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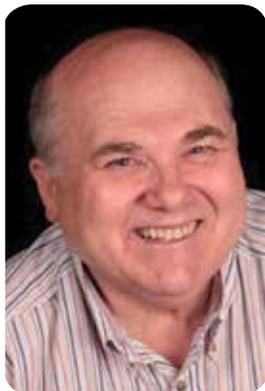
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Gary Walker
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As I write this, another aactWorldFest has come to an end – and what a week it was. Once again Venice Theatre was our host and delivered the very best. For those who were there the memories of great performances, workshops, and time with old and new friends will long make this a great week of theatre. For those who missed it – well – you missed a lot.

Once again the universal nature of theatre was on display. Whether the simplest of human relations between man and woman (or perhaps that is the most complex!) or abstract expressions of art and music, all of the performances spoke of the human experience and spoke to us clearly.

Every performance was special and worthy of the highest praise, but I can share a few highlights:

- The collaboration between the Italian commedia dell'arte masters Andrea Lattari and Cinzia Grande with

All of the performances spoke of the human experience and spoke to us clearly.

young American artists sparked. With only a month to develop those difficult skills, the production showed the creativity of the artists and dedication of the American students.

- The Loveland Players production of *The Century of Music* truly demonstrated the ability of theatre as a tool for expression. Loveland Center teaches adults with developmental disabilities life skills through theatre and the production was full of warmth and passion and stars.

- The Argentinian production by La Compasiva Teatro of *Our Daily Bread* made us laugh and cry and become totally engaged with two actors' performance without words but with an intimate ability to communicate.

One of the biggest surprises was Ben Vereen performing in the opening ceremonies and conducting his master class. Most amazing of all, he stayed the entire week to experience

every production. Clearly something good was happening at Venice Theatre. His commitment was so special that Ben Vereen was made the one and only lifetime member of AACT. I look forward to seeing him again and again as he shares his special talent with us all.

I could go on praising every production for they are indeed all praiseworthy but my space is limited. One more special note. With any AACT event there are great participants, great venues, great staff – but most of all there are great volunteers. As I said during the closing event, volunteers at Venice Theatre don't know how to say no. They only know how to make visitors feel welcomed and how to get the job done.

My highest complements go out to the people of Venice, the staff of Venice Theatre and aactWorldFest and most of all to those supremely dedicated volunteers. We'll see you again in 2018!

Gary Walker



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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at david@aact.org to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone numbers above.

On the cover

Ben Vereen kicks off the opening ceremony at aactWorldFest 2014 in Venice, FL. photo by Renee McVety

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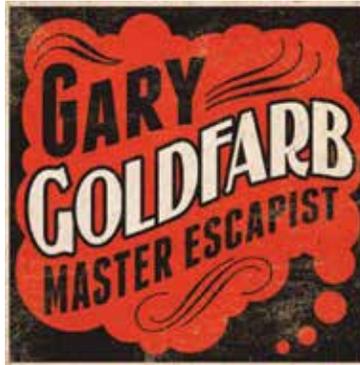
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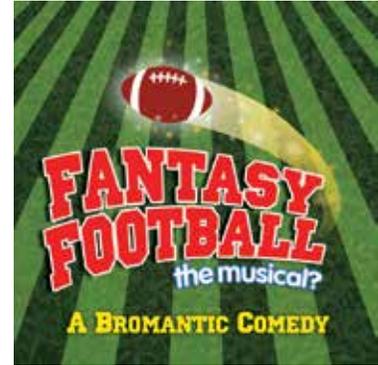
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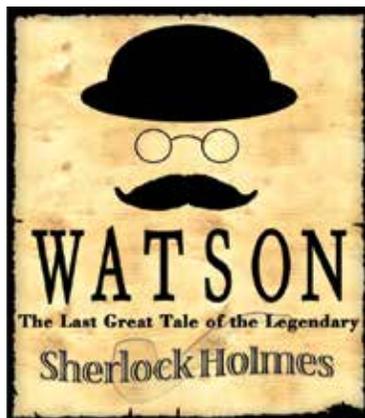


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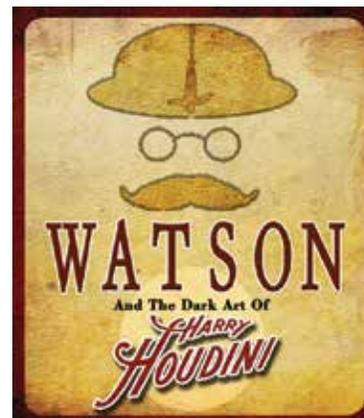


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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Executive Committee

October 10-11, 2014
Grand Rapids, MI
Hosted by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

AACT Winter Meetings 2015 for AACT Board & Committees

February 18-21, 2015
Charlotte, NC

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Congratulations

The AACT NewPlayFest premiere production of *The Vanishing Point* by Nedra Pezold Roberts received eight Elly Theatre Award nominations from the Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance (SARTA).

Nominations include California Stage Company for Overall Production and Production of Original Script, Playwright Nedra Roberts for Original Script, Ray Tatar for Direction, Richard Winters for Leading Male, Jeremy Minagro for Supporting Male, Emily Kentta for Supporting Female, and Buzz Weitz for Set Design.

The Elly Theatre Awards will be presented September 21, 2014 in Sacramento, CA.

Thanks

to the volunteers of Venice Theatre for their hard work and dedication at aactWorldFest

to Backstage.com for spotlighting AACT in the July article *Community Theater is Alive and Well and Everywhere*

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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AACT Insurance Program

AACT organizational members are eligible to participate in property, liability, and other coverages of the AACT Insurance Program.



For more information, contact:
800-749-5646
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Theatre Insurance: Not All Theatre Policies Are Created Equal!



by Ken Roberts

When theatres are shopping for property and liability insurance, there are several key coverage factors, aside from the price, that should be considered. Many theatre policies look just like any other commercial insurance policy. If it weren't for the name of the theatre being on the declarations page, the policy could just as well have been written for a dry cleaners or a law office. It's important to know not only whether the insurance company that is offering the coverage is comfortable with the class of business, but also if they offer any ancillary coverage enhancements that are specific to the unique exposures that community theatres present. This is not to say that price doesn't matter, but like the title of the 1965 Clint Eastwood spaghetti western, *For A Few Dollars More*, getting those enhancements might not be as expensive as theatres might think.

How much more would it cost them to get a policy from a performing arts insurance company that includes the coverages that are specific to their operations?

Theatres with extensive youth programming can always benefit from having some *abuse and molestation* coverage. Even if their volunteers are squeaky clean and would never

commit an offense of that nature, an organization would still have to expend valuable dollars toward their own legal defense just to fight such accusations, regardless of how untrue or unjust those accusations might be. Insurance companies that are comfortable with theatres will sometimes offer some limit of abuse and molestation coverage at no additional charge to the theatre, and who could complain about that price?

Another incredibly valuable coverage is event cancellation coverage. This is another enhancement that some insurance companies provide at no additional charge. It pays theatres for the loss of income and any necessary expenses incurred as a result of a cancellation, postponement, or relocation of a production. The cancellation would be covered if it's due to unfavorable weather, if the local authorities prohibit the event due to conditions that threaten the safety of the participants or spectators, or if 50 percent or more of the cast becomes ill. The coverage even gets triggered if the theatre's bus or flight is late and the event must be postponed and/or rescheduled.

There are plenty of other enhancements that can be included for minimal cost, such as automatic additional insured status to any venue that requires it, or property in transit, or an additional limit for costumes, props, sets, musical instruments, and audio equipment. The point is, a theatre might be able to find an insurance policy that is cheaper, but how much more would it cost them to get a policy from a performing arts insurance company that includes the coverages that are specific to their operations? If a typical commercial insurance policy doesn't include coverage for these things, how much is the theatre really saving? ♦

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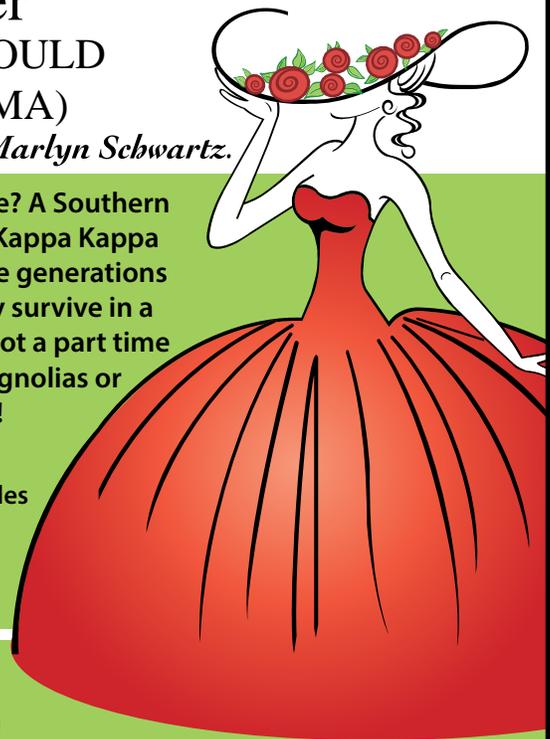
based on the cult classic, and perennial best selling book by Marlyn Schwartz.

