and FY19 Arts and Humanities Fellowships. His plays have been produced and/or developed in theatres across the country, as well as Canada, Japan, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, Australia, and the UK. For more information, visit [John-Bavoso.com](http://John-Bavoso.com).

**OPENING: February 25, 2022**

**Midland Center for the Arts/Center Stage Theatre**  
Midland, Michigan

Center Stage Theatre has its origins in the Midland Theatre Guild, which began in 1929. The Guild moved to its current home, part of Midland Center of the Arts in 1971. In 2008, it merged with the Midland Music Society to create Center Stage Theatre, which continues as part of Midland Center for the Arts, presenting up to 10 productions each year.

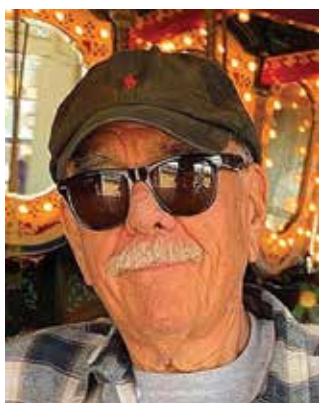
Center Stage Theatre presents a five-show subscription package annually, including a wide variety of plays and musicals, from Greek tragedy to musicals fresh from Broadway. Center Stage Theatre is today a national award-winning community theatre program, with a volunteer base over 300-strong, and a perfor-



mance season that draws tens of thousands of theatre-goers from across Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region. The theatre's productions of *Urinetown* (2011) and *Venus in Fur* (2017) both advanced to the national AACTFest theatre festival.

## Of Men and Cars, by Jim Geoghan

"*Of Men and Cars* follows my life from age four until I was late twenties," explains playwright Jim Geoghan. "A great deal of my Bronx childhood is true. Yes, I stole my father's car and hit a tree when I was four. I hung out with Dad at bars when I was five. If there was a fire nearby, Dad would take me there. As a child I thought my father was amazing. As a teenager I discovered he was not so amazing and, worse than that, I let him know it. But, as I became an adult, I began to realize that I was also not as amazing as I'd thought, and I made it up to my father before it was too late."



Jim Geoghan's play *Only Kid-ding* ran off-Broadway for two years and was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards, including best play. *Light Sensitive* has had 80 productions, and was nominated for the Joseph Jefferson Award in Chicago. His other plays include *King of City Island*, *Two Gentlemen of Corona*, *Beehive on Broadway*, *Warren and the Polar Bear*, and *Ug the Caveman Musical*, for which he wrote the book and lyrics. Geoghan

also writes and produces television—he created *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody* for the Disney Channel, and was nominated twice for Emmy Awards.

**OPENING: October 21, 2022**

**Midland Community Theatre**  
Midland, Texas

Midland Community Theatre (MCT) was founded in 1946 by Art Cole, and marked its 75th anniversary in 2020.

MCT produces musicals, comedies, dramas, mysteries, melodramas, and children's theatre in three performance spaces, along with diverse educational classes and programming.

The company offers a membership season of nine productions; a Summer Mummies fundraiser for the theatre's operating fund (since 1949); a theatre school offering after-school classes; the Pickwick Players, offering teen classes, workshops, and three productions; Applause Players, a drama therapy program for youth

with autism and their families; and Centerstage, an after-school project for teenagers who are not involved in Pickwicks.

MCT is proud to have produced original works for over 25 years, as part of its McLaren Playwriting competition, and is looking forward to mounting an AACT NewPlayFest production in 2022, continuing its tradition of showcasing emerging playwrights.

## Launch Day (*Love Stories from the Year 2108*), by Michael Higgins

Eager to escape our troubled planet, brilliant engineer Jada is blasting off today on a risky mission to colonize another world. However, ex-boyfriend, Zegg, believes the Earth—and their relationship—can be saved. But first he must convince her to stay—and hope his new robotic arm doesn't ruin everything. Jada and Zegg are just one of six couples navigating a high-tech but perilous future in this science-fiction comedy. In a series of connected stories, the couples encounter everything from spiteful computers to brain-controlling advertisements, to bizarre new animals. And as the launch clock ticks down, they search for ways to make it all work.

*continued on next page* ►

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**Michael Higgins** is a Chicago writer and playwright, whose work has been performed around the country. His comedy *Launch Day (Love Stories from the Year 2108)* has received staged readings at Benchmark Theatre in Denver, Capital Stage in Sacramento, and Chicago Dramatists in Chicago. Michael's play *The Chip* has been produced in New York and Chicago, and appears in the Smith & Kraus anthology, *The*

*Best Ten-Minute Plays 2018*. His play *Tracy and Her Dream Guys* was published in *The Best New Ten-Minute Plays 2019*, from Rowman & Littlefield. Michael is a former legal affairs reporter for the Chicago Tribune, and has a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania. A Cleveland-area native, he has also worked as a garbage collector, sewer cleaner, and assistant to the guy who scrapes roadkill off the highway.

## OPENING: October, 2022

### Theatre Tuscaloosa Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Theatre Tuscaloosa was founded in 1971 as the Tuscaloosa Community Players. In 1976, the Arts Council of Tuscaloosa leased the Historic Bama Theatre as a performing arts center, with the Players' production of *George Washington Slept Here* as the inaugural event. The group performed there for 22 years, evolving into "Theatre Tuscaloosa" in the 1980s.

The company then forged an alliance with Shelton State Community College, and in the 1990s raised funds to complete construction of a fine arts center at the college's new Martin Campus. In exchange, Shelton State named Theatre Tuscaloosa as its resident company.

Theatre Tuscaloosa produces five mainstage productions and two SecondStage productions, all designed to foster new directorial and performing talent. The Theatre Tuscaloosa Academy seeks to develop the talents and skills of volunteer performers, crew, and front-of-house staff. The company also hosts a Summer Theatre Camp, in cooperation with Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre.

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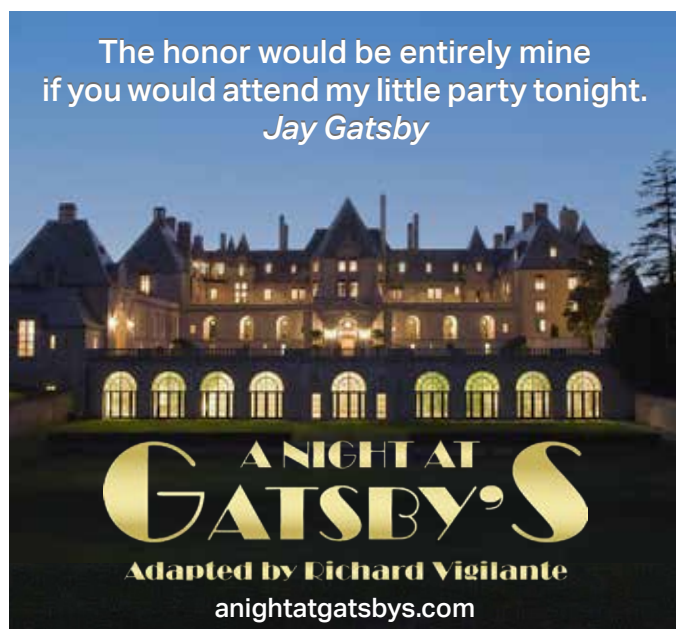
AACT NewPlayFest 2022 is made possible in part by a grant from the **Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation**, created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin and friend, Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through a lasting legacy promoting new works for theatre through AACT NewPlayFest.

For more information, visit: [aact.org/newplayfest-2022](http://aact.org/newplayfest-2022).



**Dramatic Publishing Company** publishes AACT NewPlayFest's winning plays in anthologies, and also licenses production of the winning plays. Previous AACT NewPlayFest winning plays are available in acting editions from DPC.

