

spotlight

November/December 2014 \$2.50


american association of community theatre

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Gary Walker
AACT President
2013-2015

Anticipation is a wonderful state of existence. We savor the thought of what is to come – the perfect gift, the perfect date, the perfect day ... the perfect play.

But we live in the land of community theatre, so that anticipation is often tempered with the memory of the last time we saw a show. We remember a great Maria in the *Sound of Music*, and we wonder if this production will match that performance. Or those wonderful women in *Steel Magnolias* – how will this visit to Truvy's beauty parlor compare? Will this Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* match up to the strength and dignity of the actor in the last production we saw?

No one had any idea what was coming next.

Usually, we know every warm, funny moment in the play, every sad passing, that killer eleven o'clock number. Yet, that delicious state of anticipation is still there: How will this production be done? How strong is the cast? How fresh is the director's vision?

Community theatres usually perform reliable standards or the newest Broadway hit. The challenge is bringing a fresh approach to known territory. And, as community theatre directors and actors, we do it well. Often, we surprise our audiences – hopefully, in a great way.

What we so seldom get is the anticipation of something new: The birth of a story; the joy of being the first to tell the tale to an audience.

Every person in the theatre experienced this kind of anticipation as we watched the inaugural performance of *The Boatwright* – one of the new plays produced and published as a part of the AACT NewPlayFest.

No one had any idea what was coming next. We hadn't read the script. We didn't know how the director and cast would

interpret it and realize the characters. In the story of *The Boatwright*, no one in the audience knew how they would build that boat!

Exciting? Yes! A little scary, too? Absolutely!

The only thing more exciting than this kind of anticipation is surely the payoff of a great new play!

P.S. *The Boatwright* was the final production of AACT NewPlayFest, first round. The second round is already in progress. We appreciate all the playwrights who submit their work, congratulate those whose works are chosen, and look forward with great anticipation to seeing the selected plays on stage!

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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

Patrick A. Hendren and David J. Cobb in the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre premiere production of *The Boatwright*, the last production in the inaugural cycle of AACT NewPlayFest.

Photo by Studio3Twenty



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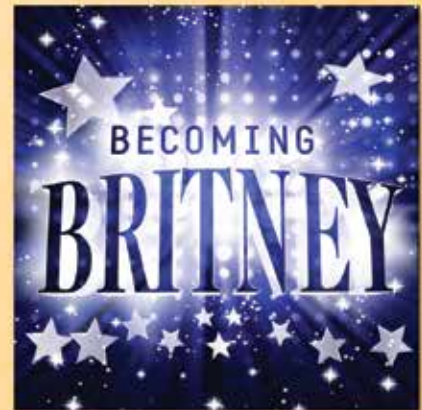


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"Website 3G"

After 18 Years, AACT's Website gets a complete makeover

For the first time since AACT went online in 1996, all programs and services are combined in one completely re-imagined, easy-to-use site.

This is "Website 3G" - the third generation of AACT's online presence, and by far the most user-friendly, says AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford.

"We listened to what members told us, and worked hard to make the new site reflect that," she explains. "The site has always been intended to promote networking among members and to provide information they can use in their theatre work. That hasn't changed. But now those resources are easier to locate and use."

"This is a huge and complex project, and we wanted to make sure we got it right."

She points to the simple, intuitive navigation menus, and a true site search function - type in a word or phrase and see a list of matching pages. Plus, communicating with fellow members has never been easier, what with online chat, discussion forums, and quick access to the Resource Roster and AACTList email discussion group.

Not surprisingly, the planning and work have taken more than a year.

"This is a huge and complex project, and we wanted to make sure we got it right," Crawford explains.

In addition to the help of a website consulting firm, many hours of effort were put in by AACT Ambassador Scott Bloom (a computer systems architect in his real life), AACT Webmaster Stephen Peithman, AACT Marketing/Communications Director David Cockerell, and Crawford herself.

AACT's website "began small in 1996 and just grew," explains Peithman. "Over the years, we added many great resources, squeezing them in where it made most sense. We even added a second site (aact2.org) to handle membership-related subjects. As a result, the site had become a somewhat unwieldy, leaving some visitors a bit overwhelmed."

By starting over from scratch, he says, all those resources are now more accessible, including the Reference Library of almost 200 articles and sample forms, a list of the most frequently produced plays and musicals (with an A-F grade for financial success), and many different ways to network with other members.

After testing by volunteers, the new site is launching, but the journey is just beginning.

"Both member needs and internet technology will continue to evolve," Crawford points out. "The new site reflects what our members tell us they need now, while building on technology that will help us address future needs as they arise. We're really excited!" ♦



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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Winter Meetings 2015 for AACT Board & Committees

February 18-21, 2015
Charlotte, NC
Hosted by Metrolina Theatre Association

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Thanks

Steve Lyons, Phillip Powell, Linda Lee, Linda Habjan, Paul Elliott, Pamela Livingstone, Chuck Rogers, Duane Baker, Barry Weinberg, Ray Tartar, Susan Pikowsky for assistance with preparation of an NEA Grant application.

Terri Saad for helping with membership mailing.

Corrections

to the September/October 2014 *Spotlight*:

In "Designing the Perfect Season," The City Theatre of Independence (MO) was listed as Powerhouse Theatre. The City Theatre of Independence performs in the Powerhouse Theatre.

In "Season Selection Discounts," Theatrical Rights Worldwide offers a 50% discount at the PerusalsNOW store and a 10% performance license discount for AACT members (with the code AACT-TRW).

Spotlight

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Are Your Insurance Policies Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious?



by Ken Roberts

Recently, one of our member theatres and I were stunned and amazed when a well-known insurance company, who has been writing liability policies for theatres for at least ten years, informed us that they would not insure an upcoming production of *Mary Poppins* because it involved “aerial activities” by volunteers and participants. What?! How could any company that professes to be a theatre insurer not cover a reasonably common activity in the theatre world? It once again reminded me of the importance of making sure that your agent and your insurance company know exactly what we do, and that not all commercial insurance policies are theatre insurance policies.

They are clearly not as comfortable with theatre as they would have us believe.

Granted, very few community theatre companies are blessed with the fly space to perform *Mary Poppins* or *Peter Pan* as they were intended to be performed, but when they are, they don't expect to be grounded by their insurance company. In the first place, most insurance companies that claim to be comfortable with the performing arts industry and the wide

variety of exposures that come with it, will exclude coverage for injuries to volunteers and participants. Hence the need for volunteer accident insurance. So unless *Mary Poppins* or *Peter Pan* is actually flying out over the audience, which I've never seen in community theatre, there is absolutely no risk of an audience member being injured. Secondly, the effects companies that come into our theatres to set up the rigging and train our volunteers to fly, will add the theatre to their policy as an additional insured for claims related to their equipment and training. Like me, you might then ask, what is the problem? . . . and the answer would be, with the insurance company. They are clearly not as comfortable with theatre as they would have us believe.

