

spotlight

May/June 2015 \$2.50

american association of community theatre

AACTFest 2015

Grand Rapids

Civic Theatre

June 23-27

Six National Companies

AACT National Awards 2015

**What's Trending
in Senior Theatre**



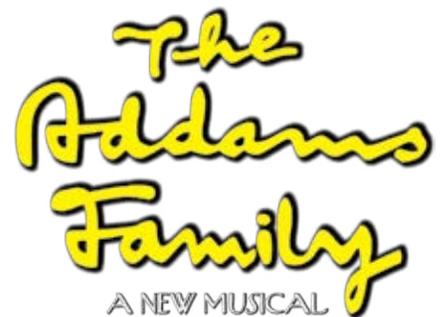
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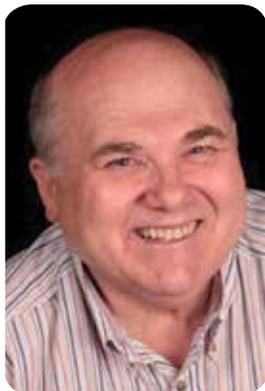


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Gary Walker
AACT President
2013-2015

Summer is coming.

That's both a fact and a fond wish as I sit in Michigan on a spring day with snow and wind in the forecast. Regardless, I choose to be an optimist and look forward to spring and ultimately summer.

As always, summer is an exciting time for AACT because our largest annual events happen then. Last year we met at the Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida for aactWorldFest to celebrate the diversity and talents of companies from all over the world.

This year AACTFest 2015 will be in my adopted home town of Grand Rapids, Michigan, to celebrate the finest theatre from across the nation.

As always, summer is an exciting time for AACT.

AACTFest is always a great event. Old friendships are rekindled and new ones formed. For seven days, community theatres from around the country (and let's not forget Region X which adds international flair from our companies on military bases throughout the world) gather to learn, to present, and to grow in their experience as avocational artists.

This year's AACTFest is even more exciting, however, for the AACT staff and board, as we continue our journey toward self-producing AACTFest. In the past, local theatres have been responsible for producing AACTFest under guidelines from AACT. This process has produced many wonderful festivals and allowed local theatres to shine as the host of the event.

Trouble is, it's a one-time event for most theatres, and in some cases, it's a financially challenging one.

Several years ago, the AACT board determined it would be best that the team that works with every AACTFest – our own staff and volunteer board – produce the event.

We began that process this year, working with staff and volunteers from our 2015 partner, Grand Rapids Civic Theatre,

along with the Grand Rapids community at large. For all their efforts, we cannot say thank you enough.

When we meet again in two years for AACTFest 2017, you will see a festival fully produced by the AACT staff and volunteer board. Plans are well underway with Rochester, Minnesota selected as the location for AACTFest 2017. Workshops and meetings will take place in the Mayo Civic Center, and performances will be in the Rochester Civic Theatre, which is in the Mayo Civic Center complex.

For now, we are busy in Grand Rapids preparing for guests and audiences, and for the twelve exciting companies performing, along with workshops and networking opportunities in theatre lobbies, restaurants and bars throughout the city.

I hope to see you all this June in Grand Rapids, Michigan!

Gary Walker

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Contacting AACT

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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

Max Walther of Kerrville, TX in the ImprovEd Shakespeare Co (Austin, TX) production of *As You Like It*. Photo by Linda M. Lee

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Utah Shakespeare Festival, Cedar City, Utah, featuring Martin Kildare and Colby Lewis. Photo: Karl Hugh.

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Upcoming AACT Meetings

AACT Board
June 23 & 27

AACT Committees and Teams
June 22-24

Grand Rapids, MI
Hosted by Grand Rapids Civic Theatre
Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Conferences

AACT Adjudication Workshop
June 23 - 27
Grand Rapids, MI
during AACTFest 2015
requires extra fee of \$135

Register for the AACT Adjudication Workshop when you register for AACTFest. Register for the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference at aact.org/conf. For more information contact the AACT office.

Artistic Directors Conferences

August 21-22 August 28-29
Charlotte, NC Tacoma, WA

For details, see the article on page 35.

AACT Community Theatre Management Conference

June 22-24
Grand Rapids, MI
just prior to AACTFest 2015.

Education Directors Conferences

August 21-22 August 28-29
Charlotte, NC Tacoma, WA

Thanks

Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator, Scott Bloom, IT consultant, and the reviewers (who read all 267 scripts!) of the AACT NewPlayFest:
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Spotlight

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Abuse & Molestation Coverage - An Unfortunate Necessity



by Ken Roberts

It is a sad fact that there are people in this world who prey upon innocent children, and indeed, look for opportunities to be around them as often as possible in the hopes of any situation to take advantage of them. However, community theatre is not truly community theatre without engaging young people in one way or another, and children should not have to be locked away to prevent them from becoming victims. Many theatres have classes, workshops, and even entirely separate productions devoted exclusively to youth. Because theatre is so dependent on volunteers to make its magic, and theatres are not always in a

unfortunate circumstances occur on theatre premises. Most parents will not be satisfied with the mere prosecution of an offender, so theatres can expect to be held accountable, even if they believe they've done everything they can to provide that safe environment. These situations necessitate the need for "Abuse & Molestation" coverage, which will pay for a theatre's legal defense, as well as any damages that are awarded to a victim for compensation.

In rare cases, children have made claims of sexual abuse just because they crave the attention, and theatres are still forced to defend themselves against those accusations, even if unfounded. The costs associated with legal defenses are often the most expensive part of any litigation, and very often those costs exceed any damages that the courts may award.

The premium for Abuse & Molestation coverage is based on the total number of students participating in various theatre activities, as well as any past claims for similar offenses. Abuse & Molestation coverage can be purchased separately, or added to existing General Liability policies by endorsement. It is usually offered at a lower limit, or "sublimit," rather than at the full limits of the General Liability. When added by endorsement, it is fairly inexpensive, and well worth the price.

What it all boils down to is, if we want to engage our children with theatre, we owe them an obligation to keep them safe. We should do the best we can to monitor every adult volunteer that offers their services, and no child should ever be left alone with an adult volunteer. If an incident should occur on theatre premises regardless of all precautions, it would be a good idea to have Abuse & Molestation coverage. If some unfortunate mishap occurs, this coverage could mean the difference between solvency and bankruptcy. ♦

Community theatre is not truly community theatre without engaging young people in one way or another, and children should not have to be locked away to prevent them from becoming victims.

position to do full background checks on every volunteer that walks through the doors, they are sometimes unwittingly subjecting their youth to, shall we say, unsavory characters. Theatres are ultimately responsible for providing a safe environment for the children that participate in their programming. While they should do everything in their power to protect these children, sometimes

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NETWORKING

More AACTFest on page 12



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June 22-24
Grand Rapids, MI
Prior to AACTFest 2015
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Vee Kennedy - Stage Coach Theatre

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AACT To Hold First Youth Summit During AACTFest 2015

AACT's first ever Youth Summit will be held in June during the national festival of AACTFest 2015 in Grand Rapids, MI. Each AACT member theatre may send one or two youth (high school or under). AACT Youth members are also welcome to attend.

AACT has been looking at ways to involve and serve youth in AACT for several years. A discounted Youth membership (\$10) was added for youth 18 and under this year. A task force charged with determining what events might be offered for youth looked at several possibilities, such as a youth festival and leadership training. Other ideas have included a section of the AACT website for youth and a youth council. Ultimately, the task force decided the question should be answered by youth, and the sooner the better. The national festival seemed a natural location as meeting facilities are already secured and youth and accompanying adults will be able to take part in AACT's flagship event, learning in workshops and enjoying the top community theatre work in the country.

Youth participating in the Summit will network, brainstorm, share ideas, and learn about youth activities in theatres around the country. They will learn about AACT and provide input to how they would like to be involved in the national theatre association. They will make friends with other youth who love theatre from around the country.

The Youth Summit will meet in the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel on Thursday and Friday mornings (June 25-26). Registration for the national Festival is required, but there is no additional fee to participate in the Youth Summit. Each theatre must provide an adult chaperone to accompany the youth in Grand Rapids.

Space will be limited in the Youth Summit, so registration will be on a space available basis. An invitation with registration instructions were emailed to AACT member theatres in late March. Registration will be first come, first served, but limited to one theatre in each state until April 20. ♦

For more information contact the AACT office.



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AACTFest 2015 National Companies



AACTFest 2015, the National Community Theatre Festival, will present twelve winning productions at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre this June. Profiles of six of the AACTFest 2015 National Companies are featured here, and the remaining six (which are being selected at regional festivals at print time) will be featured in the next issue of *Spotlight*.



