

# spotlight

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**Carole Ries**  
AACT President

### Community Theatre, Disdained or Beloved?

Do you or someone you know ever say, "It's just community theatre." I doubt that because most of you know better. This is a holdover from negative thinking implying that unless the actors are paid, the work is somehow less. That if your theatre can define itself as 'professional' that it is somehow better. Even though in large cities like Kansas City or Fort Lauderdale, I've seen many community theatres thrive, and many of the actors are seen on stages all over town.

We're all supportive of arts education. We mourn the loss of funding for arts education because we know how the loss of funds impacts the creative and intellectual development of young people. But once those students grow up, their lives and careers may take them away from the arts. That doesn't mean they lose their love of performing. Why is this wonderful institution so often maligned by professionals as well as the media? What is it about community theatre that so easily draws disdain?

In his blog, *Theater the Theater Community Disdains*, Howard Sherman shares his thoughts about possible factors involved in this mindset. "While I'm quite certain there are some fairly sophisticated community theater groups, I'll cede the point that a great deal of the work done in community theatre likely doesn't measure up to professional, or even collegiate standards. But that's not the point of it. If the participants wanted to be professionals, they might be pursuing those goals; perhaps some of them did, and didn't succeed. But I'm willing to go out on a limb and say that the majority of the participants in community theater never sought a professional career, and are happy to be teachers, dentists,

attorneys, mechanics, stay-at-home parents or what have you. The fact is, community theater is a hobby, a passion and an outlet for people who truly love theater. It's the bowling league, the weekly pick-up basketball game, the book group for the performance minded. The participants are, I'm willing to bet, ticket buyers at local theaters, tourists who flock to Broadway or national tours, parents who encourage creativity in their own children. In some cases they may even provide the only theater their community gets to see. They are the people we need."

He goes on to say, "When I worked on the American Theatre Wing's book *The Play That Changed My Life*, I was struck by the fact that this collection of independently written essays ended up including several paeans to community theater, with both Beth Henley and Sarah Ruhl writing about how their parents' community theater experiences informed their own theatrical lives; Chris Durang wrote of play readings in his living room that transformed his mother and the local newspaper editor into the elegant personages of a Noel Coward play... Surely these are not unique stories."

*Follow Howard Sherman on Twitter: [twitter.com/hesherman](https://twitter.com/hesherman)*

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*Carole*



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AACT's wide range of programs and member benefits are a great fit for individuals, and theatres large, small, and in-between

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Theatre of Western Springs created The Collaboration Project to give playwrights and directors practical experience of working together from the beginning of the process on new plays

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Gennaro Leo (*Savage*) and Aleah Montano (*Mynx*) in the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Mynx and Savage* by Rebecca Gorman O'Neill at The Vortex Theatre in Albuquerque, New Mexico  
*Photo by Ryan Dobbs*

## Contacting AACT

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## AACT Board

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

## Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

### National TEAM Conference

August 17-19, 2018  
Salt Lake City, UT  
Hosted by the Hale Centre Theatre  
[aact.org/team](http://aact.org/team)

### AACT Executive Committee

October 12 - 14, 2018  
Gettysburg Hotel  
Gettysburg, PA

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

### Special Thanks

AACT extends special thanks to Destination Gettysburg, Gettysburg Chamber of Commerce, and Gettysburg Tours, Inc. for their hospitality on the recent AACT visit to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

### Corrections

In the listing of AACT National Awards, Special Recognition Award, Fred Wise's hometown was incorrectly listed. Fred Wise is from Newark, Ohio.

### 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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## AACT Insurance Program

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



For more information,  
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# TEAM Conference Two-Minute Warning

Geoff Leonard-Robinson  
Member Engagement Director

Time is running out to register and experience the 2018 TEAM Conference. This year's Conference takes place August 17-19 and is being hosted by the Hale Centre Theatre in their magnificent Mountain America Performing Arts Centre in beautiful Salt Lake City, Utah.



Utah Images - Douglas Pulsipher

*The 2019 TEAM Conference will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, with its breathtaking mountain views. The Conference takes place August 17-19, when the average high and low temperatures are 90 and 63, respectively*

TEAM Conference is composed of four learning tracks: Technical Theatre Skills, Educational Programming Directors, Artistic Direction Vision, and Marketing/Development Skills. Each attendee registers for a single training track taking place over the three days of the Conference (Friday evening through Sunday morning).

TEAM Conference facilitators will be as follows: Technical Theatre Skills—Kacey Udy and Rob Kinmont (Salt Lake City, Utah), Educational Programming Directors—Jennifer Hamilton (Toledo, Oregon), Artistic Direction Vision—Morrie Enders (Lincoln, Nebraska), and Marketing/Development Skills—Kristi Quinn (Dakota City, Nebraska). The résumés and a brief subject matter philosophy from each of the facilitators were previously featured in *Spotlight* (see [aact.org/spotlight-archive](http://aact.org/spotlight-archive)).

## Conference Schedule

### Friday, August 17

4:30-5:30 PM	Registration
5:30-6:30 PM	Dinner* and Tour of Mountain America Performing Arts Centre <i>*Dinner is optional and requires an added \$10 fee</i>
7:00-10:00 PM	Session 1

### Saturday, August 18

8:30 AM-12:30 PM	Session 2
12:30-1:30 PM	Lunch (included with registration)
1:30-5:30 PM	Session 3
7:30 PM	Hale Centre Theatre (HCT) production <i>Compliments of HCT (see Special Offer on page 9)</i>

### Sunday, August 19

8:30 AM-12:30 PM	Session 4
------------------	-----------

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Photo: 7-10 Split, Port Stanley Festival Theatre



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 of July 26 is fast approaching to make reservations and ensure the conference rate.

While the Early Bird discount registration opportunity has passed, TEAM Conference 2018 promises to still be a bargain at the Standard Registration rates, including new discounts for theatres sending three or more participants (Group Rate), which are as follows:

TYPE	STATUS	Standard
Group	Member	\$250
Individual	Member	\$300
Individual	Non-Member	\$350



Hale Centre Theatre's Mountain America Performing Arts Centre

**Special Offer:** The Hale Centre Theatre is offering every registrant a free ticket (\$40 value) to one of their two concurrently running Disney productions: *Newsies: The Broadway Musical* or *My Son Pinocchio: Geppetto's Musical Tale* which are running during the Conference. Check out the Hale Centre Theatre website at [hct.org/online/](http://hct.org/online/) for more information on the shows.



**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).

Don't let time run out! Register today for the 2018 TEAM Conference by going to [aact.org/team-conference](http://aact.org/team-conference). ♦

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# AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere

## The Vortex Theatre Premieres *Mynx and Savage*



Linda M. Lee

*Opening Night of the World Premiere of Mynx and Savage by Rebecca Gorman O'Neill at The Vortex Theatre in Albuquerque, New Mexico*

*Front Row (l-r): Linda M. Lee, Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation; AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland; Chris Hughes, cast; Rebecca Gorman O'Neill, playwright; Heather Donovan, cast; Carrie Blomquist, Dramatic Publishing Company*

*Second Row (l-r): Vortex Theatre Board President Marc Comstock; Tori Whistler, dresser; Louisa O'Neill, costume design, Caitlyn Jones, director, Aleah Montano, cast; Genarro Leo, cast; Ray Rey Griego, director; Bridget Dunne, Vortex board member; Mary Rossman, scenic design, Nina Dorrance, props and dressing*

*Third Row (l-r) Lizzie Torres, dresser; Alfie Darling-Roberts, dresser; Josh Brown: sound design; Santana Flores, deck chief; Maria Alma Rivera, stage manager; James Zamora, lighting technician; Sheldon Blackhorse, dresser; Brigid Smith, scenic painter*

Albuquerque, New Mexico, celebrated the latest AACT NewPlayFest world premiere when *Mynx and Savage* by Rebecca Gorman O'Neill opened on April 27, 2018 at The Vortex Theatre. Opening night included an outstanding production and a festive reception. The production ran through May 12.

Playwright Rebecca Gorman O'Neill attended the opening and expressed, "It is always a powerfully exciting experience for a playwright to see her work realized on stage. I was honored to be chosen by AACT and by The Vortex Theatre for the AACT NewPlayFest production. *Mynx and Savage*, is, I think my favorite play of those I've written.

I cannot imagine a better home for *Mynx and Savage's* world premiere than the Vortex. Everyone, from crew to stage manager to directors to actors, were so amazingly generous with their time and their talents. I was treated to time with members of the board, and got to learn a little about this lovely theatre's proud 42-year history. What was truly humbling was just looking at the program - the work of dozens of people - who all came together to make a story I had written better, stronger, and just more creative than I could have ever done on my own. That's the beauty of live theatre.

