



AACTFest11 - Almost Here!

By Ruth Legg, AACTFest11 National Co-chair



What exactly will AACTFest11 be like in Rochester, NY this June?

Will the rumors of surprises prove to be true? Does Rochester really have Zweigle WHITE hot dogs? Did the AACTFest11 Co-Chair for social events really plan a dinner in the old Genesee River Aqueduct for the 2010 World Canals Conference? Will there be a wet t-shirt contest at the Friday evening After Party? Will the Endowment Dinner feature the infamous Garbage Plates from Nick Tahou's? Will the statue of Mercury be wearing makeup? Is the AACTFest11 committee insane?

All will be revealed when you arrive in Rochester and it's too late to back out!!!

The Theatre Association of New York State, its member companies and the City of Rochester will be rolling out the red carpet for AACTFest11 visitors. They will be polishing the good china and shining the silver in preparation for a memorable week of activities and friendship.

The Radisson Hotel Rochester Riverside will be resplendent in glimmering lights from the magnificent, towering chandelier in the main lobby to the Commemorative Stars at the Saturday evening Star Studded Soirée. The Radisson staff will be ready to assist you and make certain your visit is five-stars.

A few blocks away, Geva Theatre Center will be waiting with the National Design Exhibit and Competition, Silent

Auction and tasty lunches for the three lunch hour panel discussions. If you listen carefully, you can even hear Jim Sohre, musical director extraordinaire, rehearsing the Saturday night Awards Show.

The tireless AACTFest11 stage crew will be busy preparing Geva's Mainstage for twelve award winning community theatre performances. There will be load-ins, rehearsals, last minute adjustments, costumes to be unpacked and pressed, and nerves to steadied. The AACTFest11 adjudicators will have their pens poised and ready.



Rochester's 100' High Falls Water Fall and the High Falls Entertainment District with Kodak's World Headquarters in the background.

Add to this a twenty-hour Technical Theatre Conference on the beautiful campus of nearby Roberts Wesleyan College. At the Radisson Hotel Rochester Riverside preparations

continued on page 10, plus details and other stories about AACTFest11

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Rod McCullough
AACT President
2009-2011

AACT's board of directors and committees are actively involved in a variety of issues, finding ways to make community theatre better and ways to serve our members more effectively.

Every once in a while, we hear a new voice. This year, an AACT member who is a playwright got our attention. He is interested in how AACT might better serve his profession and, in turn, the world of theatre.

He wrote: "Once upon a time, plays were done in New York, often Broadway, and they would eventually trickle out into the community theatre circuit. From 1960-

How many times do your meetings end with "doesn't anyone know of a new comedy, or a comic tear-jerker with a heart?"

1980, the average number of new plays on Broadway was 29 annually. Now, the average number of new plays on Broadway is 14 annually. And most of these plays are not appropriate for community theatres. New York is not producing Neil Simon-style comedies anymore. So, where is the next Steel Magnolias coming from?"

If you have served on a play selection committee for your theatre, you know what he's talking about. How many times do your meetings end with "doesn't anyone know of a new comedy, or a comic tear-jerker with a heart?"

His suggestion is that community theatre is the perfect place to nurture new plays. Don't we agree with him? Wouldn't we like to premiere good, new work? Before you say "Yes, but our audiences won't buy tickets to something they've never heard of," keep reading. We need your help.

At its fall meetings, AACT's Executive Committee discussed this issue, and agreed it was worth a closer look. Therefore, I'm appointing a task force to discover ideas and ways that we can be of better service to our playwright members. I think we may also discover ways that our theatres can get better.

If your theatre has experience in producing new work, or with contests, festivals, or other ideas, please let me know. I'd like to share your stories with this task force!

Thank you for all you do for community theatre,

You can send your thoughts to Rod via email at rmccullough@dmplayhouse.com, by fax to 515-974-5367, or you can call him at 515-974-5353.

Annette G. Procnier
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How to Adjudicate Theatre Festivals

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contents

Features

- 1

AACTFest11 - Almost Here!
Plus lots more info about AACTFest11 on pages 10-19.
Registration form on page 19.
- 20

Tips for Safe Rigging
How to make sure your theatre's rigging system isn't an accident waiting to happen.
- 25

AACT Membership
Join AACT now to share the many benefits, resources and discounts.
- 26

Advocacy: Don't Get Mad, Don't Get Even - Get Ahead!
It's important to keep anger out of the picture when dealing with politicians.
- 28

Elite Commercial Members
Discover AACT's Elite Commercial Members Heuer Publishing, Steele Spring Theatrical Licensing and Theatrical Rights Worldwide.



Avoid rigging like this! For tips on maintaining a safe rigging system, see Tom Young's feature on page 20.

News

AACT Conferences	17
AACT Member Discounts	24
AACT on the Road	33
Adjudication Workshop	16
Announcements	7
BCA Award to Halifax EMC	22
BC/EFA	30
Moving On	37
MTI Discount	24

Networking

AACTivity Tidbits	34
Advertisers	37
Artie's Advocacy Tip	32
Calendar	38
Insurance Points	8
Networking Helps	32
New Play Contests	34
Opportunities and Resources	34
President's Letter	3
Spotlight on Boards	35



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Upcoming AACT Meetings**AACT Winter Meetings for Board, Committees, and State Contacts**

February 10-12, 2011

Las Vegas, NV *Hosted by Las Vegas Little Theatre***AACT Summer Board and Committee Meetings**

June 20-22 & June 25, 2011

AACT State Contacts Meeting June 22**AACT Annual Membership Meeting** June 24*Hosted by Theatre Association of New York State**Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.***Upcoming Educational Conferences****Technical Theatre Conference**

June 20-22, 2011 in Rochester, NY

Community Theatre Management**Conference.**

June 20-22 in Rochester, NY

Details for these conferences on page 17

Did you know?

Signing up as a Website Member is free and gives you two months limited access to help you get acquainted with AACT. Click "Register" at www.aact2.org.

Already a member but need your password? Contact the AACT office.

Thanks!

To the Theatre Association of New York State, Geva Theatre, Ruth Legg, and Joan Luther for hosting the Executive Committee meeting in Rochester, NY in October.

To Norm Small and Theatre Winter Haven (FL) for hosting the Artistic Directors Conference; also Dennis Gilmore, Conference Chair and Carole Ries, Facilitator.

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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.

Editor: Julie Crawford
Design: Jim Covault

AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org or at the phone numbers below.

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Personal and Advertising Injury Liability: The ABCs

by Ken Roberts



One of the most frequent questions asked by an executive or board member who is reviewing a general liability insurance proposal is, “What is Personal and Advertising Injury Liability, and why do I need it?” The hope is, as with all insurance coverage, that it is a coverage that will never be needed, but let me explain it to make it easier to understand when it might come in handy.

Personal and Advertising Injury is defined as injury, including consequential bodily injury, arising out of one or more of specific types of offenses. This refers to injury *other than physical injury*, but includes any physical injuries that result from the original non-physical injury. Now that I’ve made this even more confusing, let me clear things up by outlining the most common non-physical injuries:

- False arrest, detention or imprisonment
- Malicious prosecution
- Wrongful eviction, wrongful entry or invasion of privacy
- Oral or written publication of material that slanders or libels a person or organization, or disparages a person’s or organization’s goods, products or services
- Oral or written publication of material that violates a person’s right of privacy
- The use of another’s advertising idea in your “advertisement” (plagiarism)
- Infringing upon another’s copyright, trade dress or slogan in your “advertisement”

While it’s easy to see that none of the above “injuries” are physical, they are definitely injuries nonetheless. An injury to someone’s freedom or ability to make a living can be just as debilitating as a physical injury. A general liability policy covers these separately as “Coverage B” because “Coverage A,” which specifically covers *physical* bodily injury and property damage, has an exclusion for personal and advertising injury.