Region I

The Warner Theatre/Warner Stage Company

Torrington, CT

Winter Flowers by Lily Rusek

Winter Flowers begins around ten o'clock in the morning on the well-worn back porch of the Jardinier home in Athens, Mississippi. All her life Delphie has taken care of her sister Rosie who has the mental age of a seven-year-old. Delphie is now seriously ill and will no longer be able to look after her sister. She sells the family home and plans to move them into a nursing facility. However, Rosie refuses to leave the only home she has ever known, forcing Delphie to make a new plan for their future.

The Warner Stage Company, comprised of more than 800 volunteers from all over the state, is one of the most active and comprehensive community theatre programs in Connecticut. It was founded by the late Jim Fritch, with Rick Doyle and Neil Pagano in



1987. Since that time, thousands of performers have "tread the Warner boards" and through the Stage Company have been inspired to pursue professional careers on Broadway, in regional theatre, film, and television to much success. Stage Company members work to ensure the highest possible production values, giving audiences great theatre at reasonable prices and ultimately making live theatre accessible to all. Each season, more than 35,000 patrons come out to the Warner Theatre to see Warner Stage Company productions and that number continues to grow!



Region IV

Theatre Albany

Albany, Georgia

The Lady of Larkspur Lotion by Tennessee Williams

Written by one of America's great playwrights, *The Lady of Larkspur Lotion*, set in New Orleans of the 1930s, is a powerful one-act about a fading beauty and a down-on-his-luck writer who create fantasies to cope with their dismal circumstances. They are hounded by their landlady who demands payment of overdue rent.

Among the pecan groves and cotton fields of southwest Georgia, live theatre flourishes under the banner of Theatre Albany. This award-winning organization has offered outstanding performances since its inception in 1932. Theatre Albany is the oldest and one of the most highly regarded cultural organizations in the city of Albany. After more than 30 years occupying several downtown sites,



Theatre Albany acquired the home of Captain John A. Davis in 1964 for its permanent residence. This remarkable white columned antebellum treasure adapted well to its new role and, in 1980, it earned designation on the National Register of Historic Places. Theatre Albany produces a diverse and wide-ranging bill of fare, including popular Broadway plays and musicals, classic dramas, contemporary plays, and even original works.



Region IV
Tupelo Community Theatre
 Tupelo, MS
Lone Star by James McLure

Lone Star takes place in an alley behind a small-town Texas bar. Roy, a macho type who had once been a local high-school hero, is back in town after serving in Vietnam and is trying to reestablish his position in the community. Joined by his younger brother Ray, Roy drinks beer while regaling Ray with tales of his military and amorous exploits. With the arrival of Cletis, the fatuous, newlywed son of the local hardware store owner, the underpinnings of Roy's world begin to collapse.

Tupelo Community Theatre was founded in 1969. The organization is now located in the historic Lyric Theatre on Broadway in downtown Tupelo, MS. Built in 1912 as a nearly 500-seat opera house, the Lyric was converted to a movie theatre in the 1930's and



served as a field hospital after a deadly tornado nearly leveled the town in 1936 (and is the likely origin of its resident ghost, Antoine). Legend also has it that Elvis got his first kiss in the balcony. Tupelo Community Theatre bought and restored the Lyric in the mid 1980's and now produces five shows in its mainstage season, as well as various other productions in its new "Off Broadway" black box theatre.

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Region VII

Platte Valley Players

Brighton, CO

The Nina Variations by Steven Dietz

The Nina Variations is Steven Dietz's funny and fierce homage to Chekov's *The Seagull*. Nina and Treplev - Chekov's two star-crossed lovers - meet over and over again in dozens of different variations on their famous final scene. In scene after scene, they try to say all the things that were never said, but may have been thought, in Chekhov's original. And by finally speaking their minds, they allow for the possibility that they might find to each other in the end.

The Platte Valley Players, a community theatre in Brighton, Colorado, was founded in 2003. Just 20 miles from downtown Denver, Platte Valley Players has been quietly producing theatre for



the Brighton community in the beautifully renovated Brighton Armory which was originally built in 1921 and home to the 157th Infantry of the Colorado National Guard. Platte Valley Players was pivotal in the renovation of the Armory and its creation as the city's performing arts center in 2008.



Spokane Civic Theatre

Region IX

Spokane Civic Theatre

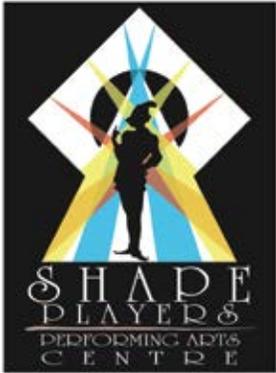
Spokane, WA

Orphans by Lyle Kessler

Orphaned brothers, Treat and Philip, are surviving in a North Philadelphia row house when Harold, a mysterious yet humorous businessman, turns their lives upside down.

Spokane Civic Theatre's mission is to foster and operate a volunteer live community theatre of high artistic merit. One of the oldest community theatres in the country, Civic strives to both produce professional-level productions and provide valuable theatre education resources to people of all ages in the surrounding communities.





Region X
SHAPE Performing Arts Centre
 Mons, Belgium
Detachments by Colleen Dodson-Baker



"The laughs rain down like freshly packed snowballs in *Detachments*, Colleen Dodson-Baker's puffy comedy about - of all things - relationships and retinal problems." *Variety*, Los Angeles. *Detachments* is a very modern look at that age-old blind spot: ourselves. In this stylized work, we are watching what seems to be the fleetly recalled memories of a woman not particularly happy with the route her life has taken. Ellen is an actor in an eight-year relationship with Garry also an actor. She says she wants more, and then, symbolically, her left retina begins to detach, a phenomenon called "the curtain effect," and she begins to lose her sight...

Detachments is intended for mature audiences.

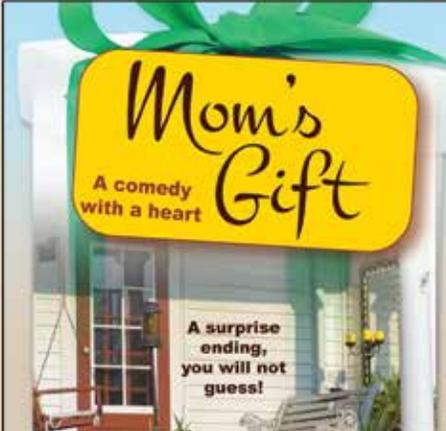
The SHAPE Performing Arts Centre and the Performing Arts School exist to provide diverse theatre, music, and dance programming of the highest quality, which stimulates, educates, and enter-

tains the SHAPE international community. SHAPE is the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe located in Mons, Belgium. The SHAPE Performing Arts Centre was founded in 1967 and the SHAPE Players was created to serve the 28 NATO members that make up the SHAPE community. The SHAPE Players offer a season of four plays and three sessions of classes annually culminating with three recital/performances. The SHAPE Performing Arts Centre operates on a budget of \$250,000 with three staff members and a minimum of 15 to 150 volunteers per production. SHAPE is a four time Region X winner; the Players performed *Wings* at the national AACTFest 2007 in Charlotte, NC, *Hold Me!* at AACTFest 2009 in Tacoma, WA, and *Hauptmann* at AACTFest 2011 in Rochester, NY.

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- NashvilleDistrict.com

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- Tulsan Times

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- Norwegian American Weekly

"Adorable!"

- Stage Hoppings

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Performance Venue Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, www.grct.org
Mary Jo DeNolf, mjdenolf@grct.org 616-222-6371

Festival Hotel The Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, amwaygrand.com
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AACTFest Myth Winning the festival is the only success.

by Murray Chase, AACT Executive Vice President

If that were true, then only one theatre in the United States is successful every two years. You can be successful at festivals in a lot of ways if:

- Your company performs well and perhaps captures some individual awards. You impress other theatres, increasing your networking opportunities. Your company members will take pride in their performance and their theatre.
- Your actors learn to perform better under pressure. They become better actors, making your show quality better at home.
- You see some really good work at the festival. Steal good ideas. Your overall production quality will improve.
- You see a good play you didn't know about before now. You can produce that play at your own theatre later and have a big success with it.

Remember, "festival" is the word for it. Enjoy it. Soak it in. Help other theatres. See all the other work. Even if you're not selected to move to the next level, you'll have grown to another level of your own. ♦

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- Bruce Pomahac, Director of Music at Rodgers and Hammerstein

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Shakespeare for Kids

by Robert Picklesimer

There is a great deal of literature out there that suggests that kids find Shakespeare more accessible than adults. They have no preconceptions, and they never play it “Shakespearian” (do that with a “proper” upper crust accent). Kids play Shakespeare naturally, and, ever since Max Reinhardt in the early 20th Century, the entire Renaissance of Shakespeare has been based upon playing his plays in a natural way. It is no mistake that English actors, generally regarded as some of the best, are weaned on Shakespeare. It is not just a nationalistic thing. Language and characterization are inherently part of Shakespeare’s plays, and some of the easiest things for young performers to learn.