Walking into the Vortex for the first time, I was so happy; I'm not a set or lighting or sound designer and I really didn't have any preconceived notions of what the play should look like, but seeing the stage and the actors on it was like seeing part of my imagination realized outside myself. The choices of the director and designers were a revelation; the bright, primary colors, the comic-book style of the set, the sounds that gave depth and context to the story - right down to the smallest prop - everything was chosen with care, consideration, and precision. Of special note were the costumes - 2 of the actors play 4 characters each - and the costume designers and dressers were fantastic. The actors were wonderful, and were so strong and gracious - I will always be thankful for this wonderful cast of 4, for making 10 characters live and breathe on stage.

A playwright is always grateful - it takes the collaboration of so many to make a play come to life. I will always be grateful to The Vortex for making *Mynx and Savage* a reality."

In *Mynx and Savage*, Adam, a comic book writer, is torn between the superheroes that make him money and a dark true story that he is afraid to tell. Ket is an artist-assistant sent by Adam's publisher



to make sure he hits his deadlines. As Adam learns to trust Ket as a colleague and not a corporate tool, Adam's characters start bleeding through: both the bright and glossy Mynx and Savage, and the sweet, quiet, and true story of Adam's troubled past. In the end, Ket makes Adam realize that his stories – no matter what form they take – will always betray his truth.

Rebecca Gorman O'Neill was born in Akron, Ohio; she left at age 17 to attend Dartmouth College. When she won the Eleanor Frost playwriting award her Junior year, she was relieved to have an excuse to stop acting. Rebecca went on to earn her MFA in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. Rebecca's original plays have been produced in the U.S. and in Canada. Her plays *Tell-Tale* and *The Greater Good* are published by Eldridge Publishing and Next Stage Press, respectively. Rebecca is a Professor of English at Metropolitan State University of Denver, where she teaches playwriting, screenwriting, cinema studies, and the graphic novel.

The Vortex Theatre production was directed by Ray Rey Griego and Caitlyn Jones, and the cast included Aleah Montano, Heather Donovan, Chris Hughes, and Genarro Leo; scenic design by Mary Rossmann, costume design by Louisa O'Neill, lighting design by Joseph Wasson, and sound design by Josh Brown.



*Savage (Genarro Leo) is confronted by Mynx (Aleah Montano) in The Vortex Theatre production of Mynx and Savage*

Ryan Dobbs

Vortex Board member Leslee Richards said, "The Vortex Theatre was thrilled with the response to the *Mynx and Savage* opening and to host AACT, the Ayre Theatre Foundation, Dramatic Publishing Company, and playwright Rebecca Gorman O'Neill. With a long history of new play presentations, we were very proud to present this addition to the catalogue in what we feel is a benchmark production. The support of the Ayre Theatre Foundation was especially important to the superb production values and thorough promotion. We look forward to hearing about future productions of Ms. O'Neill's excellent play."

*continued on page 12* ►



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Carrie Blomquist from Dramatic Publishing Company, AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland, and playwright Rebecca Gorman O'Neill enjoy the excitement of opening night at *The Vortex Theatre* on April 27, 2018

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

### AACT NewPlayFest 2018 Upcoming World Premieres

#### *Treehouse* by Joe Musso

Cottage Theatre, Cottage Grove, Oregon, AACT Region IX

[cottage theatre.org](http://cottage theatre.org)

August 10 - 26, 2018

#### *Sweet* by Denise Hinson

County Seat Theater Company, Cloquet, Minnesota, AACT Region V

[countysseattheater.com](http://countysseattheater.com)

September 28 - October 7, 2018

AACT NewPlayFest 2018 is made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation. The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation was created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin Jack. Mr. Lee participated in theatre productions at Drew University in New Jersey and at a community theatre in Connecticut in his younger years and continued that interest when he moved to California. The family is pleased to honor both men through a lasting legacy promoting new works for theatre through AACT NewPlayFest.



Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest winning plays in anthologies and also license production rights for the winning plays. American Association of Community Theatre AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 1 from the 2014 cycle with plays by Cece Dwyer, Paul Elliott, Jim Henry, Nedra Roberts, Barry Weinberg and Bo Wilson; and Volume 2 from the 2016 cycle with plays by William Baer, A.J. DeLauder, Jeanne Drennan, Thomas Hischak, Karen L. Lewis, Malcolm MacDonald, and Nedra Pezold Roberts are available from Dramatic Publishing Company. *Exit Laughing* by Paul Elliott and *Jellofish* by Jim Henry from the 2014 NewPlayFest cycle and *Wash, Dry, Fold* by Nedra Pezold Roberts from the 2016 NewPlayFest cycle are also available in acting editions from Dramatic Publishing Company. Visit [aact.org/dpc](http://aact.org/dpc) for direct links to Dramatic Publishing anthologies and plays and to learn more about discounts and special offers for AACT members. ♦

## BARD ARTS PLAYS

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



An Examined Life

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

For these and other Bard Arts plays visit [bardartsnyc.com](http://bardartsnyc.com). Email: [bardarts@verizon.net](mailto:bardarts@verizon.net)



FunBirds

# AACT Townhall: Sparking Conversation

AACT is taking great strides in expanding member engagement and services throughout Community Theatres. On April 28, 2018 AACT held a New Mexico AACT Townhall Forum hosted by The Vortex Theatre (Albuquerque, NM) in collaboration with the state theatre organization, Theatre New Mexico, and local theatre organization, The Albuquerque Theatre Guild. All Community Theatres new and old, member and non-member, were invited to attend this thoughtful dialogue on the state of community theatre. AACT would like to thank representatives Reginia Garner (Theatre New Mexico) and Claudia Mathes (Albuquerque Theatre Guild) for their guidance and support in planning the event. The forum was a great opportunity for theatres to learn about programs and services, give feedback on those they are receiving, or to request additional resources.

Linda M. Lee



*Participants of the New Mexico Townhall collaborating on challenges and accomplishments impacting their theatres*

With a small staff, AACT does its best to find opportunities to engage members in dialogue that is both meaningful and valuable. We understand that we cannot be everywhere at once, but we can make a concerted effort to maximize the time that we spend in various locations to engage our constituency.

We also understand that not all members have the financial resources to travel outside of their region to attend the various educational conferences and events that we offer. Just like the Theatre Tours, the AACT Townhall Series is a very simple concept in which AACT comes to you!

Facilitated by AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland, the Townhall had over 30 participants from various New Mexico Theatre organizations. Unique to the Townhall model is that the issues and topics discussed are specific to what is happening in the geographical area: politically, economically, demographically, environmentally (as in the case of hurricane or severe weather-prone areas) and artistically. Participants were able to drill down on the

*continued on page 14 ►*

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



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Linda M. Lee

*The AACT New Mexico Townhall was a great opportunity for all attending to network with theatres across the state*

*Front Row (l to r): Teddy Aspen (Las Cruces Community Theatre), Fabianna Tabeling (Popejoy Hall), Erica Herring (Theatre Ensemble Arts), Joey Herring (Theatre Ensemble Arts)*

*Center Row (l to r): Mike Miller (Albuquerque Theatre Guild), Paul Lewis, Glenn Lewis (Los Alamos Little Theatre), Quiana Clark-Roland (AACT), Linda Lopez McAlister (Camino Real Productions), Kathie Maldonado (Theatre New Mexico), Eric Bjorkland (Los Alamos Little Theatre), Mark Boudreau (Las Cruces Community Theatre)*

*Top Row (l to r): Ruben Miller (Sandia Performing Arts), David Richard Jones (Vortex Theatre), Yanning Morin (artist), Matt Heath (Adobe Theatre), Kim Gleason (Two Worlds), Carolyn Wickwire, Claudia Mathes (Albuquerque Theatre Guild), Andy Mayo (Aux Dog Theatre), Regina Garner (Theatre New Mexico), Lorenzo McDuffie (The Growing Stage), Barry Simon (The Liar's Game), Beth Elliot (Musical Theatre SW), E. Sue Coates (multiple theatres), Dennis West (Albuquerque Theatre Guild)*

issues to a very micro-level regarding resources available in the state and region, all the while making lasting connections with their theatre neighbors!

Topics included:

- Decline of reviews and publicity in print media
- Marketing strategies (Google ads)
- Social media engagement (ads, podcasts, Facebook, etc.)
- Fostering new audiences (seniors, millennials, youth)
- Fundraising strategies
- AACT Festival participation: barriers and opportunities
- Festival adjudication training

Participant responses included:

"It was a great meeting! I learned a lot and made some new connections. I will be looking for professional help with grant writing and fundraising. Again, thank you for a great meeting. I hope we can do it again." Ruben Miller, Sandia Performing Arts, Albuquerque

"Thank you for coming to visit us. It was my first time coming to this kind of meeting in the theatre community. I've been on the board for a local theatre company for almost a year and I am learning a lot and it is fascinating." Lorenzo McDuffie, The Growing Stage, Albuquerque



Linda M. Lee

*Claudia Mathes from the Albuquerque Theatre Guild and AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland facilitating the discussion at the New Mexico Townhall*

Following the wrap-up of the meeting, there was much discussion about creating a format to keep the conversations going. AACT was honored to be part of the process. It only takes a spark to ignite a flame and we look forward to more of these conversations sparking up across the country.

