

# spotlight

May/June 2018 \$3.00

american association of community theatre

## **aactWorldFest**

**Youth Leadership  
Conference**

**Community Theatre  
Management Conference**

**TEAM Conference  
2018**

**AACT National  
Awards**

**Diversity Through  
Community Engagement**



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**Carole Ries**  
AACT President

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE....

So many exciting things are happening at AACT. I hope you are aware of them. Many exciting projects are a direct result of AACT members speaking up. A few years ago a playwright contacted me (and several other AACT leaders) asking why AACT wasn't doing more for playwrights. He said it was so frustrating to write a play and not be able to reach a market. Perhaps a playwright may get his or her new play a workshop or produced at their home theatre. But getting theatres or royalty houses to even read an unsolicited play is difficult. Murray Chase of Venice Theatre told me recently his theatre receives over 100 unsolicited scripts a year. That's overwhelming, especially added to all of the duties that theatre and artistic managers are expected to accomplish.

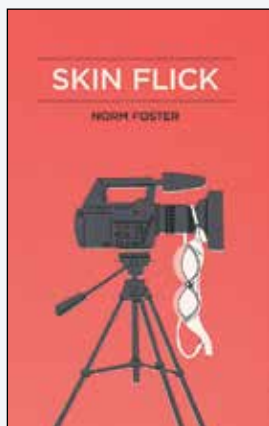
That simple request ultimately led to the creation of the AACT NewPlayFest, made possible in part by the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation. Since its 2014 debut productions, NewPlayFest has selected six plays in each of its biennial cycles. In addition, six AACT-member community theatres from around the country have been chosen to mount world premieres of each play. Dramatic Publishing Company subsequently publishes an anthology of the winning plays following each cycle. We are currently two-thirds of the way through the 2018 cycle. Looking ahead to the 2020 cycle, we have already put out a call for new scripts. Reviewers are beginning the challenge of reading and scoring all of the scripts submitted. Plans are also underway to add a dramaturge to the production process. All of this happened because one member spoke up and made us aware of a serious need.

AACT needs organizational and individual members to communicate and engage, making us aware of your needs. How can we better serve you and your home theatre? Are you a member because of the benefits? Do you join because you believe that AACT makes a difference to the success of your home theatre by providing benefits such as discounts on royalties? Did you join AACT because you like being part of the festival process?

We've also created some new programming specifically focused on our youth. Youth festivals, leadership training, and master classes are helping to ignite our younger theatre artists. We think this programming is just going to grow and grow. Youthful enthusiasm and creativity infects us all. Young people are also inspired as they experience festival shows and visit with adult actors, technicians, and enthusiastic audiences.

So, please let us know what programs, opportunities, and benefits you want AACT to continue, expand, or pursue next. Our board of directors and committee members speak for you at board meetings. Let them know or drop me an email. Contact information is on our website. We want to know if we're on the right track. Let us know. Your ideas might inspire new short or long-term plans. We want to be the best that we can be. Help AACT achieve that goal. We're here to help you and your theatre thrive.

*Carole*



**Skin Flick** by Norm Foster  
9781770917774 | \$15.95

A middle-aged couple and their friend find themselves out of work. So when they come across a mistakenly rented X-rated movie, they get the idea to make their own porno film for some quick cash. The only problem is none of them want to star in it. As if on cue, a birthday telegram messenger accidentally arrives on their doorstep and their cast is set.



**This Is How We Got Here**  
by Keith Barker  
9781770918221 | \$17.95

It's been a year since Paul and Lucille's son committed suicide and their once-solid family bonds are breaking down. While the now-separated couple tries to honour their son, Lucille's sister and her husband refuse to discuss their nephew. The ties that keep the four together are strained by grief and guilt... until a visit from a fox changes everything.

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May/June 2018

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## On the Cover

China's Luo He Yu Opera Group production of *The Seven-Star Sword* will be presented at aactWorldFest 2018 in Venice, Florida in June

## 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.



Post photos on Instagram



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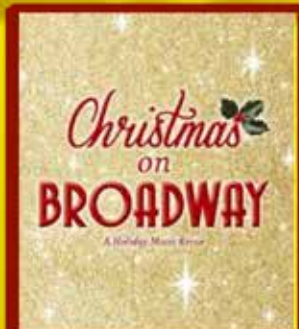
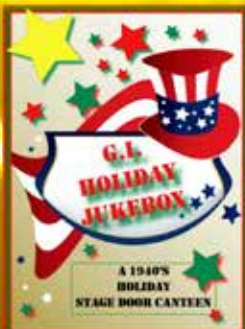


New!  
Premiering at Broadway Rose Theatre, Oregon  
December 2017!

*Your* **HOLIDAY**  
*Hit Parade*

4 Women . 2 Men . 3-piece band

Enjoy holiday hits of yesteryear alongside contemporary charmers in this tuneful new revue created by Rick Lewis and Dan Murphy.



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It's time to carry the banner on your stage with Disney's *Newsies*! Set in turn-of-the century New York City, *Newsies* is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenaged "newsies." When titans of publishing raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions and fight for what's right!

visit us at [mtishows.com/newsies](https://mtishows.com/newsies)



## AACT Board

Carole Ries, *President*  
Topeka, KS (2019)

Rick Kerby, *Executive VP*  
Bradenton, FL (2020)

Jim Walker, *VP Festivals*  
Aberdeen, SD (2020)

Frank Peot, *Secretary*  
Sun Prairie, WI (2018)

Michael D. Fox, *Treasurer*  
North Salt Lake, UT (2018)

## Members at Large

Emily Anderson  
Midland, MI (2020)

Sharon Burum  
Duncan, OK (2018)

Ron Cameron-Lewis  
Ontario, Canada (2019)

Chad-Alan Carr  
Gettysburg, PA (2020)

Michael Cochran  
Padukah, KY (2020)

Allen Ebert  
Madison, WI (2019)

Bob Frame  
Skaneateles, NY (2018)

Richard Gannon  
Naperville, IL (2018)

Kris Geddie  
Venice, FL (2019)

Liz Lydic  
El Segundo, CA (2018)

Sara Phoenix  
Tulsa, OK (2019)

Kristi Quinn  
Dakota City, NE (2020)

Chris Serface  
Tacoma, WA (2019)

Jamie Ulmer  
Beatrice, NE (2019)

## Region Representatives

I Beverley Lord  
Foxborough, MA (2019)

II Open

III Steve Hughes  
Kokomo, IN (2019)

IV Lynn Nelson  
Tupelo, MS (2019)

V Nancy Eppert  
Independence, MO (2019)

VI Sally Barnes  
Broken Arrow, OK (2019)

VII Donna Fisher  
Casper, WY (2019)

VIII Dennis Gilmore  
Indio, CA (2020)

IX Jon Douglas Rake  
Tacoma, WA (2019)

X Dane Winters  
Germany (US Army) (2019)

## Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

### 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 Board Meetings

June 19, 2018, 9:00 am - noon  
June 23, 2018 10:30 am - 12:30 pm  
aact.org/mtgs

### AACT Youth Leadership Conference

June 19-23, 2018, during aactWorldFest 2018  
Venice, FL  
aact.org/conf

### AACT Annual Membership Meeting/ AACT National Awards

Friday, June 22, 2018, 1:00 pm  
Venice, FL  
aact.org/mtgs

### aactWorldFest Closing Ceremonies/ AACT National Awards

June 23, 2018, 7:30 pm  
Venice, FL  
aact.org/worldfest

### National TEAM Conference

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

*Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office or visit [aact.org/calendar](http://aact.org/calendar) for details.*

## AACT Staff

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  
Jill Patchin, Corporate Partners Manager  
Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator  
Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator  
Stephen Peithman, Webmaster

## Spotlight

*Spotlight* is published bimonthly by the American Association of Community Theatre for its members and is annually distributed to an expanded list of known community theatre organizations and interested individuals.

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Design: Jim Covault

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## AACT Insurance Program

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



For more information, contact:  
325-486-5150  
610-362-8832 Fax  
[ken.roberts@usi.com](mailto:ken.roberts@usi.com)



# It's Time for aactWorldFest 2018!

Venice, Florida and all it has to offer is ready for you! If you haven't yet, register today for aactWorldFest 2018. We've been reporting about this amazing international community theatre festival all year, and now it's just a few weeks away. There's still time to join us, but hurry! The time is now to register, book your flight, and reserve your hotel room on the beautiful and balmy west coast of Florida. Go to [aact.org/aactworldfest](http://aact.org/aactworldfest) to get started.

Venice Theatre is excited to host aactWorldFest for the third time. If you attended in 2010 and/or 2014, you know a fantastic time awaits you. 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 know that experiencing live theatre is a treat in any setting; experiencing live theatre from all over the world while vacationing



in Venice, Florida, is heaven. This quaint resort city on the Gulf of Mexico boasts award-winning beaches, tree-lined avenues with every type of restaurant and shop you can imagine, and a welcoming community of folks who will become life-long friends. Trust us. We've seen it happen again and again!

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.



## aactWorldFest 2018 WORKSHOPS

(subject to change, visit [aact.org/worldfest](http://aact.org/worldfest) for updates)

### PERFORMANCE

**Chinese Opera Battles** - Learn the basics of this highly stylized technique, handed down through the centuries. - Dr. Chua Su Pong, Singapore

**Circus Techniques** - Sample a variety of circus arts from the group that preserves Sarasota and Venice's extraordinary circus heritage. The Circus Arts Conservatory, Sarasota, FL

**Commedia dell'arte** - Become a Pantalone, or a Capitano, or another character. Commedia is the basis of all modern physical comedy. Learn the basics of this fun style. - Andrea Lattari and Cinzia Grande, Rome, Italy

**Documentary Theatre**, a three-part workshop - a method of theatre fusing history and original creation - Manuel Ortiz, Santiago, Chile

**Hip Hop For Broadway** - It's not hip-hop as we've known it for three decades. It's not classic Broadway dancing, either. But the style is real and becoming more prevalent. Learn the basics. - Choreographer/Teacher Geena Ravella, Sarasota, FL

**The Shakespeare Code** - Decode one of the secrets to performing Shakespeare. And it's hiding in plain sight. Go "into the words" to find it. - Michael Spicer, Salina (KS) Community Theatre

**Viewpoints** - a three-day workshop - physical and vocal improvisation technique connecting theatre, movement, and music - Donnie Mather, Atlantic Acting School, NYC

**Vocal Master Class** - individual and small group - Get to the root of your own unique vocal instrument. Joan is a master diagnostician whose technique applies to any style of singing. Joan Hazel, formerly Metropolitan Opera, NYC

## ADMINISTRATIVE

**AACT, The Changing Landscape, What Can AACT Do For You?** – AACT panel

**Grant Writing in the Digital Age** – Tips for success on making your grant stand out from others in the era of plain text formatting and “fill in the box” forms. – Murray Chase, Venice, FL

**Resources for Producing Successful Musicals** – New technologies for musical rehearsal and production, including forums, rehearsal software, and stage management programs. Music Theatre International, NYC

**Saving Lives Through Performance** – This panel explores theatre of Direct Impact, on the audience AND the performers. From using performance to overcome disabilities or social restrictions, to changing our world through performance, this workshop will motivate us all. Panel includes Becky Holahan, Director of The Loveland Partnership at Venice Theatre; Halil Yitzhak of Yoram Loewenstein Studio of Tel Aviv; Manuel Ortiz of The University of Chile, Santiago.

## TECHNICAL/DESIGN

**5 Paint Mistakes...And How To Make Them Work!** – Venice Theatre’s resident Scenic Designer shows you how to turn a mishap into a masterpiece. Tim Wisgerhof, Venice, FL

**Asolo Costume Tour** – Visit Florida’s premier professional theatre and take an insider’s look at their exquisite costumes. David Covach, Costumer, Asolo Theatre Company, Sarasota, FL

### Registration

#### Full Festival:

AACT Member	\$280
non-member	\$363
AACT Student Member	\$180
Student non-member	\$263

#### MainStage Only:

AACT Member	\$255
non-member	\$338
AACT Student Member	\$155
Student non-member	\$238

You don’t want to miss any of the exciting events happening at **aactWorldFest 2018!** Go to [aact.org/worldfest](http://aact.org/worldfest) for updates on performances, workshops, and social events. And check out the adjudicators that will be providing educational adjudications throughout this global festival.

