

spotlight

January/February 2020 \$5.00

american association of community theatre



**Online Video
Marketing**

**TEAMS
2020**

aactWORLDVEST 2020

**AACT
NewPlayFest
World Premiere**

AACTFest 2021

**Community
Theatre
Management
Conference
2020**

The Marvelous Wonderettes



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Rick Kerby
AACT President

I was lucky to be one of the attendees at the 2019 AACT National Directors Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, this past November. In one word, WOW!

Our jobs in theatre can often feel very isolating. There is something reassuring and powerful sitting in a room with over 80 other people who are all in similar positions. At this conference, there are people who understand each other's problems. They have lived through the dark side of issues and can share how they found the light. As one colleague said, "It's a room full of people who 'get it'."

During the course of this conference, **we share ideas**—lots and lots of ideas. From the nuts and bolts of day-to-day running the operations of our organizations, to artistic choices of choosing a season, adapting for the latest technical toys, and solving human resources issues. We gather together to distribute information and share insights.

We talk a lot. It is understood that the "room where it happens" is a safe place. We can talk about the most uncomfortable of issues. We talk about the changing landscape of gender fluidity, inclusive casting and hiring practices, how to diversify your theatre landscape without tokenism. We discuss. We debate.

We socialize. We reacquaint with old friends and create new lifelong ones. These are friends I know I can call when I need a shoulder to lean on, an ear to bend, or to call in a favor.

This was my sixth time attending this national conference, and each time I return it makes me proud of AACT and our growth as an organization, as a community of theatres.

One of our first tasks at introductions was to explain why we decided to attend the conference. One of the reasons that was repeated by many was, "I come to recharge." I agree. My artistic batteries are electrified and ready to fire.

If you are feeling energized to sign up for the next National Directors Conference, you're right, you *should*, immediately! The bad news is that you will have to wait—the biennial conference will be held again in November, 2021. So, mark it on your calendar now.

The good news is that AACT recognizes the good created through educational conferences, and has other great opportunities in 2020. One of these is the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference, which will be held June 21-23, prior to aactWORLDfest in Venice, Florida (see page 12). Another is the AACT TEAMS Conference, August 21-23, at the Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City/Sandy, Utah (see page 14). You can register now for these great opportunities, and recharge *your* batteries in 2020.

I hope to see you there!

Now Available!

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AACT's national theatre festival will be held in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, June 14-19, 2021. Mark your calendar to join your AACT theatre family at AACTFest 2021

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Casserole by Pamela Harbaugh, the first of the AACT NewPlayFest 2020 premieres, opened at Boise Little Theatre in Boise, Idaho

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AACT Idaho Town Hall

Theatre representatives from across the state of Idaho shared common challenges and successes, and learned about the benefits, services, and networking offered by AACT in its mission to "Help Theatres Thrive"

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Online Video Marketing

Video is one of the most powerful tools in communicating with your audiences. In the first of two articles, Julie Nemitz offers tips on how to create videos that dazzle, delight, and drive ticket sales

On the Cover

Clair Wilson (Jeanna Vickery) presents her casserole creation to husband Leonard Wilson (Brad Wm Ooley) and daughter Erica Wilson (Lindsay Eng) in the world premiere production of *Casserole*, by Pamela Harbaugh, at Boise Little Theater in Boise, Idaho
Photo by Steve Strickland/Strickly Photography

Contacting AACT

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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at david@aact.org to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone number above.



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A smile is a crooked line
that makes everything straight!"
- NY Times

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- Variety

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- Time Magazine

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Listed are 2019-2020 Officers

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IV-A Lynn Nelson
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IV-B Kristy Meanor
Wetumpka, AL (2022)

V Jamie Ulmer
Beatrice, NE (2019)

VI Sally Barnes
Broken Arrow, OK (2019)

VII Donna Fisher
Casper, WY (2019)

VIII Dennis Gilmore
Indio, CA (2019)

IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA (2019)

X Dane Winters
Germany (US Army) (2019)

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences**AACT Winter Board Meetings**

The AACT Board, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams will meet virtually for the AACT Winter Meetings 2020. Most meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for more details.

Board of Directors Meeting – February 22, 2020 - 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM (central) via Zoom. RSVP attendance at aact.org/winter by January 31, 2020.

Committee Meetings will all be held virtually before January 27, 2020. AACT staff will coordinate with each committee chair to set up meeting times. Committees are to meet before the January 27 deadline.

Committee Reports – Due January 31, 2020. Please submit your report using the following webforms:

- Report on Region form - aact.org/report-region
- Board/Committee Report form - aact.org/board-report

More information and meeting links: aact.org/winter

Upcoming Events

**AACT NewPlayFest
World Premiere Productions**
see *page 21 for details*

**AACT Washington State
Town Hall**
January 25, 10AM – Noon
Tacoma Little Theatre
aact.org/calendar

**National Arts Action
Summit/Nancy Hanks Lecture/
Arts Advocacy Day**
March 30-31, 2020
Washington, DC
americansforthearts.org
AACT is a National Partner

World Theatre Day
March 27, 2020
aact.org/world-theatre-day

**USITT Conference and
Stage Expo**
April 2-4, 2020
Houston, Texas
usittshow.com

AACT Staff

Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director
David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director
Kathy Pingel, NewPlayFest Dramaturge, Education Coordinator
Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator, Education Coordinator
Karen Matheny, Membership Coordinator
Winston Daniels, Operations and Events Assistant

Jill Patchin, Corporate Partners Manager
Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator
Stephen Peithman, Webmaster /
Spotlight Assistant Editor
Susan Austin, NewPlayFest Coordinator

Spotlight

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

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For more information, contact:
Grice King
grice@kinggroup.us
940-612-1300

aactWORLDVEST 2020

June 22-27, 2020, Venice, Florida

Mark your calendars for June 22-27, 2020, and register today for aactWORLDVEST 2020 at venicetheatre.org/international/. Now's the time to register for early bird prices.

Delight in performances from top-quality theatre troupes from around the globe. Many perform in their native language, but it's easy to follow what's happening because the language of theatre is universal! Plus, there are delightful dinners, after-glow gatherings, impromptu drum circles, "lobby gabs" to make up the recipe for life-long, global friendships, and some very special events.

Take a Gander at the Real "Come from Aways"

Meet the real people celebrated in the hit Broadway musical, *Come from Aways*, at aactWORLDVEST in Venice, Florida, June 22-27, 2020.

Four residents of Gander, Newfoundland, will be at Venice Theatre during aactWORLDVEST to tell their experiences during the week of 9/11. If you've seen *Come from Aways*, you know how residents of this small town sheltered, fed, clothed, and welcomed more than 7,000 "plane people" from 60 countries when U.S. airspace was closed to all planes. Two of these "plane people," Nick and Diane Marson, will be in Venice for aactWORLDVEST as well.

Murray Chase, Venice Theatre's Executive Producing Director, can't contain his excitement about welcoming these special visitors to aactWORLDVEST. He says, "We recently had the honor of touring the town of Gander with the police constable, Os Fudge. When we invited him to Venice, he didn't hesitate to say yes, and he's bringing three more Gander folks with him, as well as Nick and Diane who met during this tragedy, fell in love, and got married."

All six are featured in the musical *Come from Aways* and in the documentary, *You Are Here*. Os Fudge, Beulah Cooper, Bonnie Harris, Brian Mosher, and Nick and Diane Marson will be honorary guests at aactWORLDVEST for the whole week. Come to the festival with them, and hear first-hand about how the musical was written and even become an honorary Newfoundlander. Be prepared, as the Gander crew will hold a series of "Screech-Ins" during the week!

aact WORLDVEST

Chase ponders how "Venice, Florida, was the home to the 'Worst of Humanity' prior to 9/11, when several of the hijackers trained at a flight school in our small town. Now, we're bringing the 'Best of Humanity' to town."