Hopefully, this coverage makes a little more sense now. It is automatically a part of every general liability policy, so there is no additional charge for it, nor is there any discount to delete it. The offenses that it covers are mostly outside what is normal for community theatres, but like most claims, the greatest expense comes from defending the organization against claims rather than the claims themselves. In other words, a theatre doesn’t have to be guilty of committing one of the offenses to be accused of it, and the services of a good attorney are utilized just as often to prove innocence as they are for guilt.

Personal and Advertising Injury Liability is pretty much exactly what it says it is, so I hope it won’t be a mystery the next time the theatre’s policy is reviewed and the inevitable question is asked, “What is it, and why do I need it?” ♦

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will be finalized for the Community Theatre Management Conference and Adjudication Workshop. And don't forget the vendors, who will be waiting to talk to you. Three days of interesting workshops are also in the works. (See related articles.)

"What a week!" you must be thinking. There's more – we haven't even touched on the parties and AACT Endowment Dinner.

All of this activity is appropriate because, you see, AACT-Fest11 is a grand celebration of the best community theatre that America has to offer. It is a tribute to AACT's 7000 constituent theatres and the 1.5 million volunteers who keep these theatres going. Just think, these volunteers produce 46,000 productions every year and entertain an audience of 86 million people.

The Theatre Association of New York State is an organization with a rich history, similar to that of AACT's. TANYS was established in 1987 when the New York State Theatre Festival Association (NYSTFA) and the New York State Community Theatre Association (NYSCTA) merged. In

2009, TANYS celebrated fifty-continuous years of the New York State Theatre Festival.

TANYS promotes the growth and quality of community and academic theatre in New York State. Like AACT, TANYS provides theatrical resources, networking, recognition and outreach services to its membership. TANYS is highly regarded for its on-going adjudication program, which makes trained adjudicators available to member companies the year round.

It was a proud moment for TANYS and its member companies when TANYS was awarded AACTFest11. We were bringing the Festival home not to just to Rochester, but to New York State for the first time in the history of the 40-year biennial event.

And so, we will all gather in just a few, short months, to celebrate with our friends and proclaim to the world. . .

We are Community Theatre – hear us Roar! ♦



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Come Early for AACTFest11, Stay Longer

When you plan your trip to AACTFest11, allow some extra time so you can enjoy Rochester, western New York, and the Finger Lakes for a day or two.

Plan to visit Rochester's Susan B. Anthony House, George Eastman House, and the Eastman School of Music. You can enjoy exhibits at the Memorial Art Gallery and Rochester Museum and Science Center. Set your inner child free at the Strong National Museum of Play and Toy Hall of Fame.

You will certainly enjoy a relaxing scenic cruise on the historic Erie Canal or time outside at Lake Ontario's Charlotte Beach, Seabreeze Amusement Park, or the Seneca Park Zoo.

There are many interesting places to visit in the area. Take in the majestic sight of Niagara Falls, ride the Maid of the Mist, gamble at a casino, and have dinner at a restaurant where you can see the falls in colorful lights at night – great for a day trip before or after The Fest.

Past AACT President Bill Muchow recommends a visit to nearby Medina and the Railroad Museum. You can step

back in history at the Genesee Country Village and Museum and the Ganondagan State Historical site. The Corning Museum of Glass is only a couple of hours from Rochester.

A trip to upstate New York is never complete without sampling award winning New York State wines and having lunch at a winery bistro. The views of the Finger Lakes are spectacular!

To learn more about the area and things to do during your visit to AACTFest11, go to www.VisitRochester.com, make it a favorite site, and visit often for Calendar of Events updates. ♦



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AACTFest11 Sponsors Play Important Roles

The AACTFest11 Committee is fortunate to have local sponsors involved in the Festival planning. The City of Rochester and County of Monroe recognized the importance of the National Festival right from the start. They are providing financial support and will help promote the event.

Partners+Napier, one of Rochester's award winning advertising agencies, took on the AACTFest11 branding. Creative Group Supervisor Ann McAllister designed the AACTFest11 logo and gave the Festival graphics the beautiful red curtains. Her talented team created the website <aactfest11.org> that more and more people will be visiting and relying on, as AACTFest11 draws closer. The Partners+Napier Creative Team is working on the t-shirts and some other surprises. Watch for them!

Media sponsors are Time Warner Cable, YNN Rochester and North Coast Radio - FM 105.9. They will provide television and radio advertising, news coverage, and interviews with participants.

The Opening Night Picnic on Wednesday, June 22, will be sponsored by Theatrical Rights Worldwide and the After Party on Friday, June 24, will be sponsored by Music Theatre International (MTI).

Representatives of these sponsors will be joining AACTFest11 participants at social events. Be sure to meet and welcome them and thank them for supporting AACTFest and community theatre. ♦

AACTFest11 Headquarters Hotel

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AACTFest11 Schedule

(subject to change)

Monday, June 20

- * Community Theatre Management Conference begins
- * Technical Theatre Conference begins
- * AACT Executive Committee dinner & meeting

Tuesday, June 21

- * Community Theatre Management Conference
- * Technical Theatre Conference
- * AACT Board Meeting
- * AACT Committee meetings
- * Adjudication Workshop begins
- * Welcome to Rochester Reception

Wednesday, June 22

- * Vendor Dedicated Morning with Light Luncheon
- * Community Theatre Management Conference concludes
- * Technical Theatre Conference concludes
- * AACT Committee Meetings
- * AACT State Contacts Meeting
- * Silent Auction & Design Exhibits open
- * Performance Session 1 (Region I & X) and Opening Ceremonies
- * Opening Night Picnic
- * Performance Session 2 (Region VI & IVb)
- * Festival After Party

Thursday, June 23

- * Vendor Exhibits
- * Workshops
- * Lunch Hour Panel Discussion
- * Silent Auction & Design Exhibits
- * Festival Commission Public Comment
- * Performance Session 3 (Region IX & V)
- * AACT Endowment Dinner

Friday, June 24

- * Vendor Exhibits
- * Workshops
- * Silent Auction & Design Exhibits
- * AACT Annual Membership Meeting
- * Lunch Hour Panel Discussion
- * Performance Session 4 (Region II & VII)
- * Performance Session 5 (Region IVa & VIII)
- * Festival After Party

Saturday, June 25

- * Vendor Exhibits
- * Workshops
- * Silent Auction & Design Exhibits
- * AACT Board Meeting
- * Lunch Hour Panel Discussion
- * Performance Session 6 (TBA & Region III)
- * Star Studded Soirée
- * AACTFest11 Awards
- * Reception Honoring Festival Participants

See www.aactfest11.org for updates. During the Festival check the electronic reader board at the Radisson Hotel Rochester Riverside.

Designers In the Spotlight

We all know how important our designers are to the successes of our productions. Often these talented, hardworking, behind the scenes heroes don't get the recognition they deserve. The AACTFest National Design Exhibit and Competition changes that.

AACT member theatres and their designers may enter. Detailed guidelines and the entry form are available for downloading on the AACTFest11 website: www.aactfest11.org.

Designs will be on display in the lobby of the Geva Theatre Center (AACTFest11 production



The Geva Theatre Center

Continued on page 17

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AACTFest11 Workshops

Watch *Spotlight* and www.aactfest11.org for additional workshops.