*continued on next page* ►

**Three new mothers.  
Three different backgrounds.  
One shared struggle.**



## CRY IT OUT

**BY MOLLY SMITH METZLER**

“A funny story that weaves together very different but highly meaningful stories from three new mothers.”

—USA Today



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# aactWorldFest 2018 Schedule

## pre-festival – Sunday, June 17

1 pm **AACT Community Theatre Management Conference begins**

## Monday, June 18

8:30 am – 5:45 pm **AACT Community Theatre Management Conference continues**

2 – 5 pm **AACT Executive Committee and Finance Committee meetings**

**6:30 pm aactWorldFest Opening Ceremonies**

evening **MainStage Performances**

*The Addams Family*, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, U.S.A.

*The Seven-Star Sword*, Luo He Yu Opera Group, China

**MainStage Adjudication** immediately following

**Afterglow Party in the Park** following performances

## Tuesday, June 19

8:30 am – Noon **AACT Community Theatre Management Conference Discussion and Wrap-up**

8 – 9 am **Youth Leadership Conference begins**

9 am – Noon **AACT Board meeting**

9 am – Noon **Workshops + Master Class**

afternoon **Pinkerton Stage Performances**

*Spirit and Sworded Treks*, Theatre Esprit Asia, U.S.A.

*Pichanga*, Corredor Latinoamericano de Teatro, Chile

**Pinkerton Stage Adjudication** immediately following

**MainStage Performances**

*The Addams Family*, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, U.S.A.

*The Seven-Star Sword*, Luo He Yu Opera Group, China

2 – 5 pm **AACT Committee meetings**

5:45 – 6:30 pm **AACT Youth Leadership Conference**

evening **MainStage Performances**

*Michaelangelo da Caravaggio*, Maner Manush, Italy

*Thumbelina*, Yerevan State Puppet Theatre, Armenia

*Request Stop*, The Wild Bunch, Germany

**MainStage Adjudication** immediately following

**Pinkerton Stage Performances**

*Spirit and Sworded Treks*, Theatre Esprit Asia, U.S.A.

*Pichanga*, Corredor Latinoamericano de Teatro, Chile

**Afterglow Party in the Park** following performances

## Wednesday, June 20

8 – 9 am **AACT Youth Leadership Conference**

9 am – Noon **Workshops + Master Class**

1 – 3:30 pm **AACT Committee meetings**

afternoon **MainStage Performances**

*Michaelangelo da Caravaggio*, Maner Manush, Italy

*Thumbelina*, Yerevan State Puppet Theatre, Armenia

*Request Stop*, The Wild Bunch, Germany

**Pinkerton Stage Performances**

*Bump!*, The Scrambled Egg Theatre Company, United Kingdom

*One of a Kind*, Yoram Loewenstein Performing Arts Studio, Israel

**Pinkerton Stage Adjudication** immediately following

4:30 – 5:15pm **AACT Youth Leadership Conference**

evening **MainStage Performances**

*Who Is A Child?*, Chipawo Trust's Girl Power Troupe, Zimbabwe

*Pan de Cada Dia*, La Compasiva Teatro, Argentina

*The Legendary Banyan Tree*, Le Ngoc Theater Troupe, Vietnam

**MainStage Adjudication** immediately following

**Pinkerton Stage Performances**

*Bump!*, The Scrambled Egg Theatre Company, United Kingdom

*One of a Kind*, Yoram Loewenstein Performing Arts Studio, Israel

**Afterglow Party in the Park** following performances



*Request Stop*



*One of a Kind*



*Michaelangelo da Caravaggio*

continued on page 12 ►





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AACT members get 10% off all Samuel French published scripts, vocal selections, and sheet music when they shop at **SAMUELFRENCH.COM**.

*For more information visit* **AACT.ORG/SAMUEL-FRENCH**.

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### Thursday, June 21

- 8 – 9 am AACT Youth Leadership Conference  
 8 – 10 am Breakfast provided by Vendors  
 9 am – Noon Workshops + Master Class  
 afternoon MainStage Performances  
*Who Is A Child?*, Chipawo Trust's Girl Power Troupe, Zimbabwe  
*Pan de Cada Dia*, La Compasiva Teatro, Argentina  
*The Legendary Banyan Tree*, Le Ngoc Theater Troupe, Vietnam  
 Pinkerton Stage Performances  
*Spirit and Sworded Treks*, Theatre Esprit Asia, U.S.A.  
*Pichanga*, Corredor Latinoamericano de Teatro, Chile  
 6 – 7 pm AACT Youth Leadership Conference  
 7 – Midnight Dinner at Sharkey's on the beach – includes Australian Fire Show



*Bump!*

### Friday, June 22

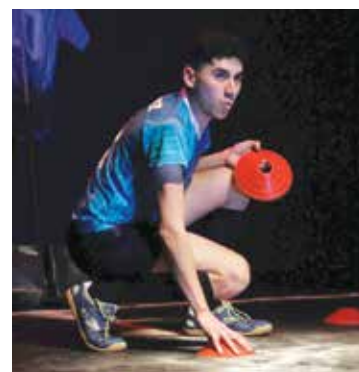
- 8 – 9 am AACT Youth Leadership Conference  
 9 am – Noon Workshops + Master Class  
 1 – 2 pm AACT Annual Membership meeting/AACT National Awards presentations  
 David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award  
 Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award  
 Distinguished Merit Award  
 Special Recognition Award  
 Shining Star Award  
 2 – 5 pm AACT Committee meetings  
 4:30 – 5:20 pm AACT Youth Leadership Conference  
 evening MainStage Performances  
*MacBeth*, Experimental Theatre Everywhere, Georgia  
*Monochrome*, Lieder Theatre Company, Australia  
*The Stone of Patience*, Zapadnia Theatre, Poland  
 Mainstage Adjudication immediately following  
 Pinkerton Stage Performances  
*Bump!*, The Scrambled Egg Theatre Company, United Kingdom  
*One of a Kind*, Yoram Loewenstein Performing Arts Studio, Israel  
 Afterglow Party in the Park following performances



*Pan de Cada Dia*

### Saturday, June 23

- 8 – 9 am AACT Youth Leadership Conference  
 9 – 10:30 am AACT Committee meetings  
 9 am – Noon Workshops  
 10:30 – 12:30 pm AACT Board meeting  
 afternoon MainStage Performances  
*MacBeth*, Experimental Theatre Everywhere, Georgia  
*Monochrome*, Lieder Theatre Company, Australia  
*The Stone of Patience*, Zapadnia Theatre, Poland  
 AACT Monologue Competition  
 5:30 – 6:30 pm AACT Youth Leadership Conference  
 7:30 – 9:30 pm aactWorldFest Closing Ceremonies/AACT National Award presentations  
 Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award  
 Mort Clark International Achievement Award  
 Diamond Crown Organization Award  
 Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award  
 Afterglow Party in the Park following closing ceremonies



*Pichanga*



*MacBeth*

Schedule is subject to change. Check for updates at [aact.org/worldfest](http://aact.org/worldfest)

# Explore Florida

The festival productions, workshops, and parties are plenty to keep you busy, but we encourage you to take time to soak in the local culture. Boating, fishing, golfing, biking, paddle boarding – whatever your pleasure, you can do it in Venice. Just a few miles from downtown, Old Florida rivers and creeks (and the unique wildlife that call them home) await you. Several state parks and preserves provide the perfect setting for a relaxing hike or boat ride.



*Florida's West Coast Intracoastal Waterway gives boaters beautiful views and incredible wildlife on a protected route with extraordinary ports of call*

If you like to golf there are 23 courses in the Venice area alone, including the championship Plantation Golf and Country Club courses, where the Ladies PGA Qualifying School tournament is held. Deep-sea fishing, parasailing, canoeing, kayaking, and bird-watching are also popular pastimes in this paradise on the gulf.

Take a short drive or bus ride and you'll find even more to do:

- Only 30 minutes away, Sarasota is consistently hailed as one of the nation's top-five cities for the arts. You'll find theatre, ballet, and symphony performances, art galleries, the renowned Ringling Museum, and the world-famous Selby Botanical Gardens

- Just an hour away you can enjoy Tampa Bay Rays major league baseball games or Busch Gardens Amusement Park and Zoological Gardens

- Walt Disney World and Universal Studios are about two hours away. Head the other direction and you'll find yourself deep in the legendary Florida Everglades

- And, the Kennedy Space Center is just a three-hour drive from Venice

Breathtaking theatre, invigorating workshops, professional networking, tourist attractions, and local haunts will all be in Venice for you to enjoy. **Come early, and stay a few days after the festival to enjoy all the Florida has to offer. We can't wait to see you! ♦**



*The welcoming community of Venice boasts award-winning beaches, and tree-lined avenues with every type of restaurant and shop you can imagine.*

## A New Dramatic Comedy by Will Holcomb

# CLINICALLY UNDEPRESSED

*Anger is just a state of mind...*

A boy born without the ability to feel anger or sadness.  
But what he can do...is change lives.

*"Out of 84 productions in 7 seasons, this is the only show we have done twice. The audience's response is always overwhelming."* john daniels jr., Director of Playhouse Smithville

<http://clinicallyundepressed.com>





# Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) 2018

Join us in beautiful Florida for the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC). This Conference is for anyone responsible for managing or interested in running a community theatre. The CTMC will be held Sunday, June 17 - Tuesday, June 19 just prior to aactWorldFest 2018 at Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida.

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.

The Conference is geared to theatres of all sizes, from those that are fully staffed to those that may not have full-time staff. It's a simple formula: an open-ended free-flowing sharing of successes, horror stories, concerns, and advice. The exchanges are roughly tied to a series of topics covering critical aspects of theatre management.

"I was amazed to hear how theatre groups large and small are facing the same challenges as our little theatre in Rochester, Minnesota. What a wonderful opportunity to make connections with others as well as revitalize yourself."

*Kelly Hain, Rochester Repertory Theatre,  
Chair of Play Selection Committee*

"A wonderful transformation occurs over the six sessions of the conference. We move away from being intimidated or evangelical or mired in distractions from home. We begin to listen and to appreciate the contributions that each of us brings to the conversation. We build trust and friendships that we can continue by text, email, or even picking up the phone."

*Merritt Olsen, former Executive/Artistic Director of Black Hills Community Theater in Rapid City, South Dakota, and San Juan Community Theatre in Friday Harbor, Washington*

Because CTMC is a pre-conference prior to aactWorldFest 2018 in Venice, you can attend two events in one trip! CTMC attendees receive a \$50 discount on their aactWorldFest registration.

CTMC 2018 will be facilitated by Educator and Director Ron Ziegler. Conference schedule and Ron's bio available at [aact.org/ctmc](http://aact.org/ctmc)

The Community Theatre Management 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!



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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.

**REGISTER NOW** at [aact.org/ctmc](http://aact.org/ctmc)

**AACT Member**

by June 1 - \$260

after June 1 - \$290

**Non-member**

by June 1 - \$335

After June 1 - \$365

**HOTEL & TRAVEL** - CTMC hotel rates are the same as aactWorldFest - [venicestage.com/international/lodging/](http://venicestage.com/international/lodging/) ♦

"The Conference allowed me to step out of my world and hear wonderful stories and ideas from those who devote their lives to leading community theatre."

Mark Masbruch, Rochester Repertory Theatre  
Treasurer



*CTMC provides engaging roundtable collaborative discussions. Participants gain a multitude of ideas, options, solutions, and more*

**'THE WORLD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL ROCK & ROLL MUSICAL'**

2019 will mark the show's **30th Anniversary Year** and **60th** of "the Day the Music Died".

License your theatre's production now for the 2019-20 season at [buddythemusical.com](http://buddythemusical.com) and be a part of this very special occasion!