Visit [aact.org/dpc](http://aact.org/dpc) for links to anthologies and plays, and to learn more about discounts and special offers for AACT members, ♦



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

# Thanks to AACT NewPlayFest 2022 Reviewers

Volunteer Reviewers played an important role in AACT NewPlayFest 2022, reading and scoring submitted scripts in several rounds of reviews. The Reviewers work under guidance from AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator Susan Austin. AACT gives a special thanks to all the dedicated volunteers the help make NewPlayFest a success. Listed are the reviewers for the AACT NewPlayFest 2022 cycle:

Emily Anderson  
Susan Apker  
Jason Applegate  
Allen Austin  
Ed Bassett  
Trinity Bird  
Scott R. Bloom  
Denise Bristol  
Mary Lou Britton  
Jeffrey Brown  
Dean Bruce  
Catherine Burke  
Sharon Burum  
Ron Cameron-Lewis  
Dr. Susanne Caviness  
Cheryl Clark  
David Copelin  
Mrs. Celia A Couture  
Mary "Katie" Davis  
Alicia Ebaugh

Jonathan Edmondson  
Jerry Eisenhower  
Nancy K. Eppert  
Michael D. Fox  
John Freed  
Dennis Gilmore  
Susan Goes  
Amy Goodyear  
David Gorsline  
Deborah Hertzog  
Andrea Holliday  
Ann Holt  
Brian Johnson  
Jeanne Johnston  
Jon Kerkhoff  
Sue Klemp  
Katie Krueger  
Lucinda Lawrence  
Madge Levinson  
Jason Lipton

Joanne Love  
Mark Maddy  
Dan Maloney  
Wanda Maragni  
Susie McCauley  
Jason McHaney  
June J. McNerney  
David Metcalf  
Susan Moring  
Tim Naegelin  
Kris Neely  
JoAnne Nissen  
Jim Parise  
Daniel Pelissier  
Katrina Ploof  
Tammy Pollard  
Joline Powell  
Caleb Price  
Annette Procnier  
Kristi Quinn

Leslee Richards  
Linda Roberts  
Dr. Jon Roberts  
Jessie Roberts  
Frances Ruoff  
Tony Rust  
Emma Shafer  
Lewis Silverman  
Henry Slavens  
Steve Taylor  
Joeann Tesar  
Judith Tilley  
Mark Toeppen  
Jes Washington  
Kathleen Weaver  
Michael Weems  
Ernest Williams  
Phyllis Wolfe

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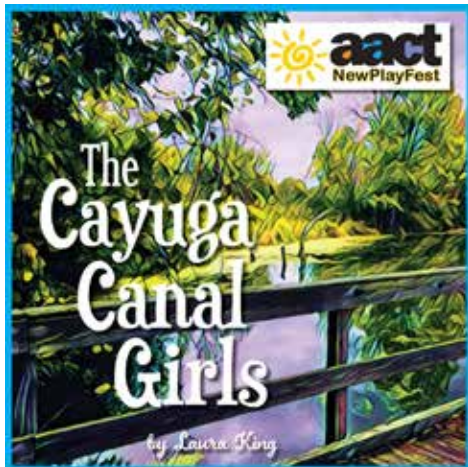
[ATwistedChristmasCarol.com](http://ATwistedChristmasCarol.com)  
[BirthdayClubThePlay.com](http://BirthdayClubThePlay.com)



# NewPlayFest 2020 Update

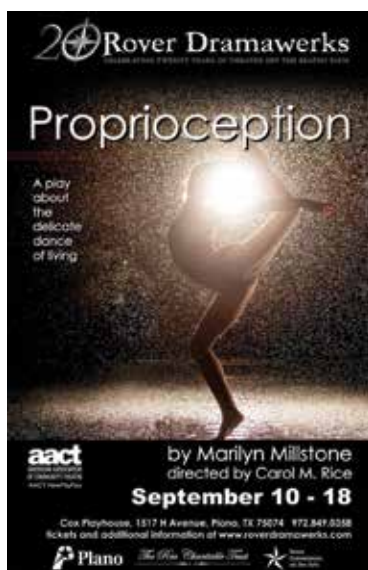
In March of 2020, AACT NewPlayFest was four shows into its six-show performance cycle, with successful productions at Boise Little Theatre in Idaho (*Casserole*, by Pam Harbaugh), Tacoma Little Theatre in Washington (*Shattering*, by Pat Montley), the Sauk Theatre in Michigan (*On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell), and the Manatee Performing Arts Center in Florida (*Goat Song Revel*, by Dan Borengasser).

Next on the docket was a performance of *The Cayuga Canal Girls*, by Laura King, at Phoenix Theatre, in Oakville, Connecticut. Then, COVID-19 halted everything.



The *Cayuga Canal Girls* has now been rescheduled for October 2–16, 2021. The play's director, Ed Basset, remains confident: "Our excitement remains high, and the cast is still working hard."

*Cayuga Canal Girls* playwright Laura King and the company had completed their workshop in February of 2020. "I'm grateful to Ed Basset and the wonderful company of The Cayuga Canal Girls for sticking with this show through these troubling times, says King. "I can't wait to return to Oakville, to finally see this show!"



The final NewPlayFest production, *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone and performed by Rover Dramawerks, has been rescheduled for September 10–18, 2021, at the Cox Playhouse in Plano, Texas.

Playwright Millstone observes, "The thrill of live theatre is dependent on the intimate connection between performers and audience. The pandemic nearly crushed it. Thanks to the support I've received from



AACT national staff and Carol Rice, I know the curtain will rise on *Proprioception*. Because the spirit of theatre people is indomitable, theatre can never be crushed. And that is what inspires me to write plays." ♦

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\*Philly and the Dreamer Producers reserve the right to make the final selections based on submitted information, timing, geographic location and will respond to all members



# ‘Confide, Commiserate, Collaborate, and Celebrate’

*Insights from the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference*

Christine Cottam

There’s a quote I’m partial to, one of those you stumble across while scrolling through social media. It reads: “Collaboration is not about gluing together existing egos. It’s about the ideas that never existed until after everyone entered the room.”

Those sentiments perfectly embody my experience with the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) earlier this year. What could have been simply a series of topics to get through, quickly grew into a wide-ranging discussion and idea-sharing session. Whether an attendee’s theatre was small-scale and all-volunteer, or large-scale with paid staff, everyone made important contributions to the discussion. And we all emerged the better for it.

Topics ranged from board evaluation and by-laws, to active shooter training, and implementing the Chicago Theatre Standards, which promote a cultural shift away from turning a blind eye to sexual harassment, discrimination, violence, intimidation and bullying in our theatres and towards mentoring, prevention, and accountability. [notinourhouse.org/chicago-theatre-standards-pilot-project/]

There were discussions on fundraising and marketing, successful programming such as the Penguin Project and senior theatre, as well as streaming, social media campaigns, and social distancing. All were enlightening.

But the two topics that took priority for me, personally, were (1) addressing leadership burnout, and (2) implementing work on equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. These are where the hard questions are being asked.

Leadership burnout is a recurring topic at management conferences these days. However, I felt the conversation shifted this time, with thought-provoking questions about the real root cause of burnout that many feel is entrenched in community theatre. There are no easy fixes, and more research, information and discussion is necessary for us to wrap our arms around this one. But I believe we will.

In respect to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI), both AACT Board Member Steven Butler and Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland suggested a few starting points:

- Community theatre leaders are already committing to this challenging work, and it is vital that we continue to support each other’s efforts.
- The better internal work we do, the better leaders we are. Educating ourselves in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and anti-racism is the first step, and the AACT website’s EDI Resources page is a good place to begin (aact.org/edi)
- For a full picture, conduct an Equity Audit of your theatre with a trained EDI consultant.