Stanislavsky System presented by Igor Golyak
The Russian Stanislavsky system –or “The Method”– is the fundamental block of contemporary film and stage acting technique, and has influenced nearly every great actor of the 20th and 21st centuries. Igor Golyak of the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts in Moscow, shares his knowledge of the origin and practice of this iconic approach to acting in a hands-on, interactive session designed to bring the actor to truth on stage.

Dare to Be Different: Direct a Musical You’ve Never Seen presented by Jim Hoare
Directing a musical you’ve never seen can be challenging, yet energizing. New works and hidden gems will be explored, heard, and read aloud by the participants. Sources for new works, marketing strategies, and past successes will be shared and discussed. With clever marketing, it can be a positive experience for an entire theatre company and its community.

Music Rights, Are You in Compliance? presented by Marsha Amato-Greenspan
Adding music to your productions is more complicated than picking out a favorite CD. Are you paying royalties or obtaining rights on the music for your productions? Is royalty-free music truly free? Protect your theatre by knowing how and when to obtain rights. In this interactive session, Marsha Amato-Greenspan shares her real life experiences.

If All the World is an Address, Then How Do I Get My Mail Delivered? presented by Marsha Amato-Greenspan
Do you know the difference between a POSTNET Barcode and an IMB? Are you letter machinable? Do you qualify for automation discount rates? Does this sound Greek to you? It won’t after this workshop! If your theatre depends on the US Mail, learn how to master it, obtain or maintain discounted rates, and get your message out there!

In Character presented by George Douglas Lee
Professional writer/actor/radio host George Lee shares his secrets of how to write and perform vivid characters, the basis of successful plays. Characterizations that will move or entertain audiences begin with the writing, and the actor who gives them life. This workshop outlines the basics of creating and performing memorable characters.

New York and Chicago: Taking Great Theatre Group Trips presented by Sandy Levitt
What could be more exciting, inspirational, and just plain fun than a taking your group on a theatre trip to New York or Chicago? Sandy Levitt of Manhattan Tour and Travel, the winner of AACT’s 2010 Corporate Award, works with theatre companies from all across America and would love to share

with you the details of how they can host your group on a trip to one of these great theatre cities!

Bring Joy, Power and Passion to your Singing presented by Ed Linderman
Broadway performer, composer and NYC professional musical theatre coach Ed Linderman shares with you the secrets of bringing your full emotional life, passion and power to your singing. Break through to a new way to move your audience through song. Participants will have an opportunity to be coached by Mr. Linderman, and may bring sheet music or cds, sing a cappella, or just listen.

Victorian Hats on a Budget presented by Jim Boman
Every theatre is facing budget challenges, and costuming for a period show can eat up a part of your available funds! Learn to create a haberdasher’s heaven without breaking the bank! Ideas shared in this workshop can be altered for almost any period.

Yeah, But I Don’t Know How to Talk to Them (working with special populations) presented by Joan E. Kole, PhD
“Yeah, but what do I say?” Learn to delve into encounters with special populations and to “speak their language.” Create more opportunities for developmentally disabled performers, aging performers, and others with visual and mobility challenges to connect with your local theatres.

The Unbroken Circle (Native American storytelling) presented by D. Terry Petrie
Pause and journey for a moment through the sacred legend of the Unbroken Circle of the Great Plains Blackfoot Blood Indian peoples. See it through the storytelling of an adopted non-native. Play the games of their children. Listen to the sacred sounds and music. Gain new insight. Live the Unbroken Circle.

Absolutely Free Ways to Computerize Your Theatre presented by Scott Bloom
A survey and demonstration of how to put an old computer to work for your theatre. Learn how to use computers to run lights, sound, your box office, a website, and streamline other vital theatre tasks with little or no expense. Participants will receive a CD with all the demonstrated software!

Creating Performance Venues from Nothing presented by Spence and Beth Watson
So, you want to do theatre in a barn? A Library? An Odd Fellows Hall? Spence and Beth Watson can show you what you need to know to make almost any space into a workable theatre. Learn how to roll up your sleeves and tackle building, wiring, and the basic equipment to get you going. All the world can be your stage!

Developing an Adjudication Program in Your State presented by Prof. Frances Ruoff
Professor Frances Ruoff reveals how an adjudication program

can enrich the experience of the theatres in your state organization. Based on the New York State Adjudication Program guidelines, you'll learn how to organize and establish goals for your organization, how to recruit and train adjudicators, develop an awards process and more.

Short Form Theatre/Big Impact

presented by Tara Phares Pauley
Community Theatre requires community participation. Want to know how to make the most of your volunteers by keeping them active in your program? Starting a "briefs and shorts" program can give opportunities to expanding your volunteer base, helping volunteers become more versatile in the organization and building more connections between the organization and the community.

Hodge Podge Costumes

presented by Jessica Lee
Can't build your costumes from scratch? No worries! You can work miracles with some ingenuity and a trip to your local Salvation Army or thrift store. It's easy on the budget and using recycled clothing is easier on the environment. Jessica Lee will share her secrets and set you on the road to creating your own riches from rags.

Yo, Theatre Staff, What's with You and the Board?

presented by Robert Miss
Come join the Acting-Up Traveling Circus. Laugh your way into understanding how the staff can have a productive relationship with the theatre board. ♦



**Queen Sheena,
All Bow!**
by Milo J. Oz

Help! please. How do you teach civility when Miss Manners and Mary Poppins aren't around? Never before has the future of three hairy bedroom monsters rested in the palm of a little spoiled, rude girl! Looks like "queen" Sheena holds all the power...uh oh. Approx. 45 minutes.

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AACT Adjudication Workshop

The National Festival offers an excellent laboratory for AACT's Adjudication Workshop. This intensive workshop will begin on Tuesday evening, June 21 and continue throughout the festival, culminating on Saturday, June 25. Participants will learn the skills of adjudicating and gain practical experience through observing and critiquing the festival shows. Sessions will be Tuesday evening and mornings (when other workshops are meeting), then between the shows (when the audience is hearing from the national adjudicators) the workshop participants will practice adjudicating the shows and receive feedback in the workshop setting.

Conducting the Adjudication Workshop is Ron Cameron-Lewis from Ontario Canada. Ron taught acting for 37 years for the Music Theatre Department at Sheridan Institute and for the joint Theatre and Drama Studies program with the University of Toronto at Mississauga. He was named Professor Emeritus in 2010. Ron continues to freelance as director, adjudicator, workshop leader, com-

munications coach, and writer. He has adjudicated over 2,000 productions around Ontario; in the USA at state, regional, and national levels; and internationally. His textbook *Acting Skills for Life* is in its third printing.



Ron Cameron-Lewis

The AACT Adjudication Workshop is part of the national festival, but requires an extra fee (\$120) to help cover the costs of the four plus days of intensive instruction. Register for the Workshop when you register for AACTFest. (See page 19) For more information contact the AACT office. ♦

AACTFest11 Stars Twinkle for You

AACTFest11 Commemorative Stars provide you with the opportunity to honor loved ones at the Festival. These may be family members, volunteers who served your theatre company faithfully, friends – anyone that you want to remember on this special occasion.




The stars will be glittering in all their glory, shining fun and memories on the Star Studded Soirée festivities on Saturday, June 25!

Larger stars can be purchased to send greetings from your Theatre Company to the Festival or from you to friends and family. In fact, the Stars can convey any message you wish. The 12" gold stars (\$20) will be inscribed with the honoree's name and a tribute. The 9" gold stars (\$10) will be inscribed with the honoree's name only.