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

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# Theatre Builds Character

## AACT 2018 Youth Leadership Conference

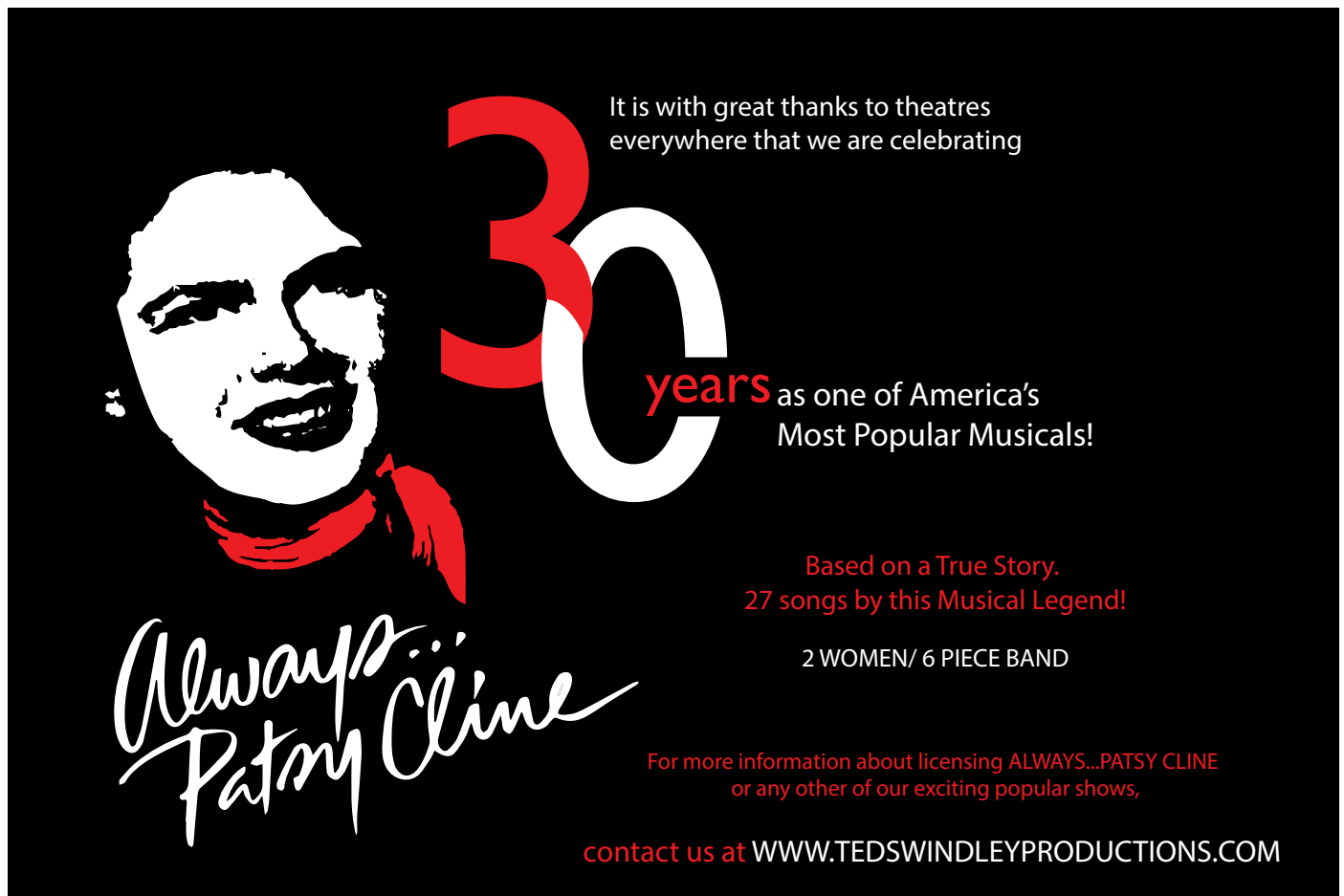
In conjunction with aactWorldFest, AACT will be hosting a Youth Leadership Conference June 18 - 23, 2018 at the Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida. The conference will focus on cultivating youth who aspire to be leaders in their communities through the power of theatre. The conference is open to ages 14-18 and will consist of attending aactWorldFest shows, round-table discussions, youth activities, and enlightening sessions. The goal of this exciting conference is to instill confidence and build character through an exhilarating and stimulating experience.

The conference will be facilitated by Educator, Director, and Choreographer Scott Keys. Scott holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre Performance from Syracuse University and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre Writing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where he was awarded the Oscar Hammerstein Fellowship for Distinguished Writing. Scott holds a degree in Secondary Education from Eckerd College and recently completed his certification as a teacher of The Meisner Technique under the renowned Larry Silverberg. He has been a theatre educator in Florida for 19 years and has been part of the theatre faculty at Booker Visual & Performing Arts High School in Sarasota since 2000. He was named 2008-2009 Teacher of the Year at Booker. He has



*Scott Keys*

directed over 200 plays and musicals in professional and educational theatres in Florida, New York, and across the Midwest. He is on the Board of Directors for the Florida Theatre Conference (FTC) and has served as an adjudicator for FTC and the International Thespian Society. He acted as Artistic Director of



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Weathervane Playhouse in Ohio for seven years. A published composer, playwright, and lyricist, Scott served as an Artistic Associate at Playwright's Horizons in New York and has had his work produced professionally in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Seattle, St. Petersburg, and Madrid, Spain.

*"Theatre Builds Character. That has remained the key-stone of my teaching philosophy. Theatre fundamentals and experiences, as well as coping with the "drama" of daily life, are students' building blocks to becoming better people and life-long learners. Theatre students develop courage, confidence, and curiosity. They learn to celebrate all aspects of the human experience, they learn to try, fail, and try again by asking questions, taking action, and making a difference. Theatre to me is as much about social-emotional learning as it is about performing."*

– Scott Keys

## Registration

Registration for the Youth Leadership Conference is only \$35. The AACT 2018 Youth Leadership Conference is an add-on event of aactWorldFest. Participants must either be registered for the mainstage shows or for the full festival in order to see the shows. Students receive a discount on their registrations. For more info on how to register, visit [aact.org/aactworldfest](http://aact.org/aactworldfest).

## Schedule

### Tuesday, June 19

8 - 9 am: **Meet and Greet** - At the meet and greet, we will split up into teams so you can work with other youth leaders from different theatres on a Scavenger Hunt

5:45 - 6:30 pm: Afternoon discussion of Tuesday's shows

### Wednesday, June 20

8 - 9 am: Youth Leadership Conference Session - **Getting to Know You** - plan to share a little about your home theatre and yourself

4:30 - 5:20 pm: **Afternoon discussion** of Wednesday's shows

### Thursday, June 21

8 - 9 am: Youth Leadership Conference Session - **All about AACT!** - present your answers to the Scavenger Hunt

6 - 7 pm: **Afternoon discussion** of Thursday's shows

### Friday, June 22

8 - 9 am: Youth Leadership Conference Session


4:30 - 5:20 pm: **Afternoon discussion** of Friday's shows

### Saturday, June 23

8 - 9 am: Youth Leadership Conference Session

5:30 - 6:30 pm: **Afternoon discussion** of Saturday's shows

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# Countdown to TEAM Conference

Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Membership Engagement Director

The clock is ticking and the excitement is building as we rapidly approach TEAM Conference 2018. Unfortunately, the opportunity for saving \$100 or more on registration for this great event is slipping away. The Early Bird registration discount ends Friday, June 29. So, when the next issue of *Spotlight* “hits the stands,” it will be too late to take advantage of that great discount.



*Hale Centre Theatre's new 133,000 square-foot \$80 million Mountain America Performing Arts Centre will be hosting the 2018 TEAM Conference*

The beautiful Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, will host this year's TEAM Conference. The theatre opened its new facility



*Construction of Hale Centre Theatre's new in-the-round Centre Stage Theatre includes a mechanized lift in the midst of audience seating that accommodates 901 patrons*

in late 2017. With a 900-seat mainstage performance space and a 467-seat Jewel Box (black box) performance space, construction of that impressive facility took some 14 months at a cost of \$80 million. While, today, this theatre may be what dreams are made of for many of our

members, Hale Centre definitely understands the challenges of young and smaller budget theatres—and what it takes to make things work. Founded in 1985, the theatre's first production was attended by just 25 paid patrons and took place in a former lingerie factory with sets constructed of salvaged plywood, costumes made from bedspreads and poster boards, and a “sound system” consisting of a tape recorder held up to a microphone. What a difference 30 years can make!

TEAM Conference will take place August 17-19 and 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 beneficial to them. Facilitators then review the survey results allowing them to cater and personalize the workshop sessions for those in attendance.

AACT is pleased to announce that this year's 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 are also featured in *Spotlight*. This issue presents Jennifer Hamilton, Kacey Udy, and Rob Kinmont. Kristi Quinn and Morrie Enders bios were published with other TEAM information in the March/April issue of *Spotlight* (see “TEAM Conference—Teeming with Opportunities!”; [aact.org/spotlight-archive](http://aact.org/spotlight-archive))

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.

Registration rates, including new discounts for theatres sending three or more participants (Group Rate), are as follows:

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

Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn new skills, strategies, and solutions to challenges as you network with other theatre leaders from around the country. And don't miss out on the benefit of saving up to \$125 per person on registration! Time runs out on the Early Bird discount in just a few short weeks. Make plans now to visit the Hale Centre Theatre August 17-19 for TEAM Conference 2018.



## Hotel:

Hilton Garden Inn Salt Lake City/Sandy  
277 West Sego Lily Drive, Sandy, Utah 84070

Call for Reservations: 801-352-9400 - Group Code is A8C

Deadline for Group Rate: July 26, 2018

Fax: +1-801-352-9401

Rate: \$119 for King/ Queen Standard (double occupancy--additional guests in room are only \$7 each) and includes breakfast

Online Reservation Link - Click here to book your group rate with AACT -- August 2018 -- HGI Sandy

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## 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).

To register for the 2018 TEAM Conference, go to [aact.org/team-conference](http://aact.org/team-conference)

## Jennifer Hamilton

### Educational Programming Directors

#### Biography

Most recently serving AACT as facilitator for the Youth Leadership Conference at AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota, Jennifer began her AACT involvement in 2008 facilitating the Education Directors Workshop in Kansas City, Missouri. Since that time, she has also presented a workshop at AACTFest 2009 in Tacoma, Washington, and served on both the Education and Workshop committees.



Jennifer began her professional theatre work as Education Director for Topeka Civic Theatre and Academy in Topeka, Kansas, a position she held from 2002 until 2014. In that role, she administered year-round classes for ages four through adult, developed and grew a summer camp program from 30 students to 300+, worked with a teen improvisation group, developed outreach programming for area schools and under-served communities, directed over 50 youth and Theatre for Young

Audiences productions, and secured program funding through grant writing.

Earning her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Sterling College in 1993, Jennifer subsequently earned her Master of Arts in Theatre & Film from the University of Kansas in 2003.

#### Philosophy/Approach to Educational Programming

Jennifer believes that a strong community theatre education program is one that emphasizes the **community** focus, reaching as much of the community as possible. She stresses that theatres can educate not only individual students through direct teaching but can educate entire communities on the transformative quality of theatre by seeking out, initiating, and growing relationships with schools and other community partners.

*continued on page 21 ►*

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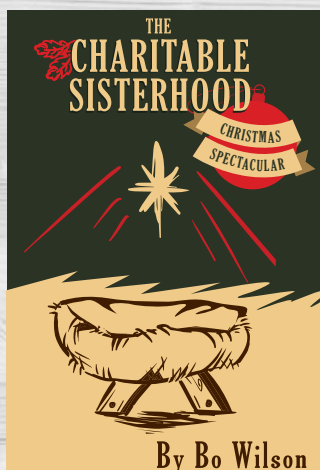
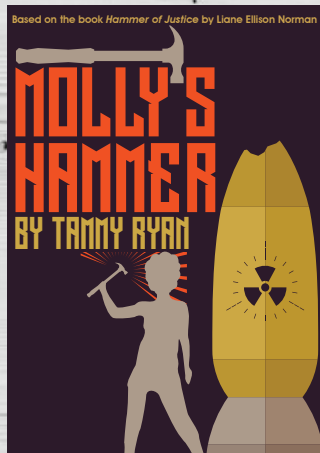
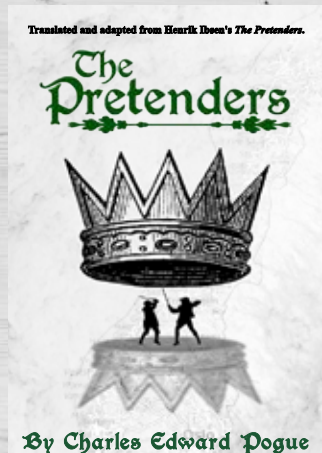
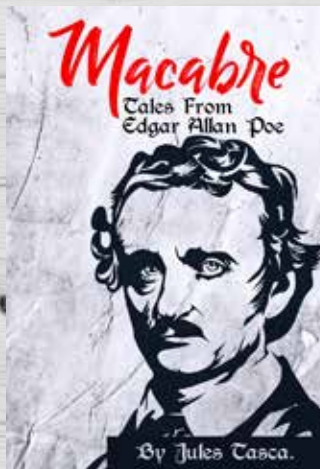
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TEAM Conference Facilitators continued from page 19

## Kacey Udy Technical Theatre Skills Co-Facilitator

### Biography

Kacey serves as the Technical Director and Resident Scenic Designer for the Hale Centre Theatre. Approaching his 100th production with Hale Centre, his design for the regional premiere of *The Pirate Queen* won the 2016 USITT Design Expo.