As community theatre leaders, we sometimes feel as though we are shipwrecked and desperately trying to keep our theatres afloat in the middle of the ocean. That’s where CTMC comes in. The conference is a lifeline, a place where we can confide, commiserate, collaborate, and celebrate with like-minded colleagues. We emerge as better leaders—not only with new ideas, but knowing that those supportive colleagues around the country are people to whom we can turn when needed.

Kudos to AACT staff (including Quiana Clark-Roland, Winston Daniels, Kathy Pingel, and Ron Ziegler) and to conference facilitator Chad-Alan Carr, for successfully navigating an all-virtual conference. Their planning and coordination hit the mark.

As someone who appreciates a well-organized system, I look forward to my next AACT Community Theatre Management Conference.



*Christine Cottam is a professionally-trained stage manager and theatre administrator who oversees the daily operations and production management at Lincoln Community Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska. Previously, she led efforts to establish two youth theatres in Hastings, Nebraska, serving as Educational Director of Hastings Junior Community Theatre and then as Managing Artistic Director of Boxcar Youth Theatre Company.*

*Christine holds bachelor's degrees in theatre and music from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. She has worked with Seven Devils Playwriting Conference at id Theatre, UNK Theatre, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Opera, Nebraska Association of Community Theatre, and in gifted education.*



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# AACT National Managing Directors Conference 2021

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November 18-21, 2021

San Antonio, Texas

The National Managing Directors Conference is back!

Community theatre managing directors will gather November 18-21, 2021, at the Drury Plaza Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, located on the city's famous River Walk. There, they'll share stories of challenges and solutions, learn about other theatres' operations, and network with colleagues from across the country.

This three-day, biennial conference (previously held in Madison, Wisconsin), is designed exclusively for individuals who are employed full-time in an administrative or artistic position in a community theatre organization.

"The value of this conference is tremendous," says Jon Douglas Rake, of the Tacoma Musical Playhouse in Tacoma, Washington. "Theatre managers share challenges from their home theatres, and issues range from boards of directors and staff to production values, marketing, facility, ticket pricing, and volunteers. Managers from small-scale theatres as well as multi-million-dollar budget theatres attend. It is a place to share and a place to learn. It is also a place to catch up on friendships."

Sarah Phoenix, Artistic Director of Theatre Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma, agrees: "The most important part of attending the conference is talking to others who do what I do, and who understand the unique nature of our roles. At the conference, we build relationships of friendship, support, and networking, and meet people who are willing to provide advice with productions and help trouble-shoot problems."

## Registration

Early-Bird Rates: (Before September 1)

Member Rate \$300

Non-Member rate \$360

On-site Rates: (After September 1)

Member Rate \$350

Non-Member rate \$400

Registration includes all conference materials, lunches, and social events.

For more information and registration, visit [aact.org/mdc](http://aact.org/mdc).



## Hotel:

Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio  
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Room Rates:

\$139 Standard per night + tax

To reserve your room, visit [aact.org/drury](http://aact.org/drury).

The Drury Plaza Hotel is located on the San Antonio River, in walking distance from shops, restaurants and entertainment. Relax in the



*The biennial National Community Theatre Directors Conference was last held at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in November 2019. Community theatre professionals from across the country assembled to share and gain knowledge from their peers. Join us for the 2021 conference in San Antonio*

sun on the deck of the rooftop pool, which also has two whirlpools. (San Antonio's average daytime temperature in November is a pleasant 72°.) Formerly the Alamo National Bank, the hotel in this 24-story renovated skyscraper features 50-foot ceilings, travertine flooring and stained-glass windows.

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Accessibility information available at [aact.org/hotel-accessibility](http://aact.org/hotel-accessibility)

For more information on the San Antonio River Walk's shops, restaurants and sights, visit [thesanantonioriverwalk.com/](http://thesanantonioriverwalk.com/)

## Schedule:

### Thursday - 11/18/2021

9:00-Noon AACT Executive Committee Meeting  
5:30-7:00pm Cocktails in Lobby

### Friday - 11/19/2021

9:00am Morning Session  
12:30pm Lunch buffet – provided by AACT  
1:30pm Afternoon Session  
5:30pm Dinner on your own – Explore the River Walk!  
7:30pm Evening Session  
10:00pm Adjourn for the day

### Saturday - 11/20/2021

9:00am Morning Session  
12:30pm Lunch buffet – provided by AACT  
1:30pm Afternoon Session  
5:30pm Dinner on your own – Explore the River Walk!  
7:30pm Evening Session with MTI Music Theatre International  
10:00pm Adjourn for the day

### Sunday - 11/21/2021

9:00am Morning Session  
11:30am Conference adjourns ♦

# Now's the Time to Join or Renew!

For more than 30 years, AACT has been committed to providing theatres with the best, most timely resources to help you succeed.

Annual AACT memberships are valid September 1 through August 31. Monthly AACT memberships are also available. See below for more information, or visit [aact.org/fees](http://aact.org/fees).

## Discounts on AACT Events

- AACT Youth Conference 2021
- AACT Fall Webinar Series
- AACT National Managing Directors Conference
- AACT Member Roundtables
- aactWORLDfest 2022

## Individual members receive:

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- Peer-to-peer networking with theatre professionals nationwide

## Organizational members receive:

- Discounted or free professional development programs, events, and conferences
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- Member-only discounts on scripts, rentals, and theatre services
- A 30% discount on ASCAP License
- Access to discounted and customized theatre insurance programs
- A digital and/or printed copy of *Spotlight* magazine, plus weekly digital communications
- Peer-to-peer networking with other organizational members and theatre professionals nationwide

- Use of AACT Membership logo and decal

Learn more about membership benefits at [aact.org/benefits](http://aact.org/benefits).

## How to Join or Renew

To join or renew your membership, go to [aact.org/join](http://aact.org/join).

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

If you or your organization have previously not paid electronically, we ask that you start doing so when you renew online. (If you require assistance, let us know by calling 817-732-3177.) AACT will be moving all membership join/renew processes online for the 2023 membership year, after which paper invoicing will be available only by request.

## Special Offers for First-Time Members

- First-time organizations can receive a 50% discount on their second year!
- Join before September 1, 2021, and receive the remainder of the 2020-2021 membership year at no additional cost.

## 2021-22 Membership Fees

Individual Annual Fees	Individual Monthly Fees
Individual: \$80	Individual: \$9
Senior/Retired Military: \$65	Senior/Retired Military: \$6
First Time Individual: \$60	
Youth: \$15	
Couple: \$130	
Military/Wounded Warrior: Complimentary	
Organization Annual Fees	Organization Monthly Fees
Under \$10,000: \$85	Under \$10,000: \$9
\$10,000-\$24,999: \$120	\$10,000-\$24,999: \$11
\$25,000-\$99,999: \$185	\$25,000-\$99,999: \$15
\$100,000-\$249,999: \$300	\$100,000-\$249,999: \$27
\$250,000-\$499,999: \$400	\$250,000-\$499,999: \$33
\$500,000-\$999,999: \$570	\$500,000-\$999,999: \$49
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# AACT Board Elections 2021

The AACT Board of Directors met virtually for the annual summer meeting on May 22, 2021.