Along those same lines, it behooves us to make sure that if we purchase accident coverage for our volunteers, the policy doesn't have any exclusions or fine print prohibiting aerial activities. I've seen some pretty specific exclusions in those policies, from skydiving to trampolines, so it never hurts to review our policies very carefully to avoid any uninsured claims. We owe that to our volunteers.

I know I have referred back to this topic several times over the years, but I cannot stress enough, the importance of making absolutely sure that your agent and your insurance company know exactly what you do. Even if your group has never considered doing any productions that involve flying, just knowing that your insurance company would not insure the event if the opportunity ever presented itself, should make any organization pause to wonder if they're with the right company. Shouldn't we all be able to expect supercalifragilisticexpialidocious? ♦

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What's Trending?

By Julie Crawford

Do you sometimes wonder if other community theatres are experiencing the same things yours is? Of course, every theatre and community is different, but there are trends that can help you understand what is happening. Or, if your theatre doesn't match the trend, make plans in case the trend does reach your theatre.

This past summer I was asked by the Arts Council of Huntsville, AL to share trends at an educational theatre event it held in early September. In preparation I sent a survey to AACTList and others asking questions about their theatre operations. It was small (40 theatres responded) and unscientific, but does give us a view of community theatres across the country. Some responses were as I expected, but others were surprising.

As I expected, theatres use social media as a promotional tool. What I didn't expect, was that almost every theatre (95%) that responded to "How are you marketing to busy customers and last minute ticket buyers?" mentioned social media or other electronic communication. Only 28% mentioned still using print media, such as direct mail, newspaper stories, and newspaper ads, with 23% using a mix of electronic and print media to reach busy and

last minute customers. La Crosse (WI) Community Theatre said, "Direct mail is still greatest ROI." And from Landmark Community Theatre at the Thomaston Opera House in Connecticut, "A good old fashioned newspaper article with a photo (hopefully color) is still the best way to sell a large number of tickets." Senior patrons respond to traditional marketing per the Old Opera House Theatre Company in West Virginia and from Manatee Performing Arts Center in Florida, "...newspapers (we happen to be in an area of the country where people still read them.)" Bergen County Players in New Jersey has moved their newspaper ads to just before opening night in response to last minute buyers and also uses e-promos and social media.

A surprising trend is that season tickets seem to be making a come-back. What is your theatre experiencing; Do you sell season tickets and, if so, are season ticket sales this year as compared to last year up, down, or holding steady? If they are up, what did you do to help make that happen?

Send your response to Julie@aact.org. Put "Trends" in the subject line. Include your theatre name, city, state, budget, your name, and your position with the theatre.

Watch for results in the next issue of *Spotlight*. ♦

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AACT NewPlayFest Produces Six World Premieres Across the Country

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre opened the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of ***The Boatwright*** by Bo Wilson of Richmond, VA as the final play of the inaugural AACT NewPlayFest. Attending the opening night and gala reception on September 12 were playwright Bo Wilson, AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford, AACT President Gary Walker, AACT Past President and Jack K. Ayre & Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation representative Linda M. Lee, and Dramatic Publishing's Amy Langton and Carrie Granatelli.

new work by AACT, its members, and the ticket-buying public. We all felt part of something larger than any one play, and I think that this, more than anything else, signifies the success of the entire competition. And so I say, Bravo AACT!"

The inaugural AACT NewPlayFest produced six world premiere productions of the selected winning plays. AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford said, "AACT NewPlayFest proved very successful in the initiative to address the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe. The playwrights and theatres both embraced the exciting journey of producing a world premiere. Playwrights were very enthusiastic and grateful to participate with the directors, actors, and production companies to see their work realized."

In this inaugural cycle more than 200 playwrights submitted scripts. Panels of reviewers selected semi-finalists. Six theatres were selected from across the country to produce the world premieres, and the theatres selected their winning play and scheduled the production into their season. The two-year process successfully met the many challenges of selecting and producing original works and received great reviews from both the producing theatres and the winning playwrights.

Here is a recap of the world premiere productions and thoughts from some of those involved with AACT NewPlayFest.

Exit Laughing by Paul Elliott of Los Angeles, CA was produced at Springfield (MO) Little Theatre in November 2013.

The Boatwright is about fifty-seven year old Ben Calloway who is recently widowed, childless and retired from the Kansas Highway Patrol. He's never seen the ocean, but decides to build a boat in his garage so he can sail across the Atlantic, single-handed. His twenty year old troubled neighbor, Jamie, has been suspended from film school, and Ben decides to let Jaime make a movie about his boat-building project. The two men, generations apart and lonely in very different ways, force one another to confront the isolation in their own lives. The cast included Patrick A. Hendren and David J. Cobb. Bruce E. Tinker directed the production.

Bo Wilson stated, "The folks at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre have been a dream to work with. Bruce Tinker and his marvelous staff made sure I knew, from the beginning, that they were wholly devoted to seeing *The Boatwright* achieve my vision for its success. I was consulted at every turn, included in every decision, and made to feel valued and safe. I came to opening night proud and excited... and the production didn't let me down. The audience's standing ovation was not, I believe, simply for my play, nor even for the GRCT's wonderful production; rather, it was for the entire event, the support of



Nanette Crighton, Judy Luxton, and Sandy Skoglund-Young in *Exit Laughing*

John "Chuck" Rogers, director, stated "*Exit Laughing* was one of those magical experiences we all hope will happen at our theatres. The wonderful script, great cast, strong technical support, positive word of mouth and successful marketing all combined for a record breaking premiere production of the

Studio3Twenty

Tonya Forbes

AACT NewPlayFest. Paul Elliott, the author, was so supportive and was able to watch the finished product enough times to know where he would like to take the script next. We all felt proud to be a part of that next step."

The Seamstress by Cece Dwyer of Sarasota, FL was produced at Hickory (NC) Community Theatre in January 2014.



Kenneth R. Burns

Christy Branch and Connie Bools in *The Seamstress*

Pamela Livingstone, Hickory Community Theatre Artistic Director, stated, "The cast and I reveled in the experience of being the first to work on *The Seamstress*. Workshopping the piece with playwright Cece Dwyer was very exciting - the creative process at its finest. The cast felt the entire experience compelling and most gratifying, and our audiences loved the show. Being one of six theatres in the country to produce one of the winning plays of the first AACT NewPlayFest has been a boon to our reputation here in North Carolina, and our audiences have expressed excitement and privilege to be a part of this brand new play."