The AACTFest11 Committee's goal is to have 1000 stars twinkling in the Grand Ballroom of the Radisson Hotel Rochester Riverside.

Send your check, made out to TANYS, AACTFest11 Stars, PO Box 667, Canandaigua, NY 14424-0667. Include the honoree's name and the tribute. Please type or print carefully. ♦



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...before I wake... is a spiritual and uplifting journey through the grieving process. A tragic accident tests Joe and Marty's marriage, their beliefs in God and their abilities to move on with life. Each struggles with the loss in a different way and at a different pace. Marty gradually learns important life lessons through the humorously touching friendship of two elderly ladies: Rose - a former neighbor, and Maggie - a feisty church volunteer. Their friendship, along with the healing power of time, brings laughter through tears.

Rated PG13 (Unit Set, Cast: 3 F, 1 M)

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www.dramatistsguildweb.com/members/colglazier/

For tickets call 260-422-8641 x221 or www.fwcivic.org

Technical Theatre Conference

June 20-22, 2011
Rochester, NY

If you want to improve your technical theatre skills, learn new techniques, and/or explore new areas, then you should be making plans to participate in the Technical Theatre Conference, June 20- 22 at AACTFest11, in Rochester, NY.

Hands-on workshops in the use of foam in costumes and puppetry, millinery for the stage, stage management, lighting, and theatre rigging and safety are just a few of the areas the Committee is working on at this time. More workshops and seminars are in the early planning stages in an effort to provide Technical Theatre Conference participants with a comprehensive list of choices.

It is not too late to offer suggestions for workshops to the Technical Theatre Conference Committee. Contact to Michael Krickmire - mkrickmi@brockport.edu or Joan Luther at Joan.Luther@co.ontario.ny.us.

The Conference will be held in the state-of-the arts facilities at the Roberts Cultural Life Center. Completed in 1966, the Andrews B. Hale Auditorium, a professional, climate-controlled

performing arts facility, has a full complement of lighting and sound equipment. Dressing rooms and the Studio Theater/Scene Shop are located backstage.



The Roberts Cultural Life Center at Roberts Wesleyan College

Registration Fee
\$190 AACT Member
\$220 non-member

\$25 early bird discount if register by May 31
Covers workshops, lunch, two dinners, and transportation to and from the Roberts Wesleyan College Campus from the hotel

Hotel: Radisson Rochester Riverside
\$119 (plus tax) single/double

Registration information and more details available at www.aact2.org, "Calendar" -> "Educational Events" or the AACT office (toll free) 866-Our-AACT (687-2228). ♦

Community Theatre Management Conference

June 20-22, 2011
Rochester, NY

The Community Theatre Management National Conference will be held June 20-22 just prior to AACTFest11 in Rochester, NY. This educational gathering is for anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre and brings together administrators from all levels of avocational theatre. From the volunteer who "runs things around here" to the "just starting" part-time administrator to the full time professional manager... all are welcome.



Tim Jebesen

The Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) is modeled after the renowned National Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference (often called the "Madison Conference"). Learning is through a series of intensive, topic specific, round table discussions with participants sharing experiences - both problems and solutions. Participants will prioritize and suggest topics through a pre-conference questionnaire.

Tim Jebesen, executive director of the Midland (TX) Community Theatre for the past 14 years, will again facilitate the conference.

Tim has experience with small, medium, and large community theatres. He previously served as director of the Salina (KS) Community Theatre and the Mansfield (OH) Playhouse.

The Community Theatre Management Conference can send you home with an idea that will pay for your trip, a renewed enthusiasm for your theatre management job, and a nationwide network of colleagues! And because the CTMC will be held immediately preceding the national festival in Rochester, you can attend two events in one trip.

Registration Fee
\$175 AACT Member
\$205 non-member

\$25 early bird discount if register by May 31
Covers all sessions, materials, breaks, and a copy of Boards in the Spotlight by Twink Lynch

Hotel: Radisson Rochester Riverside
\$119 (plus tax) single/double

Registration information and more details available at www.aact2.org, "Calendar" -> "Educational Events" or the AACT office (toll free) 866-Our-AACT (687-2228). ♦

Design Exhibit *continued from page 13*

venue) starting Wednesday, June 22 through Saturday, June 25. However, the Exhibit will be closed Saturday, June 25 until noon for adjudication. Awards will be posted prior to the final afternoon performance on Saturday. Festival participants and community residents will have plenty of time to enjoy the work of your designers.

Show off the designs that enhance your productions and take them to new levels. The AACTFest11 National Design Exhibit and Competition will showcase the best of community theatre in this country. It's an opportunity for your theatre and designers to shine! ♦

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—Johnny Saldaña, Professor of Theatre,
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Sally Bailey, MFA, MSW, RDT/BCT started with the drama program at the Texas School for the Deaf. Then on to Theatre Virginia and The Shakespeare Theater at the Folger.

In 1999 she became head the drama therapy program at Kansas State University and director of Barrier-Free Theatre specializing in creating accessible programming for children, teens, and adults both normally abled and with a wide variety of disabilities.

Her book shows how to use the theatre arts and drama therapy for education, joy, and involvement with others. Sally is a past president of the NADT and a recipient of NADT's 2006 Gertrud Schattner Award.



Save with an AACTFest11 Superpass

When you are making your plans for AACTFest11 in Rochester, NY this year, maximize your AACTFest11 experience and save money by purchasing a Superpass. The Superpass gives you admission to the Welcome to Rochester Reception, Opening Night Picnic, all six performance sessions, vendor luncheon, workshops, Design Exhibition and Competition, Silent Auction, after show parties, Star Studded Soirée, Awards Gala and Reception Honoring Festival Participants. (If purchased by individual events, the cost is over \$400 and some events are open to Superpass holders only.)

Get all the excitement of AACTFest11 week for just \$215 for AACT members and \$245 for non-members by registering before May 31.

Treat yourself to the best community theatre America has to offer, make new friends and spend a week indulging your passion for theatre. (Plus talk a friend into joining you.) ♦

Airline Discount

American Airlines discount valid June 16-30, 2011.

Find your lowest air fare and use code 7561BP.

Check the website for discounts on other airlines.

T-Shirts Are Coming

The March-April issue of *Spotlight* will have details about the AACTFest11 t-shirts. You will be able to go the Festival website (www.aactfest11.org) and choose from a variety of designs. Plan to strut-your-stuff in an AACTFest11 t-shirt at the Friday evening After Party! ♦

AACTFest11 Registration

June 20-26, 2011 - Rochester, NY

Send to: AACT • 1300 Gendy St • Fort Worth, TX 76107
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Request by May 31, except Audio Descriptors, ASL needs by May 1, 2011

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Non-members \$270

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Daily Registration [] Wed [] Thurs [] Fri [] Sat @ \$75/day \$ _____
Does not include Saturday night events.

Lunch Hour Panel Discussion Lunches *Add On to Superpass or Daily*
[] Thurs [] Fri [] Sat @ \$15/each \$ _____

Additional Opening Night Picnic Tickets @ 15 = \$ _____
One already included with Superpass or Daily registration.

Additional Star Studded Soirée, Awards Show,
Dessert Reception Tickets @ \$65 = \$ _____
One already included with Superpass registration, but not Daily

AACT Endowment Dinner @ \$ (TBA call AACT office) = \$ _____
Special Thursday Evening Event, not included in Registration.

Design Exhibition \$20 first entry + @ \$10 ea. add'l entry = \$ _____
Must complete entry form available on website or the AACT office.