He earned his BFA in Theatre Arts (focusing on Graphic and Scenic Design) from the Caine College of the Arts at Utah State University (USU) in Logan, Utah. While at USU, Kacey's designs received multiple regional design awards and were included with the U.S. delegation at the Prague Quadrennial. He was also awarded Undergraduate Researcher of the Year by USU.

Calling upon his experience spanning more than a decade, Kacey helped to lead Hale Centre prepare for the move into their new 133,000 square foot facility. He was instrumental in the design of Hale Centre's two new stages, general building layout, and the overall interior aesthetics.

### Philosophy/Approach to Technical Theatre Skills

Kacey believes passionately that strong design is just as much of a character in a production as any performer, and that artists should make sure their work is always actively engaged in the narrative. He believes that with strong passion and focus to the principals of design, great things can happen that are not dependent on budgets or technology. Good design is always good design. He is fueled by the creative process and thrives on being able to collaborate with fellow designers and artists.

## Rob Kinmont Technical Theatre Skills Co-Facilitator

### Biography



Rob has served as the Head of (Stage) Construction for the Hale Centre Theatre for the past several years. He has fabricated numerous innovations for the Theatre, including its first automated tracking system for moving set pieces (*Footloose*) and "bigger and better fire" pyrotechnics (*Zorro the Musical*) by creating a more efficient and repeatable ignition system. Rob and the technical team he manages, whose skills range from specialized metal fabrication to state-of-the-art electronics, love the

challenge of creating something that's never been done before. Rob takes inspiration from Walt Disney who is credited with saying, "It's kind of fun to do the impossible." ♦

# Announcing AACT NewPlayFest 2020 Producing Theatres



AACT NewPlayFest 2020 has kicked off with the selection of Producing Theatres. These Producing Theatres will read scripts that make it to the final round, select the winning plays, and produce the world premiere of a winning play between February 2019 and July 2020.

**Boise Little Theater** AACT Region IX  
100 E Fort St, Boise, Idaho 83712  
boiselittletheater.org



Boise Little Theater (BLT) is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization with an unwavering dedication to quality amateur theatre and has been continuously running since 1948. After the theatre building burned in 1956, plays were produced in donated spaces throughout Boise

until 1958 when a new theatre was built in the Fort Boise area of Boise City. This unique round theatre has become a city landmark. BLT currently produces seven shows per season beginning in September and running into June. BLT also produces an annual Youth Summer Theater Program encompassing ages 10-18 with Boise City Parks and Recreation.

**Manatee Performing Arts Center** AACT Region IV  
502 3rd Ave W, Bradenton, Florida 34205  
manateeperformingartscenter.com



In late 1947, several aspiring actors who also were members of the Bradenton Junior Women's Club organized a

community theatre group known as Manatee Players. Continuously operating for 70 years, The Manatee Players have grown into a beautiful new performing arts facility with two stages, The Manatee Performing Arts Center, which opened in 2013. Providing diverse and enriching opportunities for the entertainment and education of residents and visitors to the Gulf Coast of Florida, the organization produces a Broadway Series of eight shows, Action Through Acting Series of six shows, Camp Productions of four musicals, two new works per season, and Senior Theatre productions.

**Phoenix Stage Company** AACT Region I  
133 Main St, Oakville, Connecticut 06779  
phoenixstagecompany.org



Phoenix Stage Company was founded in 2010, and since has produced over 70 full stage productions. Phoenix Stage Company recently moved into a new 152-seat performance space. It promotes new plays by new playwrights with its New Works Project and a One Act Festival featuring original short plays as part

of its annual season. In 2014, Phoenix Stage Company produced the world premiere of *Jellofish* by Jim Henry as a part of the AACT NewPlayFest.

**Rover Dramawerks** AACT Region VI  
221 W Parker Rd, Plano, Texas 75023  
roverdramawerks.com



Founded in October of 2000, Rover Dramawerks presents treasures, new and rediscovered: theatre "off the beaten path." For the first five years, Rover Dramawerks was homeless and "roving." In 2006, Rover Dramawerks became the resident theatre company at the newly opened Cox Building Playhouse. Due to increasing rent, the board chose

to find and design its own theatre venue which opened in February 2014 in the Ruisseau Village Shopping Center. In addition to a season of six mainstage shows, Rover Dramawerks presents three new play festivals, an annual 10-minute comedy contest, a One Day Only 24-hour play festival, a murder mystery dinner theatre, and two youth plays for actors ages 10-18 each season.

**The Sauk** AACT Region III  
240 E Chicago St, Jonesville, Michigan 49250  
thesauk.org



Started in 1961 as the "Broad Street Players," the organization purchased the former Jonesville Opera House in 1971 and converted it into what is now the Sauk Theatre. The Sauk, also known as Hillsdale Community Theatre, produces a five-show mainstage and a three-show SaukSeconds season and hosts both a local improvisational

troupe and a professional Shakespeare company annually. Each summer, Plays-in-Development readings are produced; a program created in 2015 to give local playwrights an opportunity to workshop their plays. The program expanded nationally and, in 2018, internationally. New plays are also presented as part of the annual Sauk Shorts, an evening of 10-minute plays. In addition, local schools and a local children's theatre company use the theatre for their productions. An annual series of workshops is offered ranging in topics from stage combat, to improv, to understanding Shakespeare's texts.

**Tacoma Little Theatre** AACT Region IX  
210 N I St, Tacoma, Washington 98403  
tacomalittletheatre.com



Founded in 1918, Tacoma Little Theatre (TLT) is a historic live theatre employing professional standards of excellence and has been at its present home in Tacoma's Stadium District for over seventy years. TLT produces seven main stage productions, seven staged readings, youth productions, three four-night Murder Mystery

Dinners, and other special events annually. Educational programs include three four-week summer camps, six after school programs, a home school theatre program, group dance lessons, and improv lessons. TLT also has a resident improv group and a resident burlesque group. A small professional staff and a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors manage the theatre. ♦

# Plan Now for AACTFest 2019 National Festival!

June 18 – 22, 2019

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

[aact.org/19](http://aact.org/19)

Join the Festival!

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.

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 2019 National AACTFest will feature three experienced and nationally known adjudicators. Their comments on productions will be a learning experience for all participating company and audience members.



**Murray Chase** is the Executive/Artistic Director of Venice Theatre, a position he has held for the past 22 years. Venice Theatre (located on Florida's Gulf Coast) is one of the country's largest community theatres and host of aactWorldFest, America's international community theatre festival. Murray has adjudicated across the U.S. for both state and regional community theatre and secondary festivals, including

Regions IV, VI, and IX in AACTFest cycles. He has directed more than 230 shows during his 40-year career and has acted in, designed, and/or produced hundreds more in academic, professional, and community venues ("Some of which occurred before the invention of fire," he notes). Murray has been honored many times for his work in theatre: he is an eight-time Best Director award winner at state and regional festivals, Distinguished Career honoree from the Florida Theatre Conference, a member of the AACT Fellows, and recipient of AACT's Art Cole Lifetime Achievement Award.



**Joel Jahnke**, Professor Emeritus at Montana State University, was Artistic Director of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks from 1981 until his retirement in 2013. Winner of the Governor's Award for the Arts, Shakespeare in the Parks has been featured on NBC Nightly News and Montana PBS, as well as in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. A feature documentary entitled *Bard in the Backcountry* showcases the company throughout its 2013 tour. Joel has served as an adjudicator for the American College Theatre Festival in the Rocky Mountain

region, as well as for AACT regional festivals in South Dakota. He is a recipient of the Phi Kappa Phi Distinguished Teaching Award and the Excellence in Outreach Award from Montana State University. He has appeared in, directed, and/or designed over 400 professional, college, and community theatre productions. In retirement, he continues to pursue professional theatrical opportunities as actor, director, and designer. ♦



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**Sara Phoenix** serves as Artistic Director for Theatre Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She has directed and/or choreographed more than 100 productions for various theatres and schools throughout her 20-year career. She holds a BFA in theatre from the University of Oklahoma and is a certified theatre educator, workshop presenter, and adjudicator, as well as founder of Theatre Tulsa's youth education program. Sara has both performed in and directed award-winning productions at AACTFest National Festivals and has twice

had the opportunity to travel to Germany to perform at the AACT U.S. Army-Europe Festival. Since 2009, she has served on a number of AACT committees, including Workshops, Education, NewPlayFest, and Festival Adjudication. She also served as co-facilitator of AACT's Youth Summit in 2015 and helped to initiate the Youth Conference and Youth Festival at AACTFest 2017 National Festival in Rochester, Minnesota. She currently serves on the AACT Board and is Chair of the Education Committee.

An equally qualified alternate will be in the wings, if needed. The Alternate Adjudicator is to be announced.



*Gettysburg College's beautifully renovated 800-seat Majestic Theater will host performances for AACTFest 2019. The Majestic is located behind the Gettysburg Hotel on downtown Gettysburg's historic Lincoln Square, with a skywalk connecting the hotel and the Majestic Theater building*

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# What is Arts Advocacy and Why We Must Do It?

Carole Ries, AACT President

What do you think of when someone tells you that you should advocate for the arts on the local, state, and national levels? How does art fit into our rapidly changing world? Community theatre advocates worry about many issues impacted by government oversight. We worry that our wireless technology won't be protected by the FCC as the demand for radio frequencies increases. We worry that the new tax law will affect charitable giving. In recognition of the public good, contributions to 501(c)(3) nonprofits have been deductible since 1917. It is expected that taxpayers claiming the charitable deduction will be reduced by more than half as a result of the tax cut which reduced incentives for charitable giving. While the impulse to give comes from the heart, history has shown that tax law impacts what, when, and how much donors give.

**I personally advocated for tax policy that encourages charitable giving and supporting public access to the arts.**

Organized by Americans for the Arts, Arts Advocacy Day brought together a broad cross-section of individuals on March 12 and 13, 2018, along with 85 national organizations. Quiana Clark-Roland and I represented AACT which was once again a National Partner of this important national event. Over 600 representatives from every state of the union participated.

Overall, Arts Advocacy Day outlined fourteen Issue Briefs and three Statements of Concern. There was so much to think about, so many stories to be told. So, let me tell you the stories that captured my imagination. I was particularly taken by what is happening in the world of arts therapy. Many of these therapies are rooted in what we in theatre call creative dramatics. Who knew creative play would lead to the licensed professional therapy

disciplines of art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, psychodrama, and biblio/poetry therapy? These creative arts therapists and community artists work together to provide quality, cost-effective services within a wide variety of healthcare and community settings. Some success stories include:

- At a medical center in South Dakota, staff report a reduction in negative behaviors, decreased use of antipsychotic medication, and increased wellness and quality of life for nursing home residents.
- In Brooklyn, New York, utilizing an interdisciplinary treatment team, the creative arts therapies are used for residents with dementia, as drama therapy and the creative arts therapies tap into memories, improve communication, and provide a calming effect.



*Annika Wooten and AACT President Carole Ries pose with a Kansas buffalo in the office of U.S. Senator Jerry Moran on Arts Advocacy Day*



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- The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health is funding research that examines the impact of behavioral interventions for prevention and treatment of opioid use disorder, determining what therapies, including creative arts therapies, may work, and how they work to manage pain.

