

spotlight

A photograph of a theater stage. In the foreground, a man with long hair, glasses, and a beanie is performing, wearing a denim jacket over a white t-shirt with a graphic, and black pants. He has his arms outstretched. In the background, two women are standing and watching. The stage is lit with purple and blue lights, and there are white curtains and stage equipment visible.

March/April 2018 \$3.00

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Carole Ries
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CHANGE IS INEVITABLE....

In the last installment of *Spotlight on Boards*, Twink Lynch titled her article, "Change Is Inevitable – Deal with it!" It struck a chord as I contemplated a decision that we recently made to discontinue Twink's column. We know it is time to make space for new material and ideas, but it is also shocking to consider the end of such an iconic part of our past. Twink wrote the column for almost 14 years, beginning in 1992 and ending in 2005. AACT has reprinted the articles and continues to sell her book *Boards in the Spotlight*. I first became acquainted with Twink's articles when I was the Executive Director at the Fort Lauderdale Children's Theatre. I know I looked forward to receiving *Spotlight* every other month and read her column religiously. Eventually, I moved to Topeka and came to work with her first-hand. It's time to thank Twink Lynch for all that she has given each of us over the years. I know her columns had an enormous impact on me. I believe that they also had an impact on so many of you who read them and used the knowledge to improve the management and governance of your own community theatres, large or small.

Rod McCullough says it best:

When I began my management career at the Lincoln Community Playhouse (LCP), I was mostly a 15-year veteran actor/board member/true believer who brought passion, willingness to work long hours, and "knowing where the bodies were buried" to my role as an administrator. Because of that, I was always alert to anyone who could provide the keys to the knowledge cabinet that would make LCP successful and allow me to keep my job for a while. So, after learning about the idea of long-range planning and finding out that an expert - Twink Lynch - was just a few hours away in Topeka, I was successful in convincing the Board to contract her to facilitate a retreat. It was a Friday

evening, Saturday full-day, event. Second weekend in January. In Nebraska. It snowed. The wind blew. Roads were closed. Twink drove her diesel Mercedes to Lincoln and her only request was that we find a warm place to park it so it would re-start. The Board president moved his car out of his garage so hers could go in. The Board showed up. Twink was in her element and led a retreat that awakened the Board to their responsibilities, and opened my eyes to what our future could be like. It was Twink 101, starting with the elements of chapter one of *Boards in the Spotlight*, which was then yet to be written and published. When we finished and shared words of parting, my spirits were buoyed with her comment that, "you and the Playhouse are going to be just fine. If these people are willing to plow through a snowstorm to do long-range planning, they're committed to the Playhouse's future." A few months later when I reported that the Board had approved a Statement of Intent that is now published in her book, she said, "Congratulations, I couldn't convince my Board to do that!" Later I was offered the opportunity to transcribe her notes into a computer document that she could edit into *Boards in the Spotlight*; I jumped at the chance. Reading and keying those thoughts was like receiving a graduate degree in community theatre. I am and will forever be grateful to Twink, a friend and fellow true believer.

I too owe Twink a debt of gratitude. I have had two significant mentors in my life; both of them were former AACT Presidents, Twink Lynch and Bea Miller. How lucky can you be?

Carole



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William T. Wallace as Tony with Ron Richards (Abe) and Pat Greiner (Edith) in the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere production of *Eternity* by Michael Cochran produced by Stage III Community Theatre in Casper, Wyoming
Photo by Clint Saunders

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 number above.



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- VIII Dennis Gilmore
Indio, CA (2020)
- IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA (2019)
- X Dane Winters
Germany (US Army) (2019)

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

**Arts Advocacy Day:
The National Arts Action Summit**
March 12-13, 2018
Washington D.C.
americansforthearts.org
AACT is a National Partner

USITT Conference & Stage Expo
March 14-17, 2018
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Visit AACT in booth #2038
usittshow.com

World Theatre Day
March 27, 2018
aact.org/world-theatre-day

**National Community Theatre
Management Conference**
June 17-19, prior to aactWorldFest 2018
Venice, FL
aact.org/ctmc

AACT Summer Meetings
June 18-23, 2018
Venice, FL
aact.org/mtgs

AACT Youth Leadership Conference
June 19-23, 2018
Venice, FL
aact.org/conf

AACT Annual Membership Meeting
Friday, June 22
Venice, FL
aact.org/mtgs

National TEAM Conference
August 17-19, 2018
Salt Lake City, UT
Hosted by the Hale Centre Theatre
aact.org/team

Corrections

To the January/February *Spotlight*:
In a membership quote Dee Dee O'Connor was misspelled.
In "AACTed Hours Recognized" Elizabeth (Betsy) Willis should have been listed under "100 hours+."

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Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director
Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Member Engagement Director
David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director
Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator
Karen Matheny, Office Support Manager

Winston Daniels, Office/Festivals Assistant
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Spotlight

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AACT Insurance Program

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



For more information,
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Two AACT NewPlayFest World Premieres

Lincoln Community Playhouse Premieres *TBD* (*To Be Determined*)

The AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *TBD (To Be Determined)* by Paul Elliott opened on January 19, 2018 at the Lincoln Community Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska. The production ran through January 28.

In *TBD (To Be Determined)*, two isolated sisters take in a troubled teenager, and their world is completely upended. Secrets are revealed, veneers stripped away, and the three must band together when evil arrives on the doorstep. *TBD (To Be Determined)* is a suspenseful play with gripping twists that will leave you breathless.

Lincoln Community Playhouse Executive Director Morrie Enders said of producing the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere, "Community theatres are usually at the end of the food chain for securing rights to plays, AACT NewPlayFest let us be at the beginning. In my 30 years as a community theatre director, I don't believe I've ever seen the amount of excitement backstage as we prepared for the opening night performance of our world premiere. Everyone wanted to launch *TBD (To Be Determined)* as a great success and emotions were high. Even our audience burst into applause when I reminded them in the curtain speech that they were the first to ever see this show in performance.



Janie (Jessica R. Dinger) comforts Amber (Evan Pitt) under the careful observation of Dottie (Laurel Crusinberry) and Ruth (Margaret Minary) in a scene from the Lincoln Community Playhouse production of TBD (To Be Determined)

It was a wonderful experience to work with our playwright, Paul Elliott. He came in for four days in December to observe rehearsals. I was able to discuss the show and potential line changes or character clarifications with him right there in the moment. By the last rehearsal he attended, we all felt so comfortable working together that he shouted out a few line changes as we worked through the play."



Playwright Paul Elliott and Dramatic Publishing's Linda Habjan at the opening of TBD (To Be Determined) in Lincoln, Nebraska

Playwright Paul Elliott is the head of the Fierce Backbone Writers' Unit in Hollywood and is a respected television and screenwriter who has written, produced, and/or directed both network and syndicated shows, as well as writing/producing/and directing live entertainment spectaculars for theme parks like Disneyland, Walt Disney World Resort, EuroDisney, AstroWorld, Boblo Island, and Sanrio Puroland in Japan. Writing for stage has always been Paul's first love and his plays, *Legacy and Perspective*; *Ledge, Ledger and the Legend*; *Mind Games*; and *The Door* are produced all around the world. *Ledge, Ledger and the Legend* was voted one of the top 25 most produced one-act plays in the last 25 years. His comedy, *Exit Laughing*, was a winning play for AACT NewPlayFest 2014, and is available from Dramatic Publishing. pauelliottwriter.com ♦



Opening night of the World Premiere of TBD (To Be Determined) by Paul Elliott at Lincoln Community Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska

Kneeling/seated (left to right): Cheri Sailors, Costume Designer; Paul Elliott, Playwright; Margaret Minary, cast/Ruth; Evan Pitt, cast/Amber; Lauren Crusinberry, cast/Dottie

Middle group (left to right): Linda M. Lee, Ayre Theatre Foundation; Kathleen Turner, Lighting Designer; Kim Osmond, Assistant Stage Manager; Nick Turner, LCP Technical Director; BJ Montague, Sound Designer; Linda Habsan, Dramatic Publishing Company; Amy Koepke, cast/Sheila Ray; Mark Feit, cast/Doc; Walter J. McDowell III, cast/Robert; Morrie Enders, LCP Executive Director; David Cockerell, AACT Marketing Director; Christine Cottam, LCP Director of Operations

Back row (left to right): Jessica R. Dinger, cast/Janie; Lauren Parker, Stage Manager; Beth Wilkins, Run Crew; Paige Herel, Makeup Special Effects/Light Board Operator

Stage III Community Theatre Premieres *Eternity*

The AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Eternity* by Michael Cochran opened on January 26, 2018 at Stage III Community Theatre in Casper, Wyoming. The production ran through February 11.

In *Eternity*, Abe bumps a client appointment because he really wants an ice cream sandwich. The problem is, Abe is the angel of death and his "appointments" are to greet the newly deceased and take them to the next stop. Things spiral out of control when Abe's repeated attempts to "bump off" his delayed appointment fail. He concocts a last-ditch plan to set everything right in a Vegas wedding chapel, where a surprise visit from the "Boss" helps Abe rediscover what the real meanings of life and death are all about.

Playwright Michael Cochran graduated from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a BA in Theatre and received his MFA in Theatre from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Cochran worked professionally in Chicago and Kansas City as a Lighting and Scenic Designer until 1983 when the

continued on next page ►



Zoe Phillips (Dawn Anderson-Coats) and Jeff Lane (Adrian J. Guillen) celebrate wedded bliss in a Vegas wedding chapel in the Stage III Community Theatre production of *Eternity*



Enjoying Eternity's opening night festivities are Playwright Michael Cochran, AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland, Dramatic Publishing's Carrie Blomquist, Stage III Stage Manager Rita Butler, and Director Clint Saunders

AACT NewPlayFest continued from page 9

Market House Community Theatre (MHT) in Paducah, Kentucky hired him. Since then, he has directed and designed hundreds of productions with MHT and has served as MHT's Executive and Artistic Director from 1996 to the present. He has written several short plays and historical pieces produced by MHT, but this is his first full-length play to be produced nationally and published.