Processing Fee \$5

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No refunds after May 31, 2011.
Festival program, schedules, and participants are subject to change without notice.



Safe Rigging in Your Theatre: Train, Inspect, Maintain!

By Tom Young

When was the last time you had a professional inspector take a look at your rigging system?

If you answered, “Never,” you’re not alone. The rigging system is one of the most neglected areas of any auditorium, school stage or performing arts center. Rigging is easy to overlook when your budgets are small, your resources are limited, or you rent your performance space from a school, church, or municipal venue.

Even if you own your theatre, many years may have passed since your last significant upgrade or renovation. When things seem to be working properly, it’s easy to assume that nothing is amiss. We’ve all heard a technical director say, “Oh, that noise? It’s done that for years, and nothing bad has happened.”



An example of what your rigging system should not look like.

The telltale noise, however, could signal a hidden danger that will lead to sudden catastrophic damage, injury, or worse. And while not every rigging accident causes lasting damage, it could render a part of your rigging system inoperable. Think about what that might mean in the last week of tech rehearsals—or if the rigging fails in the middle of a performance.

In its 125-year history, J. R. Clancy has installed thousands of rigging systems in theatres across the country and around the world, including most of the

manual systems used by community theatres. We recommend three steps that help minimize the possibility of serious accidents, keeping your actors, stage crew, and other participants as safe as possible while performing onstage or working backstage.

1. Train your operators.

It’s not optional! Whether your theatre has a counterweight rigging system or automated hoists, people using moving equipment must be properly trained to understand the equipment, its correct operation, and the hazards involved.

Running a counterweight rigging system is about much more than pulling on ropes. Operators need to have a working knowledge of the physics involved—the process of balancing the load on the batten (scenery, lights or curtains) with an equal load on the arbor (steel weights). If the load is out of balance, the heavier side will come crashing down when the rope lock is removed.

People who run automated systems need training as well. While there’s no load balancing issue with motorized rigging, operators still need to know the load capacity of each batten, the importance of watching for obstructions when battens move, how to build cues using a computer control system, and the backstage procedures that keep everyone safe.

If you regularly buy gel, gobos and other specialized gear from a local theatrical supply dealer, the dealer may be able to provide a rigging professional to hold a training session with your crew. If there’s no one qualified on the dealer’s staff, they can probably direct you to another source in your area. Or call us at 800-836-1885, and we’ll provide contact information for the instructor closest to you.

Do you know where your rigging manual is? If you’re like the vast majority of users, you’ve never seen the manual at all. J. R. Clancy offers manuals for all of its systems for free. Find your manual at www.jrclancy.com/safetymanuals.asp.

We also provide safety signage, with guidelines for operating the rigging system safely. Download files to print your own signs at www.jrclancy.com/safetysigns.asp.

2. Inspect your system.

Once they've had the training, your crewmembers will understand the basics of rigging—but they will not be rigging maintenance experts. How, then, can they tell when a counterweight system is in some kind of trouble?

The signs are more obvious than you might imagine. Counterweight systems are uniform, so every line set should look the same. When something is different, it can be very obvious.

Assign a qualified crewmember to perform a basic visual inspection prior to every load-in, rehearsal and performance. These cues will help the crewperson spot the problems in the system:

Counterweights should be level. Look at the arbors: the trays that hold the stage weights. All of the weights in each arbor should be level, with no gaps between the weights. Spreader plates should be placed every two feet in the stack of weights in the arbor, and locking collars must be locked down on the top of the weights in the arbor.

- Check rope locks before actors move onstage. Ropes must be locked to keep battens in place after a scene shift. An open rope lock can result in a runaway batten—



A counterweight rigging system in good working order.

which can mean injuries onstage.

- Listen for strange sounds. Not all problems will present themselves visually. If there's a loud squeak in one of the lines, a rubbing sound, or a rattle as the arbor rises, then something is not right.
- Vibrations signal a problem. An abnormal vibration in the system will transmit right down through the hand line. A cable may be contacting a drop or set piece, or a drop may be hitting a stationary flat on its way down or up.
- Change is bad. If a crewmember could move a hand line easily by himself in yesterday's rehearsal, but today he needs two others to help him pull, that's a strong clue that a problem has developed. The batten may be caught on a piece of scenery or a pipe, or weight may have been added to the batten without the corresponding counterweights on the arbor.
- All lines should be tight. Look at the vertical row of lines running from the locking rail to the ceiling. If one or more of the lines look slack, they should be adjusted.

When you suspect there's a problem with the rigging system, it's time to call a professional. If you don't know who made or installed the gear, call your theatrical equipment dealer.

3. Maintain the system regularly.

As with any other mechanical system, your rigging requires periodic maintenance. Your inspector will provide a list of services required to keep the rigging in top working order, as well as recommendations for additional maintenance. Once you have this, chances are that the person who conducts your annual inspection can do the repairs.

Here's the really big question: How can you convince your management to foot the bill for regular maintenance of



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your rigging system? The answer is simpler than you think: Without inspections and preventative maintenance, your organization can be held liable if someone is injured. A complete record of rigging inspections and maintenance can be your best protection against litigation in an accident case. ♦

Tom Young is the vice-president of marketing for J. R. Clancy, Inc.

Rigging Safety Resources

Stage Rigging Handbook, 3rd Ed., Jay O. Glerum, Southern Illinois University Press, 2007.

Stagecraft 1: A Complete Guide to Backstage Work, 3rd Ed., William H. Lord, Meriwether Publishing, 2000.

The Perfect Stage Crew: The Complete Technical Guide for High School, College, and Community Theater, John Kaluta, Allworth Press, 2003.

Available in the AACT Bookstore: www.aact.org/bookstore

Community Theatre Supporter Honored as a Top Ten Company Supporting the Arts

Halifax Electric Membership Corporation of North Carolina was honored in November by Americans for the Arts and the prestigious Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) as one of the ten best companies supporting the arts in America. Halifax EMC was nominated by **Lakeland Theatre Company** of Littleton, NC as a sponsor of productions, and for its assistance with re-wiring the stage lighting configuration in readiness for Lakeland's new state-of-the-art computerized lighting system. "This kind of partnership with Halifax EMC, and their support and willingness to contribute their time and money to the arts, was worthy of the kind of honor and praise they are now receiving nationally. They are the best," said Wally Hurst, Managing Director of Lakeland Theatre and Cultural Arts Center, Inc.

Founded by David Rockefeller, the BCA annually honors companies across the nation that demonstrate inventive ways that businesses are working with arts organizations to produce impressive outcomes. Halifax EMC, serving parts of eastern North Carolina, has partnered with many arts organizations



Glenn Davis

Joseph C. Dilg (left), Executive Director of the Business Committee For The Arts presents the award for being one of the top ten best businesses in supporting the arts to Halifax EMC. Accepting were Charles H. Guerry, Halifax EMC Executive Vice President and General Manager and (not pictured) Beverly Carter, Halifax EMC President of the Board of Directors. Wally and Maria Hurst of Lakeland Theatre also attended.

in the region to provide assistance through various means, such as volunteers, grants, sponsorships, in-kind service, or whatever is needed.