The next Townhall is planned for Oregon in August 2018. More details soon! ♦



# Countdown to Gettysburg!

Quiana Clark-Roland, AACT Executive Director

The countdown to AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg has begun...!

On April 12-13, 2018, AACT Corporate Partners Manager Jill Patchin, AACT Board Member and Executive Director of the Gettysburg Community Theatre Chad-Alan Carr, and I met in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to finalize plans for the conference and learn about new offerings in this historic city.

Participants will be in for real a treat! Gettysburg during the summer is a hubbub of activity from quaint shops and award-winning restaurants downtown, national and international tourists visiting, and a variety of historic sites, museums, and sightseeing tours. Located in the heart of the city on Lincoln Square, AACTFest and the conference facilities will be right in the middle of it all. To learn more about downtown Gettysburg, visit [destinationgettysburg.com](http://destinationgettysburg.com).



Lincoln Square, with the Gettysburg Hotel and Majestic Theater center

## AACT Excursions and Tours

On our site visit, we met with the local Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and sightseeing companies to learn about the wide variety of excursions and tours available and how we could tailor them to meet AACT attendees' schedules. Meaning... the only thing you will need to choose is which tour to go on!

Participants will be able to sign-up for tours through the AACTFest 2019 registration process that starts in September 2018. Some options being explored include:

- **Sunset Battlefield Tour through Gettysburg Tours**  
Lasting approximately 1.5 to 2 hours depending on your preference, this excursion will give you an in-depth and up-close driving tour of the Gettysburg Battlefield on a double-decker bus.
- **Savor Gettysburg Food Tours**  
This group-friendly food tour takes participants to approximately five tasting locations, with the final stop being Hauser Estate Winery in the Gettysburg countryside.
- **Ghost Tours**  
Gettysburg has a wide variety of walking and bus ghost tours, ranging from candlelight walking tours to paranormal investigations.
- **Dine Arounds**  
AACT will work with participating restaurants to pre-reserve tables at peak dining hours in one of the nearby popular restaurants. This will be a great way of dining in a dash, experiencing the many different cuisine options downtown and most importantly...not blowing your schedule waiting for a table. More details will be available this fall at [aact.org](http://aact.org).

## Conference Hotels

While there, we had the opportunity to visit the hotels and facilities that will be hosting the festival. Rates and details on how to reserve your room will be available on the AACT website by **September 1, 2018**.

**Gettysburg Hotel** – The Gettysburg Hotel will be the main conference site and hotel for the week. Located right in the heart of downtown Gettysburg on Lincoln Square, the hotel will be the center for AACT Registration, Workshops, Exhibits, Design Competition, and special events. For more information, visit [hotelgettysburg.com](http://hotelgettysburg.com)

**Best Western Gettysburg** – Only a five-minute drive to the conference hotel, this newly-built hotel offers a plethora of services and

*continued on page 16 ►*



## GIFT OF THE MAGI THE MUSICAL

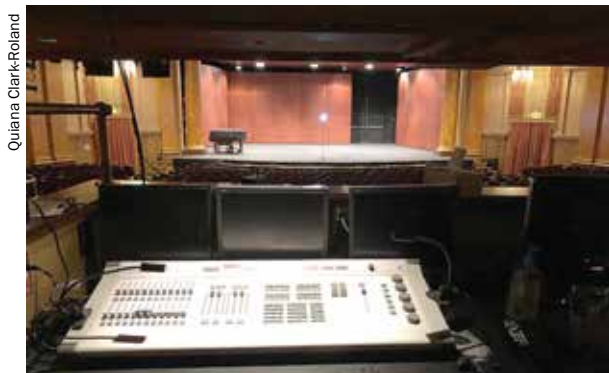
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Gettysburg continued from page 15

amenities including free breakfast, Wi-Fi in rooms and public areas, and parking. The establishment features a pool and hot tub. The hotel also sits right across the street from the Lincoln Gettysburg Address Memorial. For more info, [guestreservations.com/best-western-gettysburg/booking](http://guestreservations.com/best-western-gettysburg/booking)

**Gettysburg College Dorms** – This is a great economical option for those traveling in large groups and/or on a shoestring budget. The dorms are located less than half a mile away from the conference hotel and Majestic Theater. The dorms, however, will only be equipped with the bare essentials such as beds, linens, standard sitting furniture, and some basic bathroom amenities. The rest will be up to you to bring.



*The Majestic Theater stage from the booth*

## Conference Facilities

**Majestic Theater** - The Majestic Theater will be the heart and home of the National Festival performances. The doors first opened November 14, 1925, welcoming audiences to the largest vaudeville and silent movie theater in south-central Pennsylvania. In the 1950's, the Majestic Theater stepped on to the world stage when President Dwight D. Eisenhower and First Lady Mamie Eisenhower regularly attended performances, often in the company of world leaders. The 1,200-seat theatre was restored in 2003 and showcases performing arts and cinema.

**Gettysburg Hotel** - The Gettysburg Hotel, established 1797, is located in the heart of historic downtown Gettysburg and is within walking distance to the Gettysburg battlefield, historic area attractions, and many downtown shops and restaurants. As previously noted, the

hotel will serve as the home for conference activities such as registration, workshops, and exhibits. While there, check out the Ballroom to see the Vault! What was once the Gettysburg National Bank is now the home of the Grand Ballroom that features the original vault.

**Gettysburg Community Theatre** – Established in 2009, Gettysburg Community Theatre's (GCT) mission is "To inspire creativity and confidence, provide cultural enrichment, and instill a love of the theatre arts in people of ALL ages and abilities through quality education and performance." Thanks to Executive Director Chad-Alan Carr and the GCT Board of Directors, AACT will be utilizing GCT for additional workshop space. The theatre is located right off Lincoln Square and is less than a three-minute walk to the Gettysburg Hotel and Majestic Theater.

## Volunteer Opportunities

While there, AACT will be working with the conference facilities, as well as connecting to the Gettysburg CVB and Chamber of Commerce to make this the best festival experience for you. However, just like any other nonprofit organization, we rely heavily on the expertise, time, and commitment of volunteers to make that happen. AACT is looking for volunteers to help make AACTFest 2019 a success. Whether it is just for a few hours or a full commitment, we are looking for greeters, booth sitters, stuffers, merchandise handlers, and smiling faces to make the festival magic happen! So, if you are interested and able to dedicate a few hours to volunteer, please contact me at [Quiana@aact.org](mailto:Quiana@aact.org)

*Looking forward to seeing you in Gettysburg!*



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# AACT YouthFest 2019

## With the National Festival in Gettysburg

AACT YouthFest 2019, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial National Youth Theatre Festival, will be held in conjunction with AACTFest 2019, the National Theatre Festival, June 18 - 22, 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The Festival is by invitation only, and AACT is looking for youth theatre companies interested in performing at AACT YouthFest 2019.

### Basics:

- Company must be an AACT Organizational Member
- Cast must be 12<sup>th</sup> grade and younger. (2019 high school grads are eligible.)
- Scenery elements are encouraged to be minimal, and everything must fit inside a 10' x 10' square offstage.
- Companies are allowed 45 minutes total time, bare stage to bare stage, for set up, performance, and strike.
- Each cast member, crew member, and chaperone must have a full registration to AACTFest 2019.

*The Minnesota SkyVault Theatre Company's production of Book Travelers was presented at AACTFest 2017 National Festival as an AACT YouthFest 2017 production*



Stephen Bird

To learn more about YouthFest visit [aact.org/youthfest](http://aact.org/youthfest) and review the *Youthfest 2019 Participant Guide*. AACTFest 2019 full registration includes the keynote speech, workshops, performances of youth shows as well as the national award-winning companies' shows from the AACTFest 2019 festival cycle, receptions, adjudications, social events, the festival awards ceremony, and more!

A Youth Conference will also be held during AACTFest 2019.

AACTFest rates will be available September 1, 2018. Youth rates will be discounted. With this much lead time, you will have time for project grant writing and other fundraising opportunities.

We look forward to hearing from you about your interest in participating. Companies participating are invited, and we would like to consider you for an invitation.

AACT YouthFest is not a competition, but rather a celebration of Youth Theatre! Performances will be adjudicated and there will be opportunities for individual and group performance awards.