For it is less teaching kids Shakespeare than it is utilizing Shakespeare to teach kids acting. Every little role has an interesting character to play: servants are mad that they have to clean the pots, guards are afraid of ghosts, fairies get to experience Titania’s descriptions of the seasons, the teens of *Romeo and Juliet* experience the same angst as our modern day teens. Julie Taymor in the recent PBS show *Shakespeare Uncovered* explained that she was reluctant to approach *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* until she hit upon the idea of using what she calls “prepubescent children” as the fairies, using them as elemental forces in the play.

Everyone seems to be afraid of “getting it right.” What is “right”?

Well, I always just called them “kids,” and we have always modeled our fairies on the Cicely Barker Flower Fairies series of books, which kids just loved. But we went beyond that with *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which we have performed over five times. Kids also played the yokels and the mechanicals that do a farcical play within a play. These kids know immediately about an overacting Bottom, a bossy Quince, a shy Moonshine, or a slow Lion. We played the Lion as a rowdy 5 year old once, and he was cute and the audience loved him. And we have always played Thisbe as the cutest qualified little girl we could find, and it has always been a hit. Play the lovers and Theseus as teens, as they



Abby Roland of Austin, TX and Max Walther of Kerrville, TX in the *ImprovEd Shakespeare Co*, Austin, TX production of *As You Like It*. Photo by Linda M. Lee

really are, along with one old guy, the father of Hermia (usually me), and the play is complete. The kids love it, and the audience loves it, too.

But it is more than just *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. *Romeo and Juliet* is about teen lovers, and teen gangs. In nearly all of the Shakespeare plays we have done, we have used smaller kids as all the servants, as guards, as supporting players. In *Hamlet* we used kids for the play within the play. And every time these “kids” were learning. To the point where they could play bigger parts the next time out, because they are not intimidated by Shakespeare. If there is a strange word, and you tell them it means such and such, or the rhythm of the language suggests that they play a scene such and such, they just do it, and the audience follows them, and you have a success. If you tell them that in Bottom’s final speech in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, when he says, “Thus die I. Thus, thus, thus,” that every “thus” is a fake and comic stab at his breast, then they will do it, and believe that Shakespeare has written it that way, as he has. They don’t know that a word is a word that most people haven’t seen before. A lot of words kids haven’t seen before. That is why they learn foreign languages so easily. They are not afraid of unknown words.

There is also a major lesson for adults working with Shakespeare. In teaching it to kids, or performing it themselves, the first and most important thing for all ages to remember is not to be afraid of him. Kids aren't afraid. They just play it. If you have seen the PBS *Shakespeare Uncovered* series, it should have struck you that every version of each play they demonstrate is vastly different from every other one. No two *King Lear* productions look alike. Kids have figured out the other major secret about Shakespeare: his plays exist in the imagination. There is no heath, or ship, or streets of Verona. And that is where kids live in the theatre: in their imaginations. We should learn from them, not the other way around. Let them pick out fairy costumes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cobweb will pick out a white costume and wings, Mustardseed will be yellow,

Kids have figured out the other major secret about Shakespeare: his plays exist in the imagination.

Peaseblossom green, but they might also surprise you. Add New Orleans style masks and it becomes a riot of color. Let Tybalt choose a mask for Capulet's Ball, and it will invariably be a devil.

And then there is the question of language, the major lesson of Shakespeare. Everyone seems to be afraid of "getting it right". What is "right"? What if you don't get the scansion "right"? Who cares? Most Shakespeare companies cut vast swathes through Shakespeare. If a word is too confusing, or a joke doesn't work, or a speech is too long, cut it. That's what

everyone else does. I have seen a third of *Othello* cut, and the peace between Montague and Capulet cut (neither of which I would do, but they had reasons for it). ♦

Robert Picklesimer has run the Creative Dramatics Workshop over the last 20 years, where he has directed over 20 Shakespeare plays, primarily utilizing "kids." He has performed roles such as King Lear, Prospero in The Tempest, Henry in Lion in Winter, and Sir Anthony Absolute in The Rivals, and was twice nominated for the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) national Irene Ryan Acting Award. He has written a number of plays and translations, the most recent of which is 1787: The Musical with Lucinda Lawrence, about Madison, Hamilton, Washington and Franklin and the writing of the U.S. Constitution.

This has just touched the surface. Some of the reasons to cut plays, how to use the rhythms in Shakespeare as an advantage, and other illuminating examples will be part of the **workshop**, "Shakespeare for Kids" at **AACTFest 2015** in June in Grand Rapids. It will be fun, and NOT intimidating. Doing Shakespeare should be fun.

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AACT Announces National Awards 2015

AACT is proud to recognize the 2015 recipients of AACT National Awards, which will be presented in June, during AACTFest 2015 in Grand Rapids, Michigan

AACT Fellow Award

The honorable designation FELLOW is bestowed for life upon those members of AACT who over a period of years have contributed significantly to the idea and ideal of community theatre.



Scott Bloom (Silver Springs, Maryland) has nearly forty years of experience in community and professional theatre, and has won awards as an actor, director, designer, and playwright, and continues to be associated with many groups in the Washington, D.C. area. He is a founding board member of the Maryland Community Theatre Festival Association, on the Board of Eastern

States Theatre Association (ESTA), and a member of AACT since shortly after attending his first AACTFest in Knoxville in 1993. He is the AACT Maryland State Contact, and has served on the board, on several committees, two-terms as Vice-President for Membership, and is currently an AACT Ambassador. By profession a Computer Systems Consultant for a government agency, he lives in Silver Spring with his wife, Jan. He has been providing free internet services for the arts for more than twenty years with his own non-profit, The Theatre Pages. Besides theatre he enjoys movies, writing, playing his guitars, and building electronic effects.



Eugene Irby (Artesia, New Mexico) holds Bachelor of Business Administration degrees from Angelo State University (General Business) and Eastern New Mexico University (Marketing/Marketing Education). He served as President of New Mexico's Artesia Community Theater for two terms, and has served as Marketing Director for Roswell Community Theatre. Eugene is a past

president of Theatre New Mexico and is currently serving as a board member. He has served as state representative to the Southwest Theatre Association and as the New Mexico State Contact for AACT. In addition, he has served the Southwest Theatre and Film Association as a board member, VP of Communication, and President. He served AACT as Region VI Representative for four years, VP of Planning and Development, and as a member of the Festival Commission. Eugene also teaches drama/theater at his local high school.



Rick Kerby (Bradenton, Florida) Prior to his move to Florida, Rick was Entertainment Director for the USO of Metropolitan New York and organizer of the Miss USO Contest. Other directorial credits include productions at professional theatres in New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maine, Virginia, New Hampshire, New York City, New Orleans, and for many prominent cruise lines. He has served

on the faculties of Wagner College on Staten Island and the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in New York City. Rick is currently Producing Artistic Director of Manatee Players, where he was named Best Director at the Florida Theatre Conference, three-time winner as Best Director at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC), and two-time winner as Best Director at the national AACTFest. He has served as an adjudicator for professional theatres for the Florida State Division of Cultural Affairs. Rick is starting his third term as President of the Florida Theatre Conference. He is past President of the Florida Association of Community Theatres and has served as Community Theatre Festival Chair for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. For AACT, Rick has served as the Florida State Contact, and Committee Chair for Membership, and currently serves as Board Member at Large, and as an Executive Committee Member.



Beverley Lord (Foxborough, Massachusetts) majored in theatre in college. During her junior year abroad in Paris, she studied acting at the Ecole de Rene Simon. Her career as a high school French teacher also included directing musicals. She served several years on the Foxborough Arts Council. Bevie is on the Committee of Public Action for the Arts in Boston. She performs with and volunteers for Bay

Colony Productions at the Orpheum in Foxborough and with the Friendly Society of Weston, known as the second oldest amateur theatre company (founded January 12, 1885) in the United States. She serves on the board of directors of the New England Theatre Conference (NETC) where she chairs the Marie Philips Service to NETC Award and adjudicates plays and musicals for the Moss Hart Award. She is the NETC, Region I

Rep on the AACT Board and has served twice as a delegate to the International Amateur Theatre Association World Congress & Festival in Monaco. Still involved in education, Bevie has chaired and continues to serve on the Foxborough School Committee.