For more information on the BCA Awards go to artsusa.org, select "Information & Services" -> "Arts & Business Partnerships." Check out Lakeland Theatre at www.lakelandtheatrenc.org. ♦

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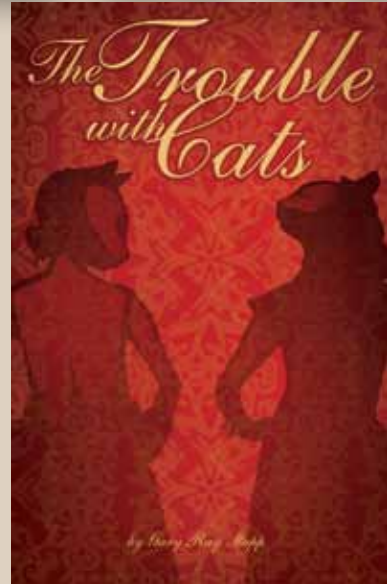
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"It is pure comedy and chaos."—*Lisa Berghouse, Orange Coast Magazine*

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MIND OVER MATT by Scott Haan

"...filled with deliciously awkward situations and clever word play... when all of the egos are on-stage together, it's a wonderful madhouse!"—*Hope Baugh, Indy Theatre Habit, Indiana*

THE TROUBLE WITH CATS by Gary Ray Stapp

"The laughs kept rolling one after another, after another, after another. Fantastic show!"

—*Kipp Ochsner, Overland Park, Kansas*

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Thanks to a groundbreaking partnership with Music Theatre International (MTI), AACT organizational members receive substantial discounts on standard rental fees on MTI musicals produced through August 31, 2011.



- 20% discount on the 1st MTI show
- 40% discount on the 2nd & 3rd MTI shows
- 60% discount on the 4th & 5th MTI shows
- the fifth MTI show's standard rental package is free!

The discount on standard rental fees increases the more MTI shows produced:

According to MTI Senior Operations Officer John Prignano, most standard rentals cost between \$750 and \$1,200 per license. With a 20% discount an AACT member theatre saves between \$150 and \$240 for the first MTI musical. Essentially, theatres with budgets under \$100,000 save more than the cost of their AACT membership with the first rental. The benefits of AACT membership and great shows – that's budget relief!

For information about applying for the discount, go to www.aact.org/MTI or contact the AACT office. ♦

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Please contact Ed Sala at fishr42@yahoo.com or at 917-538-0793.

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- *The Daily Breeze*

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- *Culver City Observer*

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- *The Easy Reader (Los Angeles)*

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The American Association of Community Theatre is *the* resource for networking, resources, and support for those involved in community theatre.

- **Networking.** AACT connects you online, on the phone, and in person to the network of people who share your passion, and understand your issues and needs, to provide you with the tools you need to succeed.
- **Festivals.** As a member of AACT, you get to attend and participate in theatre festivals that let you see the best of the best in theatres across the country.
- **Advocacy.** AACT members know what the issues are that face community theatres locally, regionally, and nationally. AACT's strong membership creates a literal and figurative voice for you as policy is shaped.
- **Validation.** Our membership numbers represent the artistic and economic impact that theatre has on a community. As a member, your work and the work of your theatre is made clear to all.
- **Resources.** AACT's website, newsletter,

workshops and conferences help answer your questions and ensure your theatre's growth and development. AACT puts you in touch with others who share your challenges and can answer your questions, share resources and ideas that help save money, time and the environment. These resources alone more than pay for your yearly membership.

- **AACT represents the interests of more than 7,000 theatres** across the United States and its territories, as well as theatre companies with the armed services overseas:
 - 7000 theatres strong
 - More than a 1.5 million volunteers
 - Over 46,000 productions per year
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 - A combined annual budget of well over \$980 million

Visit www.aact.org/aact/benefits.html for a list of AACT benefits and services. ♦

aact AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE membership form

Yes, I want to receive all the benefits of AACT membership!

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In Politics, Remember “Don’t Get Mad, Don’t Get Even – Get Ahead”

By Wally Hurst

People get mad at government officials all the time, whether it’s your congressman who can’t lower taxes like he said he would, the person at the county clerk’s office who can’t understand your problem, or the police officer you can’t talk out of writing you that ticket. It’s natural to get angry with someone who doesn’t see things your way and/or has his or her own agenda. In politics, however, it is absolutely essential that you do *NOT* let anger overcome you. I know it’s easier said than done, but let me give you reasons why you need to hold that emotion in check when dealing with the government – and especially with highly-placed elected or appointed government officials.

The first reason is simple: *there are no permanent alliances and no permanent enemies in the world of politics*. Believe it or not, there will be a time when persons who don’t see things your way on one issue will agree with you on another one. Do you want them to vote against you because you yelled at them and made their lives miserable for a time – or do you want them on your side when this issue comes to a vote? The answer is obvious. Your best friend in the world, politically speaking, may be on the opposite side of the fence on some issue such as pro-choice vs. pro-life – and that’s a very divisive issue in our country today – but you cannot allow that issue to cloud your judgment on their stance on other topics. Stay away from the issue while discussing your particular concerns with them: we all disagree with somebody else on at least one subject – let it go.

Trying to “get even” with somebody in politics is almost always a waste of time. First of all, you are not in a position of power like they are.* Secondly, if you harass them they will only draw the conclusion that you are crazy, and never give you the time of day again no matter how noble your issue is – or reasonable your request. Revenge, especially in politics, is completely over-rated.

So what do you do when they say no? Thank them for their time, be polite, and continue to try and educate them so that they eventually come around to your way of thinking. You may think that my advice to “be polite” is thrown in: it is not. You **MUST** be as nice (or nicer) to your “enemies” as you are to your friends in government. For one thing, it makes them see you as a person, not a fanatic, which is very important. And because there are no permanent alliances and no permanent enemies, you

never know when you’re going to need them on your side for another vote in the future. Start building your alliances with others, and win the final vote. Get ahead, instead of getting even or getting mad! And good luck! ♦

*There is a famous story about Senator Bill Bradley, a former NBA star and Rhodes Scholar from Princeton, who was seated at the head table at a gala banquet, attended by several hundred people. As he was eating, Senator Bradley noticed a waiter hurrying by and asked if he could have a couple of extra pats of butter for the meal. The waiter smiled, and told the senator that he would bring them as soon as he could get back to the kitchen. He then hurried off, serving other guests, and when Bradley saw him a minute or two later, he called him over and asked where his butter was. The waiter politely explained that he hadn’t been back to the kitchen yet but that he was on his way now. Senator Bradley said to the waiter, “Perhaps you don’t know who I am, son. I’m United States Senator Bill Bradley. I went to Princeton University, was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship, and played professional basketball with the New York Knicks of the NBA.” The waiter looked at him for a minute, and then told Senator Bradley, “Perhaps you don’t know who I am, Senator Bradley.” “No, as a matter of fact I don’t,” said the senator. The waiter paused for a moment and said, “I’m the guy in charge of the butter.” There’s a good lesson there for all of us, I think!

Wally Hurst is Managing Director of Lakeland Theatre Company in Littleton, North Carolina. Previously, he served as Legislative Director and lobbyist for the California State Firefighters Association. He helped pass several important pieces of legislation, and taught lobbying to hundreds of local firefighters. Wally was also a trial attorney in California. He is a proud member of AACT’s Advocacy Committee.

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Steele Spring Theatrical Licensing was founded in 2001 by writer Roger Bean to license his show *The Marvelous Wonderettes*. Nearly a decade later, the company has grown into a premiere theatrical licensing house specializing in small-cast jukebox musicals. The company prides itself on providing excellent customer service. Bean explains, "Customers are always guaranteed to speak with a real person who understands the process of putting a show together."

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Steele Spring is currently accepting submissions of new musicals and plays to add to its catalogue. If you are interested in submitting your show, please email info@steelespring.com for more information. Musicals licensed by Steele Spring Productions include *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, *Winter Wonderettes*, *Why Do Fools Fall In Love?*, *The Andrews Brothers*, and *Route 66*. For more information, please visit the website www.steelespring.com.