The Vanishing Point by Nedra Pezold Roberts of Atlanta, GA was produced by California Stage Company in Sarasota, CA in March-April 2014



Nedra Pezold Roberts

Richard Winters and Jeremy Minagro in *The Vanishing Point*

California Stage Company Director Ray Tatar commended his cast and crew for their determination and artistic risk-taking. "New plays are invigorating to a theatre company; they force us to work together on a play without any preconceived notions from past productions. Our group understood the honor that we were given with Nedra's play and AACT's hopes for their new festival, so we resolved to give it everything we had."

Playwright Nedra Pezold Roberts spent time with the cast before the closing and utilized the opportunity to ask each actor what in the script functioned as a doorway for them to access their character. Nedra found "They had some very helpful insights to give me, especially in organizing dialogue to cue the next actor. That may seem like a small thing to seasoned playwrights, but the places they pointed out gave me a simple but elegant education in acting." She continued, "The cast of *The Vanishing Point* and its director, Ray Tatar, breathed life into the words I crafted on paper, but AACT and California Stage made it possible for my dream to become reality. In the midst of the excitement and preparation (and, of course, the chaos of butterflies in my stomach) I met generous collaborators, kind friends, and creative professionals who made the AACT NewPlayFest experience exceed any expectations. I'm deeply grateful for the amazing opportunity they've gifted me. It's truly the thrill of a lifetime."

The AACT NewPlayFest production of *The Vanishing Point* received eight Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance (SARTA) annual Elly Award nominations, and was awarded with seven Elly Awards: Drama category - Ray Tatar for Direction, Richard Winters for Leading Male, Emily Kentta for Supporting Female, California Stage Company for Overall Production, Buzz Weitz for Set Design; Original Script category - California Stage Company for Production of Script, and Nedra Pezold Roberts for Best Script.

Jellofish by Jim Henry of Chicago, IL was produced by Phoenix Stage Company, Naugatuck, CT in April 2014.



Karla Woodworth

Jim Henry (playwright) and Ed Bassett (director, PSC co-founder) discuss the production with the audience after opening night.

Playwright Jim Henry stated, "I was nothing short of blessed to have my play, *Jellofish*, selected as a winner of AACT NewPlayFest, and produced by the wonderful artists at Phoenix Stage Company. During my visits to their theatre, I was impressed with the passion for the arts that every member of this fine theatre exudes. Opening night was an

amazing experience as I watched my play come to life on the stage under the skillful direction of Ed Bassett. Dramatic Publishing's commitment to promoting emerging writers gives me confidence that *Jellofish* is in great hands as it goes to print. In fact, we already have another production of the play scheduled. With the double benefit of production and publishing, the AACT NewPlayFest has instantly become one of the premier competitions for playwrights worldwide."

End Papers by Barry Weinberg of Bethesda, MD was produced by Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg (PA) in July 2014.



Jack E. Eilber, Kelly Scheib, Charles Smith, Elizabeth Z. Parry, Mark L. Scott in *End Papers*

Playwright Barry Weinberg states, "It is my hope that the AACT NewPlayFest will become a brand such that when playgoers see that a play is a winner of the AACT NewPlayFest they will feel confident that the play is worth seeing, and will buy tickets on the strength of that fact. The production of a

new play is now so dependent on the singular effort of an individual theatre to attract its local audience to the new work, that this kind of nationwide signal will benefit all of us: theatres, audiences and playwrights."

The Boatwright by Bo Wilson of Richmond, VA was produced at Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre in September 2014



Bo Wilson (playwright) discusses a scene from *The Boatwright* with actors David J. Cobb and Patrick A. Hendren

Bruce Tinker, Executive Director of GRCT and director of *The Boatwright*, said, "Our Theatre gained so much from this experience. From the beginning, the process AACT employed for the NewPlayFest made this a relatively simple project. The playwright, Bo Wilson, was very comfortable with our questions and put himself essentially at our disposal throughout the process. We have really enjoyed producing this play and getting to know Bo and learn more about the writing process. Grand Rapids Civic Theatre is honored to have participated in the AACT NewPlayFest and thrilled by the collaborative nature fostered by AACT and the playwright."

continued on next page



Hilarious Comedy Plays!

How To Train Your Husband

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

Three generations of the Smith family attempt to turn their men into fully trained and obedient husbands. Nothing quite goes according to plan and the result is hilarious comedy with plenty of unexpected twists and turns.

My In-laws are Outlaws!

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.



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Dramatic Publishing has published the six plays in an anthology and has performance rights available for all six plays. As of September 22, *Exit Laughing* has three additional scheduled productions, *Jellofish* has one additional scheduled production, and *The Vanishing Point* has one additional scheduled production.



AACT NewPlayFest was made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation. Each producing theatre company of AACT NewPlayFest 2014 received \$4,000 to aid in producing and marketing the new works. Linda M. Lee, AACT Past President, and her siblings were beneficiaries of the estate of Mr. Jack K. Ayre of Sunnyvale, CA and made the decision to help finance the new play productions of AACT NewPlayFest 2014. ♦

Dramatic Publishing Announces NewPlayFest Anthology

Dramatic Publishing announces the availability of *American Association of Community Theatre AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 1 (2014)*.

This anthology contains all six winning plays from AACT NewPlayFest, and will be available by the end of the year.

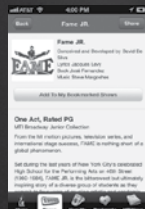
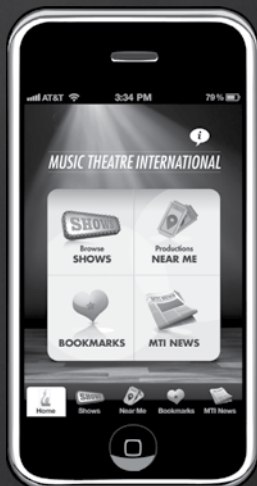
Exit Laughing by Paul Elliott, *End Papers* by Barry Weinberg, *Jellofish* by Jim Henry, *The Seamstress* by Cece Dwyer, *The Boatwright* by Bo Wilson, and *The Vanishing Point* by Nedra Pezold Roberts are all included in the anthology.

"This was truly a grass-roots movement," said Chris Sergel III, president of Dramatic. "The net result is that many thousands will continue to share the human experience through theatre. We are thrilled to partner with AACT to bring you these fine shows."

Linda Habjan, Acquisitions Editor at Dramatic Publishing, states, "We just don't provide plays to our customers—we also like to be an advocate for our playwrights to get their work out

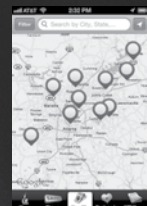


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there to potential customers, and our partnership with AACT has done a wonderful job of facilitating that. We are proud to be a part of AACT NewPlayFest.”

Dramatic Publishing is handling the performance rights, and the plays may be performed individually or in any combination. All plays are available for licensing now. The anthology will be in print before the end of the year, and at least one of the plays will be available in a separate acting edition. ♦

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Reading from the same script!