Dave Sheppard (Maynard, Massachusetts) is Executive Director of Acme Theater Productions. He has been active in community theatre for over forty-four years, having performed, directed, designed, and produced for groups all over New England. In 1976 he helped form Bolton Backstage. He earned a BA in Theater Management from the University of Massachusetts. In 1992 Dave started Acme Theater

Productions, one of the highest award winning community theatres in New England. It has participated in eleven preliminary level festivals, winning three times. Acme has won the New England Regional Festival, advancing to perform in the National Festival twice, and has represented the USA in two international festivals. Dave has been named Best Director for Massachusetts three times and for New England three times. Dave has served on the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres (EMACT) Board and was instrumental in spearheading initiatives designed to encourage and promote new theatres in Massachusetts. He served AACT on the Board eight years, served on AACT's Awards Committee, the Festival Commission as Chairman and as a Technical Rep, as an Endowment Trustee, and on the Music Rights Task Force. Dave is dedicated to fostering and helping new and small theatres grow and succeed.



Jim Walker (Bath, South Dakota) is the Artistic/Managing Director of Aberdeen Community Theatre in South Dakota, a thirty-five year actor, director, designer, adjudicator, and theatrical consultant. A charter member of AACT, Jim has served as president of the Aberdeen Area Arts Council, South Dakota Theatre Association, and the Aberdeen Convention and Visitors Bureau. Appointed in 2009

by the governor to the South Dakota Arts Council, Jim currently serves as chair. He also serves on the South Dakotans for the Arts board. He has received numerous acting, directing, and design awards. Jim directed *Honk!* in 2007 and *How to Talk Minnesotan: The Musical* in 2009, both advancing to national festivals. *Honk!* also represented the United States in Toyama, Japan in 2008. He served AACT as AACT Region V Rep for six years, and is currently an AACT board member at-large, serving on the Audit Committee, as vice-chair of the International Committee, and as an Endowment Trustee. Jim is the 2015 Festival Commission Chair.

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Diamond Crown Organization Award

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



Grand Rapids Civic Theatre & School of Theatre Arts (Grand Rapids, Michigan) is celebrating its 89th season, making

it one of the oldest community theatres in the U.S. The Civic reaches over 120,000 people annually through main stage, youth, summer repertory, camps, traveling troupe, and special events. In 1979, the theatre moved to its present home, previously known as the Majestic Theatre - built in 1903. The professional staff increased, as did educational

and outreach programs. In 1994-1995 a capital campaign secured the adjacent Wenham building for additional office, classroom, and rehearsal space. Each year over 800 volunteers are involved in all aspects of production, and the School of Theatre Arts annually serves over 2,000 students ages four to adult. A 1999 fund drive allowed the group to improve the facilities and reach their endowment goal of \$1 million dollars. Highlighting the theatre's eighth decade of operation is a \$10 million renovation to the historic theatre, transforming the four buildings into one integrated structure with significant design improvements to both the interior and the exterior facade.

Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award

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



Theatre Tulsa (Tulsa, Oklahoma) was incorporated in 1922, and built a theatre in 1932. Theatre Tulsa has survived multiple wars, fires, and economic depressions.

Beginning in the 2000's the company struggled for reasons including: lack of administrative experience and knowledge of nonprofit governance, reduction in season subscriptions, lack of artistic leadership, and the loss of board fundraising and corporate sponsorships. In 2012 Theatre Tulsa was ready to close its doors.

New administration, governance, and a focus on knowledge and skill development has provided stability and structure, creating momentum, financial steadiness and consistent, critically acclaimed artistic productions. The organization has erased debt, increased revenue streams, developed new programs, and doubled season subscriptions. It established an endowment, is receiving twenty times the previous donations and grants, and has moved from an all volunteer organization to one full time and four part time employees. The professional board, staff, and volunteers are dedicated to helping Theatre Tulsa continue to grow and prosper.

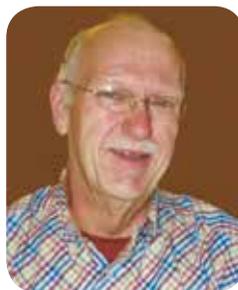
David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

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



Victoria Hanrahan (Ansbach, Germany) has worked for U.S. Army Europe Entertainment for thirty years. She is the longest serving Army Entertainment Branch Director, and epitomizes the U.S. Army Entertainment ideal and mission. Victoria's career has been a sterling example of hard work, perseverance, selfless service, devotion to soldiers and their families, belief in the mission, and a love of the art. She

has worked as a one-person operation for much of her career. Despite that challenge, Victoria's consistently innovative and inventive approach has allowed her to operate an extensive and successful theatre program while maintaining the highest level of production and program quality. Currently serving as the Entertainment Director and U.S. Army Garrison at Ansbach Terrace Playhouse, Victoria has received numerous U.S. Army entertainment citations and awards for her work. Her talents, service, belief in the program, and personal integrity have greatly served Army Entertainment, the U.S. Army, and the United States.



Lou Vander Have (Grand Rapids, Michigan) has volunteered on stage/off stage and in the boardroom for all of the theatres in Grand Rapids for over fifty years. He has been instrumental in helping the theatres create and maintain effective front of house operations and procedures as well as managing and staffing box office personnel. Lou has created show-specific props for many productions and on many occasions

has lent specialty props from his legendary Coca Cola collection. He currently serves as the preview house manager for Civic Theatre and Community Circle in Grand Rapids as well as on the Steering Committee for Grand Awards, which has raised over \$100,000 in scholarships for local students pursuing degrees in theatre. Lou is a steady force, always supporting and always working for the good of all the community theatres in the Grand Rapids area.

Distinguished Merit Award

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



Aubrey Dunne (San Diego, California) had a gift for seeing San Diego community theatres not as competitors, but as partners. In the early 1960's he created a network allowing disparate theatres to share resources, skills, and materials. His efforts demonstrated, through example, how cooperation and sharing could make all theatre groups stronger. In 1963, under Mr. Dunne's

leadership, the Associated Community Theatres (ACT) of San Diego was born. The group organized workshops and one-act festivals, creating opportunities for varied theatre groups to come together, share ideas, and learn to rely on one another. In 1965 the group had its first awards celebration, using judging criteria developed by Mr. Dunne. The member theatres voted to call the awards "The Aubreys" in honor of their founder. Mr. Dunne remained active in ACT, supporting San Diego community theatres for more than forty years. In August 2015 ACT will celebrate its 50th Aubrey Awards with a gala in Mr. Dunne's honor. Although no longer with us, Mr. Dunne's legacy of community theatre ideals, high quality, and spirit of co-operation lives on.



Oklahoma Community Theatre Association (OCTA)

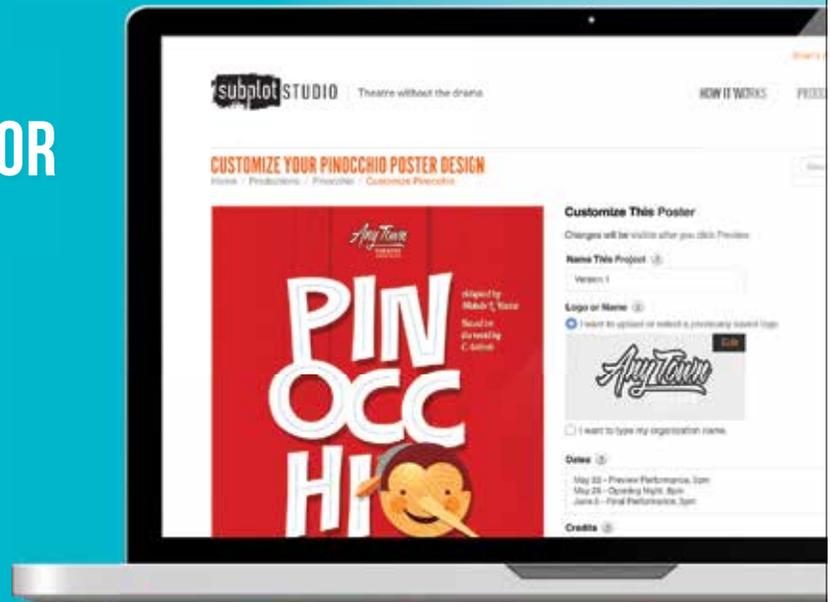
was founded in 1969 by fifteen community theatre groups. OCTA's mission

of promoting excellence in Oklahoma's community theatres is accomplished through an on-line newsletter, a library/resource center with over 2,000 theatre related materials, networking, festivals, summer conferences, and educational and performance opportunities. OCTA's officers have completed the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits "Standards of Excellence" training benefitting both OCTA and local community theatre boards. OCTAFest allows Oklahoma theatres to share their work and knowledge, and OCTA leads the nation with the most first and second place awards at regional and national festivals. Oklahoma theatres have also performed at four international festivals. OCTA efforts to provide theatre related opportunities for young people include a youth conference and assisting with the creation of theatre related curriculum available to theatres and school districts. OCTA, with a current membership of thirty-six theatres, five universities, and eighty individuals was honored with the 2014 Governor's Arts Award in recognition of its unique contributions in support of the arts.