He invites everyone to share in the remarkable story of the Gander community, and have their hearts lifted. Admission to this special "Conversation with the Real Come from Aways" is \$18 for registrants, \$25 for non-registrants, with a portion of the proceeds to benefit the Gander Theatre.



Renee McVety

The Lieder Theatre, Australia's oldest theatre company, explored an outsider encountering established tribal rituals in the powerful and energetic Monochrome at aactWORLDVEST 2018 in Venice, Florida

FESTIVAL PACKAGES

THE JETSETTER PACKAGE

Regular \$500 | Early bird (register by 1/31/20) \$465 | Student \$415

- Reserved seating for all MainStage shows
- Reserved seating for all Pinkerton shows
- Opening ceremony
- All workshops
- All afterglow parties
- Gala
- Free Drinks

THE PARADISE PACKAGE

Regular \$295 | Early bird (register by 1/31/20) \$275 | Student \$225

- Reserved seating for all MainStage shows
- Opening ceremony
- All workshops
- All afterglow parties
- Gala

THE BEACHCOMBER PACKAGE

Regular \$245 | Early bird \$225 (register by 1/31/20) | Student \$175

- Access to all MainStage shows
- All workshops
- All afterglow parties

aactWORLDFFEST 2020 registration prices listed are for AACT members. If you are not a member, add \$75 to adult registration; \$15 to student registration.

Festival Registration and more information is available at venicetheatre.org/international/

Hotel Venezia is the official hotel for aactWORLDFFEST 2020.

Registration includes

- Deluxe Breakfast Buffet
- Complimentary High Speed Internet

Hotel Venezia is one mile to Venice Beach, and one mile to Venice Theatre.

\$105. Standard room

\$135. King Suite

HotelVeneziaFl.com

941-308-7700, Ask for the aactWORLDFFEST festival discounted rate.

continued on next page ▶

“EDGE OF YOUR SEATS” WALKERPLAYS

‘aftershock’ builds to killer ending.

- *San Antonio Express-News*

Thanks for such a great play! The audience was literally on the edges of their seats!

- *Bert Miller, Artistic Director, ACT Theatre Company (Topeka)*

aftershock

A Thriller By
Michael Walker

FIRST PLACE: International Mystery Writers Festival

“Tickets to Winchester Little Theatre’s production of **ABSOLUTELY DEAD: \$40**. Hosting award-winning playwright Michael Walker at WLT’s opening: a true honor. The play’s whopping success: **priceless!**”

- *Director, Sara Gomez, Winchester Little Theatre President*

**ABSOLUTELY
DEAD**
by Michael Walker

2019-2020 Productions

March	AFTERSHOCK	Topeka, KS	ACT Theatre Co.
April	ABSOLUTELY DEAD	Pompton Lakes, NJ	Rhino Theatre
May	ABSOLUTELY DEAD	Boylston, MA	Calliope Productions
July	ABSOLUTELY DEAD	Bowie, MD	Bowie Comm Th.
March	LA FIN du SILENCE	2020 Winchester, VA	Winchester Little Th.

WALKERPLAYS.COM

2020 Festival Adjudicators

Meet adjudicators for aactWORLDVEST 2020!



Jan Palmer Sayer is the current Chairman of Great Britain’s Guild of Drama Adjudicators (GoDA), and over the last two years has adjudicated festivals in England, Ireland, Scotland and Europe. This year she will also be adjudicating in Gibraltar, at the British All Winners Festival in the Isle of Man, and at the Wales Final. Jan studied at the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, and was awarded an M.A. in Theatre and

Performance Studies—at the same time she was running her own theatre company, Shattered Windscreen. Her company’s acclaimed production of *The Fall of the House of Usher* played the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and *The Grapes of Wrath* at Cornwall’s Minack Theatre won a trophy for best production of 2015. In 2017, her company returned to Minack with *I, Don Quixote*, playing to sell-out houses. In 2020, Jan will direct the Company of Players’ gala production of the 1960’s piece, *Alfie*. As an actor, in 2018 she played Hanna Kennedy in Peter Oswald’s adaptation of *Mary Stuart*, and in 2019, Eleanor of Aquitaine in *The Lion in Winter*.



Manuel Ortiz holds a Bachelor in the Arts with a major in Acting from University of Chile. After graduating, he studied in a theater laboratory in Italy on a state grant. He has worked as an actor and director at the Chilean National Theater, as well as many other theater companies, and has taught drama at the University of Chile, the University of Cordoba in Argentina, and other educational institutions. He also has led workshops in the USA,

Spain, Brazil and Argentina. He has directed numerous plays, six of them written by Ortiz himself, including *Pichanga*, which was published in Spain in 2019. He has presented his plays in festivals in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, the United States, Spain, Italy, and Germany. In 2014, he founded the *Corredor Latinoamericano de Teatro*, bringing Latin American theatre to new audiences around the world. This past September, he directed the opening production of the season for the World Stage Theater Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma. ♦

Festival registration and more information about the area is available online at venicetheatre.org/international/

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State Premiers:
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The Merlin Players, MN
Chocolate Church Center for the Arts, ME
The Sugar Creek Players, IN
The Encore Theatre, TN

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A Christmas Wedding

THE SANTA DIARIES II

By Laura Ambler and Mala Burt



"When I attended The Merlin Players' performance of The Santa Diaries four years ago at the Paradise Center for the Arts, I laughed. And I cried. Playwrights and performers brought a moving message coupled with comedy to the stage.

And now they've done it again in A Christmas Wedding—The Santa Diaries II. The play focuses on a Hollywood couple returning to their hometown for their desired small town Christmas wedding. Except others have other ideas, including making the wedding a reality TV event. So the story evolves with humor aplenty, conflict and discerning what's most important in life. Choose fame and fortune? Or love, happiness and contentment??"

©Audrey Kletscher Helbling
Minnesota Prairie Roots

A Christmas Wedding World Premier:
The Merlin Players, MN

Contact us at: santadiariesplay@gmail.com

Community Theatre Management Conference 2020

June 21 - 23, 2020, prior to aactWORLDfest 2020

Register now for the 2020 Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC), June 21-23, in Venice, Florida.

While modeled after the renowned National Directors Conference that AACT hosts in Madison, Wisconsin, CTMC more broadly serves anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre. Attendees learn through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, roundtable discussions that speak directly to participants' unique challenges and experiences within their own theatre and community.

Participants prioritize and suggest topics through a pre-conference questionnaire. However, based on previous CTMC sessions, discussion topics will likely include:

- Sales and Marketing*
- Other Sources of Earned Income*
- Fundraising and Development*
- Event Planning*
- Volunteers*
- Board*
- Season and Play Selections (Winners and Losers)*
- Classes, Educational and Outreach Programming*
- Box Office Operations*

The National Community Theatre Management Conference will be held Sunday, June 21, through Tuesday, June 23, just prior to aactWORLDfest 2020 in Venice, Florida. This allows attendees to take part in both events in one trip—and aactWORLDfest attendees receive a \$15 discount on their CTMC registration.

Conference schedule:

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

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

MONDAY, JUNE 22

- 8:30 am Roundtable Discussions
- 11:30 am Lunch at aactWORLDfest \$15 (optional)
- 1:30 pm Roundtable Discussion

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

- 8:30 am Roundtable Discussion
- Noon Wrap-up

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As previous years' attendees know, the Community Theatre Management Conference will send you home with ideas that will more than pay for your trip, plus a renewed enthusiasm for your theatre management role, and a nationwide network of colleagues.



Ron Ziegler

The conference will be facilitated by Ron Ziegler, the first Artistic/Managing Director for Iowa's Des Moines Playhouse's Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. He also founded and managed the Iowa Fringe Festival, and was the first Executive Director for Orlando Repertory Theatre, Orlando, Florida. He has directed productions for Venice Theatre and Ocala Civic Theatre in Florida, as well as for Des Moines Playhouse. A past president of AACT and an AACT Fellow, Ron has also served as facilitator for the National Artistic Directors Conference.