Make sure everyone in your organization understands the issue at hand and knows the position you've taken. Avoid sending mixed messages.



American Association of Community Theatre AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 1 (2014)

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Passion for Performance

by Dr. Patricia Hoy

Passion is an important part of the theatre; it is a complex emotion calling to mind a wide range of images and meanings. The world of theatre is one of constant tension and release, of many beginnings and endings. You are in an adventure of some kind every moment, whether in the excitement of the opening, in the midst of the theatrical run itself, or in the poignant feeling of closing night. Through the experiences, you learn different ways to see life and discover new connections to people and places. You are actually drawn to it all as a whole experience, and your fears, love, enthusiasm, anger, and desire become passion. Passion generates the qualities of curiosity, openness, and respect. The more you learn how to deeply engage, the greater the probability for change, forward momentum, and reaching goals. Through the artistic processes of the theatre, we have an opportunity to use our imaginations to see, hear, and feel things we could not otherwise understand in such great depth.

Rest in reason; move in passion.

~ Khalil Gibran, Artist, Poet and Writer

Over the years, I've worked with and observed a full range of theatre artists from young students to experienced professionals. For some it appears as if the risk of what is found inside passion is too difficult to face; others thrive on the strong desire they discover to know, to understand, and to grow, willing to work through the isolation and anguish involved in the learning process. Yet this tension between

the powerful desire to learn and the apprehension of truly knowing is exactly what generates creativity, what ignites the creative fire. We can help build that desire by creating strong organizations and environments with real focus and balance. The theatre is a place where there is a celebration of many voices. It can transform the lives of people when there is real dialog and recognition that everyone involved has the capacity for being a part of the creative vision. When fully engaged in experiences like this, passion simply grabs

theatre can unlock
potential and transform
entire communities

you when you least expect it. Once it's experienced, you can never go back to indifference because you have gained the ability to carry it through; you thrive on the power to steer your energy into actions that further strengthen your growth and understanding. Through this challenge of passion in artistic expression and the pioneering nature required by the ever-changing brink or highest point of tension in the creative process, we can constantly expand to successfully achieve our potential. It is the passion for theatre that gives us the energy and enthusiasm to joyfully persist and persevere.

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***Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
Great dancers are great because of their passion.***

~ Martha Graham

Real passion is not fleeting. It persists and evolves. Not only is heartfelt passion critical to success in our work and to happiness as human beings, when others sense it they will jump aboard emotionally. Passion that is genuine is very contagious. It builds companies and audiences. It's possible to be enthusiastic without having passion, but truly passionate enthusiasm sparks curiosity and creates confidence. The passionate person taps into their interior monologue; they pay attention, focus, and see the bigger picture. When they are connected and driven by the strength and strategies of organizations with an impassioned perspective, the theatre can unlock potential and transform entire communities.

***Acting should be bigger than life.
Scripts should be bigger than life.
It should all be bigger than life.***

~ Bette Davis

My own experiences as a performer, educator, and administrator helped me discover four steps that can be of assistance in achieving the goal of passion in performance, whether as individuals or in organizations:

1. Realize that the resistance you may face is actually creative tension with the power to transform your awareness and create momentum.
2. Make a decision to either take on the tension, thus generating momentum that moves you beyond it, or to literally sit in the tension and experience the emotion of being in resistance. Once you decide to move forward, you soon discover a world rich with possibility, and emotions shift from fear, anger, or depression to courage, willingness, acceptance, and enjoyment.

What drives you and your organization?

3. Explore ways the tension can be resolved, what the resulting experience might be, and ultimately choose how to move into the resolution. It's like a game. And like in any game, you may fall and scrape your knee, but you go on because you have come to trust and believe in the resolution.
4. Finally, you're moving forward with the power of passion. The more you do it, the more you love it. It's liberating and energizing. You will never be able to go back to old ways.

Committed theatre performers go through this process daily, sometimes without ever realizing it. They're driven by something bigger than themselves. That's passion.

Passionate people and organizations are inspirational and are truly capable of moving others to meaningful performance, learning, vision, and insight. What drives you and your organization? With positive and productive personal desire and an impassioned belief in the fundamental value of the theatre, all sorts of amazing things can happen. ♦

Dr. Patricia Hoy has been an active performer, conductor, educator, and administrator for more than thirty years. Most recently she served as the Vice President for Academic Affairs at The Boston Conservatory, and her current speaking and consulting services based on her concepts of Arts Awareness have begun to change the way people think, teach, lead, as well as advocate for the arts—www.artsawareness.com.



AACT Educational Conferences 2014

AACT Educational Conferences 2014 were a great success, with participants attending from across the country.

The Technical Theatre Conference: Techie Boot Camp was held August 8-10 in Grand Rapids, MI, hosted by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre. Participants experienced hands-on training in set design and scenic painting from David Len, sound from Samuel Johnson, and lighting from Keith Oberfeld. Attendees were impressed with the quality of the conference and the instructors, and were excited to return to their home theatres to implement the skills they learned by participating in the conference.



Jill Patchin

Theatre Tulsa hosted the **Artistic Directors Conference** and the **Education Directors Conference** on August 22, 23 held at the Hyatt Regency Tulsa. The two conferences were held simultaneously, with some participants from the same, or nearby theatres sharing rides and rooms.

The conferences were based on the Madison model of the Managing Director's conference – in other words, there was an agenda of topics that was covered, and the facilitator did not teach but rather encouraged everyone to share their thoughts, ideas and concerns while keeping any individual from dominating the conversation.

Tim Jebson, facilitator of the Artistic Director's conference, stated "The 2014 Artistic Director's conference was an excellent mix of Artistic Directors from around the country, running different sized community theatres in different performance spaces and buildings, yet having many of the same issues and challenges (finding volunteers, building a season, balancing the needs of the actors versus the desires of the audience). As a result, it was a rewarding and engaging two days of learning and sharing, and I believe that the participants were able to take some new ideas back home and implement them into their own theatres."

Attendees had very positive comments about attending the conference. William E. P. Davis, Managing Artistic Director

at Central Kentucky Community Theatre said, "The AACT Artistic Directors Conference made me feel like I really have support and I have a place to turn when I need a second opinion. It was great to take some time with those whose companies are just ahead, just behind, or right in step with where we are, as a growing and working community theatre." Scot P. J. MacDonald, Artistic Director of Memorial Opera



Sara Phoenix

House stated, "There was so much to learn from every individual at the conference. Not only was I able to glean new ideas for marketing, board relations, and staffing; but also I left with a renewed passion for my art and all sorts of creativity for my job. AACT you truly live up to your mission of improving communities one theatre at a time. Thank you so much!"



The Education Directors Conference, facilitated by April Cochran, also hosted a diverse group of those responsible for their theatre's education programs.