Chairperson of the Nomination Committee Emily Anderson announced the following persons were elected to the Board of Directors for three-year terms:

Bob Frame, Skaneateles, New York  
Jim Walker, Aberdeen, South Dakota  
Sharon Burum, Duncan, Oklahoma  
Kelli McLoud-Schingen, Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Martha Cherbini, Leander, Texas  
Michael Cochran, Paducah, Kentucky  
Lou Ursone, Stamford, Connecticut

Elected for a one-year term was: Chris Serface, Tacoma, Washington

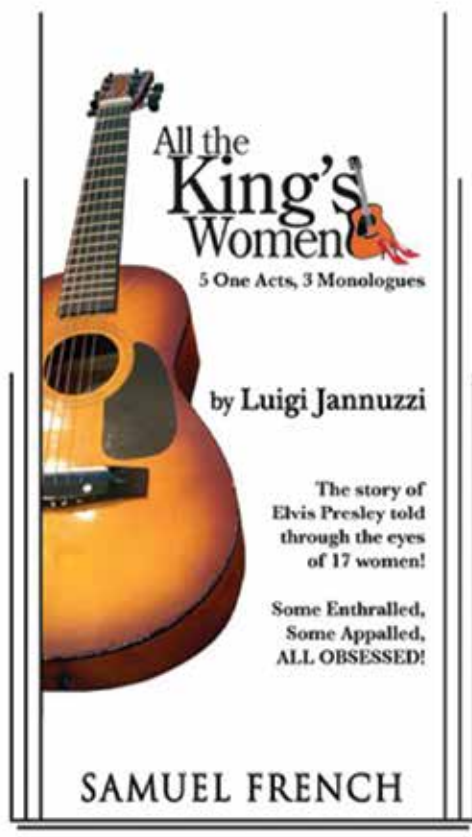
President Chris Serface appointed Frank Peot (Sun Prairie, Wisconsin) and Michael Fox (North Salt Lake, Utah) to the Board of Directors.

The following officers were elected:

President: Chris Serface  
Vice President: Sara Phoenix  
Secretary: Frank Peot  
Treasurer: Michael Fox  
Vice President for Festivals: Jim Walker

President Chris Serface expressed AACT's thanks to these retiring Board members Rich Gannon, Carolyn McCloskey, Lucinda Lawrence, and Carole Ries. Their years of service and dedication to AACT are especially appreciated.

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# AACT National Awards

## Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership

*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.*



**Dennis Gilmore** (Indio, California) found his passion for theatre at the Athens Little Theatre in Texas. He became the theatre's first Executive Director in 1989, and helped to grow the organization into what would become the Henderson County Performing Arts Center. While working full-time for the theatre and teaching technical theatre at Trinity Valley Community College, Dennis completed his M.A. in theatre with an emphasis in directing. He became active

with the Texas Nonprofit Theatres, holding various board positions, and helping to create the annual TNT Youth Conference in 1996, and the TNT POPS! New Play Project in 2009. On the national level, Dennis served AACT on myriad committees, including four years as Vice President of Education, along with terms as California State Contact and Region VII Rep. Dennis received both local and national awards for his commitment to theatre, culmination in joining the ranks of the AACT Fellows in 2011. Dennis was known as someone who was a reliable resource and an excellent listener. He possessed a wicked sense of humor and a knack for helping others thrive. The theatre community lost a great friend and advocate with Dennis' recent passing.

## Corporate Award

*Presented to businesses and corporations for significant financial support of community theatre on a regional or national basis.*



**Broadway On Demand** is considered the industry-leading livestream platform housing performance & theatre education programming.

It has streamed 2,500 events and live productions—from Broadway shows to concert series, performance venues to individual artists, and original content—in 82 countries to over 300,000 viewers. Closer to home, approved community theatre productions can now utilize the platform to stream to their audiences, thanks to the unique licensing interface, ShowShare. In fact, since May of 2020, Broadway On Demand has partnered with over 300 community theatres across the country, reached over 20,000 audience members for those theatres and generated more than \$250,000 in ticket sales revenue. In addition, over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, the company has worked diligently to expand its services and offerings to community theatres of all sizes. AACT thanks Broadway On Demand for its generous

support of virtual AACTFest, and for providing the platform and resources in which community theatres across America can still come together, perform, and celebrate the power of theatre.

## David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

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



**Donna Fisher** (Casper, Wyoming) has been involved in community theatre for 40 years, including founding and serving as director for several theatre companies in Casper, Wyoming. She has served for the past seven years as the Board President and Artistic Director for the Casper Theater Company—a company she helped organize in 2014. Donna has directed 372 major productions, and worked both on and behind the stage in many more. She

has served 16 years as the AACT Western Regional Representative, and 14 years as the AACT Wyoming State Representative. Donna has adjudicated both state and regional festivals, and served on the festival commissions in several states. She also helped form the Wyoming State Theatre Festival Committee, providing that committee with invaluable experience, information, and leadership. In 2005, Donna was nominated for the Wyoming Woman of Distinction award.

## Diamond Crown Organization Award

*Recognizes longevity and vitality of AACT member theatres that have expanded programming and/or facilities in the past 10 years, and have the administrative leadership to remain vital to their communities for the next 10 years. Recipients must have been in continuous operation for 75 years, and organizational members of AACT for the past 10 years.*



**Tacoma Little Theatre** (Tacoma, Washington) was founded in 1918 as the Tacoma Little Theatre and Drama League, and at 103 years is among the oldest community theatres currently operating in the United States.

TLT's vision is to offer a destination for the diverse community of Tacoma and Puget Sound that offer a well-rounded season of mainstage productions, staged readings, murder mysteries, special events, and a year-around education program serving both adults and children. TLT increases community awareness through special ticket programs and embracing other non-profit and service organizations, such as United Way. With the support of the community and local funders, TLT was able to complete a full remodel of its auditorium and lobby spaces, beginning in June of



2020. This was the first major upgrade since the 1950s, and came as a result of listening and responding to patron feedback. After a break, in response to the Covid pandemic, the theatre is looking forward to welcoming back patrons in the fall of 2021.

### Distinguished Merit Award

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



**Joe Barton** (Waterville, Ohio) has been serving the local and state theatre community for over 25 years, including 20 years with the Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA), serving as President for three of those years, and as Regional Representative for OCTA's Northwest Region. In 2005, Joe and several friends formed 3B Productions, and is proud that it has "set the standard for high quality productions and has been

invited to OCTA State Conference almost every year since their inception." Joe has directed over 100 productions for multiple theatres in Northwest Ohio. Besides acting, directing, and producing, he has costumed hundreds of productions, winning numerous costume design awards. He is the owner/operator of 3B Costumes, and was manager and head costumer for Kos-tumes, Ltd. for 15 years. "Community Theatre has been and will continue to be a huge part of my life," he says. "To me, theatre people have become family!"



**Charles Corritore** (Erie, Pennsylvania) has been part of the Erie Playhouse for 47 years. In 1974, when a fire decimated the group's rented space, his work as Business Manager maintained the theatre's financial stability while it performed in 10 different county-wide venues, until buying a permanent home in 1984. In addition to his contributions on the business side, Charlie has participated in well over 100 productions, sharing his innate

abilities in character development, dance, and choreography with others. Partnering with Michael Malthaner, he has been a librettist/lyricist for eight musical theatre productions. These musical productions, along with murder mysteries, which Charlie began writing in 1989, are still being performed in community theatres nationwide. Says current Executive Director, Kate Neubert, "I cannot express the incredible respect and admirations I have for him, and I know it is shared by all who have ever crossed paths. He embodies all that we love about community theatre."

### 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.*



**Linda Blystone** (Spring City, Pennsylvania) is a founding member of Forge Theatre, and has volunteered tirelessly since day-one, in 1962. During her 59 years with the company, she has worked every position from producer to stage manager. When handling phone duties, which she has managed for well over 30 years, Linda can be counted on to know every subscriber, length of time they have been a patron of the theatre, and where

each person who requires special seating would like to sit. She is also the one person in the theatre who knows where to find every prop, costume, or set piece in minutes. When talking about stage management, the theatre's board commented, "As far as any of us can tell, Linda has stage managed every main-stage production in the last 20 years. She has also worked in some capacity on every production in the theatre's nearly 60-year history."