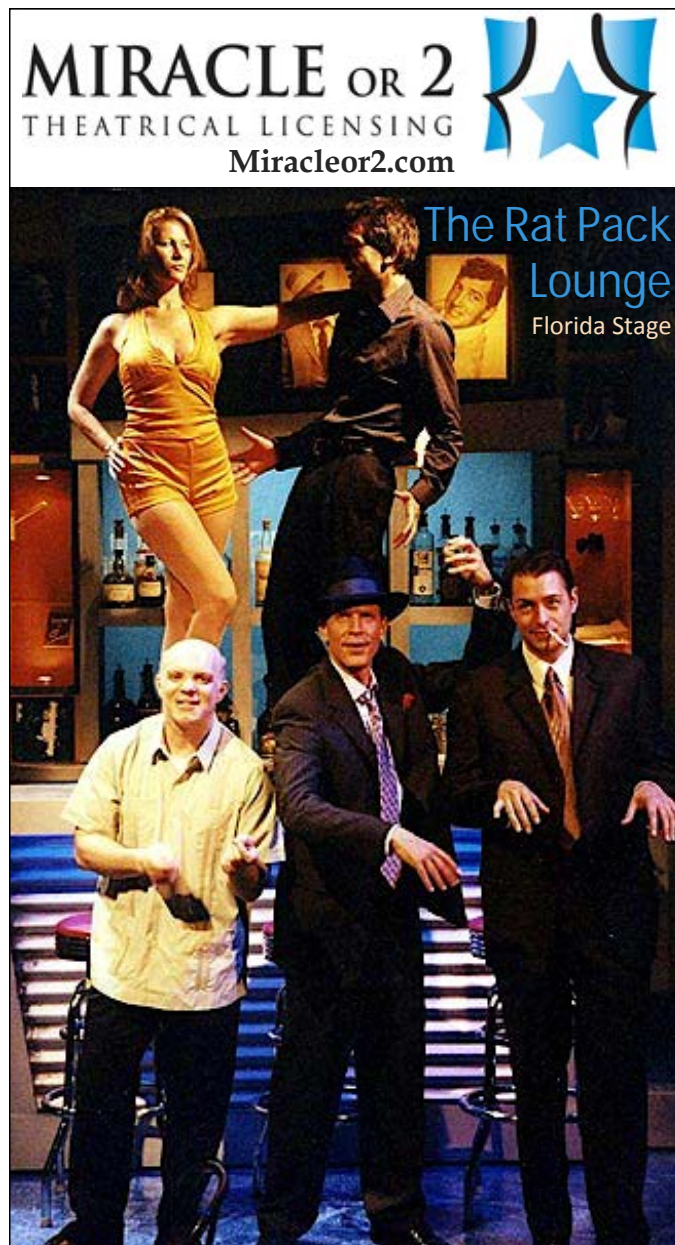
- Research is showing that music therapy is effective in Neonatal Intensive Care Units in improving the health and progress of premature babies.

Americans for the Arts held sessions on Monday that educated participants on how to lobby effectively, provided talking points, and coached us on the background of each issue brief, all to prepare us to visit our Senators and Representatives on Tuesday. I was with the Kansas delegation, captained by Ken Adams, Executive Director for the Kansas Alliance for the Arts in Education. Other members of our group included Annika Wooten, a board member of Kansas Alliance for the Arts in Education (KSAAE), and Maddie Miley, a college student. We chose to focus on a few issues as each meeting was with a legislative aide and lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. We each told our story about why we are passionate about the arts. All four of us focused on how theatre had impacted and changed our lives and those around us. The group advocated for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and asked for a slight increase in funding. I personally advocated for tax policy that encourages charitable giving and supporting public access to the arts. I urged my senators and representatives to reinstate and expand incentives for charitable giving by enacting a universal charitable deduction available to all taxpayers. We also promoted Assistance for Arts Education programs, as authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

We visited Senators Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran. Annika took a selfie with me and a Kansas buffalo in Senator Moran's office. It helps to have a Miss Kansas contestant accompany you in your lobbying efforts. Then we visited all four of our Kansas Representatives, Roger Marshall, Lynn Jenkins, Kevin Yoder, and Ron Estes.

It was a successful day in Washington D.C. Like me, be sure that your voice is heard whenever and wherever you can. ♦

*To learn more about advocating for the Arts, visit [aact.org/advocacy](http://aact.org/advocacy)*







# Reaching New “Heights”: Diversity Success through Community Engagement

Aaron Nichols



Fifteen sold-out shows!  
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Wide-ranging partnerships within a vibrant Latin American Community!

Their *In the Heights* project ended in triumph. But South Bend Civic Theatre’s victory was hard-won. Here’s how a community theatre in South Bend, Indiana, turned an ambitious (and risky) choice into a city-wide phenomenon.

line. We needed to prove, once and for all, that the Civic stage was a true reflection of our community, a welcoming place for diverse stories and diverse voices.

Lights up on scene one of our journey. It’s early 2017; *Hamilton* is a super hit in Chicago and Lin-Manuel Miranda is a household name (even here in the Midwest). Our Play Selection Committee is toying with the idea of producing Miranda’s lesser-known, but equally impressive love letter to his NYC stomping grounds, *In the Heights*. But, questions remained. Could we do justice to this powerful story?

Should we program a show knowing that our current actor pool did not reflect the required diversity of the production? Would our mostly-white audience be interested in an unfamiliar show featuring rapid-fire hip-hop and numbers sung in Spanish? Trusting in our community and the quality of the material, we took a leap of faith.

## DREAM BIG

At the moment *In the Heights* was officially chosen, we formed a small steering committee of passionate and well-connected volunteers. The group decided that rather than just be another show in the season, the “In the Heights Project,” as it came to be known, would be a wide-ranging community outreach initiative. In addition to producing Miranda’s musical, the Civic would also shepherd a community-wide discussion about South Bend’s evolving cultural identity. With this expanded focus, we began planning a diversity symposium on “Race and Identity in American Theatre,” subsidized performances for our Latinx and university communities, and organized a multi-faceted visual art exhibit.



Peter Ringenberg

The cast of South Bend Civic Theatre’s March 2018 production of *In the Heights*

“You’re doing what?! Community theatres can’t do *In the Heights*.” “Didn’t you hear about Chicago and Australia? Even professional theatres can’t produce that show.”

Those were some of the opinions expressed by naysayers when we announced our March 2018 production of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *In the Heights* last July. This skepticism came honestly; over the past few years the Civic had struggled with representation. While *The Color Purple*, *Take Me Out*, and *Black Eagles* succeeded; our productions of *Miss Saigon* and *Water by the Spoonful* missed the mark by using white actors in roles intended for actors of color. Our reputation was on the

## MAKE A PROMISE

While the committee was working on scope and mission, I was searching for strong Latinx directors and designers. There is a decades-long debate on this point – see the spirited 1997 exchange between playwright August Wilson and critic Robert Brustein – but one thing is clear: representation starts at the top. I was lucky to confirm two remarkable talents in director Leah Isabel Tirado and choreographer Jon Martinez. Although reluctant at first, they were convinced by my pledge to honor Miranda’s vision to “do it right, or not at all.” This public and executive commitment to representation was essential to the success of the entire project.

## EARN TRUST

With our mission made clear, we quickly identified and met with potential partners. The most valuable of these was South Bend's preeminent Latinx cultural and advocacy center, La Casa de Amistad. Meetings with their leadership team helped us to understand the importance of listening. We learned that it's not about the idea, it's

Natalie Benling



*Pictured L-R: Emma Magbanua, Mimi Bell, and Andrea Deleon perform a scene from In the Heights at the St. Joseph County Public Library. The cast helped to unveil SJCP's "One Book One Michiana" program. Their 2018 selection focused on Latin American immigrant stories*

about the follow through. Reaching a new community requires patience, humility, and a sustained commitment. After watching our instructors teach theatre in their classrooms and our volunteers host Latinx-focused open houses at the Civic, La Casa's Executive Director realized we were serious. That's when the floodgates of support opened up. We suddenly had access to Latinx media outlets, artists, educators, and community leaders.

## THROW A PARTY

Next, the steering committee arranged what would be the second key to our success: sponsor soirées. In the fall, a full six months before performances, two sponsors hosted receptions at their homes. These receptions allowed the theatre to share our vision and drum up awareness and support from the Latinx community. These events led directly to

Natalie Benling



*In the Heights dance auditions*

continued on next page ►

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Pictured L-R: Margie Davis, Mimi Bell, and Jorge Rivera-Herrans at the first read-through of *In the Heights*



Wepa! The cast of *In the Heights* rehearses the musical number, "Carnaval Del Barrio"

Reaching New "Heights" continued from page 27

the majority of the project's financial sponsorships, community partnerships, and group sales. A note of advice: before the event, determine its primary purpose with your host. Are you fundraising or friend-raising? You're their guest, so be ready to play by their rules.

### STAY OFF THE "FIELD OF DREAMS"

A "Field of Dreams" approach to auditions – "if you [schedule] it, they will come" – does not work for attracting diversity. A theatre, for the uninitiated, is an intimidating place. To overcome this resistance, we carried our Civic brand out of our building and into our city's vibrant Latinx neighborhoods. We promoted auditions with bilingual fliers and on Spanish-language radio. We met with Latinx teachers, social groups, and businesses. And most importantly, we held our first round of auditions in the classrooms of La Casa de Amistad. These efforts paid off! The Civic had never attracted more than a handful of Latinx actors for past productions; auditions for *In the Heights* had nearly 60.

### BECOME A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

The most effective community engagement moment of our "In the Heights Project" happened on January 30. With the help of the City of South Bend, our Civic Rights Heritage Center, the University of Notre Dame, and other civic organizations, we created "Race and Identity in American Theatre: a Diversity Symposium." The event opened with a high-octane number from *In the Heights*, followed by introductions from each of the six panelists, a moderated panel discussion, and an audience Q&A. Note: to control the tone of the evening, questions were submitted during a brief intermission. I would recommend this strategy. Our social media was targeted by white nationalists. To me, that meant we were on the right track!



West Brunswick High School, Shallotte, NC

## Freedom Riders

By Tom Quinn

2 m, 2 w (playing 18 roles)

*Freedom Riders* is set in 1961 as two young women from Harvard try to decide if they should join the Freedom Rides of the 1960s. As you travel along you will meet Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Bobby Kennedy, Theodore Roosevelt, W.E.B. Dubois and many others who fought both for and against our nation's struggle for Civil Rights.



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Christina Brooks, Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the City of South Bend, speaks at the Civic's January 30 "Race and Identity in American Theatre" Diversity Symposium

If you're planning a similar event, gather a wide variety of panelists. We were lucky to have connections to two Tony Award-nominated theatre professionals: John Herrera (Latinx actor/playwright from the original cast of *In the Heights*) and Charles Busch (legendary LGBT actor/playwright). Considering the stature of these two artists, we contracted them both to stay an extra day to lead workshops with our education program. In addition, Herrera worked with our *In the Heights* cast and Busch performed his solo cabaret. Note: if panelists are travelling from more than an hour away, offer transportation, accommodations, and a stipend. We were able to find sponsors to cover these expenses.

Rounding out the panel were Lucas Garcia (Latinx dramaturg, Chicago), Anne García-Romero (Latinx playwright, University of Notre Dame), Darryl Heller (Director, Civil Rights Heritage Center, South Bend), and Christina Brooks (City of South Bend Diversity and Inclusion Officer). The symposium was moderated by Taeyin ChoGlueck, a diversity educator and the co-founder and creative director of InterAction Inc.

I'm happy to say, because of strong media coverage and community interest, the Symposium was a standing-room-only sell out. Note: Don't make events like this free of charge. Without skin in the game, patrons have no incentive to come. We charged \$5.00 and donated all proceeds to our equity initiatives. We also recorded the event and posted it on social media where it has been viewed nearly 4,000 times.

### ENSURE ACCESS

To ensure the project's success, our steering committee also dedicated significant time and resources to access. We confirmed bilingual ushers, offered English and Spanish translations of our program insert, and most importantly, dedicated an entire performance to our Latinx community. The performance was fully-sponsored and tickets were distributed by three Latinx community leaders. Nearly 90% of this audience were new to the theatre. As an added bonus, we partnered with two local restaurants to offer tacos and paletas (frozen fruit treats). We offered a similar subsidized performance the following night for our university community. A large number of tickets were given away to first-generation and DACA students.

### DOCUMENT YOUR JOURNEY

Before auditions, we confirmed a student photographer to document the entire process. During the run of *In the Heights*, we displayed a chronological progression of these photos in our main lobby.

In addition, we showcased the work of local Latinx artists. I would also recommend capturing stories from every step of the process. We interviewed many of the *In the Heights* company; every one of these personal narratives is inspirational. Final note: create a patron survey to collect demographic data. Many grants request this information, and I guarantee your numbers will improve if you celebrate diverse stories and empower diverse voices.