Who knows what lurks in the hearts of the women of Dixie? *A Southern Belle Primer (or Why Princess Margaret Could Never be a Kappa Kappa Gamma)* is the hilarious new play that tells it all! Join three generations (3 characters) of Southern Belles as they divulge how they survive in a society that has not gone with the wind! Being a belle is not a part time job. It is cradle to grave commitment. If you like *Steel Magnolias* or *The Help* you will just adore *A Southern Belle Primer*, y'all!

Topics include:

- Top ten funeral casseroles
- Ten signs of the silver zodiac
- The golden rules of being a true Southern belle
- Honorary Southern belles
- Hairdos
- Football

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Info for *A Southern Belle Primer* is not available on the website at this time.



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AACTFest Takes a Leap Forward with Presenting Sponsor

AACTFest 2015 stands ready to benefit from national-level changes that will make the local festival experience even better for participating companies, attendees, and host theatres.

Perhaps most important, AACT has taken on the role of festival producer, allowing host companies to focus on what they do best—hosting the multi-day event, providing logistical and technical support to participating companies, and ensuring that attendees enjoy themselves thoroughly.



This shift is the result of years of feedback from host companies who often found themselves faced with a steep learning curve in dealing with the huge responsibilities of producing a national festival. Now, AACT can bring its ongoing experience with the festival cycle, providing



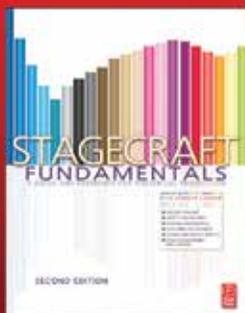
important continuity and logistical support, while lessening the administrative burden on presenting companies.

AACT's stewardship of the national festival has led Music Theatre International (MTI) to step up and become the Presenting (Diamond) Sponsor for AACTFest 2015. This is an exciting development, since MTI has long been a supporter of both AACT and its member groups, offering discounts and providing financial assistance for conferences and events.

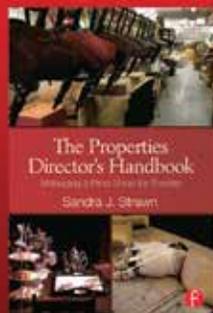
Arts-People as a Gold Sponsor, and Dramatists Play Service as a Bronze Sponsor, have also agreed to provide valuable support for AACTFest 2015. Their sponsorships will enable AACT to continue to improve the festival in many ways, providing even more educational and workshop opportunities.

take the drama out of your theatre productions

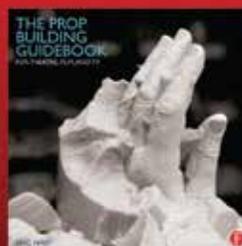
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You will be seeing these companies highlighted as we keep you informed on the latest plans for AACTFest 2015, to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 23-28.

The Grand Rapids Civic Theatre will be the location for the productions, and our host hotel is the Amway Grand Plaza, an

all within steps of the host hotel. For more, visit www.experiencegr.com

AACTFest 2015 promises to be a blockbuster event. Register now at aact.org/15 for the early bird discount, and ensure you have the hotel accommodations you prefer. ♦



Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, site of AACTFest 2015 performances

AAA Four Diamond luxury hotel. A five-minute walk between the hotel and theatre takes you past a myriad of restaurants and shops. The city also boasts the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Children's Museum, Public Museum, and Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts—



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Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg Premieres Fifth AACT NewPlayFest Production

The fifth production of the inaugural AACT NewPlayFest, **End Papers**, by Barry Weinberg of Bethesda, MD opened July 24 at Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg (PA). Attending the opening night and gala reception were playwright Weinberg, AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, AACT Past President and Jack K. Ayre Theatre Fund representative Linda M. Lee, and Linda Habjan of Dramatic Publishing.

The central character of *End Papers*, Kathy, must use all her ingenuity and intelligence in order to avoid losing her home and possessions, after her husband's secret life is exposed. Convinced that a used bookstore named End Papers

Dramatic Publishing representatives, friends and relatives come to Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, from Illinois, Texas, Ohio, Arkansas, New York, Maryland, and Virginia. They, and all those people I don't know, fill the theatre night after night, and are engrossed, entertained, surprised; they laugh, applaud and, yes, some cheer. Thank you AACT!"

The next playwright to benefit from exposure via the AACT NewPlayFest, is Bo Wilson of Richmond, VA, whose play, **The Boatwright**, opens at Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre on September 12.

These latest productions join those from previous winners **Exit Laughing**, by Paul Elliott, which opened at the Springfield (MO) Little Theatre last November, **The Seamstress** by Cece Dwyer, which premiered at Hickory (NC) Community Theatre in January, **The Vanishing Point** by Nedra Roberts, which opened at Sacramento's California Stage Company in March, and **Jellofish** by Jim Henry, at Phoenix Stage Company (Naugatuck, CT) in April. Each production reflects AACT's initiative to address the need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe.

Dramatic Publishing Company will publish the six plays in an anthology this year, with all titles available for production.

Each producing theatre company of AACT NewPlayFest 2014 received \$4000 to aid in producing and marketing these new theatrical

works. The estate of the late Mr. Jack K. Ayre of Sunnyvale, CA is providing these funds. AACT Past President Linda M. Lee and her siblings were beneficiaries of Ayre's estate and made the decision to help finance productions of winning plays in AACT NewPlayFest 2014. ♦



Linda M. Lee

Enjoying the opening of *End Papers* at Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg are playwright Barry Weinberg, cast member Charles Smith, Dramatic Publishing's Linda Habjan, and AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford

can be built into a moneymaking business, Kathy relies on the support of her warm and witty friends, and all her wiles to deal with her husband - and unwelcome romantic overtures from an old boyfriend - and establish her independence.

End Papers is one of three full-length plays by Weinberg, following *The Cafe on the Corner* and *The Main Chance*.

Weinberg is still somewhat stunned by the events of the last year.

"After 12 years of work on *End Papers*," he recalls, "revising, workshops, readings, more revisions, readings of the revised versions, then more revisions, AACT tells me *End Papers* is a finalist in the inaugural AACT NewPlayFest! I sign contracts and wait. Then AACT tells me *End Papers* has been chosen for production by the Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg, and publication by the Dramatic Publishing Company! I won! I meet Duane Baker, the director, who understands the play the way I do. Later, at the table read-through, I meet the cast, who inhabit the characters perfectly. I attend more rehearsals and the development is going just right. I'm interviewed on TV about *End Papers* and about AACT. Then tech, dress, and the excitement of opening night, a world premiere! AACT and

Springfield Little Theatre Springfield, MO	Paul Elliott Los Angeles, CA	<i>Exit Laughing</i> November 15 - 24, 2013
Hickory Community Theatre, Hickory, NC	Cece Dwyer Sarasota, FL	<i>The Seamstress</i> January 10 - 26, 2014
California Stage Company Sacramento, CA	Nedra Roberts Atlanta, GA	<i>The Vanishing Point</i> March 27 - April 28, 2014
Phoenix Stage Company Naugatuck, CT	Jim Henry Chicago, IL	<i>Jellofish</i> May 2 - 11, 2014
Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg Mechanicsburg, PA	Barry Weinberg Bethesda, MD	<i>End Papers</i> July 24 - 27, 2014
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre Grand Rapids, MI	Bo Wilson Richmond, VA	<i>The Boatwright</i> September 12 - 28, 2014

The producing theatres, playwrights, titles, and production dates for the six winning plays in AACT's first AACT NewPlayFest.

AACT Seeks New Plays

What playwright wouldn't want to see their new work showcased in a quality production, then published in a nationally published anthology?

That's what awaits the winners of the AACT NewPlayFest, one of the largest playwriting festivals in the country. Scripts will be accepted from September 1 to November 1, with the winning plays announced next June.



Scripts must be full-length, non-musical plays, in English, that have never received a full production. Submissions will only be accepted electronically through the AACT website. (For complete submission guidelines go to aact.org/newplayfest.)

Seven winning plays will be selected from the finalists by the producing theatres. (See the list of next year's producing theatres in the box on this page.) The winning plays will receive fully staged productions between July 2015 and December 2016. The playwright will be paid a royalty by the producing theatre and receive an expense-paid trip to the theatre for a rehearsal or performance.

National visibility for the plays will help playwrights find additional productions for their works. Dramatic Publishing Company will publish an anthology of the winning plays and handle rights for the scripts. AACT will provide tools for local promotion and spread the word nationwide.

It's a win-win in more ways than one.

There is no shortage of new works, but few will survive if not discovered, produced, and published. Community theatres know the value of developing new plays; some even conduct new play contests. But many theatres have little time to find a new, quality script, and often don't have the tools to sell an unknown play to their patrons. AACT NewPlayFest represents a major leap forward in ensuring a healthy future for live theatre across the country.

Reviewers needed. AACT is also seeking people with the time, interest, and theatre expertise to review and score scripts submitted to AACT NewPlayFest. Each script will be adjudicated by at least three reviewers. Those that rise to the top will be read by a second set of reviewers, whose scores will determine the finalists. AACT members are invited to apply to be a reviewer online at aact.org/newplayfest by October 15. ♦

AACT NewPlayFest 2016 Producing Theatres

Region	City, St	Theatre
2	Silver Spring, MD	Silver Spring Stage
3	Valparaiso, IN	Chicago Street Theatre
4	Winston-Salem, NC	Twin City Stage
5	Omaha, NE	Omaha Community Playhouse
6	Arlington, TX	Theatre Arlington
7	Windsor, CO	Windsor Community Playhouse
9	Bend, OR	2nd Street Theater

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Book by TODD MUELLER and HANK BOLAND

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—*Silverton Standard & the Miner*, Silverton, Colo.