Interested? Email AACT YouthFest 2019 Chair, Chad-Alan Carr at [Chad@GettysburgCommunityTheatre.org](mailto:Chad@GettysburgCommunityTheatre.org). ♦



Stephen Bird

*Clark Youth Theatre from Tulsa Oklahoma presented Snow Angel at the 2017 AACT YouthFest in Rochester, Minnesota*

## AACT Member Discount

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*- Truckee Community Theatre*

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## Call for AACTFest 2019 Workshops

The AACT Workshop Committee is starting their search for workshop concepts and presenters to share their expertise with everyone who attends AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, June 18 - 22, 2019. Send your proposal for a workshop and don't be afraid to think outside the box. Proposals need to be received by November 15, 2018.

Some popular workshops in the past have covered these topics:

- Acting (various styles and techniques)
- Fight Choreography
- Musical Theatre
- Directing
- Starting a Special Needs Theatre Program
- Theatre for Youth
- Administration
- Technology (IT)

We would also love to see more proposals for workshops on:

- Technical theatre
- Improvisation
- Anything else you can think of!!!



Linda M. Lee

*AACTFest National Festival workshops engage participants in exploring many different aspects of theatre*

Workshops are well received when those in attendance have a chance to learn by doing, so please keep that in mind as you put together your proposal. Most workshops will be in the traditional 75-minute format, but we're open to ideas for longer and shorter presentations.

The RFP (Request for Proposals) form is available to complete and submit online. [aact.org/workshopRFP](http://aact.org/workshopRFP)

The Committee is also interested in suggestions for topics that could be presented by others. We are looking for new and exciting workshops. AACT does not provide honorariums for general session presenters. Email your ideas to Chris Serface ([chris@tacomalittletheatre.com](mailto:chris@tacomalittletheatre.com)).

Help us enrich the creative experience in Gettysburg at AACTFest 2019. ♦

# AACT Launches Theatre Allies Program

Geoff Leonard-Robinson  
Member Engagement Director

**Webster's defines an ally as "one that is associated with another as a helper—a person or group that provides assistance and support."**

If one was to identify a specific phrase that gave a general description of community theatre, "**Coming Together**" might embody numerous aspects of what we do:

- Local businesses/arts councils/advertisers/sponsors/underwriters and community theatres **coming together** to keep theatres open and provide programming for communities.
- Volunteers **coming together** to build sets, usher, sell tickets, clean facilities, stage manage, operate lights/sound, and perform on stage to create the best possible productions.
- Productions sometimes **coming together** at the last minute with theatre magic and pulling off great opening nights. (let's be honest...)
- Patrons, supporters, and single-ticket-buying community members **coming together** to experience theatre productions and educational programming.

**Theatre Allies** is a new program being implemented by AACT to encourage and celebrate theatres—and even individual theatre supporters—**coming together** to form alliances in which theatres are strengthened through collaboration, cooperation, and help provided through assistance and support on a local/regional level.

The intention is for long-established, vibrant, and "healthy" theatres ("Theatre A") to identify and reach out to new theatres, or those facing operational/management/funding/artistic challenges ("Theatre B"). Theatre A extends an offer to connect personally, as well as to connect Theatre B to AACT membership and all the resources, discounts, and networking that it provides.

For a Theatre B in an area in which there's not a suitable Theatre A with which to form an alliance, individual AACT members can reach out and offer to be allies with Theatre B by connecting them with AACT membership and its member resources and benefits.

Support options between **Theatre Allies** include numerous possibilities, including the following:

1. Cover all or a portion of Theatre B AACT membership fee for the first year (and/or renewal as appropriate).
2. Allies meet in person, via phone and/or email on a regular basis during the year to discuss situations, offer ideas and

suggestions to address challenges, brainstorm programming/marketing ideas, etc.

3. Share physical resources (e.g. lighting/sound equipment, tools, set materials, etc.) in support of Theatre B productions on a complimentary or reduced rate basis (as able).

Allies contact the AACT national office to have their new alliance documented under the **Theatre Allies** program, arrange new memberships as appropriate, and outline the nature of the relationship that was agreed upon. Under this program, the **Theatre Allies** relationship is a one-year commitment. Should circumstances and agreement between the two Allies indicate extension of the relationship is desired, "official" extensions can be documented in subsequent years for as long as the Allies desire. (Of course, one of the goals of the program is to encourage the formation of long-term collaboration and mutual support beyond the period during which specific assistance is needed.)



## Charter Members of Theatre Allies

While we're just now launching this exciting program, four of our member theatres have already stepped up and formalized their alliance or expressed their interest in participation:

**Grand Rapids Civic Theatre** (Grand Rapids, Michigan)  
Bruce Tinker, Executive/Artistic Director

**Midland Community Theatre** (Midland, Texas)  
Tim Jebson, Executive Director

**Venice Theatre** (Venice, Florida)  
Murray Chase, Executive/Artistic Director

**Artists Collaborative Theatre** (Elkhorn City, Kentucky)  
Stephanie Richards, Executive Director

"Thanks" to these theatres for their vision and collaborative spirit!

If you already are engaged in a similar relationship with a theatre, we'd love to add your names to our inaugural list. OR, if you're now thinking of a theatre that you could assist through such an alliance, reach out to them and offer your assistance, start building that connection, and let AACT know about your new Theatre Allies relationship. Resource material on initiating a potential alliance is available at [aact.org/allies](http://aact.org/allies).

For more information, to offer additional ideas, or to "officially" add the alliance you have or are creating to this new AACT initiative, please contact Member Engagement Director Geoff Leonard-Robinson at 817-732-3177 or [geoff@aact.org](mailto:geoff@aact.org).

Together we are stronger! ♦



# AACT Like Goldilocks

## *Finding just the right fit for members*

Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Member Engagement Director

Most people know the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Goldilocks went into the bears' home and tried the porridge, the chairs, and the beds. In each case, she had to try all three options—feeling that the first two were too hot/large/hard or too cold/small/soft—until she found one that was “just right.” In many ways, as a national organization with some 2,000 members, AACT is like Goldilocks—constantly trying new programs, benefits, and discounts to find ones that are “just right” for its diverse membership.

Unfortunately, when soliciting new members or working with current members, we're often challenged by the reality that for many “perception is reality.” We sometimes hear from large organizations their perception that the benefits and programs offered through membership in AACT are of more service to smaller or rural organizations. Ironically, we also hear from some smaller organizations their perception that what AACT membership offers primarily is focused upon or benefits larger more urban organizations. The challenge is that the two perceptions are not mutually exclusive but can coexist within a membership as diverse as ours.

Clearly it is AACT's task to help both perceptions evolve by more effectively communicating not just the “WHAT” of benefits offered, but also the “HOW” of accessing and utilizing various membership benefits by all of our members—regardless of size—to support and enhance the operation and programming of their organizations. In short, we need to demonstrate to all of our members that AACT offers benefits and support that are “just right” for individuals and theatres of every size.

Here's a sampling of current AACT benefits and how they can benefit various members:

### RESOURCES

**Spotlight magazine**—Provides information, resources, and ideas for **individual members** and **theatres large and small**.

**Resource Library**—Collection of informational documents on a host of topics, from administration to acting, directing to employment policies, and more—**benefits theatres large and small**.

**AACTivity Database**—References from other theatres including job descriptions, salary ranges, policies, mission statements, bylaws, production histories, etc.—**benefits all theatres, especially smaller and new organizations**.

**AACTList**—An email discussion group leveraging the collective experience and knowledge of many member theatres to find answers on how to handle situations, find unique costumes or props, staffing, and more. **Benefits all theatres regardless of size**.

**Resource Roster**—Get connected with a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for personalized help with those “bigger” issues or ones that call for more intensive one-on-one assistance. **Especially beneficial for smaller theatres**.

**Making Theatre** reference materials (Production, Management, Governance, Advocacy)—**Especially helpful for smaller theatres**, but includes **beneficial information regardless of size** (especially resources and ideas on **advocating** for your theatre, the art form, and how it can benefit grant and sponsorship solicitation).