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Under the guidance of President and CEO Steve Spiegel, TRW brings innovation to theatrical licensing with revolutionary new concepts embracing the digital age. PerusalsNOW™ is an industry-leading advance that allows customers to read and hear any musical in TRW's catalogue...instantly. And, the new www.theatricalrights.com, launched in November 2010, is the most e-commerce friendly website in the theatrical licensing realm. Community theatres and schools can now complete most transactions online, still backed-up by the most reliable, friendly and experienced customer service in the business.

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Broadway Cares about Your Community

Several years ago AACT joined hands with Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (BC/EFA) to raise funds to make a difference in our communities. AACT encourages community theatres to dedicate an event to raising funds to be forwarded to BC/EFA.

The funds collected and contributed to BC/EFA by AACT member groups go to the National Grants Program, which distributed over \$5 million to communities all over the country in 2010. It went to food service and meal delivery programs in 37 states; AIDS services in 47 states, such as health clinics, housing programs, and emergency financial assistance; and disaster relief programs in Haiti.

Your theatre's fundraising event for BC/EFA can be simple. One of the best ways is to make a brief speech and have the actors collect money or checks as the audience is leaving. Another idea is to put a donation container in the lobby. Some theatres donate a portion of the proceeds from a performance or from concessions. Make sure that you invite audience members to add their own donations. Checks should be made out to BC/EFA and sent to BC/EFA, Attn: Joe Norton, 165 West 46th Street, Suite 1300, NY, NY 10036.

If you need red ribbons, brochures, logos, even a sample appeals speech, contact Joe Norton at BC/EFA <norton@bcefa.org> or 212-840-0770 ext 227. Also let the AACT office know about your projects: send a note to Julie Crawford, <julie@aacr.org> or 866-Our-AACT. ♦

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Keep Them Coming

The La Crosse (WI) Community Theatre developed the Fridays Following series in an effort to increase the number of nights they have people in the theatre. Greg Parmeter, Artistic Director, says "The only bad seat in the theatre is the empty one." He explains the program, "On the Friday following the close of each main stage production this year, we are holding a special theatrical event on the stage. Our first event was a reader's theatre presentation of *War of the Worlds*. Our November event was a cabaret night that we called *The Fifth Avenue Follies*. (Our theatre is located on 5th Avenue.) Admission is only five dollars, and we are trying to choose events that are relatively inexpensive to produce. I am hoping that as we move forward, these events will become entirely volunteer produced and include only minimal planning and involvement from the full time staff." Another Friday Following event will be a Patron's Pick event, with partially staged readings of two plays, and the audience voting to choose one for inclusion in next year's season. Other ideas include a concert staging of a musical and a 24 hour play festival. Check out La Crosse Community Theatre at lacrossecommunitytheatre.org.



Reach Out with a Sample of the Arts

The Kalamazoo (MI) Civic Theatre collaborates with other groups in town to introduce "The Civic" to potential patrons, especially new people in town. Last season The Civic joined with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra and the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA) to offer an "Art About Town" package of tickets: two Civic, two symphony, and a year's membership to the art institute. It was a \$190 value for just \$149. It was successfully marketed to realtors for new people moving into the area and also for the Chamber and the Visitors Bureau as a sampler. All three organizations promoted the package and it could be purchased through any of the three. Civic Managing Director Kristen Chesak shares some details, "We split the proceeds on a percentage basis since each of our tickets is priced drastically differently. The KIA actually took on the responsibility of managing the sales and reporting, and cut us a check when all was said and done. It was not meant as a fundraiser, but rather raising awareness of our organizations in circles where we were not as visible. It was successful, although we don't have any hard data on sampler purchasers who bought tickets again later – yet. We are planning a slightly different mix of organizations for this year for a sampler pack, so will probably do it again, but in the spring." Check out Kalamazoo Civic at www.kazoocivic.com.



Artie's Advocacy Tip



Don't get mad; get ahead.

(See article on page 26.)



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Region I Representative Bevie Lord (left) and immediate past Region I Representative Patricia White (right) pose with adjudicator Genevieve Aichele at the **New Hampshire Community Theatre Association State AACTFest**, held in Milford, NH September 25 and 26, 2010.



AACT Member at Large and Alabama Conference of Theatre Executive Director Sue Ellen Gerrells (right) shares a light moment with Wetumpka Depot Players' director Tom Salter at the **Alabama Conference of Theatre State Festival**, October 24-26, 2010 in Pell City.

AACT Festival Commission Vice Chair and Festival Commission Representative Dave Sheppard helps time an adjudication at the New Hampshire Community Theatre Association State AACTFest.



Festival Chair Clay Boyce and Festival Stage Manager Bill Richardson look over the afternoon schedule at the Alabama Conference of Theatre State Festival.

AACT Member at Large Murray Chase makes a point at the **National Artistic Directors Conference**, held November 7 & 8, 2010 in Winter Haven, FL. In the back (left to right) are Ronnie Williams from Houston, TX, AACT Vice President for Education Dennis Gilmore and Conference Facilitator Carole Ries.



Theatre Winter Haven (FL) Producing Director Norm Small welcomes participants to the National Artistic Directors Conference.



Region VI Representative Tracy Alexander attends a rehearsal as part of her duties as Festival Commission Representative at the South Carolina Theatre Festival.



South Carolina State Contact and Festival Chair Susan Smith prepares for an adjudication at the **South Carolina Theatre Festival**, held in Spartanburg, SC, November 12-14.



New York State Contact and TANYS Administrative Secretary Deborah Allison helps with gift sales at the **Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) Festival**, November 19-21 in Batavia, NY.

Pennsylvania State Contact and AACT Festival Commissioner Marsha Amato-Greenspan waits for the first performance session to begin at the Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) Festival. At Marsha's left is her husband Jeff Greenspan.



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Deadline: March 31, 2011

Details, including tips on writing for radio, competition rules, and format: www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/arts/2010/10/100728_playcomp_what_its_about.shtml

AACTivity Tidbits

AACTivity is a resource for theatre companies. It helps AACT members discover trends in running a theatre organization and connect with other theatres to learn what worked, or didn't work, for them. Check to be sure your theatre is sharing its data and ways of work on AACTivity. To view AACTivity, go to www.aact2.org, and click on "AACTivity," then "View AACTivity Data."

Data as of November 21, 2010

Top Shows Produced 2006-2010

(Shows in the same band tied)

Musicals

Beauty and the Beast *High School Musical*

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change

The Full Monty *Gypsy* *Seussical* *Thoroughly Modern Millie*

Always...Patsy Cline *Cats* *Fiddler on the Roof* *Smokey Joe's Cafe* *The Producers*

All Shook Up *Annie Get Your Gun* *The Wizard of Oz* *Urinetown*

Non-Musicals

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever *On Golden Pond*

Enchanted April *The Foreigner* *The Odd Couple*

Doubt *Leading Ladies* *Moonlight and Magnolias* *Over the Tavern*

Lend Me a Tenor *Noises Off* *Over the River and Through the Woods* *Tuesdays With Morrie* *You Can't Take It With You*



Attention Must be Paid

by Twink Lynch

Several months ago there was a vigorous email exchange over the question “Am I overreacting when I get upset that 2 or 3 of my board members work/act in shows in a smaller, competing theatre?” Some respondents thought if the board members in question still got their work done for their theatre, it was no big deal, that we don’t “own” our volunteers (board members included) and staff, and they have a right to feed their own creative needs and volunteer for any theatre or other nonprofit on their own time.