¡Sí, se puede! (Yes, it is possible!) ♦

*Aaron Nichols is the new Executive Director of the South Bend Civic Theatre. Before taking the helm at the Civic, he worked for the University of Notre Dame's Shakespeare at Notre Dame program. Aaron has volunteered as an actor, designer, and director for over twenty years and believes in the power of live theatre to guide all toward hope, unity, and understanding. He believes that civic theatres have a responsibility to authentically reflect and ennoble their communities. Aaron recently completed the Executive Program in Arts and Culture Strategy from the University of Pennsylvania. The "In the Heights project" has been a highlight of his theatrical career.*  
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# AACT 2018-2019 Membership Fees

Quiana Clark Roland, AACT Executive Director

Each fiscal year, AACT reviews its membership rates, benefits, and structure to find balance between the needs and expectations of our membership and the financial solvency of the organization. When developing and updating the Association's budget, we evaluate all of AACT's programs and focus on the goals from our strategic plan, which includes increasing membership engagement and increasing AACT's relevancy today and for future generations.

## Instead of increasing, AACT will be reducing fees this year.

Over the course of past years, AACT members have seen an annual increase to their membership rates. Although this membership fee model is not new for many associations, we have received feedback that many of you are having difficulty keeping up with the increasing costs. This has been most challenging for our senior members on fixed incomes and individuals. The AACT Office and Board leadership have given this feedback great consideration. Instead of increasing, AACT will be reducing fees this year and adding new membership offerings to meet the changing needs of those we serve. The goal is not to get more from less, but to make becoming a member of AACT accessible to all and an invaluable experience for you.

Individual, senior, and couple (formally known as Shared Address) members will see a decrease in rates. The student and youth rate has been combined into one. Most organizational members will see a slight reduction through the rounding down of fees and State/National Association rates will be matched to that of the individual rate. (Offering National Association memberships is new.)

The new rates added this year will include a discounted rate for Retired Military and an all-inclusive rate for Families [Immediate Family of 4 or more (children 18 or under)].

## Membership Fees 2018-2019

\* Indicate new groups added

Individual Members	2017-2018	2018-2019
Individual	\$83	\$75
First-time Individual	\$55	\$55
Couple	\$133	\$125
Senior Individual/Retired Military*	\$66	\$60
Youth/Student (18 and under)	\$10/\$30	\$15
Family* (Parents & Children)	N/A	\$150
Active Military/Wounded Warrior	Complimentary	Complimentary



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Organizational Members	2017-2018	2018-2019
budget under 10K	\$83	\$80
budget 10K to 24,999	\$116	\$115
budget 25K to 99,999	\$176	\$175
budget 100K to 249,999	\$286	\$285
budget 250K to 499,999	\$381	\$380
budget 500K to 999,999	\$546	\$545
budget over 1M	\$910	\$910
Military	\$83	\$80
State/National Assn*	\$56	\$75


We understand that for many of you Community Theatre is a passion and labor of love, but it also must be balanced with life's other responsibilities. AACT wants to reduce as many barriers as it can to make that possible.

As our President Carole Ries noted in her President's Letter, "AACT is looking toward the future.... We want to know if we are on the right track." So please keep giving us feedback on how we are doing. What are the programs and benefits you are enjoying, think need improving, or wish we had? Our driving force is membership engagement and how to best provide you with the tools and resources you need to see your theatre community thrive. For more information on membership rates, visit [aact.org/membership-fees](http://aact.org/membership-fees). ♦

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# AACT Announces 2018 National Awards

AACT is proud to recognize the 2018 recipients of the AACT National Awards, which will be presented in June, during aactWorldFest 2018 in Venice, Florida

## Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award

*Honors a lifetime of leadership in community theatre by members of AACT who have provided leadership at the national level, in addition to local and/or regional levels.*



**Kay Armstrong** (Dallas, Texas) has a long history of providing leadership benefitting community theatre at local, state, regional, and national levels. Prior to her 26-year involvement with AACT, Kay co-founded a community theatre in Glenview, Illinois and later, as Executive Director, assisted the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association (OCTA) in the formation of nine new

theatres. While with OCTA, Kay also supervised the creation of a playwriting competition, youth conference, and traveling board development seminar. She coordinated five state and two regional AACT festivals, and increased the visibility and credibility of community theatres by serving on the Oklahoma Arts Council's Grants Committee and the Oklahoma Arts Institute's Theatre Selection Panel. In her service to AACT, Kay has served on numerous committees and provided guidance as the VP for Festivals and as Festival Commission Chair.

*Kay is small in stature but a giant in passion, support, and leadership for making community theatres thrive!*

## Diamond Crown Organization Award

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



**Richmond Civic Theatre** (RCT), (Richmond, Indiana) proudly presenting its 77th season, is an all-volunteer community theatre located in the historic Murray Theatre in Richmond, Indiana. Outreach, partnerships, and collaboration are guiding forces at the theatre, including work with

public schools, libraries, and local Boys & Girls Clubs in the area. In 2009, RCT celebrated the centennial of the Murray Theatre with an illustrated booklet that chronicled the building's colorful history, as well as a successful capital campaign that included new seating for the theatre, enlarged restrooms, and the purchase and renovation of a neighboring building to

provide much-needed additional space for rehearsals, set-building, and storage.

*For many past and present residents of Richmond who have been longtime audience members, longtime volunteers, and community leaders, RCT is a treasure of their community.*

## Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award

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



**Hale Centre Theatre** (Sandy, Utah) greatly expanded its ability to serve Salt Lake City area theatregoers with the recent unveiling of its new \$80M, 133,306 square-foot Mountain America Performing Arts Centre.

The new facility is home to the world-class, 901-seat Centre Stage Theatre, with state-of-the-art stage automation as well as the 467-seat Jewel Box Stage. The Hale draws more than 24,000 season ticket holders annually from Utah and surrounding states. The first production in the new Centre Stage Theatre was Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*.

*The Hale Centre Theatre believes good theatre begets good theatre, and there is room in each community, and a need, for varying forms of the arts. They are proud to be theatre focused on the family – the place children and adults can learn to love the art. The Hale Centre Theatre reflects their community and gives families experiences they can discuss and memories they can cherish.*

## David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

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



**Jerry Brees** (U.S. Army IMCOM Europe Entertainment, Italy) began his career with U.S. Army Entertainment in Panama in 1983. He has been the U.S. Army Entertainment Director and the Director of the Vicenza, Italy Soldiers' Theater since 2008. His 35-year career exemplifies the U.S. Army Entertainment mission—unwavering service and commitment to soldiers through the art and power of community theatre. Jerry's

visionary leadership, creativity, and innovative thinking has created a vibrant community theatre from a defunct program in

Panama, and brought to life youth programming, monthly Café Jam Nights, and Comedy Workshops. His years of devotion have earned him numerous awards, including the U.S. Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

*As Jerry says, "Being involved in community theatre has enriched my life in a multitude of ways. Theatre is our life force; the creative and artistic elements lift the spirit, the camaraderie defines relationships, and the social impact feeds the soul. I cannot imagine life without theatre and the joy it has brought me and so many others."*



**Michael Spicer** (Salina, Kansas) has been working as a creative partner in community theatre for over 40 years. He has been a leader for more than 20 years, not only to the Salina Community Theatre (SCT), but to the community of Salina itself. In that time, SCT received first place at the AACTFest 2001 National Festival, received the Kansas Governor's Arts Award, and the AACT Twink Lynch Award. In 2009, Michael

led the charge to double the square footage of SCT, helping to raise 3.8 million dollars for a new education wing, a Black Box Theatre, and other creative and administrative spaces. Michael's regard for the importance of outreach has been demonstrated through a partnership with Kansas Wesleyan University's Musical Theatre Education Department, post-production talk-backs, and tickets donated to area adult and youth groups. Michael also brings his years of experience to several Salina organizations, including the Arts and Humanities Commission, City Commission, Downtown Development Board, and Economic Development Commission.

*During his time at the helm of Salina Community Theatre, Michael's tireless work has provided a strong sense of artistic vision, stability, and growth that has led a well-established theatre into new horizons.*



**Lynn Nelson** (Tupelo, Mississippi) was first introduced to the Tupelo Community Theatre (TCT) through her mother Phyllis Hawkins Harper, a long-time volunteer and Board Member. That introduction resulted in Lynn remaining involved in community theatre at the local, state, regional, and national levels for over 30 years. She has been a board member of TCT since 1995, and has served as the theatre's Chair of

Marketing for over 15 years. Lynn has also been involved in the community theatre festival circuit since the 1990s, serving as Community Theatre Chair for both the Mississippi Theatre Association and the Southeastern Theatre Conference. She has served as AACT Region IV Representative to the AACT

*continued on next page ►*

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Board and is active in attending and participating in their meetings, festivals, and governance.

*Lynn's passion for theatre began when she played a spoon in her third grade play about manners. She has given thousands of hours of service for the betterment of community theatre and is an asset to organizations at all levels.*

## Distinguished Merit Award

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



**Andrea Campfield** (Sand Springs, Oklahoma) is the drama teacher for Charles Page High School and also founder of the Sand Springs Community Theatre. With school funding for drama slashed, she engaged the community to participate financially, helping to continue the production of quality shows. Andrea organizes a summer arts tour that has taken her students overseas to tour theatres and museums, and to

New York to attend Broadway shows. Andrea co-authored and

directed a play about inclusion, that involved multigenerational actors and incorporated sign language, for which she received national recognition from Sertoma International, an organization whose philanthropic efforts assist those with communicative disorders.

*In a climate that has been hard on the arts, Andrea never backs away from supporting students and the community in teaching the benefits and necessity of arts in our lives.*



**Gai Jones** (Ojai, California) has been a driving force in community theatre, theatre education, and youth theatre for most of her life. She was recently elected to a two-year term as Vice President of the Educational Theatre Association, to be followed by a two-year term as President. While teaching eighth grade Speech/Drama in Fullerton, California, Gai completed an MA in Theatre as the first woman to earn the degree at California State University—Fullerton.

Gai is founder of California Youth in Theatre and taught theatre at El Dorado High School, Placentia, California, for 34 years. Upon her retirement, El Dorado High School Black Box

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*Gai Jones is truly devoted to theatre and, in particular, intergenerational theatre. She has done an amazing job at the Ojai Art Center Theater bringing youth and adults together in wonderful learning experiences.*



**Dan LaMorte** (U.S. Army IM-COM Europe Entertainment, Mons, Belgium) has brought over a quarter-century of professional experience to his position as sole director of the SHAPE Players and Performing Art School (PAS), a position he has held since 2006. Dan has been the recipient of numerous TOPPER Awards from the Tournament of Plays Festival (an Army-based program created to support volunteerism), and has

taken five SHAPE Players productions to AACTFest National Festivals. After researching and evaluating for five years, he began preparations to integrate a Performing Arts School into the already successful theatre, including new classes in theatre, music, and dance for children and adults. After six years, PAS enrollment has quadrupled, and the income for the organization has tripled.

*Dan recruits professional teachers, develops innovative programs, and is considered a visionary who has influenced and inspired a large and diverse audience.*

### Special Recognition Award

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



**Fred Wise** (Newark, New Jersey) has volunteered for the Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA) for 25 years. When the organization celebrated their 25th anniversary, Fred was asked to put together a historical timeline. Thus, he began a quest to collect and learn everything he could about OCTA. He interviewed board members, reps, delegates, conference

attendees, and member theatres, and continued with building a yearly scrapbook highlighting the organization's activities. He also used his artistic skills to create Christmas ornaments depicting the annual conference theme for the silent auction. When the 50th anniversary arrived, Fred created a scrapbook of the organization's first 50 years. Not surprisingly, many theatres and organizations asked Fred for help in putting together their own histories. Sadly, Fred passed away suddenly in 2017 at the age of 85.