**AACT Bookstore**—Reference books and scripts recommended by AACT including information on where to purchase. **Beneficial for**

**individual members, large theatres, and smaller/newly formed theatres.**

### EDUCATION

**Workshop Videos**—videos of select AACTFest workshops are made available to members on our website. This benefit allows members who could not attend AACTFest, as well as members who did attend but would like to refresh their memories from workshops attended, to view workshops with great information on a variety of management and artistic topics. **This benefits individual members as well as theatres of all sizes.**

**Full-Time Directors Conference**—Intensive 3-day facilitated roundtable discussions covering a host of topics on how to magnify the success of your theatre and its programming. **Helpful to all theatres with Full-time Managing Directors—especially medium to large theatres.**

**Community Theatre Management Conference**—3-day collaborative conference on topics of interest and concern for theatres ranging from those without any full-time staff, to those with part-time administrators, to those with full-time directors. **Very beneficial for new or small to medium size theatres.**

**Youth Leadership Conference**—Whether offered in conjunction with AACTFest or aactWorldFest, this conference exposes participants to amazing theatre and wonderful peer collaboration. Focusing on youth who aspire to be community leaders, the Youth Leadership Conference inspires and cultivates leaders for today and tomorrow with various activities coordinated by an experienced facilitator. **This benefits theatres of any size as well as individual Youth and Family members.**

**TEAM Conference**—A unique four-track intensive learning opportunity that takes place over a 3-day period every two years. Focusing on Technical Skills, Educational Programming, Artistic Vision, and Marketing/Development, this exciting program of facilitated roundtable discussions, concepts and resources, and hands-on participation **benefits theatres large and small, as well as individual members.**

**Adjudication Training**—An opportunity for members to participate in both basic (Level 1) and advanced (Level 2) “hands-on” training in performance/festival adjudication. **This benefits both individual and organizational members** who are interested in learning more about how adjudication is approached. It also helps prepare individual members who are interested in becoming adjudicators, as well as helps organizational members who desire having someone “in-house” to provide critiques and recommendations for their productions.

### FESTIVALS

**AACTFest**—Every two years theatres from across the county come together to present their award-winning productions. Other features include a wide variety of workshops, keynote speaker, Master Classes and extended training opportunities, and more. With discounted member registration fees, this experience **benefits individual members and theatres of every size.**

**aactWorldFest**—Bringing in theatrical productions from all around the world, this unique and enlightening international festival, with workshops and one-of-a-kind training opportunities, offers great features—including discounted member registrations—that **benefit members of every type and at every level.**



**YouthFest**—This festival is designed to engage younger thespians and give them invaluable insight into the festival experience, providing opportunities to present their work at a national festival, experience other youth theatre productions, receive professional adjudication, and attend workshops. As participants or attendees, this **benefits individual as well as all organizational members**.

**AACT NewPlayFest**—Not only does this festival encourage playwrights and celebrate the best in new theatrical works, NewPlayFest also provides opportunities for member theatres to workshop new works with their playwrights and produce world premieres of new plays. This benefit, including the publicity and potential new funding sources that come with it, offers **opportunities for theatres large and small**. In addition, this benefit offers great opportunities for **individual members** who are also playwrights—offering entry at no cost!

## DISCOUNTS

Backdrops, Books, Car/Truck Rentals, Computers, Costumes, Royalties, Scripts, Software, Web Design—A variety of discounts and benefits (**over 40 in all**) that variously **benefit individual and organizational members at all levels**.

**ASCAP**—30% discount on Community Theatre ASCAP license (exclusively available through AACT) covering recorded copyrighted music for pre-show, intermission, post-show, and benefit use. **Benefits member theatres at every level**.

**MTI**—20% discount on materials rental for the first four MTI musicals presented in a season, and FREE materials rental on fifth MTI musical presented the same season. The 20% discount also applies to purchase of the materials package for MTI KIDS and JR. productions. This **benefits all member theatres, regardless of size**.

**Samuel French**—10% discount on all scripts, vocal selections, and sheet music. This **benefit is available for both individual and all organizational members**.

**Dramatic Publishing**—20% discount on licensing fees and cast sets of scripts for select shows. **Benefits all member theatres, regardless of size**.

**Sherwin-Williams Paint and Supplies**—30% (or more) discount on Sherwin-Williams paint and supplies. This **benefit is available for all members—Individual and Organizational**.

## SERVICES

**Community Theatre Insurance**—USI Southwest offers insurance designed specifically for Community Theatres to address the specific needs of our members. **This benefits theatre members, large and small**.

**Job Postings**—This feature on our website allows theatres to post job openings FREE OF CHARGE. This is also a great addition to any individual's job search for employment opportunities in community theatre. This can be of **benefit to every AACT member**.

While various benefits may be better fits for larger theatres, or smaller theatres, and/or individual members, there are definitely many ways for you to take advantage of your membership in AACT—regardless of your membership type or level—and leverage benefits and discounts that are “just right” for you.

Information on all the features and benefits listed, and so much more, is available on the AACT website. It's certainly understandable that it takes some time to fully explore all of the “nooks and crannies” of the AACT website to locate and learn about all the features and information included (e.g., pages, dropdown menus, etc.). We must also acknowledge that, as AACT has grown and regularly added additional new information to its website, navigation of the website is not as intuitive or user-friendly as we would like. That is one of the issues being addressed in the coming months.

As always, if you have any suggestions on resources and/or benefits not currently offered that would assist you in your endeavors, please don't hesitate to reach out to your AACT Region Representative, Board Member, or national office with your questions or suggestions. In the meantime, we hope that you'll make time to journey through the website, *Spotlight* magazine, as well as informational mailers and emails sent to you to learn all the ways in which your national association is working for you, providing benefits and resources, and “Helping Theatres Thrive.” ♦



## Join AACT!

### 2018 – 2019 New Membership Rates!

#### Discounts

- Over 40+ Vendor Discounts & Special Offers
- New Members can receive 50% off their 2nd year
- *Spotlight* Magazine

#### Networking & Events

- AACTFest
- NewPlayFest
- National Directors Conference
- TEAM Conference
- aactWorldFest
- YouthFest
- Community Theatre Management Conference
- Adjudication Training

#### Resources

- Peer-to-Peer Mentoring
- Resource Roster
- Resource Library
- AACTivity Email List
- AACTList
- Online Video Workshops
- Advocacy

**DON'T MISS OUT!**

**JOIN/RENEW TODAY!**

Join/Renew: [aact.org/join](http://aact.org/join)

More about membership benefits: [aact.org/benefits-membership](http://aact.org/benefits-membership)



## Real-World Learning Through the “Collaboration Project”

Edward M. Pinkowski

In one of our playwriting workshops in January 2017, we asked a simple question of ourselves: What can we do to make our playwriting and directing workshops more collaborative? Then a more exact question was asked, “Are we doing everything we can to educate our Playwright and Director Workshops members on practical skills they need to share their work outside

of our community?” Subsequently more questions followed: “Are the playwrights getting the practical experience they need from pitching their ideas to potential directors and producers? Couldn’t playwrights work collaboratively with a director whose vision could be valuable in the creation of a new play, form a writing and re-writing process, experience table reads of new plays? Wouldn’t it be great to sit in rehearsals, see first-hand what was working and what wasn’t, and then face audience comments during talkbacks?”

Up until then, we were only working on craft and script analysis and not spending enough time getting the writing on its feet. Likewise, the Directing Workshop members weren’t getting the opportunity to collaborate with our playwrights in real-time to suggest additions and edits, share talents, and learn how to direct staged readings.

But to make sense of this undertaking, some background on our theatre is appropriate. The Theatre of Western Springs (TWS) is fortunate to have a robust membership of nearly 300 active volunteers and an impressive 89-year history in its community just outside of Chicago, Illinois. The Playwright and the Director Workshops are just two of our numerous programs that actively engage our members in broadening their knowledge and proficiency in the dramatic arts.



Edward M. Pinkowski

*A Disciplined Mind by Mary Ellen Druyan directed by Peggy Carlson is one of the staged readings of The Collaboration Project*

**So how did we attempt to address those questions?** We created *The Collaboration Project*.

### 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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[www.comedyplays.net](http://www.comedyplays.net)



The purpose of *The Collaboration Project* is to create an exciting, engaging, and challenging learning environment. The project also provides a staged reading of the pieces chosen.

It was early in the leadership brainstorming session when the observation was made, “Yeah, it’s kind’a like speed dating.” Playwrights would distribute their scripts electronically to the directors and the directors would in turn report back to the leadership team with which stories and playwrights they were interested in collaborating. Those who matched would meet one-on-one; directors would talk about what they liked about the script, where they lost a connection with it, and what they thought they could do to better convey the playwright’s story. A post-meeting ranking process step was put in place, and in the end the playwright would make the final determination with whom he/she would be working. Ultimately, all twelve participants (playwrights and directors) were matched into six pairings or ‘creative teams.’

The play selections were made easy as only six courageous TWS playwrights submitted their work to this yet unknown and untried endeavor. Luckily, the same amount of brave TWS directors stepped forward to participate. Now with the success of this inaugural event, we are already anticipating far more playwright submissions that will require a formal selection process to include impartial readers and a voting process.

**Okay, so who’s in charge?** The leadership team was composed of the chair of the Directors’ Workshop and the co-chairs of the Playwrights’ Workshop.