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

Register now at aact.org/management-conference

	<i>by June 1</i>	<i>after June 1</i>
AACT Member	\$260	\$290
Non-Member	\$335	\$365

Make A Legacy Gift

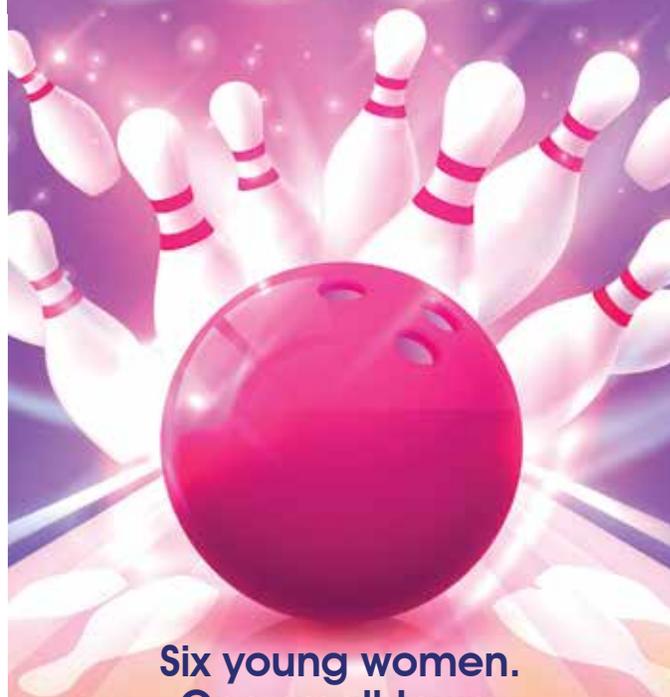
Please consider including the American Association of Community Theatre in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift. Through these special gifts, friends like you are able to sustain AACT's mission and provide learning experiences for AACT member companies participating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

To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit aact.org/legacy

or contact the AACT office at info@aact.org

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AUTHOR REBECCA GILMAN

TWILIGHT BOWL



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TEAMS Conference 2020

The TEAMS Conference will return to the beautiful Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 21-23, 2020.

TEAMS 2020 is a national educational conference with these five tracks:

TECHNICAL THEATRE

Get professional advice on technical elements to support your upcoming shows. Hands-on training in special effects, automation, scenic design/construction, lighting design, and more.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

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

ARTISTIC DIRECTION VISION

Discover and re-envision exciting ways to produce high-quality theatre. Choose the right plays for your next season; learn solutions for choosing directors, recruiting actors, and solving technical problems; and examine long-range planning.

MARKETING/DEVELOPMENT

Learn strategies for small, medium, and large-sized arts groups to enlist donors and sponsors, build audiences, create loyalty, and learn ways to use marketing and branding in today's changing social media world.

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Learn best practices for organizing rehearsals, supporting the director, managing the cast, and getting the curtain to go up on time.

Attend as an individual, or get even more out of the conference by putting together a team. The five tracks are held simultaneously, so team participants can share rides and rooms, while selecting the track that best suits their own individual needs. As attendees have found, the insights gained can pay for the conference registration many times over.



David Cockerell

The TEAMS 2019 Marketing/Development Track discussing how to build audiences, and to use marketing and branding in today's changing social media world

REGISTRATION opens February 1, 2020

	EARLY BIRD by June 29, 2020	STANDARD after June 29, 2020
Group (3 or more)	AACT Member \$225 (each) Non-Member \$300 (each)	\$250 (each) \$325 (each)
Individual	AACT Member \$250 Non-Member \$325	\$300 \$350

Early bird registration deadline: June 29, 2020

Standard rate after June 29, 2020

Registration covers continental breakfast, Sat. lunch, snacks, and materials.

Register at aact.org/teams



Hale Centre Theatre

Bonus Offer: Participants will receive 50% off their ticket to see *Titanic the Musical* at the Hale Centre Theatre--a spectacle in water! This breathtaking musical, by Peter Stone and Maury Yeston, is in keeping with the scale of the mighty (but doomed) vessel--a factual story of her officers, crew and passengers. Experience soaring music and mammoth staging in this not-to-be-missed theatrical event. Tickets are only \$26, with your TEAMS discount.

Housing: The Hilton Garden Inn (across the street from Hale Centre Theatre) will serve as the official conference hotel. A special group rate for TEAMS Conference attendees will be available. For more details on the hotel, and a link to receive the AACT discount, visit aact.org/teams.

AACTEd Hours: Participants will once again earn 17 AACTEd Hours for participation in all sessions of their conference track. Pro-rated hours will be awarded to those who are unable to attend all sessions. ♦

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Louisville is Center Stage for AACTFest 2021

June 14- 19, 2021
Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville’s state-of-the-art Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts will be home to AACTFest 2021, AACT’s national theatre festival, June 14-19, 2021. Mark your calendar to join your AACT theatre family for a great time—and great theatre.

The celebration begins with a fantastic Welcome Party, sponsored by AACT Corporate Partner Disney Theatrical Group. Disney sponsored the crowd-pleasing Welcome Party for AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, and they promise this one will be just as spectacular.

Afterglow parties following each night’s performances are sponsored by Stage Rights, and Concord Theatricals will sponsor Saturday’s Pre-Award Show Cocktail Reception. AACT Diamond Corporate Sponsor Music Theatre International will be sponsoring the AACTFest 2021 Closing Celebration Party, a great ending to an exciting week of theatre. More AACT Corporate Partner events will be added soon, ensuring that AACTFest 2021 will be a memorable experience. AACT Corporate Partners provide direct annual support for AACT sponsored programs and events and, in turn, AACT gives Partners greater visibility and discounts on AACT promotional products. Organizations interested in participating in an AACT partnership should contact Jill Patchin at jill@act.org or at 616-401-8864.

The National Companies to perform in Louisville will be decided in the next 18 months, as productions advance through state and regional festivals. Meanwhile, planning has begun for other festival events, including the Monologue Competition, sponsored by Dramatists Play Service, and AACT’s National Design Competition sponsored by USITT, which celebrates community theatre designers from across the country. Exhibitors will also be on hand with information on products and services to make your theatre the best it can be.

The Hyatt Regency Downtown is our host hotel, with special discounted rates for festival attendees. The Regency is also the location for AACTFest special events, workshops, exhibits,



Paola Noguera

Stephen Butler (Actors’ Warehouse, Gainesville, Florida), Kelli McCloud-Schingen (World Stage Theatre Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma), and Dorinda Towner (Twilight Theatre, Portland, Oregon) greet each like family at the AACTFest 2019 Welcome Party sponsored by AACT Corporate Partner Disney Theatrical Group



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Dennis Yslas, Texas Nonprofit Theatres Executive Director, accepts a prize from Disney's Pearl Hodiwala during the trivia contest held at the AACTFest 2019 Welcome Party sponsored by AACT Corporate Partner Disney Theatrical Group



The AACT Design Competition held during the AACTFest National Festival inspires creativity in all aspects of theatrical design

and conferences. This four-star hotel is within walking distance of the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts, and Actors Theatre of Louisville, as well. (A trolley will also be available to transport those staying at the hotel to the festival theatre.) The Hyatt is just steps from the Fourth Street Live District, Louisville's premier dining and entertainment destination.

Additional host hotels will be announced soon. Please consider staying at a designated host hotel, as this makes it possible for AACT to provide the great discounts, services, and experiences offered during the festival.

"We're excited to be hosting the next festival in such a vibrant and arts-friendly city as Louisville," says AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland. "It is an iconic, historic destination, and home to world-class restaurants, tourist attractions and museums, and over a dozen entertainment venues and performance companies. We're going to have a wonderful time!"

More information about the festival will be posted on the AACT website soon (aact.org/21). ♦

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Want to Perform at AACTFest 2021? Any theatre wanting to perform in 2021 should start planning *now* to participate, and get involved in your state's AACTFest qualifying festival. Note that each state process is different. Some may function on an annual basis, while others function on a biennial cycle. For more information about your state festival, contact your State Contact, listed at aact.org/statecontacts and/or your Regional Representative at aact.org/regionreps.