*National Awards continue on next page ►*

## WORLD CLASSICS ON STAGE

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**THE SECRET GARDEN**  
Brooklyn Publishing Co. | [brookpub.com](http://brookpub.com)

HOMER'S  
**THE ODYSSEY**  
Concord Theatricals | [concordtheatricals.com](http://concordtheatricals.com)

CHARLES DICKENS'  
**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**  
Eldridge Plays & Musicals | [histage.com](http://histage.com)

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S  
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**Emma Bradley** (Grand Marais, Minnesota) has been the lead costumer, designer, and coordinator for the Grand Marais Playhouse for the past 25 years. Her theatre colleagues say she has created breathtaking dresses, costumes, and soft goods for most of the Grand Marais Playhouse productions, including shows with up to 100 youth involved. In 2020, Emma stepped back from creating costumes, but not before sharing her insights and experience with upcoming

costumers. According to the theatre's Director, Susan Hennessy, "The Grand Marais Playhouse will be celebrating its 50th season in 2022, and Emma has supported the Playhouse through half of those years!"



**Jude Knight** (Memphis, Tennessee) As Theatre Memphis begins celebrating 100 years in May 2021, volunteer-extraordinaire Jude Knight will celebrate her 50th anniversary, commemorating her first show with Theatre Memphis—portraying Martha Jefferson in 1776. Fast-forward 50 years, with 43 productions as a beloved and award-winning leading lady and character actress, as well as 25 years of service on the theatre's board, Jude re-

mains as passionate and dedicated as she was when she appeared in that first production at the age of 20. In addition to her board work, she has served on many committees and has always been ready to serve in any capacity. According to Executive Producer Debbie Litch, "Her very presence elevates every meeting, discussion and action through her dedication to her community and theatre." In 2012, Jude Knight was recognized with the Eugart Yerian Award—one of the Memphis Ostranders Theatre Awards for lifetime achievement.

### Mort Clark International Achievement Award

*Recognizes individuals and organizations for significant achievement in the promotion of excellence in international community theatre. This award may be presented at an international event.*



**Annette Procunier** (Ontario, Canada) has been involved in amateur and professional international theatre for over 40 years. As an acclaimed director, adjudicator, and teacher, her work has taken her to Japan, Europe, and the United States, as well as Canada. She has adjudicated more than 135 festivals in the past 37 years (including AACTFest), and is the only North American to adjudicate the IATA World Theatre Festival in Monaco.

Annette has also been a frequent instructor, team leader, and cre-

ative inspiration to countless U.S. service members, Department of Defense civilians, and other participants in the U.S. Army Entertainment community theatre program. In 2010, Annette published the only textbook on theatrical adjudication, *Do You See What I See*, and in 2009 she became the first non-American to be named an AACT Fellow.

### 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.*



**Seth Sponhouse** (Williamsport, Pennsylvania) has spent nearly a decade working in community theatres across central Pennsylvania, and is an active member of AACT's Education Committee. In 2015, he became the first Education Coordinator for the Community Theatre League (CTL) of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. In addition to directing many plays, Seth fostered the creation of the Community Academy of Stage and Theatre,

the development of CTL's signature fundraiser, Evening with a Star, which brings a Broadway performer to Williamsport for a one-night concert and masterclass. In addition, he was instrumental in the incorporation of the Penguin Project at CTL, and the subsequent Spotlight Program (featuring children and adults with disabilities). Seth also helped establish a partnership with West Virginia University to offer a full-ride scholarship to a student participant of CTL's Ray of Light Awards, a celebration of high school theatre.



**Lou Ursone** (Stamford, Connecticut) Since 2000, Lou has served as the Executive Director/Producing Artistic Director of Curtain Call, Inc., Stamford, Connecticut's longest-running and only year-around, nonprofit producing theatre company. He was honored as the Connecticut Arts Administrator of the Year in 2008, receiving the Elizabeth Mahaffey Fellowship. Lou serves on the Arts and Culture Commission

for the City of Stamford, and was its founding chair. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Darien Arts Center for eight years, and on the Samuel French Advisory Committee for four years. During the pandemic, Lou worked tirelessly as an advocate, making sure community theatres were included in the Shuttered Venue Grants being distributed to arts groups. Lou also summarized and shared grant information with these theatres, in an effort to keep theatre administrators posted on available support.



## Special Recognition Award

*Presented to individuals and organizations whose contributions to community theatre are far reaching and of a special nature.*



**Stephen Peithman** (Oakland, California) first became involved in community theatre while a grad student at UC Davis, and continued his involvement as an actor, board president, and director with Sacramento-area theatres. He attended his first AACTFest in the 1990s, when he was editor of *Stage Directions* magazine. Stephen served on several AACT committees and for six years and on the AACT Board prior to being elected VP

for public relations. He is proudest of his role in the creation and development of AACT's first website in 1996, and continues to volunteer as webmaster, along with assisting with AACT's *Spotlight* magazine. "Community theatre has given me the opportunity to explore my talents and creativity in ways I never would have imagined," he explains. "In addition, being part of AACT has broadened my understanding and appreciation of theatre from a national perspective—in particular, the many ways in which we share a common bond. To this day, most of my closest friends are people I met through my community theatre experience, and for that, I am truly thankful."



**Colleen Stock** (Reston, Virginia) has been actively involved in community theatre for 12 years, including serving as an adjudicator for Washington Area Theatre Community Honors organization, which recognizes artistic and technical excellence in community theatre throughout the greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area. In response to area theatres' need for funding and recognition during the Covid crisis, Colleen created and helped

produce a two-day, 17-hour telethon called *Community Theatre Thrives!*. The telethon included recorded theatre content from 14 participating community theatres, showcasing the variety of talent that exists in the region. More than 3,000 viewers—some from as far away as Hawaii and Sweden—tuned into the telethon, which raised nearly \$24,000 that was shared by the 14 participating theatres. In addition to the funds raised, the telethon helped promote community theatres as an important cultural asset. With that in mind, Colleen is in the process of creating a manual to help other community theatre companies replicate this telethon activity.

## Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award

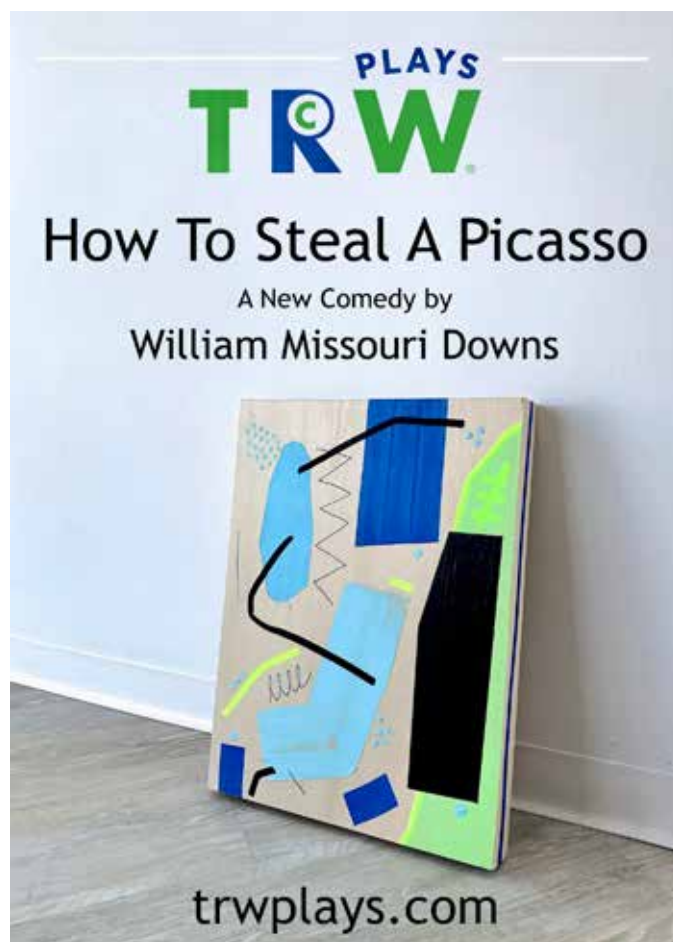
*Recognizes AACT member theatres for successfully completing major steps in new directions, expanding services to their community, or moving to the next level of organizational development.*