Artwork: Steven Ravenscraft.

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Ben Vereen and a company of Venice Theatre performers kick off the opening ceremony at aactWorldFest 2014

A World of Theatre at aactWorldFest 2014

by David Cockerell

aactWorldFest 2014 began with a colorful and enlightening opening ceremony which included Tony Award-winning Ben Vereen leading a company of Venice Theatre performers in presenting the flags of the 13 nations represented at the festival, and welcoming the crowd with “There’s No Business Like Show Business.”

Vereen, who wowed the audience by singing “Magic To Do” from *Pippin*, pointed out the amazing achievement of theatre troupes from different countries celebrating creativity at Venice Theatre. He implored the governments of the world to take notice that it is “Art that will save us. No arts. No culture. No civilization. Put the arts back in our schools,” he told the cheering crowd.

“aactWorldFest has reinforced my love and appreciation for both communication and theatre. A group of people can watch the same show and hear the same things, yet the messages received will always be different for each person. The point of theatre is to communicate an idea or an emotion. This festival has made it even more clear to me: as long as I’m communicating an idea or emotion, like I saw Argentina, Bangladesh, New Zealand and Denmark achieve, I will live a fulfilled life.”

Kim Gaesser’s blog, June 19, 2014



The opening ceremony introduced the flags of the thirteen nations represented at the festival

It was an amazing start to an amazing festival. Fourteen theatre companies – from Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Latvia, New Zealand, South Africa, and USA – presented productions throughout the week.

“From the opening ceremonies it is obvious that this is no ordinary event. Venice Theatre knows how to throw a party, and they’ve assembled an impressive guest list. Countries from around the world are represented by the theatre art they have brought to share, and the actors mingling with the audience makes the experience feel like a family reunion of the very best kind.”

Kelly Wynn Woodland’s blog, June 17, 2014

The festival of productions began with the USA entry, *Crowns* by Regina Taylor, from Delta Center Stage in Greenville, Mississippi. The energetic and vocally incredible production is set in a Southern church where women wear elaborate hats, and influence the life of a young girl who discovers meaning by following their traditions.



Jaribu Hill, Renetha Frieson, Wanda Johnson, Indiana Norfleet, Eleashia Jones-Williams, Asia Harden, and Simon Henderson commanded the stage in the USA production of *Crowns*

“While watching the Mississippi performers in *Crowns*, I wasn’t in a theatre watching a traditional musical—I was in a Southern church witnessing a triumphant gospel choir.”

Tay Tufenkjan’s blog, June 18, 2014

“*The Winged* seamlessly blends theatre, music, dance, acrobatics, and puppetry to create an experience that is greater than the sum of its parts. The Armenian performers demonstrated a type of magic you can only see on stage.”

Tay Tufenkjan’s blog, June 18, 2014



Kerstin Plewa-Brodam and Johannes Brinkmann in Germany’s production of *Noah and the Flood*

Next was a production of Franziska Steiof’s *Noah and the Flood*, performed in German by members of Studio-Buhne Essen in Germany.

“It’s a highly comical yet moving twist on what happened when Noah got word from God to build an ark. Noah has the ideas, and his over-burdened wife does all the work. Kerstin Plewa-Brodam as Mrs. Noah is a terrific clown, using broad gestures and movements with specificity. [...] We may not understand every word, but we always catch on. She works wonderfully with Johannes Brinkmann as Noah to build the ark onstage out of some chairs, rope, fabric, and brooms. By the end, they leave the audience hopeful for a bright future.”

Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 17, 2014



Harutyun Avalyan, Davit Sargsyan, Anna Petrosyan, Liana Arestakyan, and Ina Haknazaryan created stunning visuals in Armenia’s production of *The Winged*

“Part dance piece, part tribal metaphor, with heavy references to literary works, this is one of the most fascinating things I’ve seen on stage in a long time.”

Kelly Wynn Woodland’s blog, June 17, 2014

The second day of performances began with *The Inn of Cross Destinies* by Andrea Lattari and Cinzia Grande, performed by Maner Manush/Venice Theatre as a co-Italian and American production. This world premiere of a modern commedia dell’arte play was performed by a group of young Venice Theatre actors and the two Italians.

continued on next page

Except for the photo on page 26, all aactWorldFest photos are by **Renee McVety**



Andrea Lattari and Cinzia Grande wrote and directed the collaborative production from Italy/U.S.

“It’s a lively, colorful version of the tale of a father trying to control his money and the romantic lives of his children (with disastrous results). But it’s done in a Bangla style, mixing traditional music and dancing into a story that never stops moving. It’s a high energy production with humorous results.”

Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 18, 2014



Love endures over money in the Bangladesh production of *Kanjush (The Miser)*

“The cast picked up the style in less than a month of rehearsals, capturing the spirit of stock comedy and situations that have been passed down for centuries. [...] All the cast members made you feel in good hands with the style as they shared the stage with Lattari and Grande, who are a delight to watch and proved they’re good teachers, as well.”

Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 18, 2014

Next was *Kanjush (The Miser)* by Molière. This colorful version was adapted by Tariq Anam Khan from Loko Natyadal Bangladesh in Bangladesh.

Tuesday evening concluded with *Our Daily Bread* by Mario Marino and Gabriela Pagés, performed by La Compasiva Teatro of Argentina.

“Argentina’s *Our Daily Bread* was a beautiful, interpretation of a couple’s lifelong relationship, starting from their first meeting to old age. The performers never spoke aloud, yet were completely understood through their use of music, light and projections, and their bodily affect display and emblems. Their bread dough, along with Her flour and His water, was cleverly used to symbolize several central things in the relationship, like sex, pregnancy and a baby.”

Kim Gaesser’s blog, June 19, 2014



Mario Marino and Gabriela Pagés in Argentina’s production of *Our Daily Bread*

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Wednesday's productions continued to be varied in style, starting with *Babel Rap* from Theatre Ensemble in Canada, about two men building their way to heaven—a modern twist on the story of the Tower of Babel.

“Balance is an issue in *Babel Rap*, in which we see a Laurel and Hardy-style pair of bumbling construction workers, with more than hammers and nails on their minds. The work leads to some intriguing discussions about faith and God, conjuring thoughts of *Waiting for Godot*.”
 Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 19, 2014



Jeff Bastien and John Nabben work on the Tower of Babel in Canada's production of *Babel Rap*

New Zealand improv troupe Improsaurus was full of energy, working together to create a show using input from a very responsive audience.

“The ridiculous was courtesy of the New Zealand improve troupe, Improsaurus, a fun-spirited quintet of performers who created a funny story about a drug-selling family with Chekhovian-influences dealing with wild sheep and a zombie apocalypse.”
 Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 19, 2014



Tim Mooney took to the stage in his production of Shakespeare's Histories

Shakespeare's Histories by Tim Mooney, was performed by Mooney as a stand-in for a production from Togo, which faced visa issues that kept the troupe at home.

“Mooney's *Shakespeare's Histories* recounts about 500 years of English history that serve as the backdrop to 10 of William Shakespeare's plays. And it's all done in an hour. It's performed at what he calls a 'breakneck pace,' but is almost too rapid fire to fully grasp it.”
 Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 19, 2014



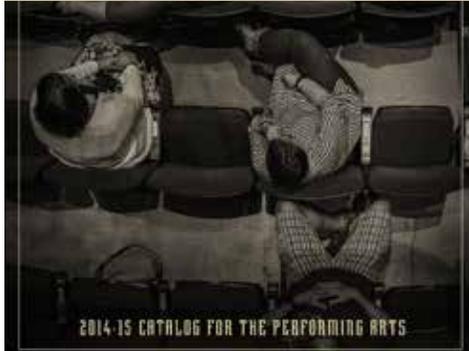
Jerome Cousins, Trubie-Dylan Smith, Alex Wilson, Dianne Pulham, and Malcolm Morrison from New Zealand created unique stories through improv for each performance

continued on next page



The 2014-15 season has arrived!

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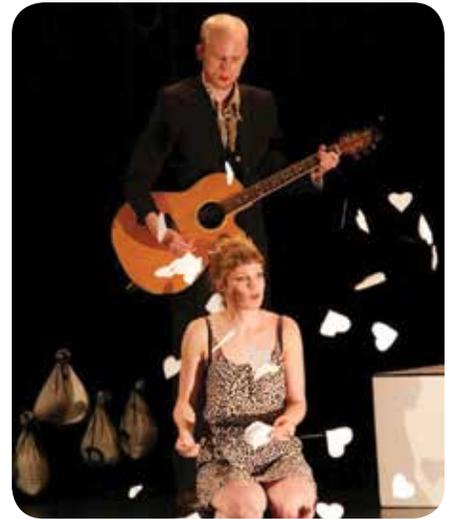
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aactWorldFest continued from previous page

POP! from Denmark's Black Box Pangea was often mesmerizing with its striking visuals utilizing multi-media, as well as creative interpretations of many current popular songs.