Participants also had great things to say about the experience of sharing thoughts and ideas. Julie Schroeder, Program Manager at Academy of Children's Theatre in Richland (VA), said, "This was the most informative, most engaging conference I have ever been to. It covered virtually every education topic I had questions about. It really was very well thought out!" Laura Dorsett, Director of Education at Theatre Tulsa, stated, "I left the conference with a steno

pad full of notes and now I am bursting at the seams with all sorts of new ideas for my students and youth programming. I am feeling really motivated right now." And Jeffery Kin, Artistic Director of The Players Theatre in Sarasota (FL), said, "I was incredibly energized by the conversation, the sharing and the camaraderie. It is a great feeling sitting with people that understand you, and feel your pain. Everyone shared their successes and failures and I have already started implementing some of the ideas that we discussed. Excellent conference, two thumbs up!" ♦

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Samuel French Introduces New Discounts

"The Six Shows You Wish Your Community Theatre Had Already Produced"

Samuel French, Inc. is pleased to announce a program running from January 1, 2015 through May 31, 2016. Participating AACT member theatres can save on licensing fees, scripts, and also receive additional benefits when licensing the following titles:



Musicals

- *Hands on a Hardbody* – Amanda Green, Doug Wright and Trey Anastasio
- *See Rock City and Other Destinations* – Adam Mathias, Brad Alexander
- *A Tale of Two Cities* – Jill Santoriello, Charles Dickens

Plays

- *Seminar* – Theresa Rebeck
- *The Most Deserving* – Catherine Treischmann
- *Stick Fly* – Lydia Diamond

Great incentives on Plays and Musicals you should know:

- FREE downloadable perusal script when considering one of these titles (\$7.95 value)
- 10% off Licensing fees when producing any of the above titles
- FREE stage manager script with standard shipping upon Licensing (\$16.95 value)
- FREE downloadable logo pack for advertising (\$50 value)(as available)
- Social Media exposure of your production via Samuel French

Eligibility

1. Theatres must be members and in good standing with AACT.
2. Member Theatre must present six or more performances of one of these eligible titles.

3. All productions must occur between January 1, 2015 and May 31, 2016.
4. Perusal or Stage Manager Script must be ordered through your Theatrical Specialist and NOT placed online.
5. You must indicate in the "comments" section of the Licensing Application that you are a member of AACT in order to participate in this promotion.
6. Titles subject to availability and may be withdrawn or substituted at any time.

More information is available at samuelfrench.com/discounts-and-promotions.

Samuel French, Inc. has been publishing and licensing plays for over 180 years. Samuel French takes pride in its tradition and history of supporting community theatres and its continued partnership with AACT.

Samuel French is proud to be one of the industry's leaders in social media. Join in the conversation by following them on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Instagram**, **Google+**, **YouTube** and **Pinterest**. For more information about their musicals, plays and resources, visit samuelfrench.com. ♦





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New IRS Application Form for 501(c)(3) Status

By Wm P Muchow CPA (New York)

On July 1, 2014 the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) implemented a new form for use by a small not for profit organization to make application for the 501(c)(3) federal tax exempt status. This designation by the IRS is the general one that allows donors to take a charitable contribution tax deduction for their contributions and exempts the organization from income taxes on activities related to its exempt purpose. Many states recognize the federal tax exempt status. Also 501(c)(3) designation is an eligibility criteria for numerous grant providers.

The new 1023EZ form is only 3 pages long while the standard 1023 form is 26 pages. The IRS stated in its announcement of July 1, 2014 (IR-2014-77) that it expects as many as 70% of applicants to qualify to use the new form. The instructions include 26 Yes/No questions to determine if the not for profit is eligible to use the short form application. The first three relate to current or expected financial size. Gross Receipts need to be under \$50,000 for each one of the coming three years (and for the last three years if applicant is an existing operation). Also total assets cannot exceed \$250,000. Gross Receipts for theatres include such items as ticket sales, membership and participation fees, program advertising, grants and donations, education fees, and dividends and interest income. For this test Gross Receipts are not reduced by expenses. The theatre's assets would include such items as cash, accounts receivables, inventory, sets, costumes, props, investments, land, building, and equipment. The other eligibility questions are asking about conditions where the IRS is looking for more information than the short form provides. These questions include asking if the organization is a church, school, hospital, or operates a charitable risk pool, etc. Most small theatres should not have issues with the topics in these questions.

The 1023EZ has 6 parts and must be filed electronically.

- **Part I Identification of Applicant.** Name, Address, Contact Information, Employer Identification Number, User Fee indicated as \$400, Web site, Email, and List of up to 5 Directors and Officers with their addresses.
- **Part II Organization Structure.** The questions include attesting to the organization having articles of incorporation and bylaws with the required provisions for a 501(c)(3).
- **Part III Your Specific Activities.** Eleven questions on operational items covering the basis for the organization's tax exemption and if it will engage in activities that the IRS has given higher scrutiny to in the past.
- **Part IV Foundation Classification.** The organization needs to indicate which public support test it will meet or that the organization is a private foundation. Form 990 Schedule A and its instruction provide additional information on which public support test should be indicated.
- **Part V Reinstatement After Automatic Revocation.** This part applies if the organization's tax exempt status was terminated for not filing the required annual tax return for

three years - for small organizations normally the 990 N (a short annual reporting form - name, address, president, and assertion that Gross Receipts are under \$50,000).

- **Part VI Signature**

Other than the identification information, the format of the 1023EZ questions generally provides a check the box answer or requires a code from a list in the instructions. The IRS may ask for additional information about the organization.

While the new form substantially reduces the extensive information that an applicant for the 501(c)(3) determination has to provide the IRS (and should shorten the IRS processing time), a new not for profit organization still needs to go through the organizational procedures of developing articles of incorporation, bylaws, and such other written procedures as records retention, conflict of interest, whistleblower, and compensation policy and procedure.

The 1023EZ is a relatively simple application process for the organization with under \$5,000 Gross Receipts to be documented as a 501(c)(3) organization with the IRS.

For additional information see the IRS website (IRS.gov) for the 1023EZ form and instructions. Also look at Revenue Procedure 2014-40. ♦



What are the advantages or disadvantages of doing a holiday show?

Responses on AACTList

(to sign up for AACTList, go to aact.org/aactlist)

The Christmas show at the Old Opera House is without question our largest and most successful show each year. We have patrons that attended every Christmas, regardless what we have playing, and who may not see another show all year. We have only one rule when selecting the Christmas show: it needs to be a show you can take a 7 year old to see. Not all our shows have a Christmas theme, *SHREK*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Sound of Music* have worked their way into our Christmas season and all did well. Families are looking for something to do at Christmas and seeing a live show at the Old Opera House has become a tradition for many in our community.

The advantage is simple, these shows make money and they help keep our Profit & Loss Statements in the black. They allow us to select shows for the rest of our season that are not as well known and may or may not be as successful at the box-office.