Michael stated, "Writing the script and having it produced in the NewPlayFest is an incredible experience. It is like being a parent and sending your child out into the world and hoping that the theatre who produces it will treat it well and that it will thrive and succeed and go on to future success! I wrote the script with community theatres in mind and it was invaluable for me to see what a small rural community theatre would do with it. I was very pleased with Stage III Community Theatre and all the wonderful people there who gave it their all to



Opening night of the World Premiere of Eternity by Michael Cochran at Stage III Community Theatre in Casper, Wyoming

Front row, seated on floor (left to right): William T. Wallace, cast/Tony; Clint Saunders, Director

Second row, seated (left to right): Janet Salters, Ayre Theatre Foundation; Quiana Clark-Roland, AACT Executive Director; Ron Richard, cast/Abe; Pat Greiner, cast/Edith; Dawn Anderson Coates, cast/Zoe Phillips; Adrian J. Guillen, cast/Jeff Lane; Michael Cochran, Playwright; Carrie Blomquist, Dramatic Publishing Company; Dob Wallace, cast/Abe understudy

Third row, (left to right): John Ordway, Assistant Director; Linda M. Lee, Ayre Theatre Foundation; Rita Butler, Stage Manager; Fay Hall, crew; Rob Tate, cast/Elvis; Heather Rankin, cast/Dinky; Jason Magnuson, cast/Freddy; Elizabeth Andress, cast/Priscilla; Christine Kiefer, crew; Tanya Baures, crew; Fathom Swanson, costumes; Teresa Petrosky Wallace, cast/Edith understudy

Back row, (left to right): Tanis Lovercheck-Saunders, crew; Kiaya Johnson, crew; Sami Saunders, crew; Kris Kontour, set design; Tyler Ballard, crew; Amber Ordway, crew; Ben Sorby, crew

produce the show. I can't thank AACT, Dramatic Publishing, and the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation enough for the opportunity they gave me with the world premiere of *Eternity*!"

Eternity Director Clint Saunders said, "I would like to thank the AACT NewPlayFest for providing such a wonderful opportunity to community theatres across the nation. This is not only a great opportunity for writers, but also for the community theatres, directors, casts, and crews who often volunteer to put on shows for their communities.

Being one of six theatres from across the nation selected to produce a world premiere provided a great opportunity for everyone involved. Most of us in our small community never have the opportunity to produce something with national recognition and a national audience. The size and scope of the project brought a great deal of media attention. TV stations, radio, and newspapers all covered the production. Many people came to our theatre for the world premiere that have never seen one of our shows. We also attracted new sponsors because of this show.

We want to thank the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation for their generosity in providing a much-needed grant, which helped our theatre produce this world premiere.

I have been beyond thrilled and humbled to direct this play. The entire experience, from getting selected as one of the six Producing Theatres to the opening night gala has been nothing but amazing. Showcasing our theatre and the many talented people from our theatre community was a truly magical experience that I will never forget." ♦



The 2018 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of *Finishing School* by Elaine Limer at Elkhart Civic Theatre in Bristol, Indiana September 8 – 17, 2017, and continued with the world premiere productions of *TBD (To be Determined)* by Paul Elliott at Lincoln Community Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska January 19 – 28, 2018, and *Eternity* by Michael Cochran at Stage III Community Theatre in Casper, Wyoming January 26 – February 11, 2018.

AACT NewPlayFest 2018 Upcoming World Premieres

Mynx and Savage by Rebecca Gorman O'Neill
The Vortex Theatre, Albuquerque, New Mexico, AACT Region VI
vortexabq.org
April 27 – May 13, 2018

Treehouse by Joe Musso
Cottage Theatre, Cottage Grove, Oregon, AACT Region IX
cottage theatre.org
August 10 – 26, 2018

Sweet by Denise Hinson
County Seat Theatre Company, Cloquet, Minnesota, AACT Region V
countysseattheatre.com
September 28 – October 7, 2018

continued on next page ►

"A SLICE OF HEAVEN!" –*Newsday*

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Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest winning plays in anthologies and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. American Association of Community Theatre AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 1 from the 2014 cycle with plays by Cece Dwyer, Paul Elliott, Jim Henry, Nedra Roberts, Barry Weinberg, and Bo Wilson; and Volume 2 from the 2016 cycle with plays



by William Baer, A.J. DeLauder, Jeanne Drennan, Thomas Hischak, Karen L. Lewis, Malcolm MacDonald, and Nedra Pezold Roberts are available from Dramatic Publishing Company. *Exit Laughing* by Paul Elliott and *Jellofish* by Jim Henry from the 2014 NewPlayFest cycle and *Wash, Dry, Fold* by Nedra Pezold Roberts from the 2016 NewPlayFest cycle are also available in acting editions from Dramatic Publishing Company. Visit aact.org/dpc for direct links to Dramatic Publishing anthologies and plays and to learn more about discounts and special offers for AACT members.

AACT NewPlayFest 2018 is made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.



Linda M. Lee of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation presents a check to Morrie Enders, Lincoln Community Playhouse Executive Director on January 19, 2018 at opening night of TBD (To Be Determined)



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Details for script submission are
available at aact.org/newplayfest.
Non-musical, full-length plays only.
Scripts must be unpublished and must
not have received a full production. (If
selected, the AACT theatre's production
is to be a world premiere.) Dramatic
Publishing Company will publish winning
plays in an anthology. Only one script
per playwright accepted. No fees
required for AACT member playwrights,
\$10 script processing fee for non-
members. For more information and
script formatting guidelines, visit
aact.org/newplayfest.



**Be a Reviewer for
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Join this exciting AACT festival by being a
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Venice Theatre, Venice Florida

aact.org/worldfest



Have you registered yet for aactWorldFest? The event will be here before you know it! Don't miss your chance to join with theatre lovers from around the globe June 18-23, 2018 in lovely Venice, Florida. In addition to seeing exceptional theatre from around the globe and meeting new friends, you'll have the opportunity to exchange ideas through workshops, seminars, and networking. You can be sure to expect offerings in acting, singing and dance, along with more unique topics yet to be announced. Past workshops have included Commedia dell'Arte, Chinese Opera, Russian Clowning, Puppet Making, Sound Design, Volunteer Management, Senior Theatre, Meet the Publishers, Trapeze, and more.



The Golden Cockerel from The Le Ngoc Theater Troupe, Vietnam

Of the trapeze workshop at the last aactWorldFest, one participant said, "...the thought of losing control

and falling was ever strong and present. Yet I still jumped, as did the others taking the workshop with me, and it was the ideal blend of terrifying and liberating. It's definitely something to experience at the festival, if not only to learn whether or not you're ready to be a Player in Pippin, but also to have an opportunity to jump despite the nerves and fear."

Workshops and seminars will range from beginner to advanced and are open to all festival attendees. Whether it is just for fun or to build upon your current skill set, there will be something for everyone.

So, make that jump! Explore everything aactWorldFest 2018 has to offer at aact.org/worldfest ♦



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Special hotel rates are also available.
Please check aact.org/worldfest for details.

AACT 2018 Youth Leadership Conference

Building the Next Generation of Leaders through the Power of Theatre!

In conjunction with aactWorldFest, the 2018 AACT Youth Leadership Conference takes place in Venice, Florida June 19-23, 2018. Focus is on cultivating youth who aspire to be leaders within their communities and teaching leadership skills through the power of theatre. Participants will be exposed to a line-up of exciting theatre performances from around the world and engage in creative lessons and activities that foster critical thinking, leadership skills, and relationship-building with other youth from around the country. The conference is open to ages 14-18. The goal of this exciting conference is to instill confidence, knowledge, and team-building skills in an exhilarating and stimulating experience.

At the 2018 AACT Youth Leadership Conference:

- Meet someone new, learn something new
- See amazing theatre from around the world!
- Share your theatre experiences with other Youth Leaders from around the country
- Chat about each day's performances, create your own list of favorites, and see how they line up
- Team up and participate in a special AACT Scavenger Hunt, then present your team's findings at one of the workshops
- Learn from a panel of experienced AACT theatre professionals
- Brainstorm! Give us your perspective. We want to know how you experience AACT as a Youth Leader and what you envision for future AACT Youth Leadership Conferences
- Plus more...

It is going to be a great Conference! Come join us!

Registration Fee - \$35

The AACTFest 2018 Youth Leadership Conference is an add-on event of aactWorldfest. For more information and a link to register, go to aact.org/youth ♦



AACT Youth meet with Major Attaway, the current Genie in the hit Broadway Musical Disney's Aladdin

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Community Theatre Management Conference 2018

June 17 - 19, 2018, prior to aactWorldFest 2018

Register NOW for the 2018 Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC). Modeled after the renowned National Community Theatre Directors Conference (often called the "Madison Conference"), this conference is for anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre.

Learning is through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, roundtable discussions catered to the participant's unique challenges and experiences within their theatre and community.

Topics discussed but are not limited to:

Sales and Marketing

Other Sources of Earned Income

Fundraising and Development

Event Planning

Volunteers

Board

Season and Play Selections (Winners and Losers)

Classes, Educational, and Outreach Programming

Box Office Operations

Participants prioritize and suggest topics through a pre-conference questionnaire. The final list of topics will be determined by the participants.

The Community Theatre Management Conference will be held Sunday, June 17 – Tuesday, June 19 as a pre-conference prior to aactWorldFest 2018 at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida. And because the CTMC will be held immediately preceding aactWorldFest in Venice, you can attend two events in one trip! CTMC attendees also receive a \$50 discount on their aactWorldFest registration.



Ron Ziegler

The Conference will be facilitated by Educator and Director Ron Ziegler.

"The best thing theatre managers can take away from CTMC—besides the immense wealth of shared information—is the realization that no one is alone in the field. There is a large group of experts – the other community theatre managers – who share the same problems, and can serve as resources not only during the conference, but long after it closes." See Ron's bio at aact.org/ctmc

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2018

1:00 pm Registration and begin Roundtable Discussions
5:30 pm Dinner Break
7 pm - 10 pm Roundtable Discussions
10:00 pm Sessions end for the day

MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2018

8:30 am Roundtable Discussions
11:30 am Lunch Interest Groups (Dutch Treat)
1:30 pm Roundtable Discussions
5:45 pm Adjourn for aactWorldFest Welcome Reception

TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2018

8:30 am Roundtable Discussions
11:30 am WRAP UP!

The Conference will send you home with ideas that will pay for your trip, a renewed enthusiasm for your theatre management role, and a nationwide network of colleagues!