"Buzz and Energy" at NewPlayFest World Premiere



Boise, Idaho, celebrated the first AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere when *Casserole*, by Pamela Harbaugh, opened on October 18, 2019, at Boise Little Theater (BLT). The play received an outstanding production and was well received, with a festive opening night reception following the performance.



Steve Strickland/Stricky Photography

Opening Night of the world premiere of Casserole by Pamela Harbaugh, at Boise Little Theater in Boise, Idaho (left to right): Patti Finley, Idaho Association of Community Theatres (I-Act) Board President; Patti O'Hara, I-Act Board Member and Boise Little Theater AACT New-PlayFest Committee Chair; Debbie Hertzog, AACT Idaho State Contact, I-Act Vice President/Membership; David Cockerell, AACT Marketing/Communications Director; Lindsay Eng, cast/Erica Wilson; Katie Kruse, cast/Penny Caufield; Omar Orbay, cast/Zachary Simmons; Elizabeth Greeley, costumes; Pam Harbaugh, Casserole playwright; Jay Parker, Assistant Director/Stage Manager; Wendy Koeppl, Director; Gary Miller, props; Keri Moran, BLT Business Manager; Jeanna Vickery, cast/Clair Wilson; Brad Wm. Ooley, cast/Leonard Wilson; Carrie Blomquist, Dramatic Publishing Company Professional Leasing Director; Paul Archibeque, BLT Board Member; Frank White, Boise Little Theater Board President; Joanna Marshal, props, BLT Board Member; David Ybarra, cast/Nicholas; Linda M. Lee, Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation



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Alleyway Theatre, Buffalo, New York

Philosophus

By Colin Speer Crowley

This hysterically historical play is mayhem from start to finish, with a little bit of Kaufman and Hart, Oscar Wilde, Monty Python, and Benny Hill all rolled into one.

www.hiStage.com

Playwright Pamela Harbaugh attended the opening, saying it was “an incredible honor for my play, *Casserole*, to have its world premiere at Boise Little Theatre.” Harbaugh praised the show’s director, Wendy Koepl, for creating a polished production, in which the cast “brought sweet nuances to their performances. But more importantly, the loving culture at BLT was the perfect platform for *Casserole*.”

Harbaugh noted that the main character in *Casserole*, Clair Wilson, gives forth unconditional love to those around her. “It seems to me that she’s almost an alter-ego for BLT. Goodness, integrity, generosity, and enthusiasm all fill that 300-seat venue.”

Harbaugh lives in Indialantic, Florida, where she was theatre critic and arts writer at *Florida Today* newspaper for 25 years. She received her theatre degree at the University of Central Florida, and spent more than 30 years teaching, producing, directing and writing for children’s theatre. Another of her plays, *Snowfall*, won a production in the New Play Festival at the Henegar Center for the Performing Arts, in Melbourne, Florida. Harbaugh also serves on the American Theatre Critics Association’s Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award Committee.



Steve Strickland/Stricky Photography

Director Wendy Koepl and Playwright Pam Harbaugh celebrate at the gala following *Casserole*’s opening night performance at Boise Little Theater

BLT worked with the playwright and AACT dramaturge in a workshop environment, as Director Wendy Koepl explains:

When I was asked to direct the NewPlayFest World Premiere of *Casserole*, I was excited, intrigued, and more than a little nervous! Fortunately, the production team, cast, and I started the whole process with the workshop process in mind, so we were prepared for whatever came our way. And what came our way was a wonderful collaboration between playwright Pam, AACT Dramaturge Kathy Pingel, the cast, the crew, and myself. Kathy and Pam always positive and very open to our thoughts, ideas, and concerns. During the workshop,



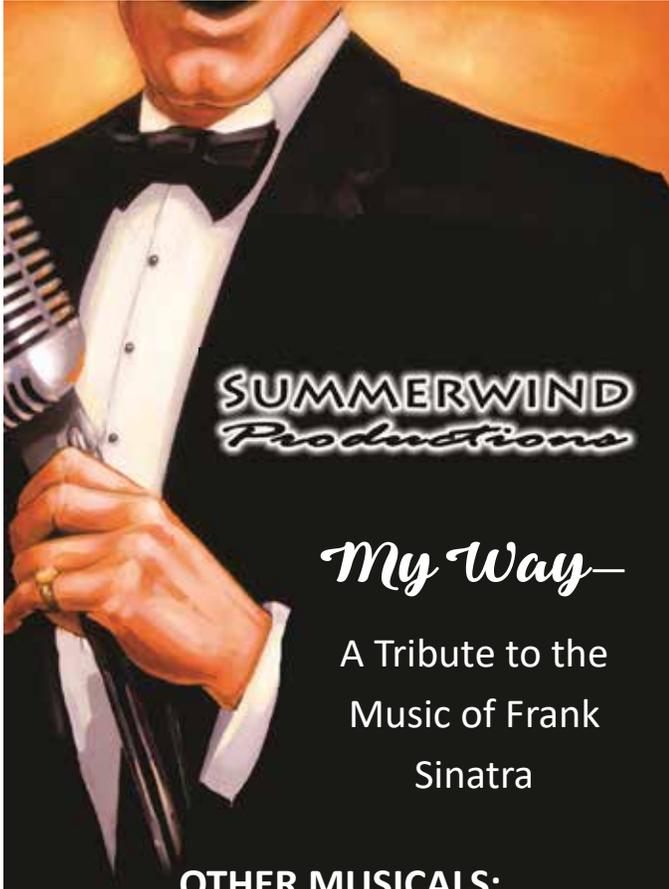
Steve Strickland/Stricky Photography

Leonard Wilson (Brad Wm. Ooley) is quite skeptical when his wife Clair Wilson (Jeanna Vickery) receives a letter from a cookbook publisher wanting to include her recipe in a new cookbook in the Boise Little Theater production of *Casserole*

The Play, the Process, the Premiere

Set in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, *Casserole* revolves around Clair Wilson, a godly woman with love to spare. A normal day gets ratcheted into high gear when she learns that a publisher wants to feature her recipe for “Mayonnaise Casserole” in a new cookbook. Leonard, her grumpy husband, isn’t much help. Nor is her daughter Erica, an abstract artist living in New York City, who suddenly shows up with stunning news and a mysterious friend named Penny. Also arriving for dinner are a hipster editor and his photographer, who have a hidden agenda for the cookbook. A wild menu is set before them all: an argument erupts, revealing many secrets and setting the stage for some of Clair’s loving wisdom.

Wendy Koepl directed Boise Little Theater’s world premiere production. The cast featured Jeanna Vickery as Clair Wilson, Brad Wm. Ooley as Leonard Wilson, Lindsay Eng as Erica Wilson, Katie Kruse as Penny Caufield, Omar Orbay as Zachary Simmons, and David Ybarra as Nicholas. The production staff included Assistant Director/Stage Manager Jay Parker, with set design by Wendy Koepl, light design by John Myers, sound design by Gregg Irwin, costumes by Elizabeth Greeley and the cast, with props by Joanna Marshall and Gary Miller. Light board operator was Amy Reichel, and soundboard operator was Timothy Reichel.



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we played with different scenes, lines, and props. We tried new ideas, and had to let other ideas go. We had laughs, frustrations, and ah-ha moments. The end result was wondrous, and more meaningful to all of us than anyone imagined it would be. The original excitement continued, the intrigue became inspiration, and the nervousness became gratitude—gratitude to have been involved with wonderful people, bringing a wonderful play to life.

Playwright Harbaugh agrees with Koeppel on the success of the workshop process—in particular the major workshopping session about three weeks before the show opened.

“Dramaturge Kathy Pingel and I attended rehearsals, spoke with cast and director, sought suggestions, and more,” Harbaugh explains. “Director Wendy Koeppel was exceedingly generous and gracious in listening to our every concern. She’d take suggestions and work on them, then take rewrites and work those in with her cast. How many directors could do that and still maintain a sincere smile?”