For the leadership team, it was important to keep these goals and potential outcomes in the forefront:

- To create a safe and encouraging environment for artistic collaboration
- For playwrights to learn which elements of their script directors use to map out their play
- New playwrights to learn how to navigate through director and actor suggestions
- For playwrights and directors to find a common language of how to fix problems
- For directors and playwrights to learn how to work on creative projects under pressure or deadline
- To build trust between writer, director, and actors in order to build a more perfect story
- For playwrights to receive feedback on their stories, from the director, the actors, and their peers
- To create ongoing collaborative partnerships for future endeavors

Each creative team (playwright and director) determined for themselves what their collaboration would look like, whether it was completely immersive with new or edited pages being created each week, or if a more natural laissez faire process between collaborators was more desirable. Most chose to work somewhere in the middle. A few hours of rehearsal time with the actors were also incorporated into the process.

continued on page 24 ►

**“It’s beginning to look a lot like, well, you know...”**



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**The Process:** We provided a month-long call for script submissions. Requirements were works between 5 and 60 pages and a complete piece of dramatic writing, not an excerpt of a longer work. The leadership committee reviewed the submissions within two weeks' time and then sent them to the Director Workshop members who also had a two-week deadline to submit their preferences. Once matched, interviews between playwrights and directors lasted two weeks, with the playwrights providing their final choices one week later. The incubation time for the creative team was four weeks. We provided one week for rehearsals, allowing staged readings held over a weekend. All in all, the entire process was 12 weeks long.

Discovered during this process were the varied interpretations of *staged reading*. Some teams were stationary and read from music stands; some wore period clothing that helped amalgamate them with the story; others presented stories with limited blocking and scripts in hand; while others added props.

**The Collaboration Project** finally went up on January 13 and 14, 2018. As this endeavor was considered a pilot run with very limited space, only the participants, their guests, and board members would attend. The results of those two evenings exceeded expectations: six playwrights, six directors, thirty-four readers, and over a hundred audience members generated nearly 200 response sheets for the playwrights that included constructive feedback on their plays. Equally helpful were the directed discussions each

evening that generated much conversation on where stories worked and where they didn't. By far the most compelling aspect about this project was the tremendous educational opportunities that both playwrights and directors received in learning from one another.



Edward M. Pinkowski

*Edward W. Wavak directs a staged reading of "Two Weddings And A Grandma" by Judy DiVita*

**Was it worth it?** At a follow-up meeting with the playwrights and directors weeks later, everyone overwhelmingly agreed it was worth the time and effort invested and they would do it again. In some of the collaborators' words:

"This whole process was invigorating!" *Margo Rife*

"Bravo! To see one's writing come to life is an eye-opening learning opportunity in itself, but then to receive audience feedback on top of that. The turnout and responses were wonderful." *Terry Harrold*

"I give it a 10 out of 10! I received positive and negative comments, but they were constructive. And that process led me to writing new interesting scenes." *Mary Ellen Druyan*

"I felt like it was a true collaboration. We talked a lot about the story and the playwright was very open to suggestions. It was easy because I felt connected with what the play was about." *Daina Giesler*

Nearly all of the playwrights said they had already incorporated some of the practical feedback into their scripts, and the directors had a feeling of shared accomplishment and enthusiasm in presenting new works to the world. ♦

*Edward M. Pinkowski, MFA is an award-winning poet, playwright, and educator. Currently, he is the Lead Drama Editor for the national literary review Clockhouse as well as co-chair of the Playwrights Workshop at The Theatre of Western Springs. He is a member of ALSCW (Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers), the Dramatists Guild, the Playwrights Center, and Chicago Dramatists.*

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# PACT Leaving No Stone Unturned in Fulfilling Their Pact with The Community

Geoff Leonard-Robinson  
Member Engagement Director

On August 25, 2017, Port Aransas (which is located in Texas on the Gulf of Mexico) was struck by Hurricane Harvey. Not only did the community suffer a direct hit from that Category 4 storm, but they suffered a second major blow when an 18-foot storm surge followed from Corpus Christi Bay. 70% of structures in Port Aransas were left uninhabitable.

While the Port Aransas Community Theatre's (PACT) facility was still standing once the storm had passed (sans part of the building's roof), the wind and water damage was unimaginable. The theatre not only lost all of their costumes and props, but their lighting and sound equipment, all of their theatre seating, furniture, carpeting, and drywall. Not a single area of the theatre was unaffected. *continued on page 26* ►

Ken Yarbrough



*After more than a decade of hosting theatre patrons, PACT's flood-damaged auditorium seats had to be removed and discarded along with interior walls, subflooring, and carpeting*



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*Lorelei Chapman, Asst. Director  
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*Audrey Kletscher Helbing, Minnesota Prairie Roots*



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Total cost estimates to restore PACT's facility and get their troupe treading the boards again exceeded \$600,000. Even in the best of community situations, raising that kind of money can be challenging. When attempting to reach that goal in a community and regional area in which residents, businesses, and other organizations have been so heavily impacted by a hurricane, the prospects can be abysmal.

**The people who are PACT rolled up their sleeves and began the work of cleaning out their home full of memories, securing it, and preparing it to be brought back from disaster.**

Some not-for-profit organizations might reluctantly acquiesce to the idea that rebuilding and restoring their beloved community theatre was a “bridge too far”—and understandably

Ken Yarbrough



*One of many piles of ruined building materials and lost theatre memories at Port Aransas Community Theatre (PACT)*

so—but not PACT. Their staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers—both adult and youth—accepted the challenge of doing whatever it took to ensure that they could return to fulfilling their mission.



In addition to presenting its regular mainstage season, PACT also produces numerous educational programs and engages in cooperative partnerships in the area. Working with the Port Aransas Independent School District, PACT provides theatre education and stage productions for grades K-12. Those productions engage students as actors, tech crew, costumers, scenic artists, and stage managers. They also facilitate numerous programs in conjunction with the City of Port Aransas Parks and Recreation Department. In the development of their mission statement and tangible outreach, PACT has created—and passionately pursues—a pact of providing service with their community.

The people who are PACT rolled up their sleeves and began the work of cleaning out their home full of memories, securing it, and preparing it to be brought back from disaster—a difficult task both physically and emotionally. And in the year since Hurricane Harvey struck, PACT has left no stone unturned in their efforts to address the \$600,000 price tag of returning the theatre to the community asset it had been for over a decade.


In November 2017, the theatre presented an evening of music, dancing, and fellowship with rising Texas musician and songwriter Dylan Kenny. Then, in December it was announced that they had successfully applied for a \$15,000 Hurricane Harvey Relief Grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA). TCA Commissioner S. Shawn Stephens of Houston commented, “When it comes to relief assistance, the arts often wait until other community needs are addressed. But

**To date PACT has raised nearly two-thirds of the funds necessary to restore and reopen the theatre.**

these grants (\$446,500 in all) will help affected areas regain a sense of stability and help artists return to work.” In January, four Coastal Bend theatres (including PACT) joined forces and presented a fundraiser including each theatre reprising musical numbers from past seasons as well as both live and silent auctions. March found The Narada Radio Company (a troupe of 80 voice actors) presenting an old-time radio drama and comedy benefit for PACT, including a selection of desserts at intermission. In April, PACT received a \$15,000 grant from the Hurricane Harvey Tourism Recovery Fund from the Texas Travel Industry Association in partnership with Tourism Cares and Travel Texas. Jeffrey Hentz, president and CEO of the Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau commented, “This grant will go a long way in helping PACT re-open later this year and provide the community and schools the vehicle to perform outstanding productions year-round.”

As of result of those various benefits, grants, individual support and memberships, as well as many others, to date PACT has raised nearly two-thirds of the funds necessary to restore

*continued on page 28* ►



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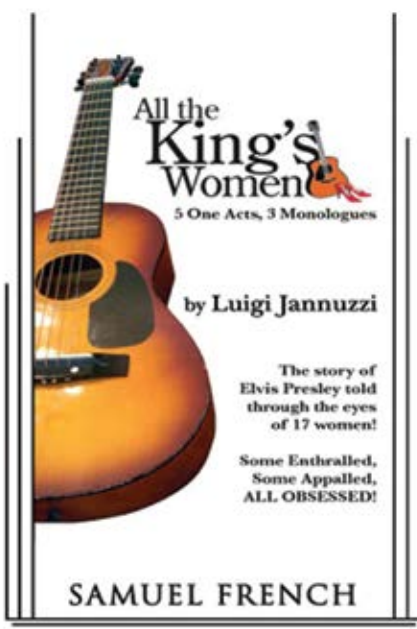
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*With saltwater-soaked drywall, insulation, and floor coverings removed, a barren clothes rack waits to once again be filled with costumes for PACT productions*

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and reopen the theatre. Of course, it will require continued and persistent manual labor and “mining for gold” in order to raise the remaining \$220,000 needed to complete the effort.