REGISTRATION at aact.org/ctmc

AACT Member

by June 1 - \$260

after June 1 - \$290

Non-member

by June 1 - \$335

after June 1 - \$365

AACTEd Hours: AACT will provide you with documentation of your participation in quality educational activities through AACT. Full participation in CTMC earns 20 AACTEd Hours.

HOTEL and TRAVEL - CTMC rates and hotels are the same as aactworldfest - venicestage.com/international/lodging/ ♦

AACTFest 2019 Handbook Summary of Changes

The Handbook for the 2019 AACTFest cycle was approved by the AACT Executive Committee, and has now been published. With input from festival chairs and Commissioners, several changes have been made from the 2017 version. Following is a summary:

The Basics

No changes.

Technical Specifications

No changes.

Adjudication Guide

1. AACT Vice President for Festivals must approve all adjudicators used at any level of the AACTFest cycle. Once prospective adjudicators have been selected, they are submitted to the Vice President for Festivals for approval.
2. Following performances, each adjudicator will have at least five (5) minutes to respond, based on the AACT Adjudication Guidelines. (The festival Chair may set a longer response time.)
3. Adjudicators should allow time in their schedules, following the awards presentation, to meet one-on-one with the directors of advancing companies to provide additional feedback.

Festival Chair Guide

1. It is strongly recommended that the festival schedule include time, following the awards presentation, for adjudicators to meet one-on-one with the directors of advancing companies.

Several minor wording changes have also been made for clarification purposes, but do not affect the rules as written. A pdf version of the *AACTFest 2019 Handbook* is online at aact.org/handbook ♦

Plan Now for AACTFest 2019 National Festival!

June 18 – 22, 2019
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
aact.org/19

Welcome to the Party!

AACTFest 19 will kick-off on June 18, 2019 with a “historic” Welcome Party, sponsored by Disney Theatrical Productions. All festival attendees are invited to attend this memorable event held at the Gettysburg Lincoln Railroad. A staple of the Gettysburg Battlefield Historic District, the Railroad station was built in 1859 and is most noted as President Abraham Lincoln’s point of arrival and departure for delivering the Gettysburg Address.

Thanks to additional support from our Corporate Partners, plans for the Welcome Party, as well as other AACTFest 19 special events and enhanced programming, are well underway! AACT greatly appreciates our Corporate Partners for their support and looks forward to further exciting developments in AACTFest 19 programming and events. (A listing of AACT Corporate Partners can be found on page 6.)

Disney Theatrical Productions, an AACT Platinum Corporate Partner, licenses musical titles for school and community theatre productions through AACT Diamond Corporate Partner, Music Theatre International. Available titles include *Newsies*, *Aladdin JR.*, based on the hit Broadway musical, and *The Lion King Experience*, a unique holistic arts education program offering condensed, age-appropriate, JR. and KIDS adaptations of *The Lion King* for accredited elementary and middle schools.

AACTFest 2019 National Festival in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania will be the culmination of a two-year cycle of festivals across the country. The festival will include 12 community theatre productions, theatre management and youth leadership conferences, a youth festival, educational workshops, top vendor displays, design and monologue competitions, social events, sightseeing, and networking opportunities, all ending with a festival awards presentation.



Destination Gettysburg

The Gettysburg Lincoln Railroad Station was built in 1859, four years before the war came north. This train station stands today as a reminder that Gettysburg was well-connected and a bustling carriage-making town prior to 1863 when the 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, stepped onto the platform of the train station the day before he delivered the Gettysburg Address in a cemetery across town.

The AACT National Companies will present productions in Gettysburg College’s 800-seat Majestic Theater right behind the Gettysburg Hotel on historic Lincoln Square.

The Majestic Theater opened on November 14, 1925, welcoming audiences to the largest vaudeville and silent movie theatre in south-central Pennsylvania. Built by Henry Scharf as an annex to the historic Gettysburg Hotel, the theatre proudly served as the cultural crossroads of commerce, college, and community. In November 2005, the Majestic was beautifully restored to its original grandeur.

Join AACTFest 2019 at the Majestic, “the grandest small-town theater in America!” Visit destinationgettysburg.com to learn more about everything Gettysburg has to offer. ♦

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TEAM Conference — Teeming with Opportunities!

Geoff Leonard-Robinson
Member Engagement Director

While August may seem like a lifetime away—or at least a season, it's not too early to start thinking about how you and your theatre can benefit from attending the third annual TEAM Conference. What grew out of a consolidation of multiple educational opportunities held at various times, the TEAM Conference provides theatres the possibilities of sharing rides, sharing rooms, and sharing an exciting collaborative educational experience with multiple members of their staff and colleagues from around the country.

beneficial to them. Facilitators then review the survey results allowing them to personalize the workshop sessions for those in attendance.

AACT is pleased to announce that this year's TEAM Conference facilitators will be as follows: Technical Theatre Skills - Kacey Udy and Rob Kinmont (Salt Lake City, Utah), Educational Programming Directors - Jennifer Hamilton (Toledo, Oregon), Artistic Direction Vision - Morrie Enders (Lincoln, Nebraska), and Marketing/Development Skills - Kristi Quinn (Dakota City, Nebraska). The résumés and a brief subject matter philosophy from each of the facilitators will be shared in *Spotlight*. This issue presents Kristi Quinn and Morrie Enders (see next page). The May/June issue will present Kacey Udy, Rob Kinmont, and Jennifer Hamilton.

The TEAM Conference will be hosted by the Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 17-19. The conference hotel will be the Hilton Garden Inn, within walking distance to the Hale Centre, and AACT has negotiated a special rate for attendees of \$119 (for double occupancy; additional guests just \$7/day) and includes breakfast. The deadline to make reservations and ensure the conference rate is July 26. Hotel information and reservation link at aact.org/team.

In 2017, Memorial Opera House in Valparaiso, Indiana sent SIX of its core staff to attend the TEAM Conference. That allowed them to take advantage of all the offered tracks, collaborate with theatre professionals from around the country, and then de-brief and compare notes with one another as to all the ideas they wanted to take back to benefit their theatre. (See "AACT 2017 TEAM Conference, Valuable Information and Excellent Motivation!" in the November/December 2017 issue of *Spotlight* at aact.org/spotlight)

To make it even more of a team experience, AACT has modified the registration fee structure to make it more economical for member theatres to multiply the benefit of the conference by multiplying the number of staff members registered for the event. As you can see in the chart that follows, this additional benefit of membership allows member theatres sending three or more attendees to qualify for a group discount—saving \$125 per person!



David Cockerell

Participants share experiences and discover solutions to similar problems during a lively roundtable discussion at TEAM 2017

The Conference is composed of four learning tracks: Technical Theatre Skills, Educational Programming Directors, Artistic Direction Vision, and Marketing/Development Skills. Each attendee registers for a single training track taking place over the three days of the Conference (Friday evening through Sunday morning). Prior to attending, registrants complete a survey indicating the topics and focuses that would be most



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TYPE	STATUS	EARLY BIRD (by June 29)	STANDARD
Group	Member	\$225	\$250
Individual	Member	\$250	\$300
Individual	Non-Member	\$325	\$350

Of course, if your theatre can only send one or two members—or you're attending on your own—you can still save \$100 off the standard registration fee by being an AACT member and taking advantage of the Early Bird discount. Be sure and register prior to June 29 to take advantage of the Early Bird discount.

AACTEd Hours - Participants will earn 17 AACTEd Hours for participation in all sessions of their conference track (pro-rated hours will be awarded to those who are not able to attend all sessions).

For more information on the 2018 TEAM Conference, go to aact.org/team. ♦

Kristi Quinn

Marketing/Development Skills Facilitator

Biography

Kristi has an extensive background in marketing, development, and fundraising. She has previously served in many capacities throughout the Sioux City, Iowa area, including: Development Director of the Art Center, Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director of the Sioux City Community Theatre, as well as Community and Economic Development Director for SIMPCO, the urban planning department. She currently multi-tasks as Executive Director for Susan G. Komen Siouxland, Theatre and Speech Director for Sergeant Bluff-Luton High School, and Artistic Director of Warrior Theatre.

She attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Morningside College in Iowa.

Kristi is also a past Vice-President of Festivals for AACT, and is currently a member of the Festival Commission. A popular festival adjudicator, Kristi served as one of the national adjudicators for AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota.



Kristi Quinn

Philosophy/Approach to Marketing and Development

Kristi believes that Marketing and Development are part of an organization's comprehensive and strategic planning. In fact, they serve to build a solid foundation in the development of mission and vision statements, which are an important part of strategic planning.

She also advocates for working and fluid planning documents that are utilized, reviewed, and revised on a regular basis. In addition, Kristi believes that Marketing and Development should not, and cannot, be strictly staff driven, but must be a shared responsibility with the Board of Directors and volunteers.

Kristi stresses that as with all planning, organizations must find Marketing and Development strategies that work best for their specific entity and the community it serves.

continued on next page ►

Hilarious Comedy Plays!

The Wedding of the Century

7 Female, 2 Male

Dorothy is a 99-year-old nun who has found the perfect item for her bucket list. She's going to find a man and get married on her 100th birthday next week! Enlisting the help of her madcap friends at the rest home, and a teenage girl who has come to interview her for a class project, Dorothy is determined to complete her bucket list and have the wedding of the century! A hilarious comedy where the surprises and laughs just keep on coming, and an ending guaranteed to melt even the hardest heart.

The Supermarket Sisterhood

7 Female, 2 Male

As if the daily skirmishes with farcical customers and the dim-witted men in their lives wasn't enough, the women who operate the checkouts at the Discount Co. supermarket are now facing a new boss and the prospect of losing their jobs to automated checkout aisles. It's time for the women to band together and take their fight to the top. Hilarious, madcap humor to tickle your funny bone and stir your heart.

The Old People Are Revolting

5 Female, 2 Male

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.

My Inlaws are Outlaws

4 - 6 Female, 2 - 4 male

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? Outrageous laugh out loud comedy at its best.

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Morrie Enders
Artistic Direction Vision Facilitator

Biography

Serving as Executive Director of Lincoln Community Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska since 2010, Morrie brings over 30 years of theatre management and artistic vision development experience to this year's TEAM Conference. He also served as Artistic Director at Kalamazoo Civic Theatre (Kalamazoo, Michigan) from 2005-2009 and Artistic/Managing Director of La Crosse Community Theatre (La Crosse, Wisconsin) from 1987-2005.