Boise Little Theater itself was delighted to be a part of one of the best new play competitions in the country, said BLT Board President, Frank White, citing “the privilege and honor” of hosting a world premiere at BLT. He admits there were “daunting moments for sure, hectic committee meetings—certainly, lots of schedule coordinating—but it was all worth it. The result touched us all in important ways, leading us to think, ponder, and reflect—and leaving us with special memories.”

White calls the entire experience “amazing, with a special kind of buzz and energy that permeated the theater and our community. From the first visit by Pam Harbaugh, to the ongoing amazing collaboration between her and Wendy Koeppel—and the entire cast and production team—the collaborative energies, including the amazing staff of AACT, were something quite special. Our marketing committee had loads of fun bringing the special occasion to the community, helping fill the theatre with audiences who got as caught up in the world premiere experience as we did. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the launching of Boise Little Theater’s 72nd season.”



Boise Little Theatre Board President Frank White (L) receives a check from Linda M. Lee, from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation, and AACT’s David Cockerell, in support of the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Casserole*

The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation provides a grant that helps make AACT NewPlayFest possible. The 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 and

Steve Strickland/Stricky Photography



friend, Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through AACT NewPlayFest, presenting and promoting new theatre works. For more information, visit aact.org/newplayfest-2020.



Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest's winning plays in anthologies, and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. Visit aact.org/dpc for direct links to Dramatic Publishing Company's NewPlayFest anthologies and plays, plus information about discounts and special offers for AACT members.

Upcoming World Premieres

AACT NewPlayFest continues its success in selecting and promoting original plays, produced as world premieres across the country. The 2020 NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere of *Casserole* at Boise Little Theater, and continues with the productions listed at right.

For more information about each play, visit: aact.org/premieres. Winning plays will be available for production through Dramatic Publishing Company, following each play's NewPlayFest world premiere,

Shattering by Pat Montley
Tacoma Little Theatre, Tacoma, Washington
 January 24 – February 9, 2020
tacomalittletheatre.com, 253-272-2281

Goat Song Revel by Dan Borengasser
Manatee Performing Arts Center, Bradenton, Florida
 February 6 – 23, 2020
manateeperformingartscenter.com, 941-748-5875

On Pine Knoll Street by Mark Cornell
The Sauk, Jonesville, Michigan
 February 6 – 16, 2020
thesauk.org, 517-849-9100

The Cayuga Canal Girls by Laura King
Phoenix Stage Company, Oakville, Connecticut
 March 20 – 29, 2020
phoenixstagecompany.org, 860-417-2505

Proprioception by Marilyn Millstone
Rover Dramawerks, Plano, Texas
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Be an AACT NewPlayFest 2022 Producing Theatre

AACT is accepting applications for Producing Theatres for the 2022 NewPlayFest. The deadline is *February 1, 2020*. For the application form, go to aact.org/new2022, or contact the AACT office (see page 4).

Producing Theatres are chosen well in advance, to allow them to schedule the world premiere productions into their seasons.

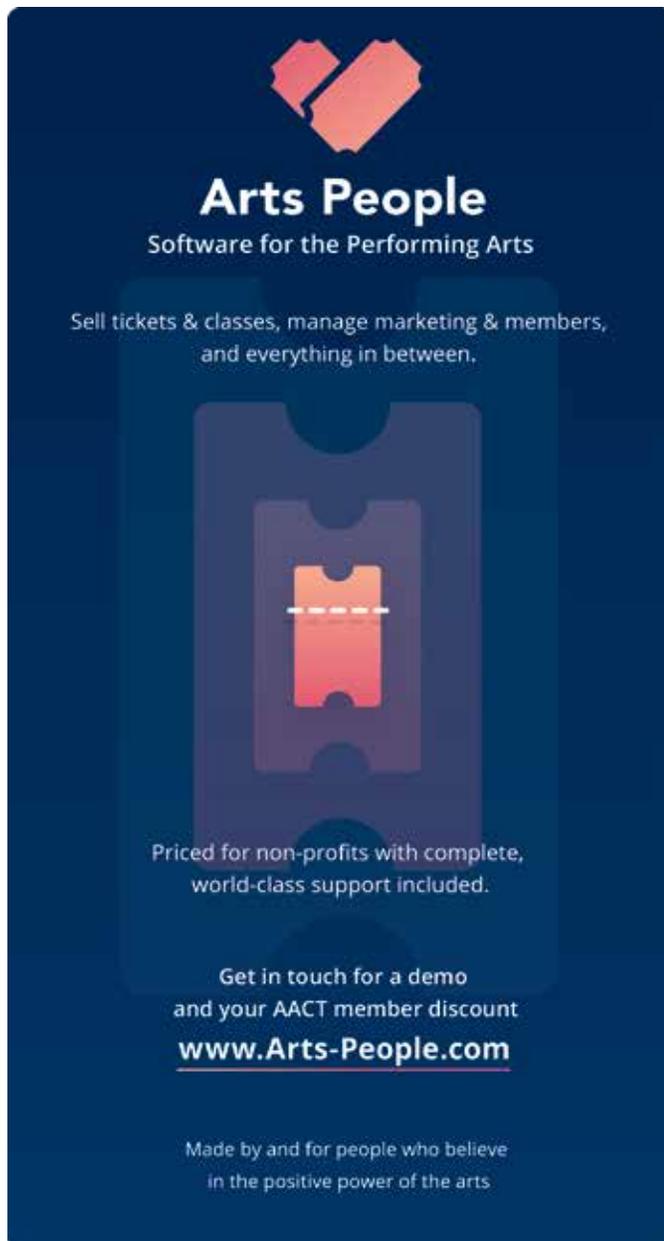
AACT will select six member theatres to produce the winning plays between June 2021 and December 2022. Producing Theatres will read the scripts that make it to the final round, and select the winning shows they will produce.

Producing a new play is an exciting process—an amazing adventure for both the company and its patrons—and the world premiere of an award-winning show is a feather in any theatre's cap. The theatre contributes to the future development of that piece, helping the playwright determine what works or doesn't work. As the experience of Boise Little Theatre proves (see "Buzz & Energy" on page 18), the

interpretations of the director and the actors can reveal insights into the work that the playwright didn't know were there. A first production may also help the playwright discover what needs to be tightened or rewritten to make it more effective.

The winning plays are published in an anthology by Dramatic Publishing Company.

Because AACT is committed to further advancing the artistic quality and creative process for community theatres and artists, it will assist each Producing Theatre with workshopping their selected play. This enhances the production process and the playwriting experience for the theatre and playwright. In addition, each Producing Theatre has an opportunity to receive funding to bring the playwright to the theatre for the workshopping process, and to attend the opening night festivities. Funds are also available to help cover production and marketing costs. (Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation is providing this generous funding. See page 20.) ♦



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Submit a Script

Script submission dates for AACT NewPlayFest 2020 will be during May and June 2020. Details for script submission are available at aact.org/new2022. Non-musical, full-length plays only. Scripts must be unpublished and must not have already received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre's production is to be a world premiere.) Only one script per playwright will be accepted. No fees are required for AACT-member playwrights; there is a \$10 script processing fee for nonmembers. For more information and script formatting guidelines, visit aact.org/new2022.

Be a Reviewer

Dedicated volunteers read and score the scripts, evaluating them in several rounds of reviews. Join this exciting process by being a Reviewer. You'll find application form and more information at aact.org/new2022.



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AACT Idaho Town Hall: A Creative Collaboration

Theatre representatives from across the state of Idaho came together in October to share common challenges and successes, and to learn about the benefits, services, and networking offered by AACT in its mission to “Help Theatres Thrive.”

Hosted by AACT and Idaho Association of Community Theatre (I-ACT), the setting was Boise Little Theater, during the morning following the company’s AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere of *Casseroles*, by Pam Harbaugh.