PACT’s present goal is to have a “soft” opening of a restored theatre in August and open their 2018-2019 season in October with *The Full Monty*. While that choice may seem odd at first glance, it’s actually another example of PACT’s creativity in fundraising and marketing that harkens back to the birth of their organization. Over a decade ago, the land on which the theatre is built was donated and a \$150,000 anonymous gift was given. In addition, a group of local ladies, committed to making PACT a reality and inspired by the 2003 movie *Calendar Girls*, created their own tasteful calendar as a fundraiser. Did it work in Port Aransas? It not only attracted the attention of TV’s “Inside Edition,” but calendar sales raised \$50,000! So, PACT is planning to re-open the theatre with a production of *The Full Monty*, including production of a new calendar featuring the cast, and also honor their history by reprinting their original “Calendar Girls” calendar. Now that’s leaving no stone unturned.

If you’re able and would like to make a contribution toward PACT’s recovery and restoration efforts, you may do so by visiting [portaransascommunitytheatre.com](http://portaransascommunitytheatre.com), scroll down the homepage, and click on the “Donate Now” button. Or, if you would prefer, you can mail your support to: Port Aransas Community Theatre, P. O. Box 835, Port Aransas, Texas 78373.





# ASCAP Offers 30% AACT Member Discount

**ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers** offers AACT members a discount on royalties for copyrighted music.

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



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

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

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

ASCAP is the oldest, largest, and foremost organization in the United States that licenses the right to publicly perform copyrighted musical compositions. It makes it easy to legally utilize music by providing an annual license at a reasonable flat fee and doesn't require submission of a list of songs to be played. ASCAP is also a membership organization of more than 450,000 songwriters, composers, lyricists, and music publishers. The complete repertoire

is available on the ASCAP website, [ascap.com](http://ascap.com).

AACT Member-Only ASCAP License Discount Rates for 2018-2019 are as follows:

Theatre Budget Level	ASCAP Theatre License Rate	AACT Member Rate
\$0-24,999	\$183.10	\$128.20
\$25,000-\$499,999	\$239.20	\$167.45
=/> \$500,000	\$348.30	\$243.80

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

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The Yale Drama Series is intended to support emerging playwrights. Submissions must be original, unpublished full-length plays written in English. No musicals, children's plays, or translations. Plays must not have been professionally produced or be under option, commissioned, or scheduled for professional production or publication at the time of submission.

There is no entry fee.

The winner of this annual competition will be awarded the David Charles Horn Prize of \$10,000, publication of his/her manuscript by Yale University Press, and a staged reading at Lincoln Center's Claire Tow Theater. The winning play will be selected by the series' current judge, Ayad Akhtar.

Deadline: Submit by August 15, 2018

Electronic submission strongly advised, hard copy also possible.

See the website for more details:  
[dchornfoundation.org/competition-rules](http://dchornfoundation.org/competition-rules)

## Bismarck State College Theatre National Ten-Minute Play Competition "What Happened to the American Dream?"

Bismarck State College (BSC) Theatre, in collaboration with Humanities North Dakota, as part of the HumanitiesND year-long "Game Changer Ideas Festival," is pleased to announce a call for brand new ten-minute plays that engage with the question "What Happened to the American Dream?"

BSC Theatre seeks only brand new, never before produced plays, outside of readings, workshops, and/or festivals. Plays should be no more than ten pages long (exclusive of cover page/dramatis personae), following traditional playwriting format. Plays may be written in any style, set in any time, and may use as many or as few characters as the author wishes. Plays will be entered into consideration for production during BSC Theatre's annual Short Play Festival in May 2019. If selected for performance, authors agree to provide BSC with performance rights for the duration of the Short Play Festival. Selection of scripts for performance will be at the discretion of a coalition of academics, theatre artists, and members of Humanities North Dakota.

Deadline: September 1, 2018

Electronic Submission only

Details: [bismarckstate.edu/community/humanities/theatrevents/](http://bismarckstate.edu/community/humanities/theatrevents/)



**I** love being an individual member of AACT. It has helped me to grow so much - to become a better director, a better actress, AND a better audience member. Because of this, I am now a better contributor to my home theatre. And besides all that, IT'S FUN!!!

*Lynn Nelson, Tupelo, Mississippi*



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# New Roles

## Member Theatre Professional Staffing Changes

Tampa, Florida – **Carrollwood Players Theatre** (CWP), Tampa's oldest community theatre, is very pleased to announce the hiring of their first Administrative Director, **Jim Russell**. While previously operated solely by volunteers since its founding in 1981, CWP responded to its continuing growth by taking the major step of hiring its first full-time employee. Jim's role includes managing the day-to-day operations of the theatre while also pursuing a major focus on development and grantsmanship.

Jim is no stranger to CWP, having previously served the organization as a director (15 shows), producer (32 shows), stage manager, actor, box office coordinator, marketing chair, and Board of Directors member. CWP presents both mainstage and black box theatre productions, the latter being conceived and implemented by Jim in 2014. His other theatre work experience includes Asolo Repertory Theatre and Florida Studio Theatre (Sarasota), Children's Musical Theatre of Alabama (Mobile), and The Six-Legged Theater Company (Morrison, Florida, featuring productions with horses and humans).

While his first day "on the job" was April 30, 2018, Jim commented, "I am excited about this new role at a theatre I have grown to love. It is an honor to serve in this capacity after being a volunteer in various capacities for CWP for nearly a decade."

CWP Board of Directors President Jim Johnson stated, "We are beginning a transition and this is the first step. Later this summer we hope to have more exciting news about changes we're undertaking as we embrace this journey." ♦

### 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@aac.org](mailto:geoff@aac.org).

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

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ARTSblog, the blog of Americans for the Arts, features posts on a variety of arts topics written by leading field experts. ARTSblog is a highly curated space for Americans for the Arts staff, members, stakeholders, and constituents to share and learn from each other and gain the latest perspectives on everything in the arts field, from Arts Education to Public Art to Community Engagement through the arts and more. The blog serves not only as a source of valued information and professional development, but also as a home for important discussions.

Comments and questions about blog posts are welcomed and encouraged.

The views expressed on ARTSblog are those of each individual author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of Americans for the Arts.

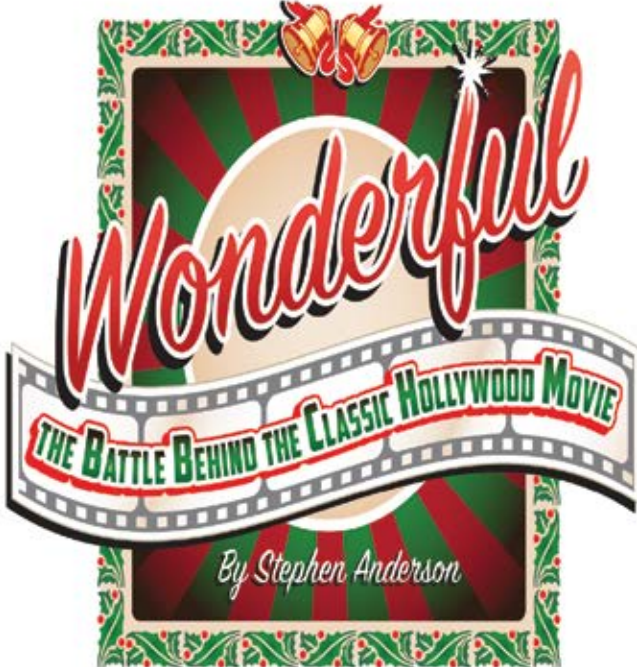
Topics of interest include Arts and Business, Arts Education, Arts Marketing, Community Engagement, Leadership, Public Art, and Social Change. Other topic areas that are of particular interest to readers include arts advocacy, local arts advancement, professional development, cultural equity, arts and healing, arts and the military, and content for artists.

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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)

## AACT Web Power

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Are you an established theatre company looking to review and update your bylaws or mission statement? Or perhaps you're a new theatre ready to create new bylaws and mission statement. Whether new or established, perhaps you're searching for information on nonprofit incorporation.

The good news: The AACT website is ready to help. You'll find sample mission statements from theatres around the country, plus downloadable bylaw samples for a wide range of company types. In addition, there's current information on nonprofit incorporation, including links to government and nonprofit resources.