Morrie Enders

Morrie earned his MFA in Directing at the University of Utah and his BFA in Theater at Central Michigan University. Since then, his productions have earned numerous awards at state, regional, national, and international festivals. He has also been a frequent workshop and conference presenter both nationally and internationally, including twice leading the AACT Managing Directors Conference (2007 and 2013).

His involvement and leadership in AACT has a long history. Most recently serving as Chair of the Adjudication Task Force, Morrie is also a former member of the Board of Directors and Membership Committee Chair. In addition, he has served as a festival adjudicator at multiple state, regional, national, and international festivals - most recently AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota.

Philosophy/Approach to Artistic Direction Vision

Morrie stresses that Artistic Direction is more than merely picking a slate of plays for any given season. But rather, he maintains that it encompasses the preparation of goals and strategies to create a place for your community theatre within the community. Furthermore, Artistic Direction establishes procedures and protocols that guide **how** your theatre produces plays.

Morrie's Vision is that Artistic Direction is both for the present and the future. He stresses that a great community theatre not only produces the finest presentations for the audience, but also the finest process for its theatre participants.

In Morrie's words: "Artistic Direction is the creation of your culture." ♦



Advocating for the Arts

Quiana Clark-Roland
AACT Executive Director

On March 12 - 13, 2018, hundreds of artists, administrators, practitioners, and educators will meet on Capitol Hill to underscore the importance of developing strong public policies and appropriating increased public funding for the Arts. They will be advocating not only on behalf of the patrons and the artists whom they represent, but will be advocating on behalf of the communities they serve. This event is National Arts Advocacy Day and once again AACT will be pledging its support and joining the coalition of National Partners to help lead the movement towards arts-friendly legislation.



As a National Partner, AACT will have a voice in directly shaping legislative platforms and messaging for Arts Advocacy Day. We will not only be supporting legislation that supports the arts sector and creative economies but also crafting legislation that directly supports and impacts AACT members and Community Theatres. National Partners also receive national recognition of their organization in print and on-line Arts Advocacy Day materials, as well as the opportunity to participate in special policy conference call briefings throughout the year.

continued on next page ►

What is Arts Advocacy Day?

The National Arts Action Summit is your opportunity to receive crucial advocacy training from experts in the field and then put that training into practice. Hosted by Americans for the Arts in partnership with over 85 national arts organizations, Arts Advocacy Day is the largest gathering of its kind, bringing together a broad cross section of America's cultural and civic organizations. Grassroots advocates from across the country come to Washington, DC to meet with their members of Congress to garner support for issues like arts education policy, the charitable tax deduction, and funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

On Monday, March 12, 2018, hundreds of arts advocates from across the country convene for interactive advocacy training and peer-to-peer learning and networking. That evening, attendees attend the Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts & Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Then, **on Tuesday**, March 13, 2018, after the Congressional Arts Kick Off, advocates will meet with their Members of Congress and Senators to share their stories about the impact and transformative power that the arts have within their communities.

Arts Advocacy Day, provides a great opportunity for:

1. **Networking** with your fellow arts advocates from across the country and go on congressional visits led by State Captains.
2. **Learning** the latest research facts and figures on the arts to help make your case.
3. **Strategizing** with experienced advocates during an interactive role play session on how to make the case for the arts and arts education to your members of Congress.

– from americansforthearts.org



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This year, legislative briefings and proposed policies will address issues on:

- Strengthening Arts Education and Training
- Supporting the National Endowment for the Arts and Block Grants
- Supporting the Corporation of Public Broadcasting and Public Programming
- Tax Policy and Charitable Donations
- Arts and the Military
- Supporting Creativity Economy and Industries
- Cultural Exchanges and Visa Processes
- Arts in Health
- Arts and Infrastructure
- Arts and Technology

Read the Arts Advocacy Day 2018 Congressional Handbook to learn more about the legislative issues. There you can read the issue briefs, learn about the latest arts issues in Congress, check out your

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legislator's voting records, and find the research to make your case. Whether or not you are able to attend National Arts Advocacy Day, there is always time to contact your legislator to voice your concerns on the matter(s) that mean the most to you and your constituency. The handbook will be available at americansforthearts.org.

Get Local

If you need help with understanding the policies and learning more about the issues being addressed, contact your State Advocacy Captain. Americans for the Arts assembles a national team of State Arts Advocacy Experts that are knowledgeable about the issues briefs and are responsible for setting up your state's congressional appointments and leading your state's delegation. For the list of captains, visit americansforthearts.org/events/arts-advocacy-day/facts-figures-to-make-your-case. Even if you are unable to attend Arts Advocacy Day, your State Captain is still a great resource for finding out what is happening locally as many states will also host their own State Arts Advocacy Day.

Advocacy Resources & Toolkit

To get helpful resources, links, research, and guides on advocacy, check out AACT's Advocacy Page, aact.org/advocacy. There you can find articles that discuss topics such as; what the difference is between advocacy and lobbying for nonprofit groups, tips on effective advocating from former lawmakers, and links to partnering arts advocacy organizations.

The page also has links to the National Arts Advocacy Day resources and Advocacy Toolkit. The Advocacy Toolkit is an online resource of how-to tutorials, links, templates, letter generators, and representative finders to help get you started. There is an advocacy toolkit for both individuals and organizations -- Both are great resources to share with your patrons, staff, volunteers, and most importantly your board when addressing issues that affect your community theatre.

Happy Advocating!

Arts Advocacy Day is an important moment in which the Arts and Creativity Economies have a platform to voice their concerns and shape legislation that positively impacts the lives of those we serve. This year, AACT President Carole Reis and I will be heading to Capitol Hill to address proposed legislation. As AACT members, we invite you to join us and be a part of the conversation. As we all know, there is strength in numbers. ♦



Washington D.C. March 21, 2017, Arts Advocacy Day - U.S. Congresswoman, 2nd District of Kansas, Lynn Jenkins visits with AACT President Carole Reis, Kansas Arts Alliance Executive Director Ken Adams, Annika Wooton, and Barbara Warady

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Creating Sensory-Friendly Theatre: A Lesson From Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

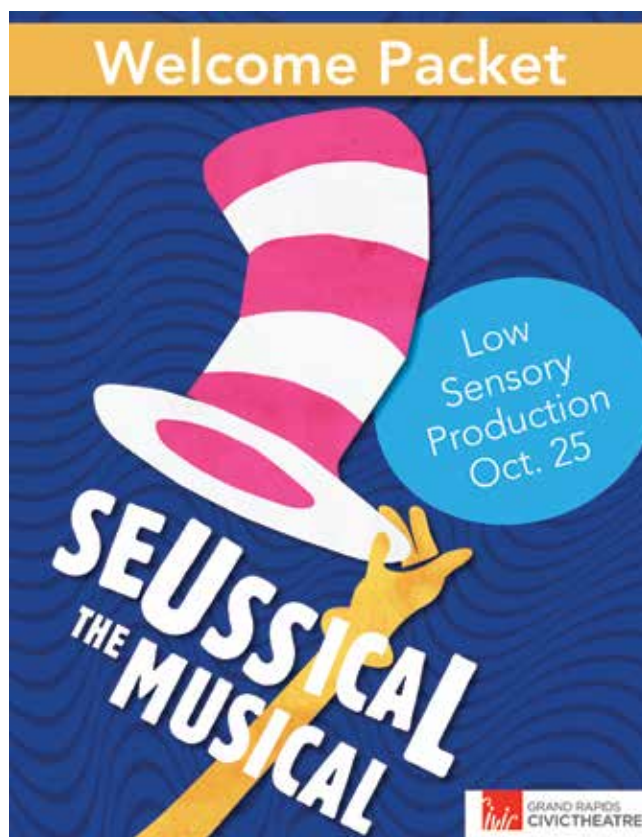
Nancy Brozek

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre took *Seussical the Musical*'s lyrics, "Oh, the things you can think" to heart when imagining ways to engage the community in this fanciful tale based on Dr. Seuss's popular stories. The musical's core messages of acceptance and appreciation of everyone was the motivation to create a special evening for those with diverse sensory needs. Community partners, sponsors, and volunteers rallied to bring the idea of Low Sensory Night from dream to reality.

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre (GRCT) committed to the event because there was a need in their community. It took a great deal of dedication from the theatre and the community to make it successful.

The goal of the evening was to decrease stimuli and create a warm and inclusive environment for families impacted by autism. Special elements used to create an inclusive performance for those with diverse sensory needs included:

- Reduced sound levels and reduced lighting intensity during the performance
- Volunteers to welcome families and give directions and help with way-finding
- A welcome packet sent to each family in advance, including theatre maps, character descriptions, and show information
- Limited seating of 200 for this performance to create space for the audience members to spread out
- Cool-down zones outside the auditorium where children and their families could relax
- Complimentary parking to reduce stimuli between the car and theatre



GRCT sent a welcome packet in advance of the performance to each attending family. This packet provided important information about the production, the theatre facility, and what to expect from this special performance



"Low Sensory Night was a blessing in so many ways," shared one parent who attended. "My child with sensory issues was enthralled. It was fabulous to be in a non-stressful environment that was so welcoming. Thank you!"

The cast of Grand Rapids Civic Theatre's production of Seussical the Musical in performance

The catalyst for this project came in 2016, when GRCT's Traveling Troupe participated in Sensory-Friendly Museum Night at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. Our Traveling Troupe presented a mini-performance that was very well received. GRCT administration wondered if it would be possible to do a sensory-friendly staging of one of our mainstage children's productions and began initial research into what was required to make appropriate accommodations.

GRCT Associate Director Allyson Paris did our initial research. Our first considerations for accommodations came from information regarding other successful low sensory theatrical productions. We consulted the Kennedy Center Accessibility Office: kennedy-center.org/accessibility/services/sensory. We also looked for best practices from other children's theatres nationwide, including: Imagination Stage in Bethesda, Maryland; Seattle Children's Theatre in Seattle, Washington; and The Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. And we spoke to Celebration! Cinema locally on their low sensory movie nights in order to understand what accommodations they used and what they felt were most needed and effective.

"My 10-year-old daughter is on the autism spectrum and has ADHD, anxiety, and DMDD. Going to a show was never an option for us because my daughter can't sit still and has outbursts," shared one parent who attended. "With Low Sensory Night, my family was able to enjoy the show, and my daughter sat for an hour and a half! Thank you again."