PRESCOTT CENTER  
*for the*  
ARTS

**Prescott Center for the Arts** (Prescott, Arizona) was founded in 1968, and offers programming that includes mainstage

and family theatre, workshops for all ages, Teen Summer Stock, a full art gallery, and a scholarship program that awards more than \$12,000 annually to youth, ages 12 to 18. Prior to the pandemic, the theatre began the most aggressive capital campaign in its 53-year history, seeking to raise funds for a new studio theatre building in an adjacent parking lot. When Covid hit, the theatre reached out to patrons and supporters with a program called "PCA Serves," that provided welfare checks and any assistance needed. The Center also staged outdoor concerts, completely remodeling the interior of the theatre to a cabaret-style facility, including new lighting and sound to accommodate safety and distancing protocols. The theatre received a \$3M donation to kick-off a capital campaign, but due to the pandemic the goals of the campaign needed to be readjusted. They have now relaunched the campaign and plan to reach their goals to fund to fund the new studio theatre, a 6,950 sq ft., 99-seat multi-purpose building, with rehearsal, storage, and administrative space. This new space represents the largest facility addition in the theatre's history. ♦



# AACT Fellows 2021

The designation “AACT Fellow” is bestowed upon members of AACT who, over a period of years, have contributed significantly to both the idea and ideal of community theatre, and to the work of AACT. Nomination and election to this select group is the responsibility of the current Fellows membership.



**Bob Frame** graduated from SUNY Oswego in 1977 with a B.A. in Technical Theatre. He recently retired as from Cayuga Community College, in Auburn, NY, where he was Director of Theatre Operations since 1979. He has served on the Board of Trustees for the Theatre Association of NY State (TANYS) since 1997, including a term as President. He also has served on the AACT Board of Directors since 2014. Other board service

includes the Auburn Players Community Theatre, Skaneateles Summer Theatre, Pointes of Faith Dancers, and Auburn Public Theatre. During his 40-plus year career, he has won numerous awards for his work in theatre. He is a trained TANYS roving adjudicator, and one of its two technical adjudicators. He has been Technical Director for the TANYS Festival for many years, and Technical Liaison for AACTFests in 2011, 2017, and 2019. In 2008, he initiated a design competition and exhibition for the annual TANYS Festival, in which designers and technicians could show off their best work. He then brought those skills to the AACT Design Competition at the national AACTFest, where he has served as co-chair for the past three cycles. Since his retirement, Bob is finding more time to explore work as a free-lance lighting designer, director, and actor. His love of theatre is shared by his wife (a stage manager) and his three daughters (a stage manager, an actress, and a lighting technician). His son lives nearby, and is perfectly content sitting in the audience.



**Kristofer Geddie** trekked to Florida from New York city to play “Coalhouse Walker” in *Ragtime* at Venice Theatre—and never left. He is currently that theatre’s General Manager and Director of Diversity. A native of North Carolina, Kris holds a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from Mars Hill University, and is working toward a Master’s in Arts Administration from Maryland’s Goucher College.

Prior to his arrival in Venice, Kris had been seen performing on stages around the world, including as a five-year company manager and principal singer for Jean Ann Ryan Productions on Norwegian Cruise Lines. Other favorite theatrical experiences include performing in *Twelfth Night*, *The Secret Garden*; the premiere of the one-man show *Bert Williams, Broadway Star*, *Angels in America*, *Dreamgirls*; and hanging quite a few times as “Judas” in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. In addition to his duties at Venice Theatre, he serves on the Gulf Coast’s Ambassador Circle for Embracing our Differences, is Treasurer of the Florida Theatre Conference and Florida State community theatre representative, and serves as a board member of both the Friends of the Venice Public Library and the American Association of Community Theatre. He has been an active participant in AACT’s online Roundtables, and was a keynote speaker at Virtual AACTFest 2021. He continues to perform and direct whenever he can. When that stuff is done for the day, Kris likes to cook and pursue collecting cookbooks and African American memorabilia.



Since he first kissed a girl onstage in a fifth-grade play, **Jon Skaalen** has been enamored of theater. Remembering lines, however, is another thing, so he has focused on his other talents—including as a founder of two theatres in Minnesota. In 1973 he accidentally attended the very first state festival organized by the Minnesota Association of Community Theatres (MACT), and was smitten by what he saw. He joined the MACT Board

in 1985, editing its newsletter, helping organize festivals and conferences, writing grants, and serving as president and then as MACT’s first Executive Director. Attending his first AACTFest in Omaha in 1989, he was excited by the learning opportunities. He served on several of AACT committees and eventually on the Board of Directors. John’s greatest impact has been as an advocate for people with disabilities. He helped both MACT and AACT do their first assessments of the accessibility of their programs and events, and developed access plans and templates which could be used by individual theaters, as well. For 20 years he worked for VSA Minnesota, assisting artists with disabilities, and arts organizations with accessibility issues at all levels. He also is a playwright who started Ole Olson Onstage in order to cast largely from people with disabilities. His efforts have been recognized with awards from state and national organizations. He continues to do arts access consulting, and serves on several advisory groups, including the Minnesota Access Alliance. And he says he still can’t remember his lines. ♦

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# Years of Service 2021

AACT is truly grateful for the contributions and commitment of our Board, Volunteers, Committee Members, and Staff. We are grateful for the energy, enthusiasm, and dedication they bring to their roles and work in support of Community Theatre in America.

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

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

## 35 Years

Jim C. Carver (Louisville, Colorado)

John W. Viars (Richardson, Texas)

## 25 Years

Tim Jebsen (Midland, Texas)

William Muchow (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Jack Phillips (Downers Grove, Illinois)

## 10 Years

Michael D. Fox (North Salt Lake, Utah)

Richard Gannon (Napperville, Illinois)

## 5 Years

Martha Cherbini (Leander, Texas)



*AACT Years of Service Pin*

## 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)

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The USITT logo is a red square with the word "usitt" in white lowercase letters.

# Unleash Your Creativity with AACT's Fall Webinar Series

AACT will once again be offering its Fall Webinar Series, beginning in September. Over the past year, members have expressed gratitude and excitement over the expansion of our educational programming, providing both members and non-members with access to expert training in theatre.

The AACT Fall 2021 Webinar Series is offering arts enrichment courses for actors, directors, theatre educators, and administrators, with an emphasis on enhancing skills and expanding perspectives. These new, affordable education webinars will deliver superior professional/vocational development with no travel costs. Participants enhance their expertise and knowledge in all aspects of theatre making by interacting directly with artists, practitioners, educators, and consultants.

The full series of seven sessions begins in September and ends in December. These curated workshops cover a variety of topics within the industry. Each session offers 1 to 1.5 hours of streaming webcast that includes a live discussion with the presenter, video demonstrations, and presentation materials.