"An out-of-the-ordinary show performed by two people who simply took popular songs off of America's radio and articulated them in different contexts. This forced the audience to reanalyze the lyrics that are known so well. It made the audience see the depth behind the words and how the same words can mean so many different things. Their show didn't have a clear line of action or storyline, so it was totally up to the audience to come up with their own interpretation. Yes, this show took me on a journey, and it also took all the other audience members on a separate journey, different and unique for each person."

Kim Gaesser's blog, June 19, 2014



Emile Bendix and Rasmus Rhode utilized inventive images in Denmark's production of POP

The day concluded with *It's a Country Thang, Y'all!* performed by The Silver Foxes from hometown Venice, FL.



The men of Venice Theatre's Silver Foxes entertained all the single ladies in It's a County Thang, Y'all!

"Venice's Silver Foxes is one of the most popular performing troupes in the area. The Foxes sang, they danced and they made us laugh. And with a soaring performance of *Blow Gabriel Blow*, they brought us to our feet."

Maureen's blog, June 20, 2014

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The diversity of production styles continued on Friday, beginning with *Poetry Butterfly* from Drawing Theatre in Latvia where stories are told through dance and a fascinating array of disappearing/reappearing watercolor images.

“In *Poetry Butterfly* [...], dancer Elina Gaitjkeviča brings a giant storybook to life on stage, floating like a paper butterfly that emerges from its pages. She takes us inside with a magical paintbrush to create cars, boats, rain and flowers that are part of her story. Accompanied by creative musician Rihards Zaļupe, the piece celebrates the joy of reading and the imagination.”

Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 21, 2014



Elina Gaitjkeviča and Rihards Zaļupe created magic with Latvia’s production of *Poetry Butterfly*

Next was *The Century of Music*, by Ronald Krine Myroup, performed by The Loveland Players from Venice, Florida. This inspirational production told the story of four generations of American family. Venice Theatre has partnered with the Loveland Center for 19 years, teaching life skills to adults with developmental disabilities through theatre study.



Tina Valenca was amazing as she led the cast of *The Century of Music* from The Loveland Players

“The joy and healing nature of the performing arts is evident in the loving production of the Loveland Follies, which Venice Theatre creates each year with the developmentally disabled adults at the Loveland Center. They sing, dance and tell jokes in tracking 100 years of American music, from the wave of immigrants in the early 20th century through today’s pop hits. It’s a joy to watch people embracing a love of theater and the cheers that come from the audience.”

Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 21, 2014

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continued on page 24



Designing the Perfect Season

by Lynn Nelson

How many times have I let this very headline excite me and then the article has let me down? Or attended a workshop about designing a season and left without all the answers? I'll tell you – too many times to count. I have learned that the perfect season consists of a “balanced set of productions that appeal to current patrons and attract new ones.” What does that even mean? Is a perfect sold-out season even an attainable goal in community theatre? After serving on my home theatre’s season selection committee for more than 20 years, I am going to say YES! A qualified yes, but a definite, resounding yes.

But here’s the catch. A pretty big one, in fact. That perfect season is a moving target – it’s never going to be the same for different theatres or different points in time. There are way too many variables. So what can we do? I have interviewed a panel of “experts” from successful community theatres of varying sizes and from diverse places (see chart). Their words of wisdom may guide us and our theatres toward that bull’s eye. Choose the advice that fits your theatre and can be implemented. Improve the next season. Learn and network more and improve even more in the next season. None of us may ever completely sell out a season, but we sure can improve!

The “panel” includes:

Name	Theatre	Location	Size & Season
Rick Kerby	Manatee Players	Bradenton, FL	Main stage - 380 seats/ 8 musicals a season @ 16 performances; additional black box with 100 seats
Nancy Eppert	Powerhouse Theatre	Independence, MO	Main stage – 220 seats/ 5 varied shows a season @ 6 performances
Tom Booth	Tupelo Community Theatre	Tupelo, MS	Main stage – 480 seats/ 5 varied shows a season @ 4 performances; additional black box with 75 seats
Chris Serface	Tacoma Little Theatre	Tacoma, WA	Main stage – 254 seats/ 7 varied shows a season @ 9 or 12 performances

Q - What does balance mean to you?

- For Chris Serface, balance is “a blend of classic, comedy, drama, period, musical, edgy.” However, he cautions that edgy should challenge your patrons but not alienate them.
- Tom Booth adds that Tupelo has to find that balance between family-friendly shows and shows with more difficult or mature language and themes, especially for its main stage season. “Our patrons have started asking for a ‘rating’ system so that they can decide if a production is suitable for their children to see.”
- Nancy Eppert’s theatre defines balance with a formula when considering shows for their season – “we present a musical (alternating years between family-friendly and adult-themed), two comedies, a drama, and a mystery.”

Q – What are some of the considerations you use to help select the season?

- Nancy’s theatre looks at several items: current/past talent

pool, potential to attract new patrons, fiscal attractiveness, and audience appeal.

- Rick Kerby has to decide if they can “properly meet the technical requirements within budget limits. Can I find directors, actors, costume designers, etc., who can meet this show’s needs without overtaxing our limited staffing?”
- Tom looks for shows that will “appeal to our theatre’s actors and volunteers, as well as to our audiences. And that’s not always easy when our patrons ask for big, well-known musicals, but our musicians and actors have done all the classics and want newer challenges.”

Q – What resources do you use?

- Rick researches what is newly available, using publisher’s catalogs and websites, as well as attending theatre festivals. His theatre has successfully marketed presenting the “Florida premiere” of a new musical. And he finds that the newer material can help attract new and younger audience members.

- Tupelo consults the AACT website with its list of most-performed productions and ratings from some of the theatres producing them. Tom says, “knowing what was successful (or not) in a similar demographic is very helpful, although not always an accurate predictor of success for us.”
- Nancy Eppert polls their patrons to ask what they would like to see and places some of their recommendations on the slate for their selection committee to read and consider.
- Several on the panel mentioned that they keep in mind good shows that were in consideration for previous seasons but weren’t selected. What might not have been a good fit with My Fair Lady could very well be a good balance to Man of LaMancha.

- And before Rick presents his suggested season to his patrons, he always verifies licensing approval from the publisher for the projected production dates. “It is difficult to present and market a season and find that you cannot get rights to a show. No matter how good the substitution is, it hurts attendance.”

So there you have it, expert advice from some of the most successful artistic directors, executive managers, and volunteers in the community theatre universe. Take what fits for your organization and use it well. Break a leg, my friends! ♦



Q – What else do you think would help our readers choose the perfect season?

- Nancy sometimes works with a theatre in the Kansas City area that chooses a season by soliciting ideas from potential directors. The directors may only submit a certain number of suggestions within a defined framework of genres (small musical, light comedy, etc.).
- Tom has found that having a new black box theatre available presents both challenges and opportunities to his organization. “TCT can focus on retaining and attracting new patrons with the main stage season. However, the black box affords us the freedom to present smaller, edgier pieces that we’ve wanted to try for a long time but didn’t have the resources to do in the past.”
- Chris loves to market his seasons in Tacoma with the motto “giving you the theatre you want to see and the theatre you didn’t know you wanted to see.” Training patrons to trust you enough to attend a show they’re not familiar with is vital to a theatre’s growth.

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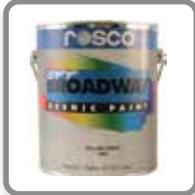


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MTI Extends AACT Member Discount

Music Theatre International (MTI) has announced that it will continue its AACT Member Discount to September 2017.

“The three-year extension is in response to the overwhelming popularity of the program, and signifies MTI’s ongoing commitment to American Community Theatre,” said MTI Senior Operations Manager John Prignano.

The program has returned more than a half-million dollars to AACT member theatres since its inception five years ago.

The program works like this:

- For the first four MTI musicals produced during the membership year, an AACT member theatre will receive a 20% discount on standard rental fees.
- If a theatre produces five MTI musicals in the year, the fifth standard rental package is free.

The following stipulations apply:

1. To participate in the discount program, a theatre must be a current, paid AACT member for the year in which the production occurs.

2. All eligible participants must join the AACT group at MTISHOWSPACE.com to be eligible for the discount.

3. A member organization must work directly with their MTI agent to receive the discount.

4. The discount will apply to any MTI show produced between September 1 and August 31 of the given AACT membership year.

5. The agreement is retroactive for productions that have occurred during the period of the agreement (that is, occurring earlier than the date of application, but during that same membership year). If a member theatre has already paid rental fees for the period covered by the agreement, the cost difference will be refunded. (Requests for discounts for productions in prior member years cannot be honored.)

6. Organizations applying for the discount must indicate on their paperwork if they are requesting it again, even if they have received the discount for a prior show.

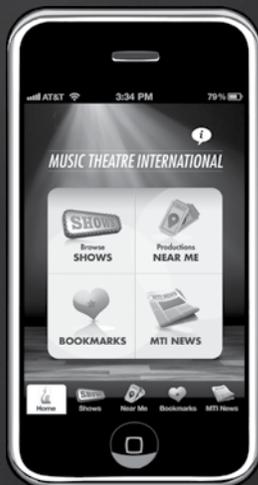
7. Rental discount applies to standard rental fees only. ♦

For more information, visit aact.org/mti



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Dramatic Publishing Offers New Discount

AACT member theatres can save a few dollars per order from Dramatic Publishing Company.