The goal of the evening was to decrease stimuli for guests. There is not a step-by-step guide to create your own Low Sensory Performance, but here is an overview of how the special evening became a reality for us:

1. We consulted resources from the community. We partnered with Autism Society of Kent County for help with program development, volunteer training, general input, and feedback for our show coordinator, and to help identify attendees and volunteers. We also utilized Artists Creating Together as our resource for "cool-down zones," which are resting stations for children to have a quiet space if they have a breakdown. They also served as a pipeline for volunteers and participants. We also reached out to various organizations that serve people with special needs or teach special education (universities, colleges, etc.) to secure the large number of volunteers needed. Grand Rapids Children's Museum had a similar program some years ago, so we had the museum's program director come in and do a rundown of what worked there.
2. A special budget was established including specialized production team members, adjustments to lighting and sound, project coordinators, specialized marketing, hospitality, and special t-shirts for volunteers.

continued on next page ►



Three character descriptions from a page of GRCT's welcome packet. These character photos and descriptions were also printed as "trading cards" that allowed attendees to prepare for the colorful characters they would experience on stage, and gave them a connection to the actors as they held the cards in their hands during the performance.

The packet also included parking information, how to enter the theatre (with photos), the location of volunteers for assistance, a synopsis of the show, how audience members would be seated, directions to the cool-down zones, and special moments to prepare for including lighting, sound, characters in the audience, clapping, and how the audience would be dismissed after the show

3. Applications were submitted for foundation grants and sponsors to cover the underwriting.
4. We hired a Low Sensory Night Coordinator and a Volunteer Coordinator with relevant experience working with people with special needs for Low Sensory Night.
5. We utilized an Occupational Therapist to review *Seussical the Musical* once it was staged to help determine the changes that needed to be made. Additionally, we asked people from the Autism Society to come and view our (traditionally-staged) production on opening weekend to help us make any less-obvious alterations to the performance itself.
6. A welcome packet was created and presented to everyone who registered because it was anticipated that these guests would not have been to the Theatre before and we wanted to make sure they felt connected. This helped the parents prepare their children for what they would experience on stage. It included an overview of characters, a synopsis of the show, and a detailed “what to expect at the performance.”
7. We treated this as an outreach program to our community with Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity focuses.

8. We made sure this was discussed in our press releases and in our interviews for the show. Our strongest marketing for the night itself came from our partner's sharing.
9. Because of the special pricing and need to account for complimentary parking and special instruction to these first time visitors, all reservations were taken by phone – not through our ticketing software online.
10. We charged \$5 a person or \$20 for families of four or more. Some of our sponsor tickets were returned to support this effort.

GRCT volunteers went above and beyond to make this evening a success. Over 27 volunteers were on hand to give tours, help families find the cool-down zones, and more. *Seussical the Musical* cast and crew voluntarily gathered for a special rehearsal to adjust their stage blocking and learn more about how to create inclusivity through their performance. ♦

Nancy Brozek is the Director of Development and Community Relations at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre in Grand Rapids, Michigan. grct.org



“Low Sensory Night encompassed the true magic of theatre, as we saw individuals completely engaged with a performance – something many family members stated was atypical,” shared Jenna Pope, Low Sensory Night Coordinator. “It was truly a wonderful evening watching the attendees express their enthusiasm for the show and beg to stay in the theatre after the production ended.”

The magic of Low Sensory Night was made successful by GRCT Volunteers, who gathered prior to the event for special training

BARD ARTS PLAYS

FunBirds (5 F, 2 M) Roger Coyne, recently divorced, swears that, in the modern age, monogamous relations are obsolete. “In an age of abundance,” he says, “a man can have two of anything—including women.” His *FunBirds*, Edna and Desiree, compete with each other, then agree to cooperate. They devise a plot to teach Roger a lesson. Obsession matches obsession leading to ludicrous ruin.



An Examined Life

An Examined Life. [2F, 1M] Arno, a philosopher, feels that he has failed in life. His life-examination consists of conversations with the ghost of his youthful teacher, Max, who still dominates his psyche. His student, Trudy, persuades him to engage in “an enlightened conversation,” and finds a way to free the Prof from his demon.



FunBirds

For these and other Bard Arts plays visit bardartsnyc.com. Email: bardarts@verizon.net

Throughout the show, you are welcome to exit the theatre, as needed. If you need to exit the theatre with a member of your party and others would like to continue watching, please raise your hand, and a volunteer, in either a black GRCT shirt or a blue volunteer shirt, will come to sit with your party while you exit and until your return.

COOL DOWN ZONES

Within our lower lobby and near our coat check room, there will be cool down zones, which will include cushions, calming music, stress balls, fidgets, etc. There will be volunteers near these zones to assist in any way necessary. Please use them whenever they are needed!



Another section of GRCT's Seussical the Musical Low Sensory Night welcome packet



National Community Theatre Directors Conference 2017

Jon Douglas Rake

The National Community Theatre Directors Conference, one of the best theatre conferences for full-time community theatre managers, takes place in Madison, Wisconsin every two years in November. Traditionally, it has been co-sponsored by the University of Madison Continuing Education Department and the American Association of Community Theatre.

This is a unique opportunity for full-time theatre managers from across the United States to get together and share their ups and downs when running non-profit theatres. Managers from small-scale theatres as well as multi-million-dollar budget theatres attend. It is a place to share and a place to learn. It is also a place to catch up on friendships.


The value of this conference is tremendous. Theatre managers share challenges from their home theatres. Issues range from Boards of Directors and staff to production values, marketing, facility, ticket



Geoff Leonard-Robinson

John Viars, Facilitator of the 2017 National Community Theatre Directors Conference, enjoys the camaraderie of the participants and hearing the variety of experiences shared by theatre managers, November 3, 2017

continued on page 28 ►



SUMMERWIND Productions

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Music of Frank
Sinatra

OTHER MUSICALS:

Christmas My Way – A Sinatra Holiday Bash

I Left My Heart – A Salute to the Music of Tony Bennett

Simply Simone – The Music of Nina Simone

Babes in Hollywood – The Music of Garland and Rooney

One More For My Baby - A Sinatra Songbook

Town Without Pity – The Love Songs of Gene Pitney

Bonnie & Clyde

Club Morocco

PLAYS:

Dracula - The Case of the Silver Scream (Film Noir)

The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria

Casa Blue—The Last Moments in the Life of Freda Kahlo

Vampire Monologues

War of the Worlds

Scripts, Information, and Licensing at:
summerwindproductions.com

pricing, and volunteers. New and innovative ways of dealing with these topics are shared and examined. Resources shared from theatre to theatre are a major component of the conference. A conference Dropbox and a special Facebook page are created so that the attendees can continue to share and ask questions after the conference is completed.

“The most important part of attending the conference is talking to others who do what I do and understand the unique nature of our roles.”

Chris Serface, Managing Artistic Director of Tacoma Little Theatre in Tacoma, Washington, says, “I think the networking among the peer group is invaluable - to be able to share your challenges and find how others solved them. I also think the round-table discussions are a huge part of the information sharing and help everyone.”

Sarah Phoenix, Artistic Director of Theatre Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma, shares, “The most important part of attending the conference is talking to others who do what I do and understand the unique nature of our roles. We build relationships of friendship, support, networking, and meet people who are willing to help with productions and troubleshoot problems.”

One of the topics covered at the 2017 conference was the use of technology in technical theatre. It is becoming more and more the standard rather than the exception. New production design concepts include scenic projections and lighting effects. Technology is expensive, but while working with our fellow theatres some of these technological hurdles can be overcome through consulting and sharing. Some larger theatres can adapt to new developments in technology while some smaller theatres must become very creative.

It can be intimidating and invigorating at the same time.

We also discussed how new and evolving social media has affected marketing productions. Print media, while still very beneficial, is becoming less and less available and therefore theatres need to bridge the gap with creative marketing plans. Many theatres are using Facebook as an important marketing tool. New and different audiences are being reached through social media.

Artistic programming was also a hot topic with the attendees. Production “hits and misses” from past seasons were shared. Sometimes there were surprises because one theatre may not have done as well as another theatre with the same specific play or musical. The main factor affecting this is knowing our audiences and presenting what they want to see.

One of the most beneficial reasons for going to the conference is to find the answers to your theatre concerns and to learn new ways to make your theatre stronger; the networking among a group of peers is invaluable. It can be intimidating and invigorating at the same time. Building friendships and relationships of professional support, sharing challenges and solutions, and finding help with specific challenges for one's theatre - from production issues to organizational structure - are all part of this amazing conference.

The 2019 conference will again be in Madison, Wisconsin, and it will be solely produced by AACT. I will be attending and I encourage you to come join me. I look forward to hearing the challenges you face at your theatre and seeing how our peers can help you in finding creative solutions.

Details of the 2019 National Community Theatre Directors Conference are currently being established. Visit aact.org/ctdc for updates and information. ♦

Jon Douglas Rake is the founder and Managing Artistic Director of Tacoma Musical Playhouse. He is the AACT Region IX Representative and has served AACT on the Festival Commission, the Membership Committee, the International Committee, the AACT Trustees, and several other committees and groups. His service has enabled theatres to benefit from AACT programs and services and to form stronger theatre-to-theatre relationships. tmp.org

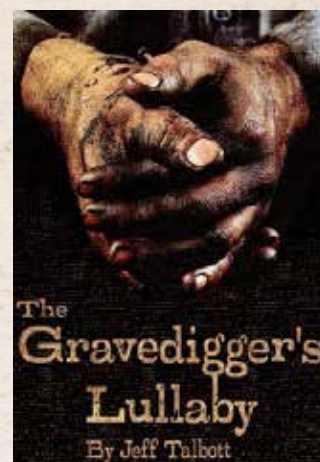
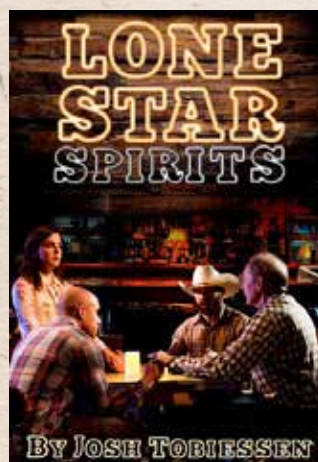
AACT Web Power

Need help on a production or administrative issue? AACT's Resource Roster wants to help you find the answers you need. Submit your question using the convenient online form at aact.org/resource-roster, or use the website's drop-down menu under "Networking." The Resource Roster Coordinator will match your question with an AACT member experienced in the topic you've indicated.