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Special Recognition Award

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



Dr. Mary Kay Switzer (Banning, California) founded A Repertory Theatre (ART) ten years ago. The mission statement of this community theatre group requires all plays be done as fundraisers for charities and other worthwhile causes; and that mission has been followed throughout the group's history. The current charity benefiting from the theatrical efforts of ART is California's Orange County and

Inland Empire Make A Wish Foundation. A published award-winning author and Artistic Director of ART, Dr. Switzer directs and often writes the plays. ART, currently operating out of facilities provided by the Highland Springs Resort, has become a feature of the Banning community for using theatre to benefit society.



Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre (Grand Forks, North Dakota) does what other community theatres do, brings amateur theatre artists together to create live theatre for their community. However, the GGFC goes a step above. For the last four years, the GGFC has found ways to open dialogue with

community members about issues that pertain to the Greater Grand Forks area. In 2012 the theatre employed a playwright to go into the seventh and eighth grade English classes at the Grand Forks Air Force Base and engage students in writing material that became a play, *Deployed*, about their parents' deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Other projects have involved a monologue writing workshop for girls and women ages 9 - 55, and having girls ages 11 - 17 interview women over the age of 70 about their lives. The stories, snippets of history, were performed multiple times for various groups in the area. In addition to a regular season including shows specifically chosen to encourage discussions of topical issues, GGFC is also creating new theatre woven from the very fabric of their community.

Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award

Presented to individuals above the age of sixty-five who have faithfully served community theatre on a non-paid basis for over twenty-five years.



Ruth Behrend (Hartland, Wisconsin) starred in the Lake Country Players June 1959 debut production, *Sabrina Fair*, and for over fifty-four years she has continued to volunteer her time and talents. She has worn many hats during her time with Lake Country Playhouse including actress, director, treasurer, board member, box office chairperson, and marketing and event coordinator. In 2000 Ruth initiated

LCP's summer childrens program fostering the talent of area youth and nurturing a pathway for the current educational programs offered through the theatre. Ruth's on-going commitment and dedication to Lake Country Playhouse has helped to create a solid foundation for what is now a vibrant and thriving community theatre.

has worked back stage, catalogued donated items, organized props and storage, built cafe tables and a Shakespearian stage to allow the group to perform in the round, designed and helped build sets, and served several terms as president. Guy is the keeper of the keys to the Weston Town Hall where the group performs and is there, come sunshine, rain, hail, or snow, to open the hall for every rehearsal and performance. Community theatre service has become a family affair with his wife, son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter all joining in to help.



Jean Endrizzi (Duluth, Minnesota) has volunteered for the Duluth Playhouse for more than half of its 100 years. She has documented much of Duluth Playhouse's centennial history in over twenty-five years of her Back in Time newsletter articles - which she continues today. Jean has held every volunteer position at the Playhouse except director and treasurer. That

covers a lot of ground over hundreds of shows. Jean served on the statewide Minnesota Association of Community Theatre (MACT) Board for many years and is currently an Emeritus Director for MACT. Her many honors have included being named Miss Twin Ports, which recognizes outstanding community



Guy Dillaway (Weston, Massachusetts) In 1965 the Weston Friendly Society (Weston, Massachusetts) needed an actor to fill a vacated role due to an emergency. Guy Dillaway stepped into that role and has never left! Guy has actively and selflessly promoted the art of community theatre on a volunteer basis for a half century. He

contributions from Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin. Jean taught English and speech for thirty years and is renowned for her theatre parties and wonderful collection of theatre masks and books.



Richard and Elaine Albright (Aurora, Illinois) have been active members in Grove Players (Downers Grove, Illinois) for over six decades, beginning in 1966 when both auditioned for Grove Players' first musical, Pajama Game. During this journey, they have become the two most respected and beloved

company members Grove Players has ever known. Dick, an accomplished actor and vocalist has appeared on stage more than forty-five times, most recently as an ensemble member in The Dining Room. Behind the scenes he has produced, directed, been a tireless set construction warrior, and paired up with Elaine on the costume committee. Dick has served on the board for six terms and on Grove Player's Play Selection Committee, including numerous stints as chairperson. Elaine's resume certainly does not pale against that of her spouse. A superb vocalist and actor she has many stage credits, has served as assistant director, worked on set, set dressing, costumes, and properties committees. She is a fixture as house manager, has served on the Grove Payers' Board eight times, and won Grove Players' all-time Most Valuable Volunteer for her work as costume designer and builder. For a number of years Richard and Elaine provided and served lunch for Grove Players' crews working on SIS (Set Install Saturday)! Could it be they know and appreciate that the best way to reach an artist's heart is through his/her stomach?

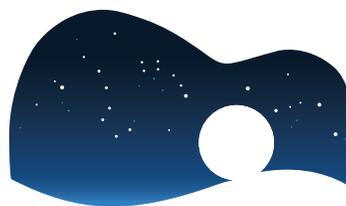


Libby Kafka (Sharon, Massachusetts) has volunteered thirty-two years at the various community theatres in southern Massachusetts; and she's not done yet! Had her hours not been cut, she would still be at every performance of every show. Libby has volunteered for Actors Collaborative, Foxboro Orpheum, and the Sharon Community Center before her current volunteer work at Mansfield Music and

Arts Society. In the past fourteen years alone, Libby volunteered her time for 1,232 performances (4,928 hours); not counting concerts. Her volunteer efforts have included concessions, handing out programs, taking tickets, making coffee, and making sure the theatre lobby and restrooms are presentable for patrons. She also provides coffee, soda, milk, and baked goods at her own expense. Libby is the ultimate of all volunteers who enjoys greeting patrons and making sure they leave with a smile and a friendly "come again." Well known in the southern Massachusetts theatre scene, Libby is known to many of the actors simply as Grand Ma. ♦



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What's Trending?

By Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director

Trends can help you understand what is happening or assist you in preparing before a trend reaches your theatre.

Senior Theatre was the subject of a Trends survey distributed in March. Responses were received from 130 theatres in 41 states. Only 22.3% responding offer programming specifically for those 55 and over. An additional 18.5% said they are thinking about it. Some theatres that do not offer programming specifically for seniors noted their makeup is mostly seniors. Lemon Bay Playhouse in Englewood, FL, stated, "Almost all of our plays are geared toward an older audience using older actors." The Drama Group in Chicago Heights, IL explained, "While we offer no specific 'Senior' programming, we make every attempt to ensure that roles throughout the season take advantage of our substantial Senior membership."

Four theatres (3%) checked that senior programming is the main focus of their theatre. Virgin Valley Theatre Group in Mesquite, NV explains its focus on seniors, "We are a retirement community with an average age for our actors over 60. Everything we do is geared toward seniors."

Senior programming has been around a long time and seems to be having a new surge of activity. Over half of senior programs (51.7%) have been in operation six or more years. 41.4% for over ten years. 34.5% have begun their programming in the last three years, with 13.8% of programs in their 4th or 5th year. Participation in most theatres' senior programs is holding steady (44.4%) or is up (40.7%). Only 14.8% of theatres reported participation to be down.

The survey asked theatres what programs they offer seniors. Most often reported (by 38% of theatres) is a traveling performance group. Seniors are the audience for most of the traveling groups with 36% of theatres mentioning senior centers, nursing homes, and retirement communities. Programs in schools were specified by 18% and seniors performing for community groups help to promote 18% of the theatres. Theater Works in Peoria, AZ brings senior performances to its theatre by hosting performances of theatre troupes from senior living facilities.

Other programs offered for seniors include classes for seniors (31% of theatres offering senior programming) and readers theatre (also 31%). Radio plays are performed by 13.8% and 10.3% have improv groups. 24% of the theatres stage other types of performances from variety shows to fully staged musicals performed by seniors. Producing original plays, playwriting, and reading plays (without an audience) were mentioned by several theatres. One theatre mentioned collaborating with the Senior Center. Seniors at Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City, MI are involved in developing oral histories and collaborations with the City's History Center.