Linda M. Lee

Boise Little Theater Board President Frank White shares knowledge of theatre operations at the Idaho Town Hall

“What AACT provides goes way beyond our experience of hosting a world premiere,” said BLT President Frank White. “They provided a space and a dialog for all of our community theaters from around our state to meet, talk, collaborate, and exchange ideas that will prove invaluable as we go forward.”

The town hall-style meeting included artistic and managing directors, board presidents and members, music education and community development directors, local directors and actors, as well as playwright Harbaugh.

Facilitated by AACT’s Marketing/Communications Director David Cockerell, Jack K. Ayre & Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation representative Linda M. Lee, and I-ACT co-founder and AACT Idaho State Contact Deborah Hertzog, the meeting was attended by people representing 11 organizations. Topics included sharing resources, educational conferences, youth programming, member discounts, insurance programs, and participation in AACTFest festivals. The result was a positive exchange of ideas and issues, connecting with one another, and being part of the network of theatres represented by AACT, whose “benefits are endless and invaluable,” White said.

“Idaho is proud to be part of AACT Region IX, along with Alaska, Oregon, and Washington,” said Hertzog, “and we plan to launch future Idaho town halls in other parts of the state in 2020. Thank you, AACT, for your guidance, support, and strong advocacy for community theatre. It was our pleasure to have you in Idaho.” ♦

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Idaho Town Hall, October 19, 2019, Boise Little Theater

Front row (l-r): Jeanna Vickery, Idaho Association of Community Theatres (I-ACT) Board, Boise Little Theater; Jutta Geurtsen, Idaho Commission on the Arts Community Development Director; Linda M. Lee, Jack K Ayre & Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation; Melissa Hadden, Treasure Valley Children's Theater Music Education Director; Lisa Perry; Encore Theatre Board; Pam Harbaugh, playwright

2nd row (l-r): Nancy McIntosh, Lewiston Civic Theatre Executive Director; Patti Finley, I-ACT Board, Encore Theatre Company, Boise Little Theater; Debbie Hertzog, AACT Idaho State Contact, I-ACT Board, Boise Little Theater; Patti O'Hara, I-ACT Board, Boise Little Theater; Jonathan Perry, Encore Theatre Company Executive Director, I-ACT Board; Joseph Wright, I-ACT Board, Stage Coach Theatre, Boise Little Theater

3rd row (l-r): Darin Vickery, Boise Little Theater, Stage Coach Theatre; Frank White, Boise Little Theater Board President; David Cockerell, AACT Marketing/Communications Director; Dan Allers, Stage Coach Theatre

back row (l-r): Brad Wm. Ooley, Boise Little Theater; Millie Boardman, Knock 'Em Dead Productions; Shannon Mobberley, Daisy's Madhouse Theatre Board

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Don't Get Left Behind in the Online Video Marketing Boom

Julie Nemitz

"By 2022, 82% of the content consumed on the Internet will be video."
- Cisco

"75% of all video plays are on a mobile or tablet device." - eMarketer

"Viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in video, compared to 10% when reading it in text." - Insivia

These statistics may surprise some, but video is without a doubt one of the most powerful tools in communicating with your audiences. It is a near-perfect storytelling platform, and I daresay there is no one more strongly positioned to be video storytellers than theatres!

Strong marketing video will hold the attention of your audiences—past, present and future. It allows you to form a relationship with the viewer, and impact them emotionally, prompting them to head over to your online ticketing services and make a purchase. Importantly, video “slows the scroll”—a phrase we marketers use to describe

the type of content that makes the viewer slow down when scrolling through their emails and social media feeds.

For nearly 15 years, I created video marketing content for some of the country's top brands: Scholastic Publishers, Walmart.com, Procter & Gamble, and Nestlé Foods, among many others. What I learned there I've brought to developing video and social media content for theatre organizations over the past five years. And I've loved every minute of it!



Julie Nemitz/courtesy of The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre

A multi-camera shoot allows for different angles and visual perspectives

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When it comes down to it, there is very little difference between engaging diaper buyers in the wonders of motherhood (as I did in the web series “Moms First” for Pampers), and engaging ticket buyers to connect with the emotional, graphic world of Alison Bechdel in *Fun Home*—as my team and I did for Farmers Alley Theatre in Kalamazoo, Michigan. It was all done through video.

But how do you create videos that dazzle, delight and drive ticket sales, without depleting your marketing and promotional budgets? I'm glad you asked, because you don't need a six-person video crew, \$10,000 cameras, or a Hollywood producer on hand. That's good news, since the majority of community theatres simply cannot afford the cost of a professional video production. Instead, you must be resourceful.

Julie Nemitz/courtesy of The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre



Preparing the actors and wiring for good sound are important in preparation before a shoot

continued on next page ►

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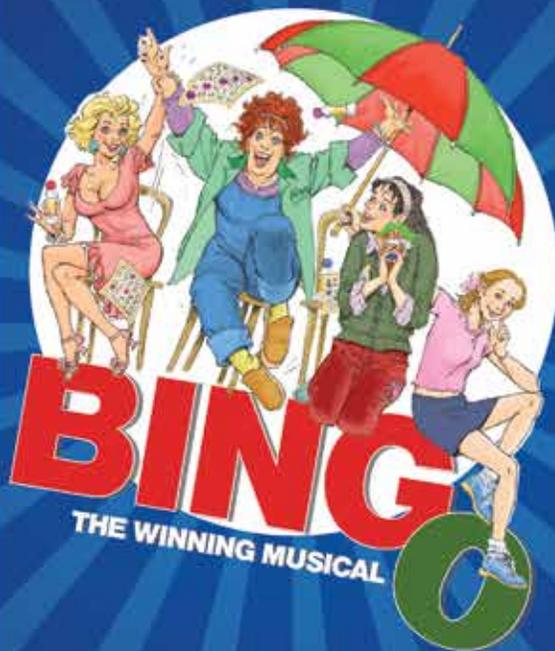
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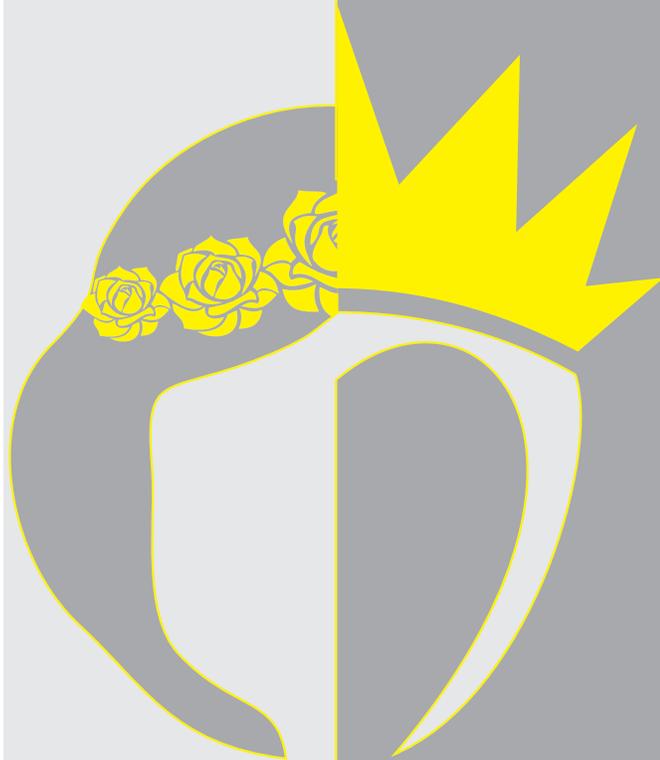
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Online Video Marketing *continued from page 27*

Fortunately, there are talented people in your community that you can tap for help. Some that have worked miracles for me include:

- A college student with a part-time side hustle as a videographer
- A video broadcasting teacher at a local high school
- A producer at a local community-access media center
- A cast member who could work iMovie (a video editing app) in his sleep
- A student who's a pro at IGTV (Instagram TV), with a thousand followers