Others, including myself, felt strongly that it is a conflict of interest for a board member to work in a show (or worse, to fundraise) for a competing theatre.

Some people believe the arts shouldn’t be competitive, that we should support each other generously, that such support will help each group do better theatre. Several respondents thought it was actually good for their theatres to have their volunteers (including board members) and staff participating in shows at other theatres because it gave them a broader perspective of what goes into “playmaking.” It exposed them to different production philosophies, different mission statements, and perhaps made them appreciate their home theatres more. The doing and seeing of other theatres’ productions was seen to be valuable in helping staff and volunteers (including board members) grow and develop greater discernment regarding what is good and what is bad so the home theatres might be able to avoid the bad.

I generally have no argument with a policy that favors sharing props, costumes, mailing lists, spotlights, even the facility in some cases, as long as the sharing is as reciprocal as possible (recognizing that some smaller theatres can’t fully reciprocate). I don’t even object to our volunteers and paid staff working on shows at other theatres, as long as it doesn’t interfere with their agreed-upon responsibilities for our theatre. But I definitely draw the line at board members acting in or in any way working on behalf of a competing theatre.

I am especially opposed to board members sharing marketing strategies developed by volunteers or staff of their theatre to help the competing theatre sell tickets to the show the board member has been cast in. Or even worse, sharing donor cultivation strategies to help raise additional funds for the competing theatre. To me, that is clearly a conflict of interest.

Some respondents thought board members shouldn’t even do shows at their own theatre during their tenure on the board, due to the time rehearsals and performances take from the very limited time the board member has to give to board service in the first place. In a past article I wrote that our bylaws should include a provision that if board members miss three consecutive meetings (for any reason) or five meetings out of twelve, that should “create a vacancy on the board.” I still believe that is a reasonable provision. Face to face discussion and decision making is the work of the board. Absentee board members can contribute nothing, or at most very little, to this essential responsibility.

Some of the disagreement about this issue may be the result of a misunderstanding of the nature of the role of the board in a nonprofit. It is significantly different from the role of other volunteers and from the role of the staff. Only the board can be held legally responsible for the health of the organization. Only the board has specific legal duties, required by our various state governments, owed to the organization. The primary duties are usually described as the duty of care, the duty of loyalty, and the duty of obedience.

This means when good people who love the theatre say yes to serving on the board, they are now in a different relationship to the theatre than when they “just loved it” as production or front-of-house volunteers. In my book, they can still work on a show in a variety of capacities, but they can no longer chit-chat about whatever they want to regarding the theatre with their non-board friends (remember, confidentiality is also expected of board members). And the way I read the duty of loyalty provision, they may not put their personal needs for creative expression – or anything else - above the need of the theatre to have their undivided attention, and especially their (prepared) attendance at board meetings.

The Ohio Attorney General has published a pamphlet for board members discussing board responsibilities. Regarding the duty of loyalty, the pamphlet says: “Many problems can be avoided if board members keep the duty of loyalty foremost in their thoughts. **The duty of loyalty requires that the interest of the charity, and, as a consequence, the interest of the public, takes precedence over the board member’s personal interests.** A trustee must, loyally and without self-interest, further the charitable objectives of the organization by acting fairly and in the best interest of the charity. . . . Board members should not

engage in any transaction that is adverse to the charity, engage in any competing enterprise to the detriment of the charity The interest of the charity is always first.”

One of the respondents in this email exchange didn't think any court of law would entertain a lawsuit charging a community theatre board member with failing the test of loyalty because he/she was in a show at a competing theatre. It does seem like a trivial issue when seen in the light of an Enron or Arthur Andersen scandal. But to me it doesn't matter whether someone is taken to court. I think it's a matter of good faith commitment. I think attention must be paid by our board members to their duty of loyalty to our theatres, even if no one ever sues them over the breach of such duty.

Having said all this, I do want to take note of another comment that was made by someone in a small town, where potential board members aren't knocking down his door to get on the board. In such cases, obviously, we have to deal with reality. There are only “x” number of people in our community who are interested in and remotely qualified for serving on our board – some of them are bound to be actors who - guess what? – want to be in shows. Especially if a theatre only does 2-3 shows a year, how can we possibly tell those actor/board members they cannot act elsewhere?

Well, what if we created a certain number of one-year terms on our boards, so those actor/board members would only have to give up acting in a competing theatre for one year at a time?

What if we added some additional acting opportunities in our theatre with less rehearsal and performance time, possibly through a radio players program, a readers theatre program, or some outreach troupes which could “tour” to retirement centers? And surely there must be other ways for our actor/board members to exercise their creative muscles and still be attentive – and loyal - board members. Can they run workshops? Write short scripts?

Artistic voices are essential to our board deliberations. They help business board members understand the magic of creating theatre. Business voices are also essential to our board deliberations. They help artists govern the organization and pay the bills. We need both, and we need them there, in the boardroom, not on somebody else's “boards.” ♦

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, August 2002

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardsmanship for Spotlight for many years. Her early articles are compiled into a still-relevant book for Boards: Boards in the Spotlight.

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Amarillo Little Theatre

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

Moving On

Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest 11

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival.

Region	State	Theatre	From	Production
II	NY	Wyoming County Bicentennial Singers	Warsaw	<i>Physical Therapy</i>
II	NY	Auburn Players Community Theatre	Auburn	<i>Two Women and a Chair</i>
IV	AL	South City Theatre	Alabaster	<i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>
IV	AL	Wetumpka Depot Players	Wetumpka	<i>Second Samuel</i>
IV	FL	Manatee Players	Bradenton	<i>Sunday in the Park with George</i>
IV	GA	Arts Center Theatre	Moultrie	<i>Early Frost</i>
IV	KY	Artists Collaborative Theatre	Elkhorn City	<i>Honky Tonk Angels</i>
IV	SC	Sumter Little Theatre	Sumter	<i>The Harry and Sam Dialogues</i>
IV	TN	Cookeville Performing Arts Center	Cookeville	<i>Dead Man's Cell Phone</i>
IV	WV	Summit Players	Bluefield	<i>The Passing of Pearl</i>
VII	WY	Jackson Community Theatre	Jackson Hole	<i>Good Honest Food</i>
X		SHAPE Players	SHAPE Mons, Belgium	<i>Hauptmann</i>

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
Jan 13-16	Mississippi Theatre Association ★ State AACTFest 11	MS Meridian	866-687-2228 www.mta-online.org
Jan 14-15	Maryland Community Theatre Festival Assn ★ State Theatre Festival 2011	MD Lexington Park	301-751-736 www.mctfa.org
Jan 15	Virginia Theatre Association ★ State AACTFest 11	VA Richmond	540-801-8089 www.vtasite.org
Feb 3-6	Theatre Nebula ★ Illinois State AACTFest	IL Palatine	847-359-9378 www.theatrenebula.org
Feb 4	Arkansas Community Theatre Association ★ State AACTFest 2011	AR El Dorado	870-862-5474 www.arcta.net/
Feb 4-6	Community Theatre Association of Michigan ★ State AACTFest 2011	MI Midland	989-631-5930 X1270 www.communitytheatre.org
Feb 17-20	Theatres of Louisiana ★ Louisiana State AACTFest	LA Westwego	504-885-2000 x204 www.jpas.org
Feb 25-27	Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre WI ★ Wisconsin AACTFest 2011	WI De Pere	920-737-2561 www.wact.org

For dates farther ahead, check the website: www.aact2.org

★ Indicates festival in the 2011 AACTFest Cycle

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