Beginning this membership year, the Woodstock, IL publishing company will offer one free script for every five purchased on a license. That is effectively a 20% discount per every five scripts.

According to Linda Habjan, Dramatic Publishing's Acquisitions Editor, the discount begins right away and will involve a simple procedure to implement. AACT member theatres will provide a code with each script order when the license is approved, and Dramatic Publishing will automatically apply the discount.

AACT provides the discount code to member theatres as they sign up or renew membership. ♦

Season Selection Discounts

Several licensing houses and other theatrical resource companies offer discounts to AACT member theatres, which could be useful in planning your next theatre season. Current offerings include:

Scripts and Royalties:

Buddy Worldwide

10% off royalties for *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story*.

Classics on Stage

25% off children's theatre scripts and plays with production order.

Dramatic Publishing

One free script for every five purchased on a license.

Heuer Publishing

10% off scripts and royalty fees for all of the plays included in the *Laugh More: 10 Great Comedies!* promotion.

Music Theatre International

20% discount on standard rental fees; fifth standard rental package is free.

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Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male Length: Two Acts
Annie discovers her in-laws are outlaws... and her mother in-law has hired a mad group of assassins to kill her! How will Annie, a mild mannered Librarian, outwit the best of the Italian, Russian and Irish contract killers? This is outrageous, laugh out loud comedy at its best.

The Old People Are Revolting!
Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male
Length: Two Acts
Hilarious comedy about seniors seeking revenge! The residents of the Sunshine Retirement Village have had enough: they're revolting! Bursting with eccentric characters and crazy shenanigans the play is great fun to stage and a huge audience pleaser.

Order your free perusal script or read online at www.comedyplays.net

Australia's Lieder Theater Company presented *The Servant of Two Masters* by Carlo Goldoni, a marriage of razor sharp pacing, grotesque physicality, spot-on improv, and sublime dedication to the ridiculous.



Hijinks were plentiful in Australia's production of *The Servant of Two Masters*

Closing out the performance part of the festival was *The Mouse's Daughter's Wedding* from China's Henan Qu Opera Troupe. Performed in Mandarin, audiences praised its spectacular combination of opera, comedy, dance, and color.

"[...] about Zhu Zhu, [a] young mouse in love and her mother who wants only the best financial deal, which may be a seductive but sinister cat who offers jewels and cash. There are spirited dance battles against the cat, black clouds, wind and a wall. It's a comical tale told by singing actors and dancers who emulate the sounds of mice and cats in their voices and movements. We may not understand the lyrics, but the story is clear. The costumes and performances providing a colorful explosion of style."

Jay Handelman, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, June 21, 2014



Lui Yan Li as Zhu Zhu, the mouse, encountered Chang Xiang Ke as the Wind in China's production of *The Mouse's Daughter's Wedding*

"In an art form that relies on physicality to sell stock characters, these actors embraced the silly and the divine and that's all I've ever wanted to do myself. I wanted to jump on stage and join in the fun. In fact, in a way I did. Well, me and the rest of audience. During a particularly elaborate lie that turned into a retelling of Goldilocks, our eponymous servant, Truffalindo, enlisted the audience to help tell his tale."

Jeremy's blog June 21, 2014

Lucky, The Hero! by Vicky Davis, was performed by actors from the Africa Centre for HIV and AIDS Management Educational Theatre Company at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. An educational piece with a mission, its purpose is to raise awareness and provide information about prevention of HIV/AIDS.



Ricardo De Ruiter as Lucky teaches lessons about life in South Africa's production of *Lucky, The Hero!*

"HIV/AIDS is a serious health issue that doesn't stop being important because we've had some recent success in controlling it. That being said, just because something is important and serious doesn't mean you can't have fun. And damn, do these guys have fun. It's a bold choice to present information on preventing HIV infection in a light-hearted, easily accessible and effective way."

Jeremy's blog June 21, 2014

Adjudicators for aactWorldFest 2014 were Benny Sato Ambush, Thomas Hauger, and Kathy Pingel. They provided valuable commentary at the end of each performance, many times through translators. It was rewarding and educational to witness the comments and evaluations these adjudicators offered the participating productions.

And yes, there were workshops—everything from Ben Vereen’s master class to improvisation techniques, to basics of trapeze. The educational opportunities were abundant.



Improvisation workshop



Ben Vereen master class in musical theatre



Techniques of Commedia dell'Arte

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aactWorldFest continued from previous page

aactWorldFest 2014 would not have been the same without the tireless efforts of Venice Theatre Executive/Artistic Director Murray Chase, Festival Coordinator Lori Chase, and Assistant Coordinator Kristofer Geddie. They were always present, and had an answer to every question (even if it required a translator). AACT is grateful for their dedication to making aactWorldFest 2014 such an incredible experience.

AACT would also like to thank President Jean Trammell and the Venice Theatre Board of Directors, Technical Director John Andzulis, Lighting Designer Ryan Mueller, Sound/Projections Dorian Boyd, Laurie Colton, Kim Kollar, Paul Bekkenhius, and the many, many incredible volunteers at Venice Theatre—all who made aactWorldFest 2014 a success.



Simon O. Henderson Jr

Murray Chase, Lori Chase, and Kristofer Geddie were the exceptional leaders of aactWorldFest 2014

But that's not all!

As an indication of that success, at the end of the festival it was announced that AACT's Board of Directors has invited Venice Theatre to host aactWorldFest in 2018.

See you in four years! ♦

“Imagine the highest high you’ve ever felt when onstage, or with a good design, or as a director – whichever realm of theatre excites you most. The teeming buzz of palpable electricity of the best performance, when you expect literal sparks to fly from your fingertips at the lightest touch . . . now imagine that for an entire week. THAT’S aactWorldFest.”

Corinne’s blog, June 23, 2014

To read full blogs and reviews of aactWorldFest 2014, go to venicestage.com/international

Jay Handelman is the theatre and television critic for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. He is President of the Foundation of the American Theatre Critics Association.

Kim Gaesser is the Venice Theatre summer marketing intern.

Jeremy Heideman is an actor at Venice Theatre and participates in the Sarasota Medieval Fair.

Maureen Holland is the secretary of the Venice Theatre Guild.

Tay Tufenkjian is the Venice Theatre Assistant Box Office Manager.

Corinne Woodland is an actor, helps run summer theatre camp at Manatee Performing Arts Center, and teaches in the Manatee County School District.

Kelly Wynn Woodland is a director and actor at Venice Theatre and a teacher in the Manatee County School District.



aactWorldFest Awards

aactWorldFest 2014 concluded with an awards ceremony that celebrated each company's incredible strengths.

"We watch each performance, learning a little about our differences (who knew *The Miser* was so popular in Bangladesh?!) but mostly about how much we are All. The Same. Our humanity and our energy and our magic are linked, all across the globe, and it is powerful. To paraphrase Trubie-Dylan Smith from New Zealand in the closing ceremonies, at aactWorldFest we find our families that we always had, but just hadn't met yet."

Corinne's blog, June 23, 2014

Outstanding Ensemble

The Century of Music The Loveland Players – Loveland Center/Venice Theatre – USA, Florida

Lucky, the Hero! Africa Centre for HIV & AIDS Management Educational Theatre Co. – South Africa

Outstanding Comedian

Rubel Shankar *Kanjush (The Miser)* – Loko Natyadal Bangladesh – Bangladesh

John Nabben *Babel Rap* – Theatre Ensemble – Canada

Trubie-Dylan Smith *Imposaurus* – New Zealand

Outstanding Soundscape

The Winged Yerevan State Puppet Theatre – Armenia

Outstanding Vocal Ensemble

Crowns Delta Center Stage - USA, Mississippi

Outstanding Individual Vocal Performance

Emilie Bendix & Rasmus Rhode *POP!* – Black Box Pangea Denmark

Outstanding Costumes

Kanjush (The Miser) Loko Natyadal Bangladesh – Bangladesh

The Servant of Two Masters Lieder Theatre Company Australia

The Mouse's Daughter's Wedding Henan Qu Opera Troupe China

Outstanding Make-up

The Mouse's Daughter's Wedding Henan Qu Opera Troupe China

Outstanding Accompanist

Oliver Johnson *Crowns* – Delta Center Stage – USA, Mississippi

Rihards Zalupe *Poetry Butterfly* – Drawing Theatre – Latvia

Outstanding Choreography & Dance

Elina Gaitjukevica *Poetry Butterfly* – Drawing Theatre Latvia

Outstanding Music Composition

Rihards Zalupe *Poetry Butterfly* – Drawing Theatre – Latvia

Outstanding Visual Impact

The Winged Yerevan State Puppet Theatre – Armenia

Outstanding Featured Actress

Kaitlyn Terpstra *The Inn of Crossed Destinies* – Maner Manush/Venice Theatre – Italy/USA, Florida

Tina Valenca *The Century of Music* – Loveland Center/Venice Theatre – USA, Florida