Julie Nemitz/courtesy of The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre

Capturing the actors and director rehearsing Matilda: The Musical at the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre

A Rule to Remember

I firmly believe in the “Rule of Three” when creating video content to promote a show. It’s far better to create three well-crafted, thoughtful videos than six sloppy ones. My three approaches:

1. *Tickets on Sale Now Video.* A call-to-action announcement that promotes a purchase, this video should be no longer than 15 seconds or so, and highlights your theatre logo, show logo, and possibly, strong production photos. Adding animation makes the content pop.
2. *A “Peek Behind the Curtain” Video.* A longer-form video is critical to your storytelling, especially if the production is a lesser-known title. Take the viewer inside the process of creating your show, and share what the play or musical is about. These videos work best at 2-4 minutes long. Showcase some bits of rehearsal, or interview the cast and production team. Keep it fast and fun. With a little preparation, this format can even be done using a Facebook Live! video. Just be brave and authentic.
3. *Full Production Promo Video.* This can be the magic bullet for your advertising and a ticket sales boost. Showing just 30 to 45 seconds of clips from your production in all its glory—scenery, costumes and lighting, oh my!—gives the

viewer a glimpse into what's in store for them, and excites them to want more. Going this route means you'll need to enlist support from a video expert who can film and edit quickly, in order to create video that can truly drive ticket sales. (Check your production license for specific rules about filming or photographing an actual performance. Filming at a dress rehearsal, or staging a number for the camera, may be the simplest solution.)

Once you've created your video content, work it *hard*. Post videos across all your social media platforms. Make sure that your cast, crew and production teams like, comment, and *share* it on their own social media. Upload video to your YouTube channel. Embed video in your email marketing. It can't be repeated too often: putting your advertising dollars into video content will ensure you reach new ticket buyers.

In the next issue of *Spotlight*, I'll explore digital marketing priorities you'll want to master in order to get butts in seats! Until then, take a stab. Create video that dazzles and delights your audiences! ♦

Julie Nemitz is the founder and chief content officer for Playhouse Theatre Marketing Academy, where she inspires and educates community theatres and theatre educators in how to promote their productions online more easily, efficiently and affordably, using the latest digital marketing techniques. She followed in her parents' footsteps while growing up, treading the boards of her local community theatre, The Kalamazoo Civic. Julie has had a huge, soft spot in her heart for community theatre ever since. Learn more at www.playhousetheatremarketingacademy.com or contact Julie via email at julie@playhouseartscollective.com or on Instagram @playhousetheatremarketing and Facebook at @playhousetheatremarketingacademy.



Julie Nemitz/courtesy of The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre

The video production team of Matt Perigo and Jake Andrews from Public Media Network get up close and personal filming action on the stage during a rehearsal

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AACT 2020 National Awards Nominations Close January 20

AACT National Awards are presented each year in recognition of outstanding contributions to community theatre, and are selected through nominations from community theatres and their supporters. *Nominations are open until January 20*, and awards will be presented at aactWORLDVEST 2020 in Venice, Florida.

Anyone may nominate a candidate for a National Award. To submit a nomination uniquely suited to your theatre “hero,” visit the AACT website for criteria for each award, a list of previous award recipients, and the online nomination form. [aact.org/national-awards]



Murray and Lori Chase of Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida (home of aactWORLDVEST 2014, 2018, and 2020) were recognized for their service with the Mort Clark International Achievement Award in 2019

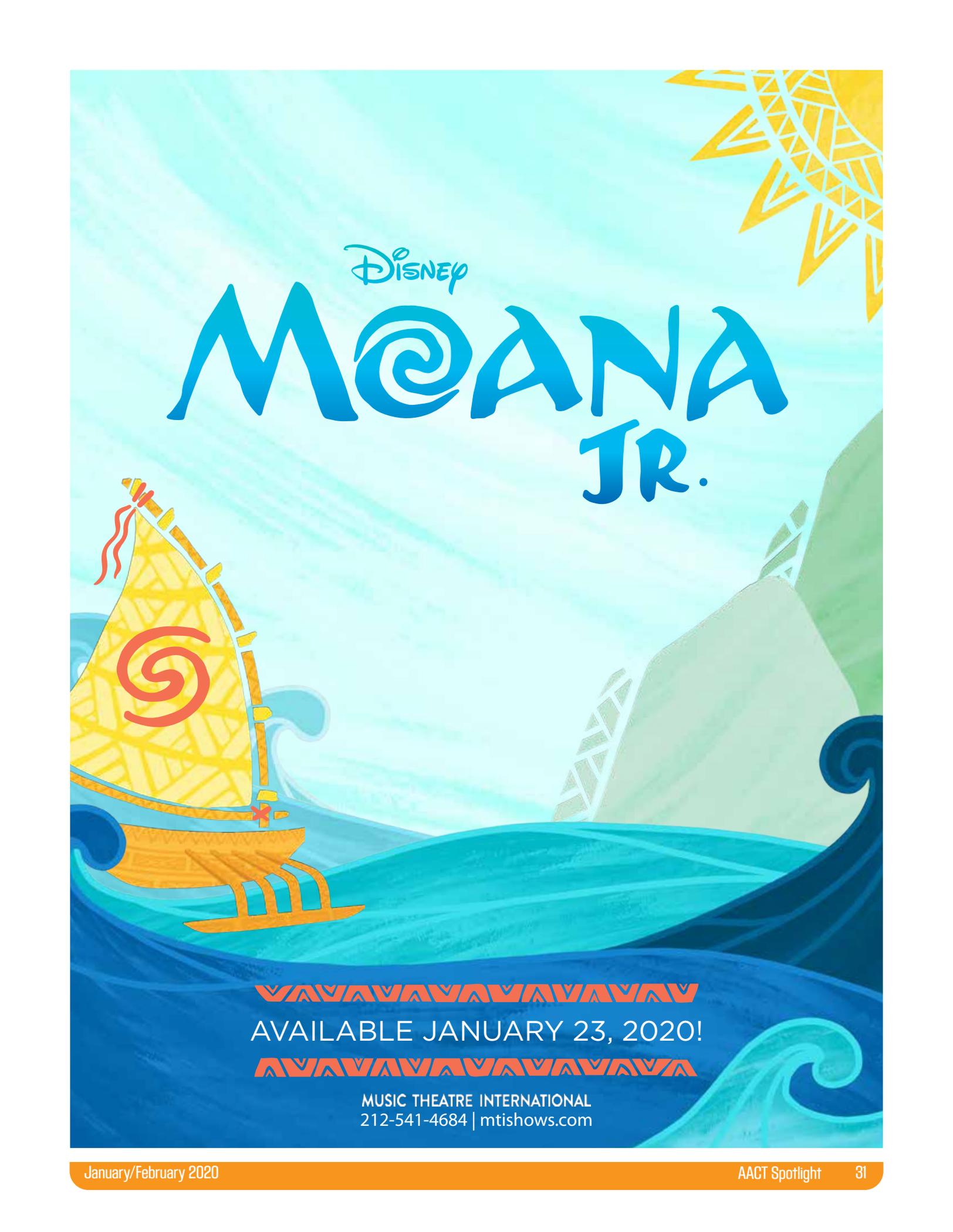
AACT bestows 10 major recognitions, each focused on a different area of service, to honor those who have contributed significantly to community theatre nationwide.

- Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award
- David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award
- Diamond Crown Organization Award
- Distinguished Merit Award
- Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award
- Mort Clark International Achievement Award
- Shining Star Award
- Special Recognition Award
- Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award
- Corporate Award

The AACT Awards Committee encourages nominations of individuals of all ages for those awards whose criteria are based on merit, rather than age or length of service.