Senior programs are valuable to community theatres. The survey asked theatres to share the value of senior programs to their theatre. Community involvement, outreach, and service, and fulfilling mission were mentioned by 9% of theatres responding to the survey. Senior programs allow seniors to perform and stay involved in other ways according to 6% of theatres. Another 3% noted the value of a place for seniors to socialize. Senior activities increase the visibility of 5% of theatres. Senior programming "Brings in volunteers to our theatre" noted Daytona (FL) Playhouse Inc., one of the 4.6% of theatres that pointed out this value. For Gettysburg (PA) Community Theatre the impact is broadened, "Brings in new actors, audience and volunteers." 2.3% of theatres found senior programming results in seniors participating in other theatre programming. Also mentioned as a value of senior programming were audience/participant development, rounding out theatre offerings, and seniors as donors. Venice (FL) Theatre shared that its senior group members "have the highest percentage of donorship of any group in our theatre." For Ojai (CA) Art Center Theatre the value brought to the theatre by senior programming is "wisdom and experience." ♦

Next up in "What's Trending" is community theatre facility trends. Check it out in the July-August issue of Spotlight.

To participate in "Trending" surveys, be sure your theatre contact's email is in the AACT database.

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.

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



Ron Ziegler

Former AACT Board Member Dennis Gilmore conducts a workshop on community theatre management at the California AACTFest, held at Long Beach Playhouse, February 14, 2015.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Board Member at Large Liz Lydic and Region VIII Representative Gil Savage facilitate a round table discussion about AACTFest participation. The event was part of the California AACTFest in Long Beach, CA February 14, 2015.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Board Member at Large and Festival Commission Chair Jim Walker participates in a group activity during a social event at the AACT Winter Meetings, February 19-22 in Charlotte, NC.



Julie Crawford

AACT Executive Director Julie Crawford poses with SETC President Jack Benjamin at the Southeastern Theatre Conference convention, held in Chattanooga, TN March 4-8, 2015



Steve Kempasny

AACT Festival Commission member Katrina Ploof (who was serving as an adjudicator) makes a point during an adjudication at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (Region IV) community theatre festival, March 4-8, 2105 in Chattanooga, TN. Adjudicating with Katrina were (left to right) Dennis Yslas and James Bond.

continued on next page

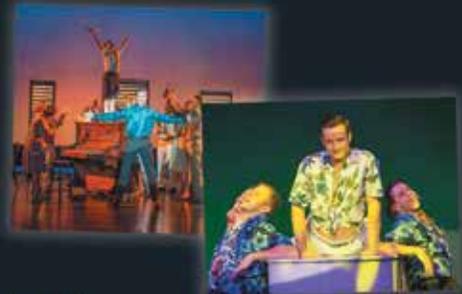
"We broke ticket sales records after the reviews came out."*

The Dallas Uptown Players' 2014 regional premiere of The Boy From Oz was described by local media as "a blockbuster", "exquisite", and the "glitziest, giddiest, most exuberant musical of the summer."

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***Jeff Rane Uptown Players**

Ron Ziegler



AACT Committee member Morrie Enders reviews his notes after a performance at the South Dakota AACTFest, held March 5-6 in Sioux Falls, SD. Morrie served as an adjudicator at the festival.

Ron Ziegler



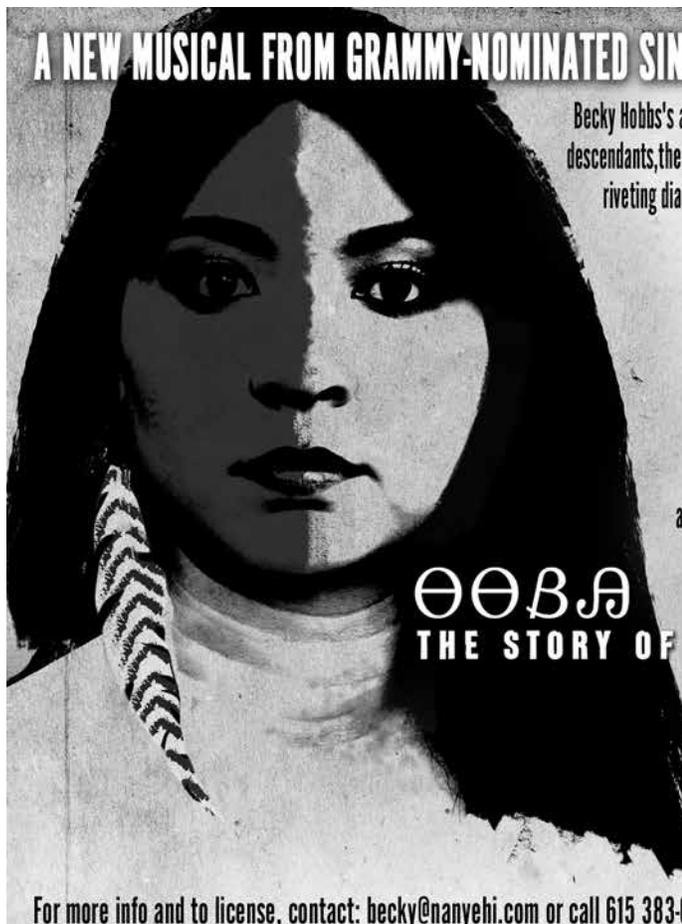
South Dakota State Contact Cheryl Wyant checks a schedule item with Sioux Empire Community Theatre Executive Director Patrick Pope. Cheryl was serving as chair of the South Dakota AACTFest, held in Sioux Falls, SD March 5-6, 2015.

AACT Vice President for Festivals Kay Armstrong and Festival Commission Chair Jim Walker share a light moment between shows at Kaleidoscope 2015 (Washington Community Theatre Festival), held in Richland, WA March 12-15, 2015. Kay was serving as an adjudicator and Jim was Commissioner for the festival.



Ron Ziegler

A NEW MUSICAL FROM GRAMMY-NOMINATED SINGER-SONGWRITER BECKY HOBBS AND NICK SWEET



Becky Hobbs's and Nick Sweet's interpretive story of Nanyehi is a world-class musical production. As one of her descendants, the story of Nancy Ward is both inspirational and deeply personal to me. The stirring compositions, riveting dialogue and modern choreography make this a must-see piece of musical theater. Cherokee Nation history enthusiasts and theater fans will be mesmerized with Becky's wonderful creation.

- Bill John Baker, Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, OK

While Nancy Ward's history is intriguing and the basis for an exciting musical and Becky Hobbs original songs tell a haunting story, the 'cry for peace' that Ward made during the Revolutionary War era is one that still resonates today.

- D. Ray Smith, The Oak Ridger, Oak Ridge, TN.

NANYEHI set several attendance records in Kingsport, TN during it's 2014 run: the single night attendance record, the combined attendance record for any Kingsport Theatre Guild production in 67 years, and a new record for the venue, The Kingsport Renaissance Arts Center & Theatre, which also hosts professional touring acts.

- Tina Radtke, Executive Director, Kingsport Theatre Guild

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VAMPIRE Monologues
A play by Jeremy Childs

I LEFT MY HEART
A Salute to the Music of Tony Bennett

Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria
and other youth theatre titles by Jack Stokes

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**Americans for the Arts
Annual Convention 2015**

Chicago, IL
June 12-14, 2015

The conference will take place at the Chicago Sheraton, with more than 40 breakouts, three keynotes, three pre-conferences, two Workshop

Intensives, a dozen ARTventure Tours, and an opening reception at the Museum of Contemporary Art!

This year's Annual Convention explores power and empowerment of the individual and the greater community. It is organized around five core themes:

Translating Impact: How do we persuade decision makers to support the arts?

Transforming Models: How do we improve arts organizations' resiliency?

Empowering Culture: How do we ensure that all communities are served by the arts?

Creating Tomorrow: How can the arts be a part of creating a better future?

Building Skills: What are the primary skills needed to succeed in the arts today?

Americans for the Arts
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
convention.artsusa.org/about

**Southeastern Theatre Conference, Inc.
Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest/Award**

Submissions (email attachment only) to:

Todd W. Ristau, Chair
SETC Playwriting Committee
tristau@hollins.edu

The Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest is dedicated to the discovery, development, and publicizing of worthy new plays and playwrights. One winning script will be selected.

Winner will receive a \$1,000 cash award during the gala banquet and an all-expense paid trip to SETC's 67th Annual Convention in Greensboro, NC, where both a critique and staged reading of the winning play will be held. The winning play will also be considered for publication in Southern Theatre magazine.

One submission per playwright only. Full length plays or related one acts; no musicals or children's plays. Plays must be unproduced (no professional productions) and unpublished. Readings and workshops are acceptable.

Winning playwright receives \$1,000 prize, plus travel expenses, and a reading at SETC Convention.

Deadline: June 1, 2015
Details: setc.org/getchell-new-play-contest

ASCAP Offers Discount for AACT Members

Those involved in theatre know so much goes into creating a solid and successful production. Not only do you want everything on stage to run smoothly and according to plan, but setting the appropriate mood in the theatre through the use of preshow music also aids in enhancing the overall experience for audience members. From the tunes played before the show to the intermission melodies, which assist in carrying the energy from one act to the next, the music is essential ... and costs money. ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) offers AACT members a discount on royalties for copyrighted music to help cut down on that cost.