*Without Fred's diligent work, knowledge of OCTA's history would be very little, if not lost all together.*

continued on next page ►

**"Spooky and chilling!"**  
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## Special Recognition Award *continued*



**Cheryl and Tom Navo** (U.S. Army IMCOM Europe Entertainment, Kaiserslautern, Germany) have been active volunteers for 10 years at KMC (Kaiserslautern Military Community) Onstage, Kaiserslautern and the Hilltop Theater, Baumholder. Both have performed, designed, built sets, and directed award-winning shows. In 2016, when the Baumholder Theater closed and KMC Onstage was slated

to be closed, Tom and Cheryl were vital in developing a plan for theatre to continue in the community. In 2017, Cheryl and Tom became volunteer managers and producers of the KMC Onstage Studio Theater. This second, experimental, theatre space will present productions in conjunction with KMC Onstage, and provide additional opportunities for volunteers; more community entertainment; and new, more diverse, and challenging shows. Their dedication is such that Tom and Cheryl postponed their retirement and return to the U.S. so they could continue being part of the KMC Onstage program and volunteer family.

*Cheryl and Tom's overseas military community is a transient one with soldiers and civilians transferring in and out on limited assignments. Their community theatre, KMC Onstage, is a place where they connect with others who love theatre and people who are newly discovering a love for theatre.*

## Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award

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



**David Zacharias** (Merced, California) In December 2017, the Merced Center with the Performing Arts Merced Playhouse lost an important friend in David Zacharias. His support and leadership over the years ensured that the theatre remained open for the past 24 seasons. Whether it was as a board member, patron, donor, actor, or many of the other hats he wore, David was a fixture of his community theatre for

every year since it began. It was through his work, leadership, and kindness that Playhouse Merced weathered many changing tides and has grown stronger with a broad base of community support.

*Robert Hypes, Artistic Director of the Performing Arts Merced Playhouse comments, "Now, every day as I walk through the double doors in the Playhouse, I am reminded of the tens of thousands of lives that have been made better because one person took an interest in community theatre so many years ago."*



**Joseph Connor** (Sandy Spring, Maryland) has served as the lighting director for every single production at the Sandy Spring Theatre Group (SSTG) for 45 years—125 shows and counting. He not only does the lighting designs, but also hangs fixtures and often runs the light board for shows. He has also helped other theatre groups. Mention Joe's name to anyone active in community theatre in Montgomery

County, Maryland, and they will know him, his work (including a lighting design award presented at Maryland's One-Act Festival), and his dedication. In addition to his primary job as lighting director, Joe has also served as Executive Producer of SSTG for the last 32 years.

*Dr. Joe Connor, a physicist by day before he retired and SSTG lighting director extraordinaire, has captured the hearts of all who have known and done theatre with him. He is a theatre treasure. He is always impressed by the caterpillar to butterfly transformation that occurs when someone passes from the darkness of the wings into the lights of the stage.*



**Pat Heiss** (Charlotte, North Carolina) is a "triple threat" actor, dancer, and singer, who has performed and volunteered at Theatre Charlotte for 56 years, and she proclaims, as in *Follies*, "I'm still here!" Over a span of 20 years, she served as a Board Member and then President of the Board. Pat is a "hands-on" event planner for the theatre's annual fundraising ball, and continuously works to raise interest

and community theatre participation in the Charlotte region. She has received numerous theatre performance awards and wide recognition for her volunteering efforts. Pat has a passion for Theatre Charlotte and strives to ensure it continues as a welcoming venue and community resource for actors and volunteers for generations to come.

*After 55 years, Pat is still a most dependable and loyal volunteer. Theatre Charlotte couldn't do without her.*



**Kathleen Davis** (Evergreen, Colorado) has served the Evergreen Players for 51 years. From the start, she has taken on every role that community theatre has to offer, from cleaning the toilets to serving as actor, director, stage manager, choreographer, sound designer, light board operator, grant writer, and in various board positions. Kathleen is currently President of the Board for the Evergreen Players, guiding the

organization into a new era with a new educational facility to serve both children and adults. In recognition of her service to community theatre, Kathleen received the Distinguished Merit Award from the Colorado Community Theatre Coalition. She has participated in the Colorado Theatre Festival, winning several awards, and was part of the Evergreen Players journey to the 2001 AACTFest National Festival with their production of *All in the Timing*.

*Kathleen's guiding principles: "What can we do for the community?" and "What does the community need from the Evergreen Players?"*

## Shining Star Award

*Recognizes individual AACT Members who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of AACT and its mission through their leadership and service on a national level.*



**Kristi Quinn** (Dakota City, Nebraska) is a board member of the Nebraska Association of Community Theatre and has served multiple terms on the AACT Board of Directors, including as Vice President of Festivals for four years. She has served on the AACT Festival Commission, representing AACT at festivals throughout the United States and Region X (Europe), and was

selected as an adjudicator for the 2017 AACTFest National Festival. Kristi has participated in multiple AACT training and educational conferences and has served as a member of task force groups for Festivals, AACT SWOT Analysis, and the Employee Manual.

*Kristi's leadership and vision continue to have a positive impact on AACT's mission.*



**Nancy Eppert** (Independence, MO) became an official member of AACT in 2003. She coordinated the Artistic Directors Conference in 2006 and the Education Directors Conference in 2008. In 2009, Nancy became Chair of AACT's Education Committee and coordinated AACT's first Technical Theatre Conference. She was a strong advocate in the creation and

implementation of the AACTEd Hours program, and served on the Advocacy, Membership, and Workshop Committees, as well as several ad hoc committees and task force groups. Nancy has served as a Member at Large on the AACT Board of Directors and as the AACT Region V Representative to the AACT Board for the past four years.

*Participating in theatre gives Nancy a safe place to express ideas, an outlet for deep emotions, and a family of like-minded people.*

*continued on next page ►*

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## Shining Star Award *continued*



**Sara Phoenix** (Tulsa, Oklahoma) has served on AACT committees since 2009, including Workshop, Education, and Festival Adjudication. She was elected to the AACT Board in 2013 and re-elected in 2016. She has chaired the Education Committee for the past five years, and also serves as a member of the Executive Committee. Sara was co-facilitator of AACT's first Youth Summit in 2015 and continues to

provide guidance to AACT's growing youth programs. She guided the creation of AACT's first Youth Festival in 2017, allowing youth and adults to mix and learn from each other at the AACTFest National Festival. Sara's leadership with the 2017 National Festival was also instrumental in organizing a Youth Leadership Conference, a Monologue Competition, expanding the AACTFest Design Competition, bolstering festival workshops, and revitalizing a "kindred groups program" into AACTChats.

*Sara is a Shining Star whose brightness leads the way into AACT's future.*

## Mort Clark International Achievement Award

*Recognizes significant achievement in the promotion of excellence in international community theatre.*



**Frank Peot** (Sun Prairie, Wisconsin) has spent over two decades supporting and advocating for the value and benefits of participation in international theatre festivals. He has also served as Secretary on the AACT Board of Directors Executive Committee for the past 28 years. No one is ever a stranger to Frank, and he has a gift for encouraging participants from diverse countries to sit together and learn, experience, and interact in

cross-cultural conversations (much like Mort Clark, the award's namesake). Frank has served as the chief U.S. delegate to the World Congress of International Amateur Theatre, attending and singing the praises of the international festival in Monaco and many others along the way.

*Community theatre has enriched Frank's life, created excitement, and provided him with numerous lifelong friends. It has allowed him to be creative in many ways, and he has gained an amazing amount of knowledge about people, the world, and creating incredible entertainment.* ♦

## Artie's Advocacy Tip



### Make Yourself Heard

Advocacy is an important tool for your theatre to achieve its mission!

Although Washington D.C. may seem like it's a world away, it is surprisingly easy for citizens to voice their concerns and seek the help of elected

officials. A letter, phone call, fax, email, or post card from a constituent represents a voice that would otherwise have gone unheard. Each message represents a concerned voter, so it will not be ignored.

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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

# New Roles

## Member Theatre Professional Staffing Changes

### Keep Everyone “In The Know”

- Hired a new member on your artistic or management team?
- Added a new professional position to your staff?
- Changed the title/responsibilities of one of your team members?

Help AACT members join in celebrating your organization’s developments and stay up-to-date with whom to contact at your organization by submitting your professional staffing changes to *Spotlight* for inclusion in “New Roles.”

Positions listed are paid professional positions. Submissions should be sent to: Geoff Leonard-Robinson at [geoff@aacr.org](mailto:geoff@aacr.org).

Visit the Job Postings on the AACT website at [aacr.org/jobs](http://aacr.org/jobs). Job postings are frequently added, so check back often.

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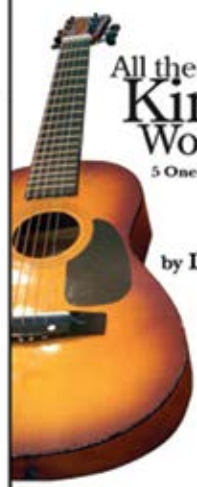
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Listings do not imply AACT endorsement



**Educational Theatre Association  
National Conference**  
Denver, Colorado  
September 13-16, 2018

In 2018, the Conference will explore the profession of the theatre educator, both as teacher and artist. With the theme "We are all Artists," it will examine the intersection of classroom teaching and theatrical artistry, in workshops and keynotes that focus on how

teachers and teaching artists can collaborate and complement one another's strengths to enrich students' theatre experiences.

The Educational Theatre Association's National Conference is held each year to provide educators with the opportunity to meet and network with their peers during an event featuring a wide range of professional development and keynote speakers. Featured Events include appearances by John Cariani, author of *Almost, Maine*, award-winning director and acting teacher Sue Hamilton, and actor Franc D'Ambrosio, best known as The Phantom in Andrew Lloyd Webber's Tony Award-winning musical *The Phantom of the Opera*.

"We are all Artists" aims to help attendees rediscover the artistry in their teaching and the teaching in their art.

Early Registration, with substantial savings, through May 21.

Details: [schooltheatre.org/conference2018/home](http://schooltheatre.org/conference2018/home)

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## Make A Legacy Gift

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.

To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit [aact.org/legacy](http://aact.org/legacy)

or contact the AACT office at [info@aact.org](mailto:info@aact.org)

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## AACT Web Power

**A**sk a question, share ideas, or provide help via **AACTList**, the email discussion group for organizational members of AACT, providing a forum for problem solving and resource sharing among our member theatres.

Once you've subscribed, you can post (or respond to) a question, or raise an issue with other AACT members via email. AACTList members respond to your questions, sharing their experience or expertise with you and everyone else on the list. You can receive e-mails in two ways—individually, as they are sent, or in "digest" form, which groups a day's postings in a single e-mail. All discussions are archived, so you can check to see if your question or concern has been addressed previously.

Complete information can be found at [aact.org/aactlist](http://aact.org/aactlist) (you must be signed in to access this page).

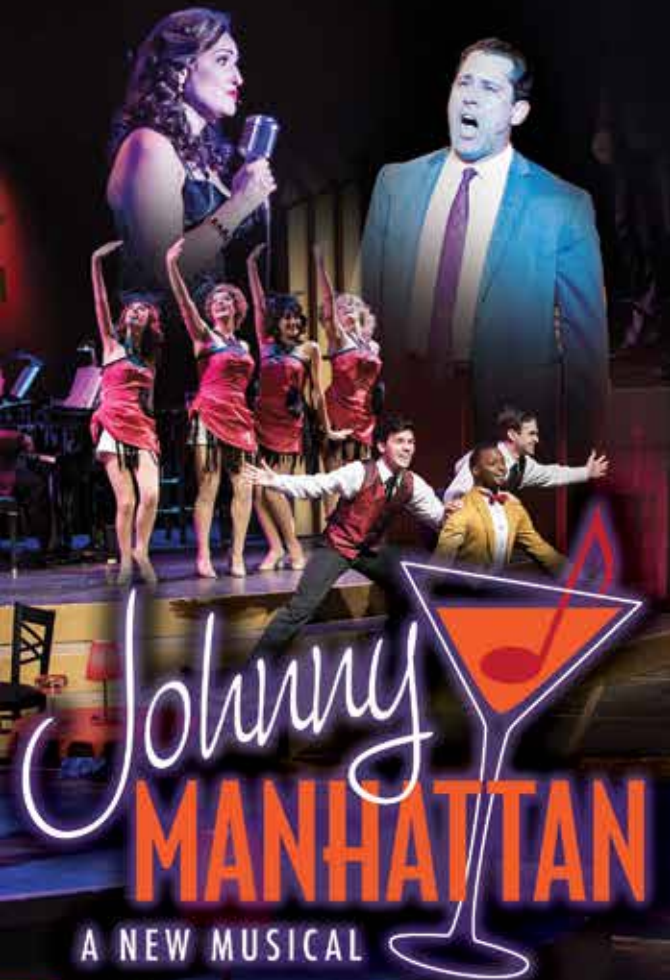
*Watch for Web Power in every issue of Spotlight — and learn how to get the most from the AACT website.*

• • • • •

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# AACT Corporate Partners

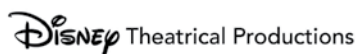
Much of the work of the American Association of Community Theatre would not be possible without the generous support of our Corporate Partners, who are listed below. We thank each of them for their commitment to AACT--and to the work of community theatres everywhere.