Note: If you are looking for something very specific, such as a prop, sample documents, or references for consultants, it's better to use AACTList, our email discussion group, so that you can reach multiple people with one post. [aact.org/aactlist]

The members of the Resource Roster are AACT members who have volunteered their time and skills to assist with your theatrical needs. If you would like to volunteer your expertise to the Resource Roster, please contact Dennis Gilmore at dennisgilmore@hcpac.org. Along with your name and contact information, include the specific skill or knowledge you can provide to other AACT members.

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AACT Elections: Meet the Candidates

The AACT Nominating Committee has presented the following slate of candidates for elective positions as Members at Large on the AACT Board, with terms beginning in June 2018.

Ballots will be available in April for the annual AACT election. Deadline for voting members to submit a ballot will be May 1. (Associate Members are non-voting.)

Following are this year's candidates and those who are continuing on the Board.

Visit aact.org/aact-elections-2018 for full bios and photos of the candidates.

Candidates for AACT Board Member at Large

Sharon Burum, Duncan, Oklahoma, Region VI
David Deratzian, Skippack, Pennsylvania, Region II
Marc Edson, Chico, California, Region VIII
Michael Fox, North Salt Lake, Utah, Region VII
Bob Frame, Skaneateles, New York, Region II
Richard Gannon, Naperville, Illinois, Region III
Steven J. Heron, Titusville, Florida, Region IV
Lucinda Lawrence, Champaign, Illinois, Region III
Jason Magnuson, Casper, Wyoming, Region VII
Carolyn McCloskey, McMinnville, Oregon, Region IX
Judy Rozema, Kearney, Nebraska, Region V

Continuing Board Members

These persons' terms end in 2019 and 2020, so they will serve with those elected in spring 2018.

Region I

Bevie Lord, Massachusetts, Region Rep

Region II

Marsha Amato-Greenspan, Delaware, Region Rep
Chad-Alan Carr, Pennsylvania, Member at Large

Region III

Emily Anderson, Michigan, Member at Large
Allen Ebert, Wisconsin, Member at Large
Steve Hughes, Indiana, Region Rep

Region IV

Michael Cochran, Kentucky, Member at Large
Kristofer Geddie, Florida, Member at Large
Rick Kerby, Florida, Executive Vice President
Lynn Nelson, Mississippi, Region Rep

Region V

Nancy Eppert, Missouri, Region Rep
Carole Ries, Kansas, President
Kristi Quinn, Nebraska, Member at Large
Jamie Ulmer, Nebraska, Member at Large
Jim Walker, South Dakota, Vice President for Festivals

Region VI

Sally Barnes, Oklahoma, Region Rep
Sara Phoenix, Oklahoma, Member at Large

Region VII

Donna Fisher, Wyoming, Region Rep

Region VIII

Dennis Gilmore, California, Region Rep

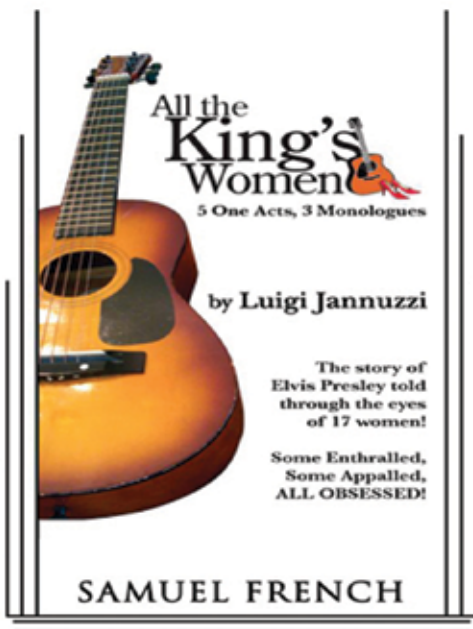
Region IX

Jon Douglas Rake, Washington, Region Rep
Chris Serface, Washington, Member at Large

Region X

Dane Winters, Germany, Region Rep
International
Ron Cameron-Lewis, Canada, Member at Large

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Spotlight Award Honors Sabrina Switzer-Wareing

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. The AACT Awards Committee encourages community theatres to consider nominating individuals of all ages for the AACT Spotlight Award.

A Repertory Theatre Group (ART), Banning, California honored **Sabrina Switzer-Wareing** with the AACT Spotlight Award on April 10, 2017. Sabrina currently lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, and due to her busy rehearsal schedule, was unable to travel to accept the Award.

Sabrina's husband, Scott, presented the Spotlight Award during a break in rehearsals, and Sabrina remarked, "I want to thank AACT and ART for this Award. We give of ourselves and the reward is immeasurable. AACT's dedication to promote community theatre offers theatre artists the opportunity to share their passion. I am honored to receive this Award!"



Sabrina Switzer-Wareing and her AACT Spotlight Award

In keeping with ART's mission, all proceeds from its productions go to support charitable causes, including college scholarships, Make A Wish Foundation, local food banks and housing programs, and the Seeing Eye Dog program, leaving no funds for theatre operations. When ART is in need, Sabrina always comes to the rescue, to help raise funds for whatever it takes for the theatre to survive!

Sabrina has written and directed many of ART's productions. The actors who have worked with Sabrina throughout the years are grateful for her guidance and support. They feel very enriched by her directing skills.

Sabrina is Director of Drama for the Herberger Academy at Arizona State University. The Academy is designed for gifted students who thrive in a highly engaging learning environment. Sabrina was named "Theatre Teacher of the Year" at the Arizona Thespian Society Conference.

ART is proud of Sabrina's success, and is very thankful for her loyal support! Her nomination letter stated, "Sabrina has contributed much to the continued success of A Repertory Theatre!"

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Laundry**

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A vibrant musical poster for 'Honky Tonk Laundry'. The background is orange and yellow with radiating lines and stars. At the top, it lists glowing reviews from StageSceneLA, LA Times, and Stage and Cinema. Below that, it announces a new musical from the creator of 'The Marvelous Wonderettes'. The title 'HONKY TONK Laundry' is written in large, stylized, colorful letters. Underneath, it lists featured Nashville hits. A photo of two women in red, fringed outfits performing on stage is shown. At the bottom, it says 'IT BLOWS THE ROOF OFF THE PLACE!' with a quote from Broadway World. The logo for Steele Spring Stage Rights and their website are at the very bottom.



Peter Pan Joins the Army

Kathy Pingel

AACT Region X has a talented, dynamic, and interactive community of AACT member theatres connected through festivals, workshops, and shared resources. The region is composed of theatres on military bases throughout Europe and is overseen by Dane Winters, Region Entertainment Program Manager for the U.S. Armed Forces. AACT members who have adjudicated and taught in Region X have been treated to innovative theatrical work and made friendships with the dedicated volunteers. The rest of us have enjoyed the Region X performances at AACTFest National Festivals.

After adjudicating the Region X Festival in October 2017, Ron Ziegler and I extended our stay to be guest directors at the Terrace Playhouse on the army base in Ansbach, Germany. An arrangement was made with Vikki Hanrahan, Artistic Director, to direct *Peter and the Starcatcher*. The idea was to use outside directors to give the actors and designers new perspectives on processes and to give Vikki a break. As with many small theatres, she is not only the artistic director but also has created and leads a large children's program, designs sets and lighting, and directs most of the plays. This is in addition to her duties as groundskeeper and host to traveling guest artists. (Ask her about her time with Brian Cranston – there are some perks!)

Vikki writes, “Working with Kathy and Ron was an enriching experience. Working with new people gave both our community theatre volunteers and me the opportunity to learn different approaches and techniques. We always learn and grow

as artists when someone from outside directs a show. You learn a new language to use with your actors for future productions.”

The Terrace Playhouse is a small black box, seating a maximum of 60. It used to be the officer's club at the army base but was repurposed as a theatre. There is a cozy lobby area complete with a bar, piano, high top tables with lit candles, and proudly decorated with awards from AACT and the military.

As we looked at pictures of an actress' husband in full camo, we gained respect for what it takes for her to “set it aside” and rehearse.

The twelve volunteers who performed in *Peter and the Starcatcher* had produced several plays together—a tightly-knit community of actors with a shared history of pitching in whenever needed. They were welcoming, eager to learn, and passionate about producing a vibrant story.

Ron and I decided to do the play as “poor theatre.” It was a new approach for the actors, but they set aside apprehension and embraced it fully. Vikki decided to sacrifice her “time off” to be in the play to learn from the inside. With guidance, the actors collaborated to transform the stage into ships, a boxing ring, and

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“One of the sweetest and funniest scripts we’ve read in years!” Rainbows Comedy Playhouse, Pennsylvania
“What a brilliant script!” Script2Stage2Screen, California

Photo: 7-10 Split, Port Stanley Festival Theatre



Brian Sowers

The cast and crew of Ansbach Terrace Playhouse's Peter and the Starcatcher with guest directors Kathy Pingel and Ron Ziegler

Front row (left to right): Brian Sowders, JD Dill, Savannah Deasy, Kathy Pingel, Ron Ziegler, Mara Aafiati, Kazia Huseman

Back row (left to right): Katherine Wellman, Lynn Daniels, Heather Luna, John Kelker, Travis Bruce, Amber Demmon, Terrace Playhouse Artistic Director Vikki Hanrahan, Adam Sullivan, Margi Ritscher, Gary Deasy

an island with a crocodile, among other things. At the end of the process, the look of the play was entirely theirs, and it energized the company to have done something new and different.

Dane Winters has been working on developing an exchange program for some time. He says, "The goal is to give our staff and volunteers a chance to work with and learn from new people. With such a limited number of directors in the Entertainment program in Europe, our volunteers rarely have the chance to work with someone from the outside. *Peter and the Starcatcher* was a tremendous success and our goal was fully met. Always a successful and enthusiastic group, the Ansbach volunteers showed a new excitement and eagerness which will continue to resonate through the company for a long time."