- Enjoy a user-friendly, convenient format and the opportunity to gather safely as a group, or to participate individually from home
- AACTEd hours are awarded for the completion of our online courses
- All sessions are recorded, and attendees will have access to the presentation for 30 days afterward.

Per-session registration is \$15 for AACT members, and \$20 for non-members.

The listed sessions are subject to change. At press time, the scheduled sessions include:

**Coproducing: Diversity-in-Action** Katy Meriman and Tiffany Johnson Des Moines Community Playhouse and Pyramid Theatre collaborated to produce *A Love Offering* by Jonathan Norton. Artistic Directors Katy Meriman and Tiffany Johnson share their process from script choice to blending rehearsals. Learn from their experiences, and what benefits have led them to commit to collaborating annually.

**Theatre Education in Senior Care** Emma Shafer Emma Shafer is using her theatre background to work with senior citizens in a nursing home. Seniors learn about their voices, bodies,

and imaginations just like all actors, but with a special sensitivity to working around their limitations.

**Viewpoints** Marina Bergenstock ([marinabergenstock.com](http://marinabergenstock.com)) Viewpoints is an improvisational directing technique developed by Anne Bogart that provides a way to think about movement, gesture, and how the body is used to create meaning.

**Kamishibai** April Cochran Kamishibai "paper play" is a form of Japanese street theater and storytelling. Very simply it is an illustrated story, revealed card by card with narration. It is a dynamic way to engage prereaders and serve as a jumping off point for creative dramatics.

**How to Begin a New Play Festival** Trinity Bird ([thesauk.org](http://thesauk.org)) Established in 2015, the Play-in-Development series at the Sauk in Jonesville, Michigan, workshops three to four unpublished plays utilizing local actors who collaborate with a director and the playwright to present a staged reading, where audience feedback is collected. The workshopped plays have been considered for inclusion in the Sauk's mainstage seasons.

**Psychological Dramaturgy** Kathy Pingel and Dr. Caitlin Powell Traditional dramaturgy in community theatre involves research to reveal the historical context of a play. What are the manners and dress of the time? Do words have a different meaning in the play's time frame? What is the political climate? Dr. Powell, Psychology Department Head at St. Thomas More in Covington, Kentucky, has developed a method of research that helps actors better understand why they may make decisions based on psychological principles.

**Explore the Directing Process Utilizing Shakespeare** Rick St. Peter Participants will gain a deeper understanding of both the craft (how we do what we do as directors) and the art (why we do what we do as directors) of directing, by looking at both through the lens of Shakespeare. The webinar will use Gertrude's speech in Act IV, Scene vii of *Hamlet* and will look at the directing process and choices made to stage the scene for a production that was featured in *American Theatre* magazine. (No prior experience with Shakespeare is required in order to participate.)

To view full webinar descriptions and dates visit [aact.org/webinars](http://aact.org/webinars).

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# Make Your Re-opening a Grand Opening!

Michael D. Fox

We are all, no doubt, deep into our planning for our re-openings, after the devastation of this pandemic. Many, like our theatre in Salt Lake City, may already be past the honeymoon phase of re-engaging our audiences. Others may be looking to open their doors this fall. What considerations guided us along our path, and might inform you on yours? I'm confident in only two things. First, we will bloom and thrive again. Second, no one's path will be the same. Take all ideas offered here, or elsewhere, as fodder to chew and, hopefully, nourish.

Our first question to ourselves: As theatre volunteers, employees, leadership or board members, what might we be doing if we were on the cusp of a *grand opening*—and how might that be different from a simple *re-opening*? For us at Hale Centre Theatre, it meant selecting a show that was as widely appealing and beloved as possible. For another theatre, it might mean partnering with other venues or organizations, or trying varied artistic endeavors. For some, it

**We found ourselves wanting to widen what we call our happiness circle**

could mean digging deep into savings and spending more than in the past to make a splash. Identifying what “grand” would mean to *your* audience and participants could be a compelling consideration.



*"Do You Hear the People Sing" from Les Misérables at Hale Centre Theatre, April 2021*

If we consider our patrons and participants as family that we want to welcome back to our home, it might be enlightening to examine how are our actual family gatherings are changing. With that in mind, Hale Centre Theatre altered guidelines and rules, such as working from home, children at work policies, vacation time, etc., to protect ourselves and our participants. We set better expectations for our participants, which include leaving the theatre *at* the theatre, and having a life *outside* our walls. We found ourselves wanting to widen what we call our happiness circle (both internal and external participants), purposely bringing in folks who hadn't felt as welcome before, and to change our “family gatherings” for the future. Conscious effort regarding a more open and loving venue, which includes appropriate boundaries, is a now a part of our reopening, and beyond.

Finally, don't forget what you do best. It was tempting for us, during a time of need and fear, to consider starting a new business model, or even a new profit center. But each time we were tempted, we remembered that our experience, our success, our



bread and butter, is *staging live productions*. We decided not to stray. That doesn't mean it isn't right for others to try something "new" or "in addition to." It's always possible that you may find a new form of artistic expression that works for your volunteers and teams. However, the question you'll need to answer first is, "Is that our *best* choice, or just a *choice*?"

## Now is the time to make purposeful choices about each aspect of your organization.

As live theatre returns, your best response is to take control. Now is the time to make purposeful choices about each aspect of your organization. Be unafraid. Perhaps the greatest thing we all have learned from the pandemic is that we are resourceful, both individually and together, and that we can survive. So, make the choices that help you thrive in this new environment and enjoy it along the way. That's what we've learned, and that's what we wish for you. Break a leg! ♦

*Michael is the Chief Operations Officer for Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, where he has worked for 19 years. For AACT, he serves as the Treasurer on the AACT Board of Directors.*

## Artie's Advocacy Tip

Advocacy is more than simply the act of speaking or writing in support of something. Each time you step onto a stage you are affirming the value and purpose of your art.

Whether arts advocates contact their representatives directly, or work with the media to present a continual positive image of the arts to the public, advocacy is essential to encouraging funding and support from government at all levels.



You might feel that you don't have the knowledge or skill to advocate for your theatre organization. Yes, you do! Resources are available: [aact.org/advocacy](http://aact.org/advocacy).

## Spotlight on Discounter



### Broadway Media

#### Make Your Stage Come Alive!

Community theatre is the most diverse segment of theatrical organizations in the performance arts industry. For productions of all shapes and sizes, **Broadway Media** is a source for outstanding production design needs—from simple backdrop replacement with projections, to professional grade installations from the world's most celebrated theatrical designers. Through their products, their partnerships and advocacy, they are dedicated to a vision of universal access to the joy of theatre-making, regardless of space, place, or budget.

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# 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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*News from the Americans for the Arts website:*

## Applications Open for Arts and Culture Relief Funds from the American Rescue Plan

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has announced guidelines for two new grant programs that will distribute approximately \$80 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds directly to nonprofit arts and culture organizations and to local arts agencies to subgrant deeper into communities across the country. Applicants for this new grant program will not have to be a previous NEA grantee to be eligible to apply.