Steven Brewer, Managing/Artistic Director
Old Opera House Theatre Company and Arts Centre
Charles Town, WV
www.oldoperahouse.org

We are tackling *Christmas Carol* as our first time Christmas offering in 12 years of existence. We hope it will help us increase patronage and volunteerism. For auditions we had a record turnout, even double previous auditions and it is not even a musical. We anticipate to sell out our 6 planned performances. We have chosen the two weekends before Thanksgiving in order to avoid the plethora of conflicts at the beginning of December.

John Campbell, Director
Monroe Actors Stage Company, Waterloo, IL.
www.masctheatre.org

Our Christmas show is the first show of our season. We try to offer one with a Christmas theme - as they are the most requested. The last couple of years we have performed the first two weekends after Thanksgiving. That ends the show early enough that our cast and crew can enjoy the season.

This year we are scrambling for a performance venue so it is very beneficial that we have chosen *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. The play takes place in a church and I believe we have found a local church to host the production. Plus it has 20 children in it and we are always looking for ways to involve our local young people.

Joanne Kidd
Yuma Community Theater, Inc., Yuma, AZ
www.yumacommunitytheater.org

We have found that the closer to Christmas that the performances occur, the higher the box office. One week makes a big difference. This year will make our 15th annual production of *A Christmas Carol*, which has grown to 6 performances (including one for schools). Same set, mostly same lighting, mostly same costumes, even the same sound design for the last 9 years. We sold at 97% last year; performances happened Dec. 19-22 with two doubles. This year, the schedule is Dec. 18-21, with two doubles. As the years go by and many cast members return year-to-year, it allows us also to use some of the same young people who are now in college; they get home from college the weekend before opening and slot into their old roles.

Murray Chase, Executive/Artistic Director
Venice Theatre, Venice, FL
www.venicestage.com

We extend our Family Weekend Series show a few years ago and have it coordinated with our chambers of commerce Christmas tree lighting festivities. Our production has sold out every year during this event, the first week in Dec. Last year we presented *Madeline's Christmas*.

John Rich, Artistic Director
Regional Theatre of the Palouse, Pullman, WA
www.rtoptheatre.org

A New AACT National Award

AACT announces a new AACT National Award, the AACT Diamond Crown Organization Award.

This award will recognize organizational longevity and vitality.

Criteria include:

- Organization must have been an organizational member of AACT for at least the past 10 years.
- Organization must have been in continuous operation for at least 75 years.

- Organization must show evidence of expansion/growth in programming and/or facility over the most recent 10 years.
- Evidence of administrative strength/stability to move on to the next 10 years.

The award will be selected by nominations from members of the community theatre community.

Nominations for all AACT National Awards are due January 8, 2014. ♦

Theatrical Rights Worldwide Offers Discounts for AACT Members

Theatrical Rights Worldwide offers AACT members a 50% discount at its PerusalsNOW store and a 10% performance license discount.

Fred Stuart of Theatrical Rights Worldwide states, "AACT is the backbone of our customer base and we value the ability to be able to offer significant discounts to AACT members. When paying licensing fees, this can be a real savings for AACT members."

The discounts for AACT participating theatres are available on the TRW website using the code AACT-TRW.

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TRW's Theatre for Young Audiences catalog (TYA@TRW) features a stellar collection of fresh, vibrant titles like



Pinkalicious the Musical, *How I Became a Pirate*, *Ivy+Bean*, *Tilly the Trickster* and more. Its new Jazz Drama Program unites musical styles into a kid-friendly theatre experience.

The development of innovative production enhancement tools has always been TRW's passion. The centerpiece of its **ShowGO!** product line is the Right On Cue Services (ROCS) rehearsal accompaniment interface, Show|Ready. The state-of-the-art service is powered by ROCS and provides customers with the best rehearsal accompaniment tool on the market. **ShowGO!** also features Transposition Express, Cinevative customized video spots, the Scene Partner App and more! ♦

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AACT Welcomes You to AACTFest 2015

AACTFest 2015, the National Community Theatre Festival that celebrates creativity of community theatre across the nation, will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan June 23 – 27, 2015. Join us as we applaud community theatre companies as they strive toward excellence in theatrical production, and experience the camaraderie and education opportunities that are AACTFest.



Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

The beautifully restored **Grand Rapids Civic Theatre** (grct.org) in downtown Grand Rapids will host the festival that will present twelve award winning productions by theatres from across the country and the U.S. Armed Services overseas.

The official hotel for AACTFest 2015 is the luxurious **Amway Grand Plaza** (amwaygrand.com) located in downtown Grand Rapids a short walk from the Theatre. Enjoy our special AACTFest rate of \$129 for 1-4 in a room. Luxury Suites at an additional rate are subject to availability. Reserve online at resweb.passkey.com/go/AACT2015 or call (800) 253-3590 to reserve at the AACTFest rate.



Amway Grand Plaza Hotel

The success of AACTFest requires the dedication and commitment of many individuals. **Jill Patchin**, AACT Conference Coordinator, is working diligently in preparation of the festival. **Kay Armstrong**, AACT Vice President for Festivals and **Jim Walker**, AACT Festival Commission Chair, are excited as theatre companies across the country are preparing to present examples of excellence in community theatre. **Ron Ziegler**, AACT Field Services Director, is attending State and Regional festivals as award winning productions are selected to advance to the National festival.

David Shepherd, Executive Director of Acme Theater Productions in Maynard, MA, returns to the national festival

as AACTFest 2015 Festival Commissioner, a position he held at the 2013 festival in Carmel, IN. Dave has been very active in community theatre for over 35 years, having performed, directed, designed and produced for groups from all over New England. He continues to serve on several AACT committees.

The historic Grand Rapids Civic Theatre (GRCT) will be an exciting performance venue for all the winning productions, and they are well equipped to host the festival. **Bruce Tinker**, GRCT Executive Director, has been involved with AACT for over 20 years and is excited to have Grand Rapids Civic Theatre be the host theatre for AACTFest 2015. **Mary Jo DeNolf**, GRCT Director of Volunteers and Operations, has been involved with Grand Rapids Civic since 1993 as a volunteer and came on board as staff in July 1998. She will be the liaison between GRCT and AACT Festival Coordinator and VP of Festivals. Mary Jo experienced National AACT Festival when Grand Rapids hosted in 1997. She has previously served



as an adjudicator and looks forward to seeing and meeting everyone who will be coming to GRCT! **Jim Chervenka** will be coordinating backstage activities at AACTFest 2015. Jim recently retired from the position of GRCT Technical Director and will be the liaison between the Commissioner and will work side by side with the companies performing to ensure they have everything they need. Jim was GRCT TD for 39 years and was instrumental backstage at AACTFest 1997. **Steve Schwall**, GRCT Technical Director, is new to GRCT but not new to AACT as he worked at Kalamazoo (MI) Civic when they hosted AACTFest 2005. Steve will be a great asset to all groups with his expertise. Questions about AACTFest 2015 can be emailed directly to GRCT at aact2015@grct.org or to AACT at festivals@aact.org or info@aact.org.