As we visited the B Company's 1-214th Aviation hangars (Big Windy) and climbed aboard a Chinook helicopter, we got a sense of the magnitude and complexity of our military forces. As we looked at pictures of an actress' husband in full camo, we gained respect for what it takes for her to "set it aside" and rehearse. And as we sat around a table with the actors in a restaurant famous for its goose dinners and listened to them alternate between English and German, we came to appreciate the richness of cross-cultural experiences. In the coming months, Ron and I will be working with Dane to expand the program to bring over additional guest directors and designers. Judging by our first experience, we can highly recommend the exchange because as much as it may have benefitted the theatre and volunteers, it profited us more. ♦

Until her retirement in 2015, Kathy Pingel was the Director of Education at the Des Moines Community Playhouse, and also served as Artistic Director of the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. She holds a BA in theatre from Eastern Michigan University, an MA from Northwestern University in Performance Studies, and an MAT from Northwestern University. Kathy has adjudicated at the state, regional, national, and international levels for the American Association of Community Theatre.



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New Roles

Member Theatre Professional Staffing Changes

Huntsville, Alabama – **Theatre Huntsville** welcomed **Leslie Gates** as their new Executive Director. Involved and in love with community theatre since the age of five, Leslie received her BA in Theatre from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. She has worked extensively both onstage and behind the scenes in Atlanta and Chicago. While in Atlanta, she also served on the Board of Directors of Onstage Atlanta; and in Chicago she was a founding member of Potluck Productions, “dedicated to bringing a slice of the South to the Windy City.” After moving to Huntsville, Leslie served as the Theatre Performance Instructor at Lee High School (2015-2017), while also serving on the Huntsville Board of Arts and in various positions on the Theatre Huntsville Board of Directors. Having appeared onstage at numerous theatres, she has also directed several award-winning productions. Leslie stated, “Theatre Huntsville has a very exciting future ahead of us. Change is inevitable and to grow as an organization we must be prepared and excited to embrace it. As our city evolves and grows, we are ready to go on that journey. I want to engage our community in conversations via performance and artistic vision.”

Salem, Oregon – **Tony Zandol** recently retired as Technical Director for **Pentacle Theatre** after serving in that staff position from 1995-2017. He previously filled that position as a volunteer

from 1985-1995. The theatre was pleased to announce that **Chris Benham** took over the reins as their new Technical Director January 1, 2018. Chris actually began his new job on October 2, 2017, spending the next three months working side-by-side with Tony to ensure a smooth transition working in the space and with Pentacle’s volunteers. An accomplished set designer and builder, Chris gained set design experience with both mainstage and black box theatre productions for the Gallery Players of Oregon at Gallery Theater in McMinnville (also an AACT member), and in previously running the theatre scene shop at George Fox University (Newberg, Oregon). Pentacle Theatre Executive Director **Lisa Joyce** commented, “Chris has the broad skills and direct practical experience we were looking for in a Technical Director. Best of all, he understands and has a passion for community theatre.”

Averill Park, New York – **Sand Lake Center for the Arts (SLCA)** announced the arrival of **Brian Sheldon** as their new Managing Director in November 2017. A 2011 graduate of Russell Sage College in Troy, New York, earning his Bachelor’s Degree in Theatre Arts, Brian has 20 years of experience appearing on many stages including the New York State Theatre Institute, Albany Civic Theatre, Schenectady Light Opera Company, and The Theater Barn. In addition, he also co-wrote the book for *Backbeard*, an original children’s musical (matthewmccelligott.com/backbeard/) which premiered in 2016 and appeared in the 2017 New York Musical Festival in New York City. Prior to coming to SLCA, Brian was a teaching instructor/director at Circus Theatricks. Regarding his new position, he stated, “I am overjoyed to be joining the SLCA team and look forward to creating new art in our area!” ♦

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Carolyn McCloskey receiving her AACT 15-year pin for volunteer service from **Jeff Zimmerman**, Oregon Community Theatre Alliance Board President.

The pin was presented at a board meeting of the Oregon Community Theatre Alliance on November 4, 2017.



AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** visited with **Duncan (OK) Little Theatre** Board members and volunteers, and toured both their home and performance spaces on December 1, 2017. Pictured top moving clockwise: **Cindy Mann** (Treasurer), **Leigh McEntire** (Board), **Tana Latham** (Publicity), **Brett Lovett** (Board), **Sharon Burum** (AACT Board Member at Large), and **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**.



AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** (L) visited with **Lawton (OK) Community Theatre** Managing Director **Shelly Ray** (R), and attended their production of *A Tuna Christmas* (cast and crew pictured) on December 1, 2017.

Cast and crew pictured, front row (L-R): **Wally Harris** (cast) and **Scott Richard Klein** (cast); back row (L-R): AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, **Ashley Morrison**, **Abby Jones**, **Autumn Pina**, **Barbara Hunter**, Director **Albert Rivas**, **Kaley Patterson**, stand-in crew, **Amanda Ricbey**, **LaVeeta Cooper**, **Cassie Jones**, **Hunter Pinkerton**, and LCT Managing Director **Shelly Ray**



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Ardmore (OK) Little Theatre Board members welcomed AACT's Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** for a theatre visit on December 1, 2017. Photo (L-R) Board Member **Carl Clark**, **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, Board Members **Julie Clemens** (Secretary), **Mary Ann Keester**, and **Joel Wellnitz** (Office Manager). [Attending but not pictured, Board President **Ruth Ellis**.]



A production of *Almost Maine* rounded out a visit by AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** with Managing Director **Rebecca Fry** at *Shawnee (OK) Little Theatre* on December 2, 2017.

Cast and crew of the production pictured, front row (L-R): **Juliette Souders**, **Maile Hopkins**, **Nicki Sherman**, and **Amy Jennings**; back row (L-R): AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, Managing Director **Rebecca Fry**, **Elijah Gragg**, **Eric Hopkins**, **Preston Fry**, **Eric Stimple**, **Bruce Fry**, **Rachel Clagg**, **Paul Jennings**, and **Chris Sherman**



Production Director **Chuck Tweed** (L) gave a tour of *Jewel Box Theatre* (Oklahoma City, OK) and visited with AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** on December 3, 2017. After which, **Leonard-Robinson** attended a performance of *Plaid Tidings*.

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Geoff Leonard-Robinson (L) and the cast of the Jewel Box Theatre production of Plaid Tidings (2nd from left to right): Jeremy Small, Gareth Forsberg, Mitchell Hammond, and Owen Whitham, December 3, 2017.



Town and Gown Theatre (Stillwater, OK) Board President Jacob Boyd (L) and volunteer extraordinaire Linda Phillips (R) hosted a visit and tour with AACT Member Engagement Director Geoff Leonard-Robinson on December 4, 2017.

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WHERE'S MY MEMBER ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR BEEN?

December 2017

Ardmore Little Theatre (Oklahoma)
visit

Duncan Little Theatre (Oklahoma)
visit

Lawton Community Theatre (Oklahoma)
visit and *A Tuna Christmas* performance

Shawnee Little Theatre (Oklahoma)
visit and *Almost, Maine* performance

Jewel Box Theatre (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)
visit and *Plaid Tidings* performance

Town and Gown Theatre (Stillwater, Oklahoma)
visit

Gaslight Theatre (Enid, Oklahoma)
visit, *The Mousetrap* tech week rehearsal, and
youth theatre *The Beauty and The Beast* rehearsal

Sooner Theatre (Norman, Oklahoma)
visit with Studio Director Tish Wills, tour of the historic
theatre and the Sooner Theatre's second venue, The Studio

Greater Lewisville Community Theatre (Texas)
Meet Me in St. Louis performance

January 2018

MainStage Irving-Las Colinas Theatre
The Gazebo performance



Gaslight Theatre
(Enid, OK)



Sooner Theatre (Norman, OK)

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*AACT Marketing Director **David Cockerell** (L) joined with **Lincoln (NE) Community Playhouse (LCP)** Director of Operations **Christine Cottam**, guest **Ed Joswick**, Playwright **Paul Elliott**, and LCP House Manager **Shaundra Montague** in celebrating AACT NewPlayFest 2018 and the world premiere of TBD (To Be Determined) by Paul Elliott on January 19, 2018 at Lincoln Community Playhouse.*



***Donna Fisher**, President and Artistic Director of the **Casper (WY) Theatre Company** welcomed AACT Executive Director **Quiana Clark-Roland** and gave a tour of the theatre on January 27, 2018 prior to attending the world premiere of *Eternity* by **Michael Cochran** presented by **Stage III Community Theatre** (Casper, WY) as part of AACT NewPlayFest 2018.*

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Introduction to Adjudication with Ron Cameron-Lewis from Theatre Ontario

Theatre Ontario is excited to be offering an "Introduction to Adjudication" course in London, Ontario from May 16 to 20, taught by esteemed AACT Fellow Ron Cameron-Lewis.

This is a course for emerging and potential adjudicators. Participants will receive training in the principles of adjudication, attend community theatre performances at Theatre Ontario Festival 2018, and practice adjudicating presentation skills in a private setting.

After the course, participants have the opportunity—at their discretion—to perform a practice adjudication at an Ontario community theatre. (We recognize participants from AACT may not be able to take advantage fully of this opportunity, but Theatre Ontario is committed to exploring the possibility.)

Ron Cameron-Lewis is well known to community groups across the province as a teacher, adjudicator, and workshop leader. He has adjudicated well over 2,000 productions throughout Ontario for community and educational theatre festivals, as well as in the USA at state, regional, national, and

international levels. Since 2010, he has taught the art of adjudication to 50 people, three times at Theatre Ontario Festivals and twice at AACT national festivals in Rochester, New York, and Carmel, Indiana.

The 5-day course coincides with Theatre Ontario Festival 2018. Classes are held in the afternoons and late nights following evening performances.

Afternoon sessions will cover general principles of public adjudication, private/detailed adjudication, written adjudication, evaluation schemes and assessment, and choosing award winners.

Evening sessions will include a viewing of the plays in the Festival, followed by a nightly gathering immediately after each show to practice public adjudication.

As much as possible, the course will be geared to the specific needs of participants

The application deadline is April 9.