Outstanding Staging

The Inn of Crossed Destinies Maner Manush/Venice Theatre Italy/USA, Florida

The Mouse's Daughter's Wedding Henan Qu Opera Troupe China

Outstanding Innovation through Technology

Our Daily Bread La Campaiva Teatro – Argentina

POP! Black Box Pangea – Denmark

Outstanding Actor

Mario Marino *Our Daily Bread* – La Campaiva Teatro Argentina

Josh Waters *The Servant of Two Masters* – Lieder Theatre Company – Australia

Outstanding Actress

Gabriela Pages *Our Daily Bread* – La Campaiva Teatro Argentina

Kerstin Plewa-Brodam *Noah and the Flood* – Studio-Buhne Essen – Germany

Outstanding Theatre for Social Change

Lucky, the Hero! Africa Centre for HIV & AIDS Management Educational Theatre Co. – South Africa

Outstanding Performance Art

POP! Black Box Pangea – Denmark

Poetry Butterfly Drawing Theatre – Latvia

Outstanding Directorial Vision

Alfredo Badalamenti *Our Daily Bread* – La Campaiva Teatro Argentina

Varis Klausitajs *Poetry Butterfly* – Drawing Theatre – Latvia

Outstanding Production

The Winged Yerevan State Puppet Theatre – Armenia

Noah and the Flood Studio-Buhne Essen – Germany

Adjudication Awards for Theatrical Excellence

Excellence in Puppet Craft and Performance

The Winged – Yerevan State Puppet Theatre – Armenia

Excellence in Master Teaching

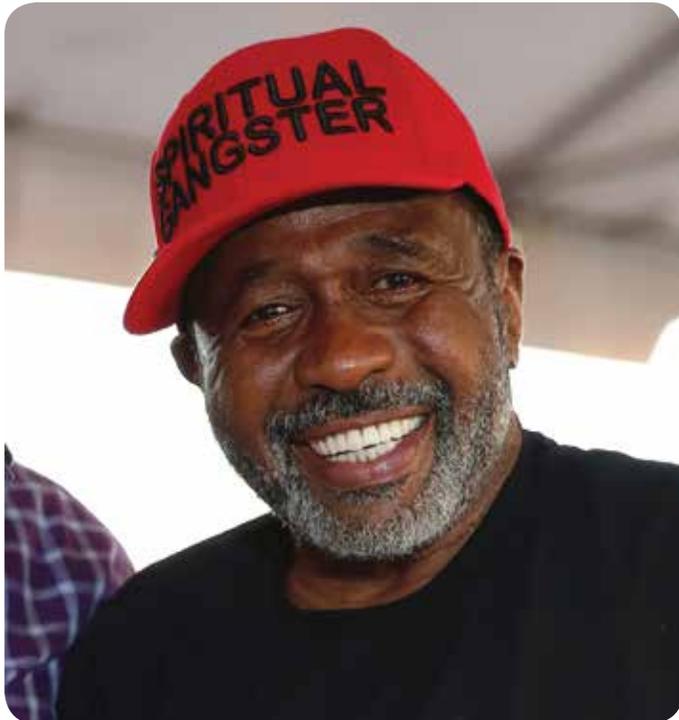
Andrea Lattari & Cinzia Grande *The Inn of Crossed Destinies* – Maner Manush/Venice Theatre – Italy/USA, Florida

Excellence in Overall Performance

Our Daily Bread – La Campaiva Teatro – Argentina

Welcome the Newest Member of AACT

Tony Award-winning star Ben Vereen said at the opening ceremony of aactWorldFest 2014, “Where else but in Venice can the world get together for the arts? This is happening - I want to see this.”



Renee McVety

Ben Vereen networking with AACT members at aactWorldFest 2014

Mr. Vereen was scheduled to open the festival and present a Master Class in Musical Theatre, but he decided to stay for the entire week. He was present at every performance, every adjudication, the social evening at Sharkeys, and the afterglow parties (ever present, playing his wooden flute). This talented artist took the opportunity to experience all that is aactWorlFest.

At the end of the festival, AACT President Gary Walker presented Mr. Vereen with an AACT Lifetime Membership. Welcome to AACT! ♦



Have you renewed your membership for 2014-15?

Now is the time to renew and enjoy the many benefits of your AACT membership!

If only one of them had just stayed home...

APPEARANCES to the CONTRARY



by Jim Inman

In this dark, urban comedy about the cruel ambiguities of Love and Sex, seismic sexual energies crack the professional and personal veneers of two couples, uniting them in a confrontation of exposed secrets, shattered egos, and eventual redemption ... for three of them...

“A Latter Day *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*”

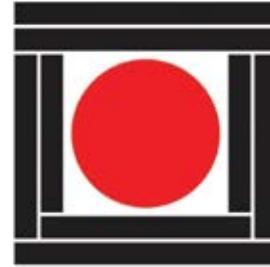
L. A. Times, Variety, Hollywood Reporter

To read the play (w/o the end) and for Performance Rights, please contact Heartland Plays, Inc. at playsnow@heartlandplays.com

aita/iata Meets During aactWorldFest in Venice, FL

by Anne Gilmour, aita/iata Secretariat

The International Amateur Theatre Association (aita/iata) held its 2014 summer meeting during aactWorldFest 2014 in Venice, Florida. The aita/iata Council, made up of the Executive Board and Regional Representatives, were pleased to accept the generous invitation made through NARA Representative and AACT member Kathleen Maldonado to hold the meeting at Venice Theatre, which was hosting a wide range of international productions and many, varied workshops at aactWorldFest 2014.



Members of Venice Theatre generously and warmly hosted the aita/iata Council and the Secretary, providing an excellent opportunity for Council members to learn more about the host venue.

Members of Venice Theatre generously and warmly hosted the aita/iata Council and the Secretary, providing an excellent opportunity for Council members to learn more about the host venue, and to meet the volunteers who are such an essential part of the success of Venice Theatre. Particular thanks go to Lori Chase, who ensured that Council members had all they needed for their meetings, not to mention her service as the overall organizer of aactWorldFest 2014.

The aita/iata Council discussed in great depth a proposal made by an internal Working Group, which had been tasked to review the structure and future direction of aita/iata. Regional Representatives made valuable contributions to the Working Group's proposals, which are now being disseminated through the Regional structure for discussion and debate. The Council will discuss all the feedback it receives at a meeting in November in Peligros, Granada, Spain, before the ideas are put to the membership at the next General Assembly in Ypres, Flanders, Belgium, in July 2015.

Audiences - including aita/iata members - warmly received the wide range of international productions participating at aactWorldFest 2014. Those who stayed for the post-show adjudications were treated to insightful, thoughtful and illuminating discussion about the productions, which became more popular as the festival progressed.

aita/iata thanks all connected with Venice Theatre who helped bring the wonder and excitement of international theatre to Venice, Florida, and made the week of the aactWorldFest 2014 such a success. ♦

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The Musical of a Lifetime
THE BOY FROM OZ

Spotlight Award Honors Sheila Bourque

The **AACT Spotlight Award** partners AACT with theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of their local theatres. Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award.

"Sheila Bourque is the soul of the **Kirk Players,"** states Sheila's Spotlight Award nomination. Ms. Bourque was honored for her long time service to the Kirk Players on June 14th. Kirk Players Artistic Director, Paddy Lynn, announced the confirmation of the Spotlight Award for Sheila prior to the curtain of Kirk Players' final show of its 48th season, *37 Postcards*. Sheila was not able to attend the event.

Sheila joined Kirk Players in 1990, and quickly became immersed in theatre. Throughout the years, she has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to children. Sheila stage-managed 18 children's shows, with casts and crews including over 60 children, teens, and adults. Her technical ingenuity contributes to brilliant set designs and efficient set changes, for four productions annually.



Kirk Players in Mundelein, IL presented Sheila Bourque the AACT Spotlight Award on June 14.

Sheila's most notable contributions to the organization have come through her commitment to leadership on Kirk Players' Board of Directors. She currently serves as Board President and Administrative Director. Sheila has tirelessly worked to continually prepare and submit applications for state and national grants, and corporate sponsorships. Her efforts have been rewarded with organizational grants from Target Stores, Illinois Arts Council, and gifts from local businesses.

At the Spotlight Award announcement Paddy remarked, "Kirk Players, a 48 year 'young' organization, thrives because of Sheila Bourque's leadership and passion for community service through excellence in theatre!" ♦



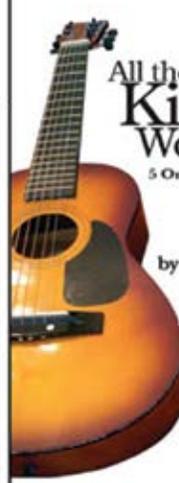
Artie's Advocacy Tip



The company you keep.

The credibility and reputation of those involved with your organization all too often determine how the public perceives you and your mission.

"FROM CALIFORNIA TO AUSTRALIA,
this play rocks!"



All the King's Women
5 One Acts, 3 Monologues

by Luigi Jannuzzi

The story of Elvis Presley told through the eyes of 17 women!

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Some Appalled,
ALL OBSESSED!

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www.sctplayhouse.org/costumes

New Roles

Baton Rouge, LA -- **Jenny Ballard** has been named Managing Artistic Director at **Theatre Baton Rouge**. Jenny began her theatre career in 2003 as Education Director and interim Managing Director of The Actors Co-op in Knoxville, Tennessee, and soon after became the Education Director and interim Artistic Director for the Tennessee Stage Company. In 2007, Ballard co-founded the Knoxville Children's Theatre and served as its Artistic Director. She came to Baton Rouge to study at Louisiana State University, where she earned her MFA in Theatre. She began her new duties in July 2014.