ASCAP's Community Theatre license covers the theatre for the AACT membership year at all its venues. The license includes copyrighted pre-show, intermission, and post-show music played by means other than live performers. It is important to stress, the Community Theatre license does NOT cover recorded music during a play or music performed live, such as in a musical revue or string quartet performance.



The Community Theatre license year is September 1 – August 31. Theatres that sign up through the AACT office by September 1 will receive a **30% discount** on the ASCAP license fee. An AACT membership is required to receive the discounted rate. Both AACT membership and ASCAP fees must be received in the AACT office by September 10 along with a signed ASCAP license. (If AACT already has an ASCAP license on file for you, there is no need to send a new one.)

You may wonder why you need an ASCAP license if you already purchased the CD, album, or download. As artists, or people involved in the arts, we understand and respect the need for artists to be compensated for their craft. It is important to remember the only payment composers receive for a creative work is usually covers private listening – for you and a few friends – it does not cover a public presentation. Also, most of the amount paid for the CD goes to the record company and performer. Composers and songwriters rely on public performance royalties to earn a living. ASCAP makes that happen.

ASCAP is the oldest, largest, and foremost organization in the United States that licenses the right to publicly perform copyrighted musical compositions. It makes it easy to legally utilize music by providing an annual license at a reasonable flat fee and doesn't require submission of a list of songs to be played. ASCAP is also a membership organization of more than 450,000 songwriters, composers, lyricists, and music publishers. The ASCAP membership list covers a vast spectrum of genres and musicians from Irving Berlin to Garth Brooks, from Duke Ellington and the Gershwins to Madonna. With such a plethora of artists, you will surely find just the right song to set the mood, style, and time period for any production. Licensees have unlimited access to the ASCAP repertoire which spans millions of works such as "Purple Haze," "I Get A Kick Out of You," "Just the Way You Are," and "Born in the U.S.A." The complete repertoire is available on the ASCAP website (www.ascap.com).

The generous discount provided to AACT members by ASCAP is just one of the many benefits of an AACT membership. More information may be found at www.aact.org/ascap. ♦

How do you reach out to Seniors (over 55) to participate in your theatre programs?

Responses from Facebook
(facebook.com/AACT.org)

We produce teasers in local retirement communities and activity centers that are seeking entertainment that will come to them. We provide enough show that they are entertained, but also little enough that they desire more. We also offer discounts for seniors and awards and recognition for individuals that coordinate groups of people coming to watch. We are thrilled that we have such an active interest by mature community audiences.

Aaron Morrow
Beaverton Civic Theatre, Beaverton, OR
beavertoncivictheatre.org

We have our ushers recruited by the local RSVP organization, offer senior discounts on shows. We try to make sure that our retirement communities know about all participation opportunities.

Kyla Welch
Denton Community Theatre, Denton, Texas
dentoncommunitytheatre.com

Gettysburg Community Theatre just did a successful production of *Fiddler On The Roof jr* with a cast of ages 55+ and it had a cast of 25 seniors ages 55-95. We ask MTI, and they allowed us you to do their Broadway jr collection with actors ages 55+. Do shows the seniors LOVE and they will come audition. Also make it stress free by allowing them to use their scripts on stage IF they want to. Great fun. Huge sell out.

Chad-Alan Carr
Gettysburg Community Theatre, Gettysburg, PA
gettysburgcommunitytheatre.org

Our play reading committee does a good job of selecting shows that require actors of all age ranges. We actively recruit for volunteers. There are several retirement communities in the city, and a good number of their residents are season-ticket holders. We offer discounted senior rates and group rates. For example, our season tickets are a TREMENDOUS bargain, which is valuable to those on a fixed income. Senior season ticket price is \$45 and includes not only tickets to each of our five productions but also two "bonus tickets," one each for two area theaters. We take advantage of attending festivals and arts events, and partner with other arts organizations for ad swaps to get our name out to their audiences and the community. We also speak at local civic leagues and clubs.

Nancy Bloom
Little Theatre of Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach, VA
ltvb.com

Artie's Advocacy Tip



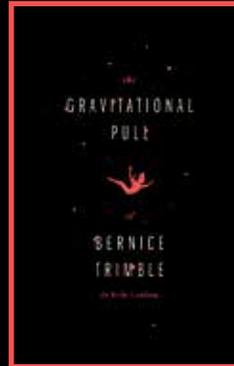
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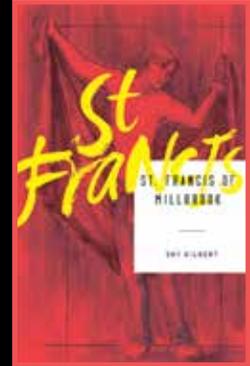
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—PAULA CITRON



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Who Gets To Do What?

by Twink Lynch

To “own” something means to have control over it. If you own your house, you can remodel it, paint it purple, or tear it down and build something else. If you own a business, you can decide where to locate, what to sell, or what services to offer.

In a 501(c)(3) community theatre, the Board is the legal “owner” of the organization, thus having control over and being entitled to make all binding decisions about it. Certain paid staff functions (such as cleaning the facility or answering phones) imply no shared ownership or control. But when executive-level staff (artistic, managing or executive director) are hired, a conflict over ownership may surface because “executive” functioning implies a certain amount of autonomy to make decisions — not only in

I believe all theatres have the right to set up any division of authority they want.

regard to daily operation, but also in regard to artistic choices and long range visioning for the theatre. Most community theatres which have developed enough to hire an executive staff person (CEO) have fairly substantial cash flows. Boards of such theatres usually adopt an annual budget and create an internal system of controls to guide staff decisions regarding financial operations. Once a CEO is hired, he/she should participate in the budgeting process, thus sharing ownership and responsibility for adhering to it, but it is absolutely the Board’s job to define the limits and to monitor staff performance in this area.

Some, but not all, Boards know that it is appropriate and desirable for the CEO to hire and manage subordinate staff within a staff structure and personnel policies approved by the Board. Sometimes there is conflict around the issues of who should be hired or fired and who does the evaluation, but good Board orientation and training should eliminate this problem. Everything I have read on the subject says unequivocally that hiring, firing, and evaluating subordinate staff are the CEO’s responsibility.

Much of the conflict I have seen in community theatre rises out of artistic ownership issues: who gets to make artistic choices regarding play selection, casting, and even blocking/rehearsing a show, not to mention long-range artistic goals and objectives for program, staffing, and facilities development.

I believe all theatres have the right to set up any division of authority they want. If a theatre does not wish to share authority with staff they have hired to do things they can’t find volunteers to do any more, that is their prerogative. If they want to hire a

director, but also want to influence and/or veto casting choices, not to mention give feedback after each rehearsal, that’s okay, too, provided the Board has been upfront with potential staff before any hiring takes place. If a theatre has a tradition that volunteers who work backstage or front of house have “earned” the right to be cast, even if they are not in the director’s best judgment right for a given role, the theatre has a right to do that, as long as the director has been told by the Board what is expected and has agreed to work under those conditions.

In order to minimize conflict, the Board must be very clear on what kind of theatre it wants — volunteer-driven, staff-driven, or partnership-driven. Then job descriptions for staff and for Board must be carefully designed because doing so forces everyone to clarify values and expectations. And an honest, fact-to-face exchange of views with potential staff is a must.

It is a terrible injustice when a director is fired because she cast the “best” people who auditioned, only to find that a member of the theatre who was not cast has the power to raise hell about it. It is equally unjust when a director agrees to very clear expectations about the importance of keeping the theatre open to as many volunteers as possible, and then turns the theatre into a de facto repertory company, using only the “best” actors.

Over time, the needs of Board Members and paid staff change, and many organizations’ needs evolve beyond initial dreams. Remember that Abraham Maslow said, “A met need is no longer a motivator.” Thus, paid artistic staff’s emerging needs for more challenging shows may become an issue if the community still wants to do and/or see only family comedies that were written in another time, with a sensibility very different from today’s “in your face” playwrights. The same thing can happen to volunteer actors, paid or volunteer designers and musicians, and many others who work with us. Only honest, respectful collaboration — with the needs of “this theatre in this community at this time” as the primary focus — will resolve these issues. Whose theatre is it? Having been both Board Member and paid executive staff, I vote for a partner-driven “ours.” ♦

For additional reading: Brian O’Connell’s *The Board Member’s Book*, New York, The Foundation Center, 1985. Available from the AACT Bookstore (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, available at aact.org

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight (page 53). Originally appeared in Spotlight November, 1995.

Announcing AACT 2015 Educational Conferences

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS CONFERENCE

Choose the right plays for your next season; learn solutions for choosing directors, recruiting actors, and solving technical problems; and examine long-range planning.