For this and related information, visit the AACT website's Governance page: [aact.org/governance](http://aact.org/governance)

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

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## Safety Issues: *The Little Things We Can Do*

Ken Roberts

In an earlier article, we discussed the various emergency management tools and techniques that many insurance underwriters look for, such as emergency lighting, alarm systems, evacuation plans, and “panic” hardware on all public exits. They, like us, want to make sure that everything possible is done to ensure the safety of our patrons, staff, and volunteers. While all of those things are great ideas, they’re not always financially feasible for many of our new and fledgling theatres. Many new

**Our performance venues need to be dark for us to create the proper atmospheres for our productions, and this creates one of our greatest hazards.**

organizations may need to rent or lease space from owners who will neither install those features nor allow the theatre to do it. What it all comes down to is that even if we are not able to have the state-of-the-art facilities that our underwriters wish we had, there are still things we can do to help maintain the safety of our venues that won’t break the bank.

We in the theatre world are a creative group of folks, and I have seen more than my share of creative solutions to the most common hazards we face in our venues. Our performance venues need to be dark for us to create the proper atmospheres for our productions, and this creates one of our greatest hazards. Backstage spaces, as well as aisles in some theatres, can be lit

with dimmable strings of Christmas lights to keep the areas lit well enough to protect actors and patrons from running into walls or falling.

Any abrupt change in elevation, such as where two different concrete slabs come together or where floor trim for carpeting or flooring is necessary, can be pointed out with proper signage or by painting a fluorescent yellow stripe on the upper step. Anything that can be done to draw attention to those areas before an accident happens can save a lot of headaches.

What theatre would be complete without an assortment of gaffer’s tape? Even though it may not be a permanent solution, nor the most aesthetically pleasing one, tears or rolled up corners or seams on rugs and carpeting can and should be taped down before someone trips and injures themselves. There’s certain to be a color that can be coordinated with your carpeting until the proper repairs can be made.

The point to all of this is that even without having the latest and greatest of modern technology to help us make our theatres safer, there are plenty of little things that we can do that won’t drive us to bankruptcy. We can help to protect everyone in our facilities and demonstrate to insurance companies that we are contributing to a safer environment, and the latter can make a difference when it’s time to purchase our coverage. ♦

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# AACT 2018 Election Results

Congratulations to those elected to AACT leadership positions.

## Member at Large positions on the AACT Board:

Sharon Burum  
Duncan, Oklahoma, Region VI  
Michael Fox  
North Salt Lake, Utah, Region VII  
Bob Frame  
Skaneateles, New York, Region II  
Richard Gannon  
Naperville, Illinois, Region III  
Lucinda Lawrence  
Champaign, Illinois, Region III  
Carolyn McCloskey  
McMinnville, Oregon, Region IX  
Judy Rozema  
Kearney, Nebraska, Region V

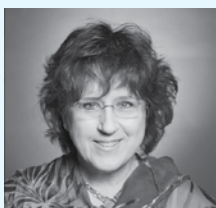
## Artie's Advocacy Tip



**No elected official is an expert on everything; they all need help. Become a trusted advisor, offering your help and vision.**

Be informed and know what you want. Be relentless in voicing a strong and clear message. Find fun, creative ways of making yourself heard.

Invite and encourage your elected representatives to attend arts events and activities so that they can see the positive audience reaction of their constituents. Recognize them publicly when they are there for you.



The Conferences offered by AACT are top notch. The Artistic Director's Conference included TONS of useful and practical ideas. Attending two Festivals that included world class performances has inspired me as a director and an artist.

*Lisa Garza, Board Member,  
Stageworks Theatre, Houston, Texas*

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David Cockerell

Board Members, Staff, and Guests pause for a moment during the AACT Board of Directors Winter Meeting at the Drury Hotel Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas, February 23, 2018. Pictured (bottom left moving clockwise): Rick Kerby, Bevie Lord, Bob Frame, Ron Cameron-Lewis, Dennis Gilmore, Jamie Ulmer, Chad-Alan Carr, Emily Anderson, Bob Pritchard, JoAnne Nissen, Scott Bloom, Michael Cochran, Nancy Eppert, Linda Lee, Wanda Schenk, Rich Gannon, Geoff Leonard-Robinson, Deborah Hertzog, Lynn Nelson, Lucinda Lawrence, Liz Lydic, Sharon Burum, Sally Barnes, Donna Fisher, Joanne Berry, Jon Rake, Ron Ziegler, Jill Patchin, Chris Serface, Sara Phoenix, Steven Hughes, Frank Peot, Carole Ries, Michael Fox, Quiana Clark-Roland, and Jim Walker.

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Claudia Mathes from the Albuquerque Theatre Guild, AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland, and Regina Garner from Theatre New Mexico meet with New Mexico theatre organizations during a Townhall Meeting at The Vortex Theatre in Albuquerque, April 28, 2018



AACT National Awards 2018 were presented Saturday, April 28 at the The 2018 TOPPERS, U.S. Army IMCOM Europe Tournament of Plays Award Program, held in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Pictured l-r, Jerry Brees received the David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award, Dan LaMorte received the Distinguished Merit Award, presenter AACT Festivals Coordinator Ron Ziegler, and Cheryl and Tom Navo received the Special Recognition Award

### Where's My Membership Engagement Director Been ?

#### April 2018

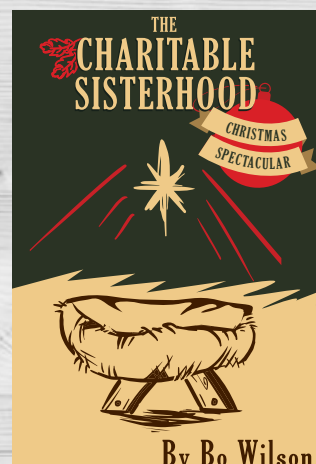
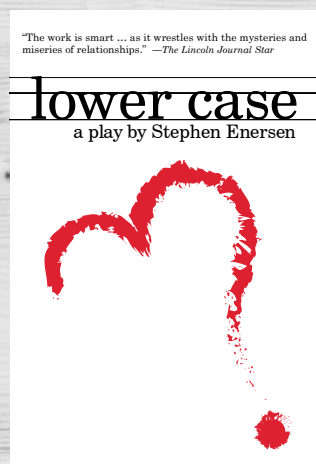
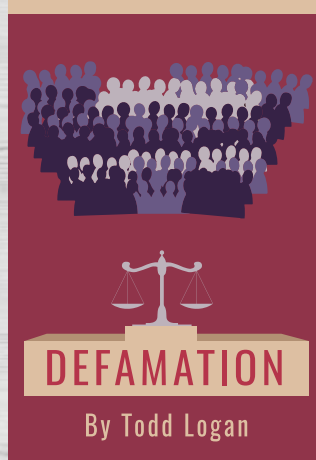
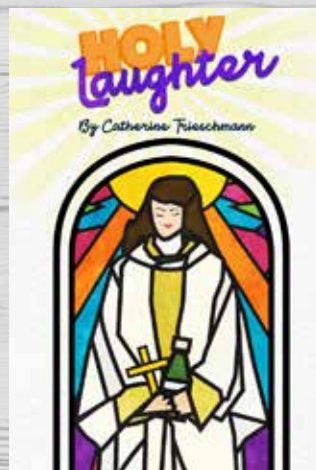
Theatre Arlington (Texas)  
Red performance

Stolen Shakespeare Guild (Texas)  
Into the Woods performance

#### May 2018

MainStage  
Irving-Las Colinas (Texas)  
The Full Monty performance

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
July 11 - 14	<b>Colorado Community Theatre Coalition</b> Colorado State Festival for AACTFest 2019	<b>CO</b> Salida	303-885-0567 cctcfestival.com
July 20 - 21	<b>Oklahoma Community Theatre Association</b> OCTA State Festival for AACTFest 2019	<b>OK</b> Shawnee	405-840-0788 oktheatre.org
August 11 - 12	<b>Florida Theatre Conference</b> 2018 FTC Play Festival for AACTFest 2019	<b>FL</b> Winter Haven	727-544-8915 flatheatre.org
August 10 - 26	<b>AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere</b> <i>Treehouse</i> by Joe Musso at Cottage Theatre	<b>OR</b> Cottage Grove	541-942-8001 aact.org/newplayfest
August 11	<b>AACT Oregon Townhall</b> Twilight Theatre	<b>OR</b> Portland	817-732-3177 aact.org/calendar
August 17 - 18	<b>Minnesota Association of Community Theatres</b> MACT FAST Fest '18 short play festival	<b>MN</b> Cloquet	952-884-9676 mact.net
August 17 - 19	<b>AACT</b> TEAM Conference 2018	<b>UT</b> Salt Lake City	817-732-3177 aact.org/team
Aug 31 - Sept 3	<b>Ohio Community Theatre Association</b> OCTA Rocks! Ohio State Conference 2018 for AACTFest 2019	<b>OH</b> Columbus	419-270-5071 octa1953.org

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

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