The *AACTFest 2015 Handbook* presents guidelines for participating companies, adjudicators, and festival commissioners at the state, region and national levels. It is available from the AACT office or can be downloaded at aact.org/handbook.

Now is the time to register for this amazing festival. Registration discounts are currently available, and rates will increase as the festival approaches. Mark your calendar for June 23 – 27, 2015 and make your plans to attend AACTFest 2015. Register now at aact.org/15. ♦

Spotlight Award Goes to Beth Marshall

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.

Theatre Arlington (TX) had a special surprise in store for **Beth Marshall** at its Theatre Arlington Guild (TAG) volunteer appreciation brunch on Saturday, June 21st. Beth was honored with the AACT Spotlight Award! Karen Matheny, AACT Office Support Manager, presented the award.

Beth is a long time supporter of Theatre Arlington. She became a member of TAG at its inception in 1994, and has been active ever since. TAG was organized by a group of individuals who had the desire



Karen Matheny (r), AACT Office Support Manager, presented the Spotlight Award to Theatre Arlington's Beth Marshall

to assist Theatre Arlington towards its goal of excellence in community theatre.

For the past nine years, Beth has served as President of the TA Guild. "She is responsible for its ongoing organization and growth," writes Norman Ussery, Theatre Arlington's Executive Director. Under Beth's guidance and leadership, TAG now contributes \$10,000 annually to Theatre Arlington.

Beth has served on Theatre Arlington's Board of Directors, and is a loyal season subscriber and donor. She is very active in Theatre Arlington's Youth Outreach Programs. Beth volunteers in all aspects of the theatre's operation, and is often seen cleaning the

concession kitchen and gardening. Beth Marshall's loyal and never-ending dedication is certainly an inspiration to all involved with Theatre Arlington! ♦

Thanks, Tyler!

Many thanks to Tyler McDonald, who served as an intern in the AACT office this past summer. He is a musician and an arts administration student at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. Tyler was interested in learning about budgeting and about financial processes and record keeping in a nonprofit organization. Best wishes to Tyler as he completes his degree and heads out into the nonprofit world! ♦



Tyler McDonald, summer intern in the AACT office

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The Wong plays in the Secret of the Space Chupacabra Golem
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Julie Crawford

AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford (left) relaxes after dinner September 6, 2014 in downtown Huntsville, AL with (left to right) Jay Hixon and Nora Hixon (from Lyrique Music Productions) and John Hancock and Leslie Gates (both with Theatre Huntsville). Julie was in Huntsville as a special guest and featured speaker for the Lee Deal Theatre Symposium presented by the Arts Council of Huntsville and the University of Alabama - Huntsville.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Executive Vice President Murray Chase (center) checks timing between shows at the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition Festival, held in Denver, CO August 13-16, 2014. Murray attended the festival as Festival Commissioner.

AACT Education and Nominating Committee member Kathy Pingel goes over her notes following a performance at the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition Festival, held in Denver, CO August 13-16, 2014. Kathy served as an adjudicator at the festival.



Ron Ziegler



Joe Pelonzi

A variety of AACT officials attended the New Hampshire Community Theatre Festival in Concord NH September 19-21, 2014. From left to right: New Hampshire State Contact Joe Pelonzi, AACT Field Services Director Ron Ziegler, Festival Commissioner Marsha Amato-Greenspan, AACT Region I Representative Bevie Lord, AACT Education Committee Member Jerry White and AACT Festival Commission Member Pat White.



Linda Lee

AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford (left) and Past President Linda Lee (right) pose on the steps of Gettysburg (PA) Community Theatre with the theatre's Artistic Director Chad-Alan Carr July 26, 2014. Julie and Linda toured the theatre as part of their visit to Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg's performance of AACT NewPlayFest winner End Papers.

More On the Road on p. 30



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The Roles Board Members Play

by Twink Lynch

There is more to meetings than meets the eye. Not only do we have to deal with right/left brain dominance issues, we need to realize that groups like Boards and committees work on two distinct levels:

1. the level of the “task” or printed agenda, and
2. the level of undisclosed needs and motives of individual members (the “hidden agendas”).

Everyone has personal needs, some more apparent than others. These personal needs do not always cause a problem in a group, but sometimes there are needs which are in conflict with the purpose of the group and/or are in conflict with other individuals in the group. If these needs get in the way of the group purpose, they need to be dealt with, usually by the presiding officer (who may need to recess the meeting and visit with the Board Member in private before going on). Sometimes an alert member of the group can try to surface the hidden agenda — a helpful action, since once out in the open it is much easier to deal with. People referred to as “prima donnas” (male or female) are often acting out hidden agendas.

Experts in human resource development at University Associates point out that each Board Member plays a role (sometimes more than one) in each meeting. Some roles are related to the “task” or “business at hand.” Such roles include the functions of:

1. seeking information (being willing to ask “dumb questions”);
2. providing information in ways that others can understand it;
3. being willing to “stand and be counted” by offering honest opinions relative to the merits of what is being discussed;
4. clarifying and/or elaborating on the material involved in the discussion; synthesizing ideas (pulling things together); and/or
5. summarizing the discussion.

While the presiding officer is charged with running the meeting, **all members at the meeting have equal responsibility to help the task agenda along by taking on the above roles as needed and appropriate.**

Other roles serve to build the group as a well-functioning unit (as opposed to dysfunctional unit). These roles help to build trust among group members, which is the most basic ingredient to effective decision-making. Such roles include:

1. “gatekeeping,” which is helping others to make a contribution to the discussion (e.g., “I think Peggy is trying to say something”);
2. “following,” which is thoughtfully accepting the ideas

of others without needing to restate them half a dozen times; and

3. “summarizing” apparent group feeling (e.g., “this is where I think we are,” or “I sense a lot of strong feeling against this action”).

Other roles/functions which accomplish task and group maintenance objectives are:

1. “diagnosing” (determining sources of difficulties, analyzing the main blocks to progress);
2. “testing for consensus” (e.g., “can we take a straw vote?”);
3. “mediating” (trying to conciliate differences); and
4. “relieving tension” (without “horsing around” in a destructive way — see below).

Dysfunctional behavior includes:

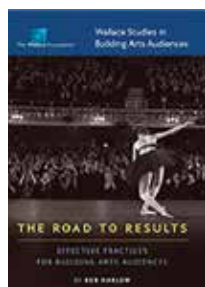
1. being aggressive (getting in somebody’s face when you disagree);
2. blocking the progress of the group by going off on a tangent;
3. “self-confessing” (using the group as a sounding Board inappropriately);
4. competing;
5. horsing around; and
6. withdrawing from the discussion by whispering to others or daydreaming.