This Artistic Directors Conference will help you discover and re-envision exciting ways to produce high quality theatre as you exchange ideas and experiences with fellow producers and artistic directors.

The Artistic Directors Conference is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for the overall artistic direction of their theatre.

EDUCATION DIRECTORS CONFERENCE

Boost your theatre's education program, exchange ideas and experiences, and learn skills to better manage your programs.

This Education Directors Conference will give you skills to tackle theatre education issues, a renewed enthusiasm to build your educational programs, and provide you with a network of colleagues from all over the country.

The Education Directors Conference is for anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for their theatre's education program.

Both conferences will be held concurrently in two locations.

Charlotte, North Carolina

Holiday Inn Charlotte Center City

August 21-22, 2015

Artistic Directors Facilitator:

Rick Kerby
Producing Artistic Director
Manatee Players, Bradenton, FL

Education Directors Facilitator:

Sandy Davisson
Director of Education/
Outreach
Venice Theatre, Venice, FL

Tacoma, Washington

Hotel Murano

August 28-29, 2015

Artistic Directors Facilitator:

Keith Dixon
Artistic Director
Spokane Civic Theatre,
Spokane, WA

Education Directors Facilitator:

Chris Serface
Managing Artistic Director
Tacoma Little Theatre,
Tacoma, WA

The two conferences will be held simultaneously so participants from the same, or nearby, theatres can share rides and rooms.

The fee for each AD/ED Conference is \$235 for members registering by July 14.

For more information contact the AACT office 817-732-3177 or info@aact.org. ♦

Curtain Up! Introducing AACT's New Website

All AACT programs and services are available on one completely re-imagined, easy-to-use site.

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If you have suggestions, or if you need help with any aspect of the site, call us weekdays at 866-OurAACT (866-687-2228).

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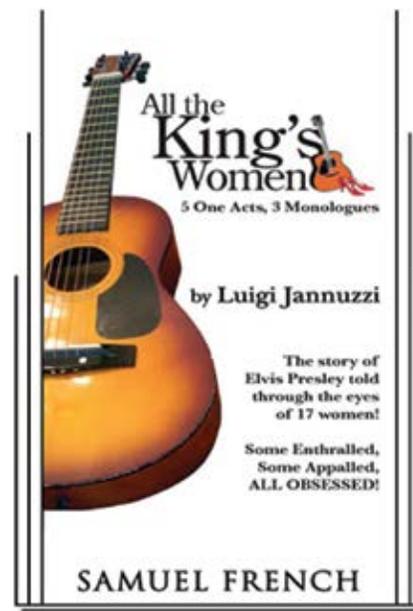
Thousand Oaks, CA - **Cabrillo Music Theatre** is proud to announce the appointment of **Maureen O'Boyle Feldman** as Director of Development. Maureen oversees fundraising and sponsorship for the theatre, and reports directly to Cabrillo's Board of Directors. Maureen comes to Cabrillo Music Theatre with over 20 years of experience in business development, fundraising, and production in both the entertainment and non-profit arenas. She is also an experienced voiceover artist, having been the voice for dozens of national commercial campaigns. Maureen holds a bachelor's degree in kinesiology, a certificate in grant writing, and a master's degree in media communications. She began her new position in March 2015.

Omaha, NE - **The Omaha Community Playhouse** has hired **Jeff Horger** as its next Associate Artistic Director, succeeding **Susan Baer Collins**, who retired in June 2014. Jeff has been an instructor-director at Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach, Florida for the past two years. Born and raised in Illinois, he holds a master of fine arts degree in acting from the University of Alabama. His duties include directing up to three shows a year and developing and expanding the Playhouse's alternative programming, plus aiding in the staging of the productions for the theatre's professional touring arm, the Nebraska Theatre Caravan. Jeff began his duties in March 2015.

Pittsburgh, PA - The Board of Directors of **Little Lake Theatre Company** announces that **Roxy MtJoy** will step into the role of Artistic Director, while **Bob Rak**, long-time Little Lake Theatre Company actor and Board member, will assume the role of Managing Director. The new management team will replace **Sunny Disney Fitchett** as Artistic Director and **Robert Fitchett** as Managing Director as they transition into their previously announced retirement on June 1, 2015. Roxy's experience includes off-Broadway and Los Angeles directing credits as well as administrative, producing, and development leadership for several New York City based arts organizations. She was a finalist for both the Drama League and Manhattan Theatre Club Directing Fellowships and earned a BA in Theatre from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia and a Master of Fine Arts in theatre from the Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. She also trained at the

American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and the Upright Citizens Brigade in Los Angeles and New York City. Prior to his appointment as Managing Director, Bob worked in leading finance and operational roles with corporations such as ANSYS, Inc. where he served as Senior Financial Analyst for more than 10 years. He's also held operational roles with several not-for-profit organizations, including The Early Learning Institute, Main Stay Life Services and the Center for Creative Play. He holds a BS degree in accounting from the University of Pittsburgh and a combined MBA/MOIS from the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Graduate Program. ♦

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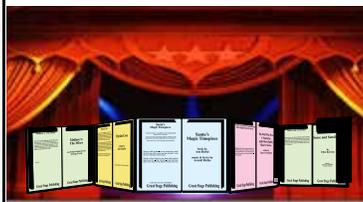


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When	Who/What	Where	Information
June 9-14	Texas Nonprofit Theatres Youth Theatre Conference	TX Bastrop	817-731-2238 www.texas theatres.org
June 22-24	AACT Community Theatre Management Conference	MI Grand Rapids	866-687-2228 www.aact.org
June 23-28	AACT ★AACTFest 2015 National Festival	MI Grand Rapids	866-687-2228 www.aact.org

★ Indicates festival in the AACTFest 2015 Cycle

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

Moving On

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival. Productions advancing to the National festival are in bold type.

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
I	CT	Warner Theatre	Torrington	Winter Flowers
II	DC	Chevy Chase Players	Washington	<i>The Actor and the Assassin</i>
II	DE	Reedy Point Players	Delaware City	<i>Find Me</i>
II	PA	Hamilton-Gibson Productions	Wellsboro	<i>Miracle on South Division Street</i>
II	PA	Community Theatre League	Williamsport	<i>The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee</i>
II	NY	Rochester Black Sheep Theatre	Rochester	Feeding the Moonfish
III	WI	Sun Prairie Civic Theatre	Sun Prairie	<i>The Coal Diamond</i>
III	WI	Baraboo Theatre Guild	Baraboo	<i>Escanaba in da Moonlight</i>
III	IN	Elkhart Civic Theatre	Bristol	The 39 Steps
III	IN	Kokomo Civic Theatre	Kokomo	Freud's Last Session
III	MI	Holland Civic Theatre	Holland	<i>Revival at Possum Kingdom Community Church</i>
III	MI	Players de Noc	Escanaba	<i>The Hairy Ape</i>
IV	GA	Theatre Albany	Albany	The Lady of Larkspur Lotion
IV	MS	Tupelo Community Theatre	Tupelo	Lone Star
V	MN	County Seat Theater Company	Cloquet	<i>Old Jake's Skirts</i>
V	MN	Fungus Amongus Players	Dassel-Cokato	<i>The Romancers</i>
V	NE	Beatrice Community Players	Beatrice	<i>Completely Hollywood (unabridged)</i>
V	SD	Aberdeen Community Theatre	Aberdeen	<i>Working</i>
V	SD	Mighty Corson Art Players	Brandon	<i>Waiting for the Parade</i>
VI	LA	City Park Players	Alexandria	<i>Coffee With God</i>
VI	LA	UpStage Theatre Company	Baton Rouge	<i>Indigo Blues - A Love Song</i>
VI	AR	Lantern Theatre/CCAA	Conway	God of Carnage
VI	NM	Los Alamos Little Theatre	Los Alamos	<i>The Pillowman</i>
VI	NM	Nat Gold Players	Las Vegas	<i>Sheltered Women</i>
VI	TX	Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center	Katy	<i>On the Road With Hank the Horse</i>
VI	TX	Playhouse 2000	Kerrville	<i>Riley's Back in Town</i>
VII	CO	Platte Valley Players	Brighton	The Nina Variations
VIII	CA	New Group West	Cardiff	<i>I Am My Own Wife</i>
IX	ID	Modern Theatre, Lake City Playhouse	Coeur d'Alene	<i>The Last Five Years</i>
IX	OR	Beaverton Civic Theatre	Beaverton	<i>The Dining Room</i>
IX	WA	Richland Players	Richland	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>
IX	WA	Spokane Civic Theatre	Spokane	Orphans
X	Belgium	SHAPE PLAYERS	Mons	Detachments

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