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## Southeastern Theatre Conference Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest

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

To be eligible for the contest, the submitting playwright must be a current member of SETC, reside in the SETC region (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia), or attend a college or university within the SETC region.

One winning playwright receives a \$1,000 cash award and an all-expense paid trip to SETC's annual convention, where both a critique and staged reading of the winning play are held. The winning play is also considered for online publication and a feature in *Southern Theatre* magazine.

Submitted work must be by one playwright only. No collaborations or adaptations will be considered. One submission per playwright only. Submitted work must be either a full-length play or thematically related one acts which constitute a full-length play when performed together; no musicals or children's plays.

Plays must be unproduced (no professional productions; readings and workshops are acceptable) and unpublished. Any play which has had more than one consecutive performance by a non-college or university theatre which charged admission and/or had a review will not be considered.

Submissions (email attachment only) to:  
Chair of the Getchell New Play Committee, Joe Frost  
setc.getchell@gmail.com

Deadline: June 1, 2018

Details: [setc.org/scholarships-awards/awards/getchell-new-play-contest/](http://setc.org/scholarships-awards/awards/getchell-new-play-contest/)

## Castillo Theatre Fratti-Newman Political Play Contest

The Castillo Theatre (NYC) sponsors the Mario Fratti-Fred Newman Political Play Contest and reading series annually. In its tenth year, the political play contest is intended to encourage the writing of scripts for the stage that engage the political/social/cultural questions affecting the world today and/or historical events and issues that impact on our heritage.

While Castillo recognizes that in the broadest sense, all theatre is political, the contest is seeking politically progressive plays that: look at social and/or economic problems and challenges; explore possibilities of social transformation; and, reflect the concerns and interests of communities or which explore the importance of community. The contest also welcomes scripts that experiment with form and seek new ways of seeing and experiencing theatrical performance.

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

The contest is judged by a team of distinguished theatre artists. The winning script(s) will receive a reading at the Castillo Theatre in New York City during the theatre's 2019 summer season.

Submissions (hard copy only):  
Castillo Theatre  
543 West 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10036  
Attn: Fratti-Newman Political Play Contest

Deadline: July 1, 2018

Details: [castillo.org/playwriting-contest/](http://castillo.org/playwriting-contest/)



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## Theatre Insurance: *We're not in Kansas anymore!*

Ken Roberts

If you've ever wondered why there's not an insurance company on every street corner that writes coverage for our theatres, consider this: a hypothetical theatre is doing a children's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. One of the members of the Board of Directors has the cutest little dog that can be trained to do whatever is required of Toto for their production. The rehearsals are going off without a hitch, as every night Toto rushes to Dorothy and leaps into her little outstretched arms at just the right moment. However,

**Each policy has its specific role to play in weaving a blanket of protection over our theatres, and each insurance company must understand how we operate so as to not leave any holes in our coverage.**

opening night comes and there are all those proud parents out in the auditorium, which up until now had been empty. When Toto rushes across the stage on cue, the audience erupts into cheers and applause and Toto, instead of leaping into Dorothy's arms, runs over and bites her on the hand causing an injury that requires an 8-year-old girl to get stitches. Now there are medical bills and Mom and Dad are considering suing the theatre as well as the board member for endangering their child.

This type of claim will show up on a theatre's loss history as "dog bite." While this occurrence may not seem that far fetched to those of us who participate in theatre regularly, on any other company's loss history it might raise an eyebrow or two. Insurance companies that cover zoos and animal shelters expect to see dog bites, but the carriers that protect the average nonprofit organization do not. Theatres, however, are a completely different animal (no pun intended), so the few insurance companies that will consider theatre coverage must know that almost anything can, and will, happen.

Depending on the circumstances and location of a theatre, there are several policies that can come into play to cover an accident of this nature. General Liability, Workers Compensation, Directors and Officers Liability, and possibly even Accident Insurance all have a role in paying the bills and demands of our staff, volunteers, and patrons. Each policy has its specific role to play in weaving a blanket of protection over our theatres, and each insurance company must understand how we operate so as to not leave any holes in our coverage.

The bottom line on all of this is that we need to make sure we don't just buy the least expensive policy we can find, but that we can feel secure that our insurance companies know exactly how theatres operate, and that they won't cancel our policies or raise the rates beyond affordability because of a claim that seems bizarre. In the theatre world, nothing is bizarre because, after all, we're not in Kansas anymore. ♦

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*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](http://bardartsnyc.com). Email: [bardarts@verizon.net](mailto:bardarts@verizon.net)





David Cockerell

*The Classic Theatre (San Antonio, TX) and the cast of Bless Me, Última by Rudolfo Anaya welcomed AACT winter board meeting attendees after the performance on February 23, 2018. Pictured (L-R): kneeling/seated — Jennifer Hamilton and Nancy Eppert; first row — Joanne Berry, Lynn Nelson, and AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland; second row — Kerry Berry, JoAnne Nissen, cast members Bella Villarreal, Keli Rosa Cabunoc, Amanda Ireta-Goode, Marisa Varela, and Anna de Luna, AACT President Carole Ries, Bevie Lord, and Sharon Burum; third row — John Eppert, cast members Luis García Jr., Andrew Treviño, Ivan Ortega, Ricardo Guzman, Julio Alberto Sepúlveda, and Alyx Irene Gonzáles, Dennis Yslas, Sara Phoenix, AACT Secretary Frank Peot, Susan Austin, and Sally Barnes; fourth row — Linda Miller, AACT Executive Vice-President Rick Kerby, Ron Cameron-Lewis, AACT Member Engagement Director Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Chris Serface, cast members Carlos Alvarado and Spencer Oldham, Bob Frame, AACT Treasurer Michael Fox, and Donna Fisher [Not pictured: The Classic Theatre Executive and Artistic Director Kelly Hilliard Roush]*

*AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland with Bless Me, Última Director José Ruben De León at Classic Theatre in San Antonio, Texas, following the production of his show attended by AACT members in town for winter board meetings on February 23, 2018*



David Cockerell

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*AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** (L) visited with **Theatre Tuscaloosa** (AL) Managing Director **Adam Miller** (R), and later attended the theatre's production of *The End of The Line* (at SETC in Mobile, AL) on March 5 and 9, 2018*



***Millbrook (AL) Community Players** hosted AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** for a tour of their theatre home on March 5, 2018. Board Member and Past President **John Chain** (L) and Executive Director **John Collier** (R) also shared much of MCP's organizational and performance history*



*AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** (L) visited with **Wetumpka (AL) Depot Players** Executive Director **Kristy Meanor** (Center) and **Rudy** (R) and learned about the theatre's inspiring 38-year journey on March 5, 2018*



***Opelika (AL) Theatre Company** welcomed AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** for a visit to their performance space and an engaging conversation about their theatre and vision for the future on March 6, 2018. Pictured (L-R) **Barbara Patton** (former Mayor of Opelika and Director of the Community Foundation of East Alabama), **Betty Johnston** (Co-founder and Hospitality), **Marty Moore** (Executive/Artistic Director and Co-founder), **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, **Libby Herring** (Co-founder and Stage Director), and **Kim Harling** (Public Relations)*

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

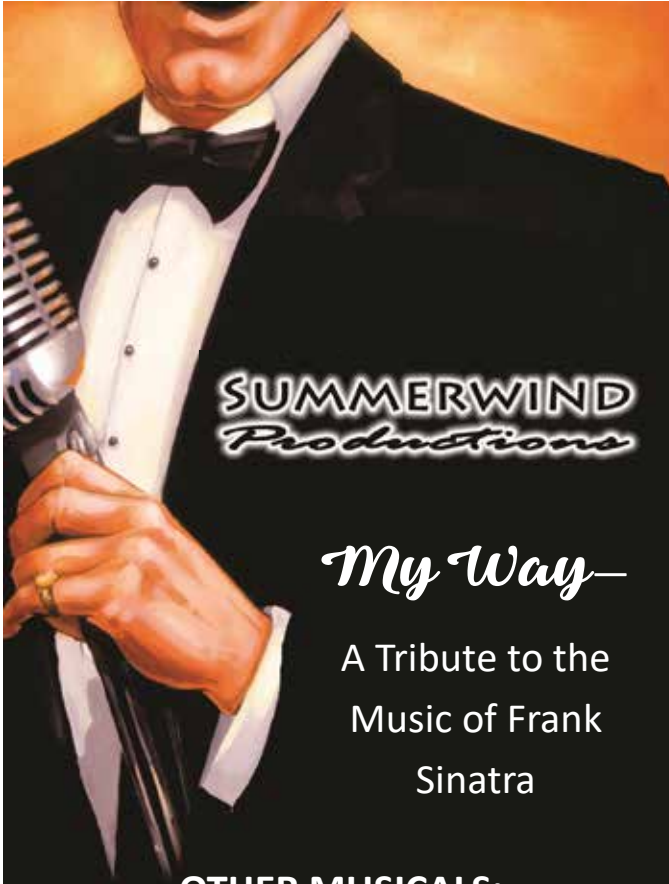
Annie discovers her in-laws are outlaws... and her mother-in-law has hired a mad group of assassins to kill her! How will Annie, a mild-mannered librarian, outwit the best of the Italian, Russian and Irish contract killers? Outrageous laugh out loud comedy at its best.

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AACT On the Road continued from page 47



Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center

Members of the Auburn (AL) Area Community Theatre visited with AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, provided a tour of their performance space, and engaged in a lively discussion of their operation and future goals on March 6, 2018. Pictured (L-R): Artistic Director **Andrea Holliday**, Associate Artistic Director **Steve Bice**, Education Director **Melanie Brown**, **Geoff Leonard-Robinson**, Board President **Terry Kelley** [Attending but not pictured, Board Treasurer **Tim Alroth**]



Geoff Leonard-Robinson

**Melaine Bennett** (L), Managing Director of **Cloverdale Playhouse** (Montgomery, AL), provided a tour of the theatre's performance spaces and an overview of its rich history for AACT Member Engagement Director **Geoff Leonard-Robinson** (R) during a visit on March 6, 2018

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*AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland (far right) sharing a moment at the Kennedy Center with members of Texans for the Arts (L to R) Marci Dallas (FreshArts.org), Ann Grabam (Executive Director Texans for the Arts), Jane Chu (Chairman National Endowment for the Arts), Heidi Marquez Smith (Texas Cultural Trust Council), and Jennifer Townsend (Houston Methodist Hospital) at National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., March 12, 2018*



*AACT President Carole Ries and Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland attending the Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy at National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., March 12, 2018*



*AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland visiting with AACT Corporate Partner Arts People Director of Sales Marc Ross at the SETC Commercial Exhibits and Education Expo in Mobile, Alabama, March 8, 2018*

### Where's My Engagement Director Been?

March 2018

Theatre Tuscaloosa (Alabama)  
Millbrook Community Players (Alabama)  
Wetumpka Depot Players (Alabama)  
Opelika Theatre Company (Alabama)  
Auburn Area Community Theatre (Alabama)  
The Cloverdale Playhouse (Montgomery, Alabama)  
Southeastern Theatre Conference — SETC (Mobile, Alabama)



*AACT Corporate Partners Manager Jill Patchin promoting AACT at the USITT Conference and Stage Expo in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, March 15, 2018. She was assisted by AACT Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler*





When	Who/What	Where	Information
June 17 - 19	Community Theatre Management Conference 2018	FL Venice	817-732-3177 aact.org
June 18 - 23	AACT WorldFest	FL Venice	941-484-4033 x271 venicestage.com/international
June 18 - 23	AACT Youth Leadership Conference	FL Venice	817-732-3177 aact.org
June 25 - 30	International Thespian Festival	OH Cincinnati	513-421-3900 schooltheatre.org/festival

For dates farther ahead, check the website: [aact.org/calendar](http://aact.org/calendar)

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