Waterloo, IA -- The **Waterloo Community Playhouse/Blackhawk Children's Theatre** Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of **Matthew R. Kerns** as its new Artistic Director. Matthew replaces long-time Artistic Director Chuck Stilwill, who retires in September. Matthew originates from the Midwest and has been working most recently as Education Director for Theatre Cedar Rapids in Iowa. He holds an MFA in Contemporary Performance from Naropa University in Boulder, CO and a BFA from Eastern New Mexico University. Matthew's academic career includes serving as Chair of Theatre Department at the Chicago Academy for the Arts, Communications Faculty at Loyola University Chicago, and as Director of Theatre at Sonoma Academy in Santa Rosa, California. In 2006, Matthew was a recipient of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Creative Ticket Award celebrating arts and academic excellence. Matthew joined the Waterloo Community Playhouse staff in August and will take the reigns as Artistic Director in mid-September.

Western Springs, IL -- The Board of Directors of **Theatre of Western Springs** announces the appointment of **Eddie Sugarman** to the new position of Executive Artistic Director,

effective June 2014. Eddie's position encompasses the Managing Director position, formerly held by Bill Hammack and the Artistic Director position, most recently held by Rick Snyder. Eddie has been the Managing Director at the award-winning 16th Street Theatre in Berwyn, IL for the past two years, where he led marketing and fundraising efforts. Prior to that, he worked in the marketing department at the Tony Award-winning Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Eddie co-wrote the musical *Meet John Doe*, which enjoyed its world premiere at the Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C., won 2 Helen Hayes Awards, and is licensed by the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. He also was a stuntman for two years in the original production of the musical *Ragtime*. Eddie holds a MS in Arts Administration from Drexel University and a BFA in Musical Theatre from University of Michigan. ♦

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Murder Inn

A brand new Murder Mystery/Comedy by
Howard Voland & Keith McGregor

Published by

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www.samuel french.com

"Features wonderful dialogue, a colorful kooky cast of characters, and a good dose of humor"—
Everett Herald

One interior set, two acts, four men & eight women; modern dress.

Chu Confirmed as NEA Chair

Dr. Jane Chu has been confirmed by U.S. Senate as Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA].

“The confirmation of Dr. Jane Chu is great news for not only the National Endowment for the Arts, but also for the arts in our country,” said Robert Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “Dr. Chu brings an insightful combination of expertise to the position—experience in arts education, business administration, and philanthropy. She also understands the value of art at the community level and how the arts are transformative to individuals as well as places.”

Chu comes to the NEA from the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Mo. Which she joined as CEO in 2006. She has served as fund executive at the Kauffman Fund for Kansas City, vice president of external relations for the Union Station Kansas City, and vice president of community investment for the Greater Kansas



Dr. Jane Chu

City Community Foundation. She holds degrees in visual arts, piano performance and piano pedagogy, an MBA, and a Ph.D. in philanthropic studies. Nonprofit Connect in Kansas City recently named her their Nonprofit Professional of the Year.

Since 1965, the NEA has awarded over \$5 billion in grants across all 50 states via local, state, and federal partnerships. Each grant dollar on average is matched by \$9 of additional investments. As such, the NEA stands as the largest annual national supporter of the nonprofit arts in the United States, “increasing public access to and engagement with the arts, strengthening American communities, and helping foster a diverse, innovative, productive, and motivated 21st-century workforce,” according to an NEA spokesperson. All together, the NEA

says, the nonprofit arts industry and its audiences represent a \$135 billion industry, employing 4.1 million Americans. ♦

Photo by Strauss Peyton Studios

Mario Fratti-Fred Newman Political Play Contest

Castillo Theatre
543 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036
Attn: Fratti-Newman Political Play Contest

This bi-annual contest is intended to encourage the writing of scripts for the stage that engage the political/social/cultural questions affecting the world today and/or historical events and issues that impact on our heritage.

The plays submitted to the Fratti-Newman Political Play Contest may be written in any style, set in any historical time, geographic or imaginary location, contain any number of characters and be of any length. The plays must be in English and cannot be musicals or adaptations. No scripts will be considered that have previously been submitted to this contest, have received a production or won other contests. Only one script per playwright per year will be accepted.

The winning script(s) will receive a reading at the Castillo Theatre in New York City during the theatre’s 2015 summer season.

Hard copy submission only.

Deadline: October 1, 2014 (postmark)

Details: castillo.org/playwriting-contest/

Drury University One-Act Playwriting Competition

Drury University One-Act Playwriting Competition
c/o Mick Sokol, Associate Professor of Theatre
900 North Benton Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802

Open to all playwrights. Scripts are to be original, unpublished and unproduced. Staged reading or workshop productions will not disqualify a script. Musicals, monologues, children’s plays, adaptations, film scripts and television scripts are ineligible. Preference will be given to small cast, one-set shows with running times of no less than 20 minutes and no more than 45 minutes.

First prize: \$300

Honorable mention: \$150

Deadline: December 1, 2014 (postmark)

Hard copy submission only.

Details: drury.edu/du/theatre/One-Act-Playwriting-Competition/

What are you most proud of that your theatre did this summer?

Responses on Facebook

(www.facebook.com/AACT.org)

Union Community Theatre in Union KY participated in our first regional OCTAfest with the show *Tommy*. We had 75% newbies in the cast who had never participated so it was very exciting to bring our company into the spotlight in our first AACT year.

Lindsey Morgan Huffaker

Union Community Theatre, Union, KY

www.unionct.net

Having applied for the production rights to *Les Miserables* the very day they became available for amateur theatres, we opened this amazing show on July 11. Over a hundred people auditioned, some from hours away. It was very exciting to have this show come to life at Engle Lane Theatre in Streator, IL just four years after a tornado badly damaged our theatre. What a comeback!

Kathy Missel

Engle Lane Theatre, Streator, IL

www.englelane.org

Spamalot at Ross Summer Theater in Merrillville, IN. marks the 50th year of this amazing, professional quality community theater. The theater's founder, Jerauld Reinhart, passed away this year, and this show, one of his absolute favorites, was a tribute to his incredible legacy.

Timothy Slatton

Ross Summer Theatre, Merrillville, IN

www.m-mproductions.com

The Lindale Community Theater in Lindale, TX finished the renovation of a 100+ year old building using private funds, donations and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor in time for the most ambitious project of our very young five year history, *The Drowsy Chaperone*. We love to act...and it shows!

Tim Mitchiner

Lindale Community Theatre, Lindale, TX

www.lindalecommunitytheatre.org

Hilo Community Players in Hilo, Hawaii, presented our 37th Annual Shakespeare in the Park and our Inaugural Kid Shakes. *Antony and Cleopatra* was performed with only six actors portraying all the roles with minimal costumes on an almost bare platform. The performances were some of the best I've ever seen. Our Inaugural Kid Shakes used the hilarious script *This is Hamlet* to introduce Shakespeare to audiences of all ages and to educate a new generation of actors.

Hilo Community Players

Hilo, HI

www.hilocommunityplayers.org

Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre is on the "Road to the 50th" preparing to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2016. We've launched a 50th Anniversary Committee and organized a Play Reading Committee to choose plays for the anniversary season that are exciting and challenging for audiences and artists. Big plans are now in the works. ASGT is an outdoor summer theatre presenting musicals in a historic building, which we own and maintain ourselves. That's pretty significant, considering we're an all-volunteer theatre with no Executive Director (or any paid staff, for that matter)! We're proud to have been in continuous operation for almost 50 years.

Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre

Annapolis, MA

www.summergarden.com

Performing in *The Dixie Swim Club* with four very talented women, director and stage managed by my husband. There were no divas and everybody was like old friends even though we put it up in less than 15 rehearsals including tech at The Barnstormers. It only shows what teamwork really means.

Marsha L. Amato-Greenspan

The Barnstormers Theater, Ridley Park, PA

www.barnstormertheater.com

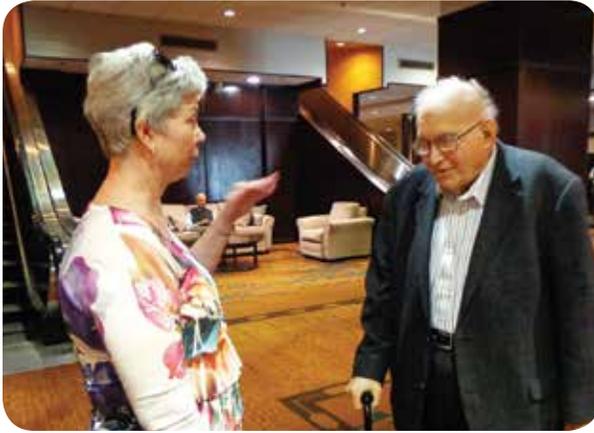
Conducting the first annual Theater Camp at the Boys & Girls Club of Booneville, MS. Conceived, written and performed by members of the Boys & Girls Club, the themes of the original production, *Owning*, include: Conflict Resolution, Goal Setting, Decision Making, Personal Responsibility and "Owning" Your Choices.