We live in a society dominated by a win-lose philosophy (the late Vince Lombardi is reputed to have said “Winning isn’t the best thing, it’s the **only** thing!”). This win-lose climate can contaminate group process to the point that individual members of the group try to get their point of view adopted at all costs — forget the good of the community theatre! My personal favorite antidote to win-lose is to choose to believe that everyone is “partly right.” In that way, we can respect each person’s input; we can truly listen to another’s point of view when it differs from our own — and take the chance that we may then have to change our point of view somewhat. We need to develop the skill of “active listening” — it is a learnable skill and ought to be on all Board-training agendas because it is a skill most notable in its absence in human communication. ♦

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 back cover for ordering information.

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight (page 47). Originally appeared in Spotlight, May, 1995.

Listings do not imply AACT endorsement



The Road to Results: Effective Practices for Building Arts Audiences

The Wallace Foundation

Based on case studies of 10 arts organizations that undertook audience-building projects as part of the Wallace Excellence Awards initiative, this guide pinpoints nine practices that successful efforts had in common — from identifying a target group that made sense for the organization to determining what barriers needed to be removed for that target to join the audience. Filled with examples of successes and challenges from the work of museums, opera companies, a theater and other institutions, the report can serve as a guide to audience building for all arts groups. A separate infographic summarizes the nine practices on a single page.

Downloadable pdf:

wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/audience-development-for-the-arts/strategies-for-expanding-audiences/Pages/The-Road-to-Results-Effective-Practices-for-Building-Arts-Audiences.aspx

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Denton Community Theatre
Method and Madness Competition
214 W. Hickory St.
Denton, TX 76201

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Only one-act plays are eligible. Plays must have a running time of under 50 minutes.

Prizes to be announced.

\$25 submission fee

Submission deadline: December 1, 2014 (postmark)

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Mountain Playhouse International Playwriting Contest

Mountain Playhouse
7690 Somerset Pike
PO Box 205
Jennerstown, PA 15547
814-629-9201

Submitted plays must be comedies or musicals and capable of being performed by eight actors or less. Must not have had professional production.

Mountain Playhouse will stage a public reading of the winning play before the end of 2015, and the author will be awarded a cash prize of \$1,000. In addition, should the Mountain Playhouse decide to present a live production of the play, the author will receive royalties.

Submissions deadline: December 31, 2014

Details: mountainplayhouse.com/index.php/about/playwriting-contest

New Roles

Cottonwood Shores, TX - **Hill Country Community Theatre** announces the appointment of **Mike Rademaekers** to the position of Executive Director. He replaces Steve Reily who left the theatre for another position. Mike was a founder of Los Angeles' Secret Rose Theatre and managed and operated it for 14 years. While in Los Angeles, he appeared with actors such as Keira Knightly, Matthew Broderick, and Daryl Hannah, among others, and worked on a film with John Goodman. Mike holds a BA in Mass Communications from Quinnipiac University. He began his new position July 1, 2014.

Muskegon, MI - **Teri Gust** recently took the reins as the newest Managing Director for the **Muskegon Civic Theatre**, replacing Ginny Sprague, who has retired. Teri has been involved as an actress, director, producer, and set and lighting designer with the theatre for years, participating in stage productions since 2008. In this position, she will be responsible for daily operations for the theatre, including season ticket sales, sponsorships, fundraising and marketing. She started her new job July 16, 2014.

Sheridan, WY — **The WYO Theater** announces that **Gerard Gibbs** has joined the organization as Executive Director, beginning in August 2014. Prior to his appointment, Gerard worked in Cranbrook, British Columbia, where he was Managing Director for the Key City Theatre. Prior to that time, he was Director of Artistic Planning for the Akron Symphony Orchestra

and Executive Director of the Empress Theatre in Southern Alberta. Gerard has been involved in classical music not only as a manager but also as a professional oboist. He has performed in Canada with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and appeared in 2013 as a soloist with the Symphony of the Kootenays. Earlier this year, he was a soloist with the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra in the region of Alberta where he founded the Windy Mountain Chamber Music Festival in 2004. ♦



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When	Who/What	Where	Information
Nov 5-8	Florida Theatre Conference ★ State AACTFest 2015	FL Gainesville	941-488-1115 x247 flatheatre.org
Nov 7-9	South Carolina Theatre Association ★ State AACTFest 2015	SC Aiken	864-380-6934 southcarolinatheatre.com
Nov 7-8	West Virginia Theatre Conference ★ AACTFest 2015	WV Bridgeport	304-290-2582 wvtheatre.org
Nov 14-16	Community Theatre Association of Michigan Michigan Theatre Leadership Conference	MI Traverse City	231-838-0269 communitytheatre.org
Nov 21-22	Kentucky Theatre Association ★ State AACTFest 2015	KY Richmond	859-312-1041 theatreky.org
Nov 21-23	Theatre Association of New York State ★ TANYS Festival 2014	NY Auburn	315-685-8193 tanys.org

★ Indicates festival in the AACTFest 2015 Cycle

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

On the Road continued from page 26



Ron Ziegler

Festival Commissioner Dave Shepherd shares a light moment with AACT Region I Representative Bevie Lord following the Connecticut Community Theatre Festival, held in Torrington, CT September 27, 2014.

International Theatre Festival News

The 12th Biennial Liverpool International Theatre Festival was held May 14th to 18th, 2014 in Liverpool, Nova Scotia Canada. The five-day festival showcased outstanding amateur theatre from across North America and around the world. Participating AACT Theatres included the Baytown (TX) Theatre production of *God of Carnage* and Broken Arrow (OK) Community Theatre production of *The Gin Game*. *God of Carnage* received nominations for Outstanding Visual Presentation, and Amy Miller Martin was named Outstanding Actress. *The Gin Game* was nominated for Outstanding International Production, Martha Cherbini was nominated for her direction, and Karen Lee Maio was nominated for Outstanding Actress. The next Liverpool festival will be in 2016. For more information: www.litf.ca ♦

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	CT	Backyard Theatre Ensemble	Cheshire	<i>Laundry and Bourbon</i>
I	CT	Warner Stage Company	Torrington	<i>Winter Flowers</i>
I	NH	ActorSingers	Nashua	<i>Dolls and Guys</i>
I	NH	Community Players of Concord	Concord	<i>The Boxer and Mary</i>
III	OH	Troy Civic Theatre	Troy	<i>Angel Street</i>
III	OH	Williams County Community Theatre	Bryan	<i>Proof</i>
VII	CO	Evergreen Players	Evergreen	<i>Apartment 3A</i>
VII	CO	Platte Valley Players	Brighton	<i>The Nina Variations</i>

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