Approximately \$20 million will be available to Local Arts Agencies for subgrant amounts of \$150,000, \$250,000, or \$500,000. The Local Arts Agency Subgranting Guidelines are available now and the application **deadline is Thursday, July 22, 2021.**

Additionally, approximately \$60 million will be available to arts and culture organizations for grant amounts of \$50,000, \$100,00, or \$150,000. Guidelines for direct grants to arts and culture organizations are available now and the application **deadline is Thursday, August 12, 2021.**

Local Arts Agency Subgranting Guidelines: [arts.gov](https://arts.gov)

Guidelines for direct grants to arts and culture organizations: [arts.gov](https://arts.gov)

More details at the Americans for the Arts site: [americansforthearts.org](https://americansforthearts.org)

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## Yale Drama Series 2022 Playwriting Competition David Charles Horn Prize

The Yale Drama Series is seeking submissions for its 2022 playwriting competition. The winning play will be selected by the series' current judge, Paula Vogel. The winner of this annual competition will be awarded the David Charles Horn Prize of \$10,000, publication of their manuscript by Yale University Press, and a staged reading or virtual performance. The prize and publication are contingent on the playwright's agreeing to the terms of the publishing agreement. There is no entry fee.

Guidelines for submission:

- This contest is restricted to plays written in the English language. Worldwide submissions are accepted.
- Submissions must be original, unpublished full-length plays, with a minimum of 65 pages. Plays with less than 65 pages will not be considered. Translations, musicals, and children's plays are not accepted.
- The Yale Drama Series is intended to support emerging playwrights. Playwrights may win the competition only once.
- Playwrights may submit only one manuscript per year. Only manuscripts authored by one playwright are eligible.

- Plays that have been professionally produced or published are not eligible. Plays that have had a workshop, reading, or non-professional production or that have been published as an actor's edition will be considered.
- Plays may not be under option, commissioned, or scheduled for professional production or publication at the time of submission.
- Plays must be typed/word-processed and page-numbered.
- The Yale Drama Series reserves the right to reject any manuscript for any reason.
- The Yale Drama Series reserves the right of the judge to not choose a winner for any given year of the competition, and reserves the right to determine the ineligibility of a winner, in keeping with the spirit of the competition, and based upon the accomplishments of the author.

Electronic submission strongly recommended; hard copy submission also possible.

Details: [yalebooks.yale.edu/yale-drama-series-submissions](https://yalebooks.yale.edu/yale-drama-series-submissions)

Dustin Poisson



AACT Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler and Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland share a moment of levity before INNOVAtheatre's production of Ordinary Days. The show was recorded on April 30 in Loveland, Ohio, so that it could be streamed during Virtual AACTFest 2021.

AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland chats with actors Bonnie Emmer and Anna Masla after their performance in INNOVAtheatre's Ordinary Days.



Dustin Poisson

Cody Calvin



AACT Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler (left) with camera operators Dustin Poisson and Chris Kotcher watch set up for Elkhorn, Kentucky's Artists Collaborative Theatre production of Blood Song: The Story of the Hatfields and the McCoys. The show was recorded on April 28 at the Jenny Wiley Amphitheatre near Prestonsburg, Kentucky, in preparation for streaming during Virtual AACTFest 2021.



AACT Education Coordinator Kathy Pingel makes a virtual appearance in Players de Noc's production of Jerry's Brain, center-screen between Jeff Woerpel (Super Ego, left) and Brian Tourangeau (Id, right). In front are Pete Ammel (Jerry, left) and Chris Perryman (Jamie, right). The show was recorded on May 13 in Escanaba, Michigan for streaming during AACTFest.



News Director Craig Woerpel interviews AACTFest Production Manager Mary Jo DeNolf, AACT Corporate Partners Manager Jill Patchin, and Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler at WDBC Radio in Escanaba, Michigan.



When	What/Who	Where	Information
July 12 - 16	AACT Virtual Youth Theatre Conference 2021	Virtual	817-732-3177 aact.org/youth

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

## AACT Web Power

We in theatre love what we do, in part because we are passionate about promoting the arts in a way that also serves the greater good.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are key components of this. We can do our best work, and better our communities, when we help ensure that every member of our community can be safe, belong, and access equal opportunity. The movement to fully realized equity, diversity, and inclusion is constant, and requires both collaboration and introspection.

If your theatre wants to embed those efforts in your work, we've pulled together some resources to help get you started, and posted them on our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Resources page. (Our thanks to Dorinda Toner, Producing Artistic Director of Twilight Theater Company in Portland, Oregon, for her guidance.)

Visit [aact.org/edi](http://aact.org/edi), or on the drop-down menu, go to "Making Theatre" and click on "EDI Resources".

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

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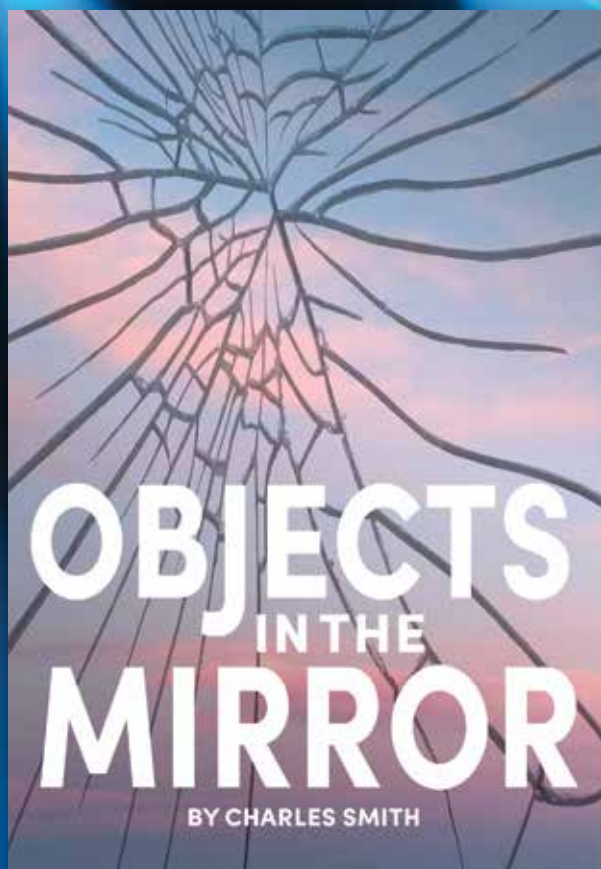
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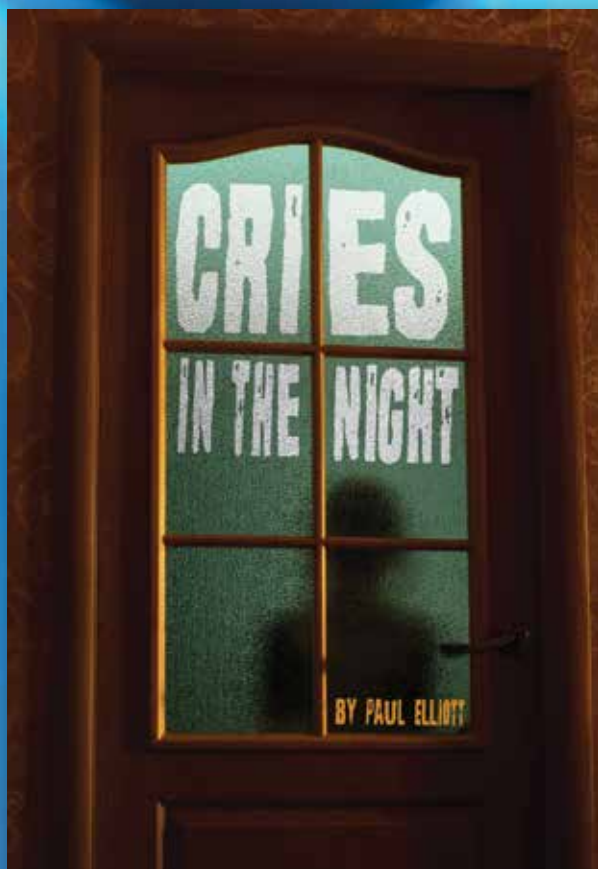
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**[aact.org/mdc](http://aact.org/mdc) for information and link to registration**