Gene Papke

Boys & Girls Club, Booneville, MS

www.facebook.com/pages/Boys-Girls-Club-of-Booneville





Ron Ziegler

AACT Conference Coordinator Jill Patchin discusses hotel layout with Past President Bill Muchow during a site visit on May 29, 2014 in Rochester, MN. The pair were seeking information for the 2017 AACTFest.



Jill Patchin

AACT Field Services Director Ron Ziegler chats with Paramount Arts Center Artistic Director Melanie Cornelison and Executive Director Bruce Marquis in front of the theatre in Ashland, KY on May 30, 2014. Ron was in Ashland on a site visit seeking a location for AACTFest 2017.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Festival Commissioner Kristi Quinn waits for the beginning of a performance session at the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre Festival, June 27-29, 2014 in Tewksbury, MA. Behind Kristi is AACT Region I Representative Bevie Lord.



Kathy Pingel

AACT Vice President for Festivals Kay Armstrong discusses the new AACTFest 2015 Handbook with Festival Chair and AACT Festival Commission member Sharon Burum at the Oklahoma Theatre Festival held in Duncan, OK, July 10-13, 2014.



Ron Ziegler

Idaho State Contact George Green (right) presides over the first meeting of the newly-formed Idaho Association of Community Theatre on June 7, 2014 in Boise, ID. In the center is key organizer Debbie Hertzog.



Ron Ziegler

Florida State Contact Kristofer Geddie shares an informal moment with theatre legend Ben Vareen at aactWorldFest, held June 16-21, 2014 in Venice, FL. Mr. Vareen was at the festival for the entire week as a special guest and workshop presenter.



If I Only Had a (Whole) Brain

by Twink Lynch

The major job of the Board is to make decisions for our theatres in a group setting. These decisions focus on program, policy, people, and money. We all realize each Board Member brings a unique background to the process (e.g., gender, ethnicity, geography, education, career, income, previous Board and/or theatre experience, basic value system).

Each Board Member also brings a “brain dominance,” that is, whether he/she is left-brained or right-brained. Since brain dominance can have a mighty impact on the success of Board and committee meetings, let’s look at some theories.

Scientists studying the brain in the last 30 years have found that each hemisphere functions almost directly opposite to the other. The left side is rational, linear, sequential and serious. A left-brained person uses knowledge and facts logically, succeeds with math and language, follows rules, likes order, works by the clock, does things “by the book,” engages in two-dimensional thinking, and is concerned with the “bottom line.”

The right side of the brain is illogical, irrational, intuitive, playful, creative, holistic, spontaneous, and flexible. A right-brained person indulges in fantasy, engages in three-dimensional thinking, works in polychronic time (not determined by units), is turned on by the arts, uses “common sense,” and takes feelings into consideration.

Researchers discovered that 90 percent of all children are highly creative until age five. Since schools are organized around left-brain values, only 2 percent of children are still highly creative by age eight. At school they learn to be on time, color in the lines, wait their turn, stand in line, and in short, conform. Their previous ways of thinking are discounted as childish, emotional, and silly. The results? They grow up, clean up, finish one thing before starting another, and learn that big boys/girls don’t cry.

By late adolescence, most people seem to be primarily either “right-brained” or “left-brained.” Some can actually use both sides with equal ease. Fortunate is the Board that has one or two such people to build bridges and interpret for the others.

Left-brained people like efficient meetings that run on time. I feel certain that Colonel Robert (who wrote those infamous “Rules”) was left-brained. Right-brained people, who tend to be more sociable, will probably stop coming if the meetings aren’t “fun.”

At any given time, some right-brained members will be led through the Board meetings and activities by left-brained members and vice versa. Thus, the process may be boring, frustrating, and tiring for all. A left-brained leader will start on time or die in the attempt, have an agenda, and “run a tight ship.” He will keep discussions on target and feel proud when the meeting is over in an hour or less. Conversely, the

Some can actually use both sides with equal ease. Fortunate is the Board that has one or two such people to build bridges and interpret for the others.

right-brained leader will seek creativity in a brainstorming session, allow ample input, and get excited by “off-the-wall” approaches. This leader may not understand the impatient Board Member who demands to “move the agenda.”

Both kinds of people have much to contribute to decision making. The right-brained are probably more tuned in to the production aspects and people in your theatre, but the left-brained will be sure we build realistic budgets, pay bills, and ultimately get the show up on time. We need both to be effective. But each will burn out the other if both views are not understood and respected. ♦

For more on this brain dominance issue, read *Time Management for Unmanageable People* by Ann McGee-Cooper (1994), available from the AACT Bookstore (www.aact.org/bookstore).

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardmanship for Spotlight for many years. Her early articles are compiled into a still relevant book for boards: Boards in the Spotlight. See ad on page 36 for ordering information.

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight (page 45). Originally appeared in Spotlight, March, 1995.

Years of Service

In celebration of our volunteers, the AACT Board of Directors recognizes the following volunteers who have served AACT as Board members, on committees, and as State Contacts.

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

25 years

Joanne Berry Bay City, MI
Bob Kafka Wauwatosa, WI

20 years

Kay Armstrong Dallas, TX
Jill Patchin Grand Rapids, MI
Stephen Peithman Davis, CA
Harv Thompson McFarland, WI

15 years

Murray Chase Rotonda, FL
Dennis Gilmore Indio, CA
Ginger Heath Monroe, NC

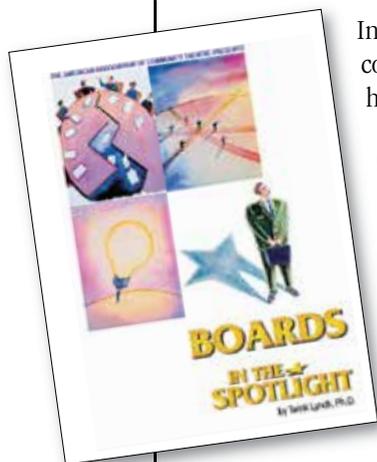
10 years

Jon Douglas Rake Tacoma, WA
Dave Sheppard Maynard, MA

5 years

Tracy Alexander Midland, TX
Frieda Austin Weatherford, TX
Sharon Burum Duncan, Ok
Lori Chase Rotonda, FL
Vikki Hanrahan Ansbach, Germany
Yvonne Johnson Short Hills, NJ
Rick Kerby Sarasota, FL
Joan Luther Naples, NY
Chad McDonald Cookeville, TN
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Sara Phoenix Tulsa, OK
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Rod McCullough
Fulton Opera House

"It's great to see a light bulb go on over board members' heads as they begin to understand their job and responsibility."
Fran Newton
Niagara Falls Little Theatre

"A must-read."
Allen Shankles
Amarillo Little Theatre

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

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**National Guild for Community Arts Education
77th Annual Conference**

November 19-22, 2014
Los Angeles, CA

Join more than 500 leaders from 300+ organizations nationwide as they explore ways to amplify our impact, increase demand and support for arts education, and transform our communities. The focus of this year's conference—catalyzing positive change through arts education—has profound implications for all involved—staff, teaching artists, trustees, students, and partners in other sectors. Through your participation, you'll gain knowledge, relationships, and inspiration to advance your organization and shape the future.

For program details and registration visit communityartsed.org

National Guild for Community Arts Education
520 8th Avenue, Suite 302
New York, NY 10018



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When	Who/What	Where	Information
Sept 19-21	New Hampshire Community Theatre Association ★New Hampshire State AACTFest 2015	NH Concord	603-557-8467 nhcommunitytheatre.com
Sept 27	Connecticut Community Theatre Association ★Connecticut State AACTFest 2015	CT Naugatuck	860-489-7180 phoenixstagecompany.org
Oct 9-11	Georgia Theatre Conference ★Georgia Community Theatre Festival	GA Columbus	229-985-8194 georgiatheatreweb.wix.com/gtc-website
Oct 10-12	Installation Mgmt Command - Europe Region ★Region X AACTFest 2015	Kaiserslautern, Germany	011-49-631-411-6252 facebook.com/groups/30984348548/
Oct 23-26	Virginia Theatre Association ★Virginia State AACTFest 2015	VA Norfolk	540-604-1190 vtasite.org
Oct 24-26	Alabama Conference of Theatre ★ActFest 2015	AL Guntersville	205-275-7790 alabamaconferenceoftheatre.zeekeeinteractive.com
Oct 24-26	Illinois Theatre Association ★Fire on the Prairie: Community Theatre Festival	IL Springfield	630-305-7348 illinoistheatre.org
Oct 24-26	Tennessee Theatre Association ★47th Annual Conference	TN Maryville	865-660-1177 tennesseetheatreassociation.webly.com/

★ Indicates festival in the AACTFest 2015 Cycle

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

Moving On

Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest 2015

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

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
I	ME	L/A Community Little Theater	Auburn	<i>Am I Blue</i>
I	MA	The Hovey Players	Waltham	<i>Rabbit Hole</i>
I	MA	The Lexington Players	Lexington	<i>Spring Awakening</i>
VI	OK	ONstage Woodward	Woodward	<i>Graceland</i> and <i>Asleep on the Wind</i>
VI	OK	Shawnee Little Theatre	Shawnee	<i>Gidion's Knot</i>

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- *New York Times*



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- *The Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

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- *Associated Press*

- *Newsday*

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