Learn more about the course at <http://www.theatreontario.org/training/introduction-to-adjudication/introduction-to-adjudication-2018.aspx>

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aact.org/samuel-french

New England Theatre Conference 19th Annual Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award

The New England Theatre Conference, Inc.
Aurand Harris Playwriting Award
167 Cherry Street, #331
Milford, CT 06460

Created in 1997 to honor the late Aurand Harris (1915-1996) for his lifetime dedication to all aspects of professional theatre for young audiences, this contest is open to new full-length plays for young audiences. No musicals or plays targeted for an adult audience. Plays must be unpublished and not have had a professional production.

A panel of judges named by the NETC Executive Board will administer this award. The judges may withhold prizes, if in their opinion, no play merits the award.

A staged reading of the award-winning scripts, or of selected scenes from those scripts, may be given at the annual NETC convention in the fall or on another occasion.

Deadline: May 1, 2018

Electronic submission only

\$1,000 first prize, \$500 second prize

Details: netconline.org

Red Bull Theater Short New Play Festival

Red Bull Theater's Short New Play Festival returns on Monday, July 16 at the Lucille Lortel Theater in New York City.

Six short plays will be selected from an open submission process and presented in staged readings alongside two new short plays by commissioned writers, Tina Howe (*Painting Churches*, *Pride's Crossing*) and Doug Wright (*I Am My Own Wife*, *Quills*).

Plays will be selected partly based on:
Relevance to Red Bull Theater's mission.
Incorporation of the theme: THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE.

Electronic Submission only

\$20 submission fee

Selected plays will receive a staged reading performance in the festival on Monday July 16, 2018, directed by Pamela Berlin and Evan Yionoulis, performed by a company of some of New York's finest actors.

SELECTED PLAYWRIGHTS will receive a commissioning fee of \$300 plus a travel reimbursement of up to \$400 to attend the festival rehearsal and performance (receipts required). Playwrights are expected to attend the festival on Monday, July 16 in New York City.

Deadline: 12 noon on Monday, April 23, 2018 -- no exceptions

Details: redbulltheater.com/snpfsubmissions

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Surprise! *Do you know where your coverage is?*

Ken Roberts

In the theatre world, you always have more important things to focus on than your insurance unless you experience a loss, in which case your insurance quickly becomes your primary focus. When things are “normal,” you go through the annual tedium of paperwork to get your policies renewed so you can put them in a drawer and forget about them for a year until it’s time to start all over again. Insurance is one of life’s necessary evils, and this fact is only made worse when the insurance companies change their

Your relationship with your agent or broker is crucial in this area. You must be able to trust them and know that they are constantly looking out for your theatre’s best interests...

“appetite,” or what they’re willing to insure, because of catastrophic claims. This makes it all the more important to review your policy, meaning *actually read it every year*, so that there are no surprises.

One example of how catastrophic claims impact the appetite of insurance companies is how the industry has modified its policies to deal with hurricane damage. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita set new records for insured storm damage in the U.S. in 2005 and, as a result, many major insurers have now either excluded

windstorms from their coverage, or they have increased deductibles to force their policy holders to share more of the burden. How many community theatres in Florida and the rest of the Gulf Coast can afford to have a windstorm exclusion on their insurance policies? How important do you think it would be for a theatre to know that their deductible for wind damage had increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000, or even higher?

Your relationship with your agent or broker is crucial in this area. You must be able to trust them and know that they are constantly looking out for your theatre’s best interests by evaluating your coverage regularly and alerting you to changes that could potentially leave your theatre exposed and potentially uninsured if calamity strikes. If you don’t already have that type of relationship with your insurance representative, you need to either establish one or go find another agent. *That’s what you pay us for!*

When you have your annual renewal meeting with your agent or broker, take a good look at the declarations pages of your policies, and if you don’t have time to or don’t understand what is in front of you, just ask them how your renewal coverage compares to your expiring coverage. Ask specifically if any endorsements and/or exclusions have been added to the policy, and then follow up by asking for detailed explanations if any have been added. The key is to avoid surprises at all cost. Once you know exactly what you’ve renewed, *then* you can put the policy in your drawer for another year. ♦



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This article marks the final chapter of the *Boards in the Spotlight* column by educator and author Twink Lynch. As AACT moves forward with a new dream and vision for *Spotlight*, we are thankful for the many lessons she has shared with us. As Twink states in this article, “My own belief is that visions change as a theatre group moves through the various stages of development....” This can be no truer than where we are today.



You Got to Have a Dream

Twink Lynch

The entire *Boards in the Spotlight* book has been focused on the need for effective management of community theatres and, in particular, on the role of the Board in the growth and development of our theatre organizations. We have concentrated on planning, organizing, staffing, supervising, and evaluating our programs and our Board Members. And now, just as we might think we’ve covered most of the major concerns, researchers have started calling our attention to the emerging key to organizational survival in the new millennium — visionary leadership.

Robert Greenleaf, in his seminal book *Servant Leadership*, describes vision as “the overarching purpose, the big dream, the visionary concept — something presently out of reach — so stated that it excites the imagination and challenges people to work for something they do not yet know how to do.”

**Envisioning the future
“begins with a vague
desire to do something
that would challenge
yourself and others.”**

A vision is not our “purpose” (why we exist) or our “mission” (what we do — our program). A vision is future-oriented and answers the question “What do we want to become?”

Let’s say our purpose and mission are something like this:

“The purpose of the Red Barn Players is to celebrate and nurture creativity, to provide opportunities for self-discovery, self-expression, and self-fulfillment, to pursue excellence, and to delight and challenge our audiences through theatre and the performing arts.

“We have a multiple mission:

1. to produce a broad spectrum of excellent theatrical production,
2. to provide hands-on learning and skill-building experiences for our volunteers in all aspects of theatre production and management,
3. to foster an appreciation of theatre literature,
4. to provide a sequential program of educational experiences in all aspects of theatre for children, youth, adults, and seniors,
5. to celebrate achievements of our volunteers and staff members,
6. to join with other community theatres in the state, region, and nation for mutual assistance and celebration.”

What might our vision statement be and how do we develop one? According to James Kouzes and Barry Posner, envisioning the future “begins with a vague desire to do something that would challenge yourself and others. You begin to get a sense of what you want the organization to look like, feel like, and be like when you and others have completed the journey.... Because you want what you create to be unique, you differentiate your organization from others that produce the same product, provide the same service, or make the same promise...you want to set a new standard of perfection, beauty, or excellence.”

Usually visions begin in the minds of leaders (designated or not) of the organization: Board Members, the chief staff person, sometimes a key “stakeholder,” or perhaps a major donor. My own belief is that visions change as a theatre group moves through the various stages of development we have previously discussed. Thus, an early vision might be “to become a true community theatre”

continued on next page ►

**We have the
potential to
change lives!**

**Unfortunately,
some of us
never reach
our potential
because we
don't know
we have any.**

— this was certainly the case of my own theatre group back in 1936 as two essentially “little theatre” groups (read: private clubs) merged to become a civic theatre. A growing, expanding group might long for a home of its own, with a vision of mainstage, studio, and children’s productions. Some theatres may dream of winning the national AACTFest and going to Monaco or Dundalk or Toyama City. Theatres which have fulfilled such dreams might now be focusing on how they can make a difference in the lives of their citizens, young and old, or how they can contribute to the field of community theatre — how they can help to make a world which fosters creative expression, honors diversity, and appreciates the value of face-to-face communal experiences in an increasingly cybernetic environment?

In other words, there is more to our community theatre life than just “getting the show up.” We have the potential to change lives! Unfortunately, some of us never reach our potential because we don’t know we have any.

My own introduction to the idea of human and organizational potential came originally from learning about Abraham Maslow’s theory of human motivation and his “Hierarchy of Needs.” Then I was absolutely blown away by the quality of the productions at my first national festival (then called FACT — Festival of American Community Theatre) in Oklahoma City in 1975. That means I was not only in (young) middle age, but I had worked for twelve years in my community theatre without having any vision of what together we could become.

A friend of mine has written that “a leader’s compelling vision has been the basis for the very creation of most of our charitable organizations. Often, as they mature, as leadership evolves, or as the environment changes, organizations become preoccupied with business as usual. Their vision is not renewed to adapt to new realities. Without a compelling vision they will not reach their potential to be as effective as possible in serving their constituencies.” (Mike Maude, “On Vision,” in *Fund Raising Management*, August 1997). How true and how sad.

So what we need are leaders who have dreams. Mike Murray, a national consultant in team building, defines leaders as “people with the capacity to dream dreams and have visions and share them with others in such a way that they, of their own free will, say yes.” Just being a dreamer, then, isn’t enough; a leader must be able to articulate the dream to others who have a stake in it and, further, be able to build a sense of a shared destiny. Kouzes and Posner state: “To move others to share the vision, leaders must

- Discover and appeal to a common purpose;
- Communicate expressively, thereby bringing the vision to life in such a way that people can see themselves in it;
- Sincerely believe in what they’re saying and demonstrate their personal conviction.”

They cite psychologist David E. Berlew who believes that “what really excites people, what really provides meaning and generates enthusiasm, are these value-related opportunities:

- A chance to be tested, to make it on one’s own;
- A chance to take part in a social experiment;
- A chance to do something well;
- A chance to do something good;
- A chance to change the way things are.”

**So get your core
group together.
Include stakeholders
outside the Board.
Dream a little.**

Kouzes and Posner believe “the best organizational leaders are able to bring out and make use of [the] human longing for meaning and fulfillment by communicating the meaning and significance of the organization’s work so that the individual understands his or her own important role in creating it.... People really do want to make commitments; and united in a common cause, calling, mission, purpose, or vision, they can get extraordinary things accomplished.”

So get your core group together. Include stakeholders outside the Board. Dream a little. Remember what Bloody Mary said in *South Pacific*: “You got to have a dream; if you don’t have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?” ♦

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight, page 97

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardmanship for Spotlight for many years. AACT thanks Twink Lynch for sharing her guidance and words of wisdom over the years. Many of her articles are compiled into a relevant book for boards: Boards in the Spotlight, available at aact.org/store.

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Please consider including American Association of Community Theatre in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift. Through these special gifts, friends like you are able to sustain AACT’s mission and provide learning experiences for AACT member companies participating in the AACTFest national festivals.

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Mar 27	World Theatre Day		aact.org/world-theatre-day
Apr 27 - May 13	AACTNewPayFest World Premiere <i>Minx and Savage</i> by Rebecca Gorman O'Neill The Vortex Theatre	NM Albuquerque	505-463-0440 vortexabq.org aact.org/newplayfest

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