Spotlight Award Nominations

Nominations are welcome anytime for the AACT Spotlight Award, which is presented locally by AACT and an AACT-member theatre, in recognition of long or special service with a significant impact on the quality of local theatre. Nominations are accepted for persons of all ages. For more detail, and the online nomination form, visit aact.org/spotlight-award. ♦

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a Polynesian sailing vessel with a yellow sail featuring a red spiral, navigating through blue waves. In the background, there are green hills and a large, golden sun with a geometric pattern. The overall style is bright and colorful, typical of Disney's branding for children's entertainment.

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Take Part in World Theatre Day 2020

Since 1962, World Theatre Day has been celebrated on the 27th of March by theatre organizations and theatre lovers all over the world.

Created by the International Theatre Institute (ITI), the international non-governmental organization for the performing arts, World Theatre Day is a day to underscore the value and importance of theatre as an art form, and its positive impact on individuals and communities.

National and international theatre events are organized to mark the occasion, but many activities are local. To find out how you can participate in the celebration of World Theatre Day, visit www.world-theatre-day.org.

Each year, a World Theatre Day International Message is circulated, in which a figure of world stature shares his or her reflections on the theme of Theatre and a Culture of Peace. The first message was written in 1962 by Jean Cocteau, French playwright, designer, filmmaker, visual artist and critic. You can read it, and messages in the years since, online



at the link above.

An international non-governmental organization for the performing arts, ITI was founded in 1948 by UNESCO and the international theatre community. ♦

AACT Web Power

The AACTivity Productions List recently received a significant update from member theatres. Here's a quick summary of the most produced plays and musicals over the past five years:

10 Most Produced Musicals

- 1) *Mamma Mia!*
- 2) *Mary Poppins*
- 3) *Sister Act*
- 4) *Addams Family*
- 4) *Newsies* (tie)
- 5) *Ragtime*
- 5) *Monty Python's Spamalot* (tie)
- 6) *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*
- 6) *Disney's Little Mermaid* (tie)
- 6) *Rocky Horror Show* (tie)
- 6) *Shrek The Musical* (tie)
- 7) *Les Miserables*
- 9) *A Christmas Story: The Musical*
- 10) *Cabaret*

10 Most Produced Plays

- 1) *Steel Magnolias*
- 2) *Best Christmas Pageant Ever*
- 3) *Calendar Girls*
- 4) *Dixie Swim Club*
- 4) *The Foreigner* (tie)
- 4) *To Kill a Mockingbird* (tie)
- 4) *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (tie)
- 5) *A Christmas Carol*
- 5) *Diary of Anne Frank* (tie)
- 6) *Don't Dress for Dinner*
- 7) *Arsenic and Old Lace*
- 7) *A Christmas Story* (tie)
- 8) *Fox on the Fairway*
- 9) *Leading Ladies*
- 10) *Silent Sky*

The AACTivity Productions List not only shows which plays and musicals are being produced around the country, but also how well they've fared financially and otherwise. To see more, go to aact.org/list (you must be signed in).

If your theatre isn't sharing your production information with other AACT members, enroll in AACTivity [aact.org/aactivity]. If your company is already an AACTivity member, check in to see that your listings are up to date.

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



Take Advantage of Member Benefits and Discounts

Members of AACT enjoy wonderful benefits. Theatres across the country save through royalty discounts, great shared programs with AACT Corporate Partners, and, of course, the always important ASCAP license.

AACT Member Benefits include great discounts on

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Broadway Licensing
Buddy Worldwide
Classics On Stage
Dramatic Publishing
Heuer Publishing
Music Theatre International - MTI
Stage Rights
Theatrical Rights Worldwide - TRW
Twisted Plays
YouthPLAYS

Box Office Member Management

Arts People
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Spotlight Award Honors Sharon Burum and Chuck Tweed

The AACT Spotlight Award partners AACT with member theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of local theatre. Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award at aact.org/spotlight-award.

The **Oklahoma Community Theatre Association (OCTA)** honored **Sharon Burum**, and **Chuck Tweed** with Spotlight Awards at its annual meeting and conference. Muskogee Little Theatre served as host for the event, with a day of workshops featuring leaders from throughout the state. AACT Region VI Representative Sally Barnes presented the awards.



Sally Barnes

Chuck Tweed and Sharon Burum with AACT Region VI Representative Sally Barnes (center).

Sharon Burum has been involved with Duncan Little Theatre and OCTA for over 25 years. She has served Duncan Little Theatre as a volunteer, actor, director, and producer. Her first experience with OCTA was in 1995, when Duncan Little Theatre hosted OCTAFest. Sharon has continued her service to OCTA as a three-time President, and is currently a Member-at-Large on the AACT Board of Directors. In 2010, she received the Governor's Arts Award, recognizing individuals and organizations that have impacted the arts in their communities and throughout the state. The Governor of Oklahoma presented the Awards during a special ceremony at the State Capitol.

Mention the name Jewel Box Theatre in Oklahoma City, and immediately people think of **Chuck Tweed**, who has been called the "face of Jewel Box." Chuck served the theatre as Production Director for 41 years. Under his leadership, Jewel Box Theatre boosted its number of season ticket holders from 237 to 2700. His passion for excellence was instrumental in the establishment of the theatre's annual Gem Awards, as well as its national playwriting competition and a behind-the-scenes boot camp that gives patrons a look at the hard work that goes into a production. Chuck is a founding member of the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association, and in 2013, received the prestigious Governor Arts Award, recognizing his longtime leadership and significant contribution to the arts. ♦

AACT National Office Goes "Virtual"

In recent months, AACT's national office has transitioned to a virtual operating structure.

The change is part of AACT's Long-Range Strategic Plan, approved last summer by the organization's Board of Directors, who saw going virtual as a major, transformative step in AACT's growth and development.

Eliminating the need for a physical office space, going virtual will also eliminate a major operating expense, allowing AACT to reallocate funds to enhance member programs and services. It also moves AACT closer to another Strategic Plan element—eventually positioning staff across the country, to better serve regional needs. In fact, a number of staff members have been "virtual" for some time, working from home offices in Texas, Florida, Michigan and California. As a result, AACT staff meetings have been conducted by video conference for several years, making the transition from a central office much easier.

AACT will continue to strive for a comprehensive, more cost-effective, network operating system, closely aligned with the priorities of both the organization and its members, serving theatres across America and on U.S. Military bases in Europe.

AACT's mailing address is now:
AACT
PO Box 101476
Fort Worth, TX 76185

The main phone number remains (817) 732-3177, providing a quick way to contact staff on all matters related to AACT.

supporting AACT programs and events. She's a past AACT President, with knowledge and expertise to spare.

Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator, Education Coordinator
ron@aact.org

Ron guides AACT's festival program, and coordinates Festival Commissioners for state and regional festivals. He also coordinates AACT's educational programming. A former AACT President, he has years of experience at all levels of community theatre.

Stephen Peithman, Webmaster, *Spotlight* Assistant Editor
webmaster@aact.org

Stephen's focus is website content, navigation, and operation. He created AACT's first website in 1996, and has guided it ever since. Stephen's experience as founding editor of *Stage Directions* magazine is put to use in assisting with editing *Spotlight*.

Kathy Pingel, NewPlayFest Dramaturge, Education Coordinator
kathy@aact.org

Kathy serves at the Dramaturge for the 2020 AACT NewPlayFest Festival, and coordinates AACT's educational programming.

Susan Austin, NewPlayFest Coordinator
newplayfest@aact.org

Susan coordinates and provides support to AACT NewPlayFest playwrights and reviewers, including handling script submissions and overseeing the review process. ♦

AACT Staff 2020

Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director
quiana@aact.org

Ask Quiana about all things AACT, including AACT leadership, committees, programs, educational events, awards, finances, and planning.

Karen Matheny, Membership Coordinator
karen@aact.org

Karen handles memberships, provides information on AACT programs and benefits, and how to connect to our national network of America's theatres and theatre lovers.

David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director
david@aact.org

David handles communications with members, including e-news and promos; edits *Spotlight*; promotes AACT programs; and works to increase AACT visibility.

Winston Daniels, Operations and Events Assistant
winston@aact.org

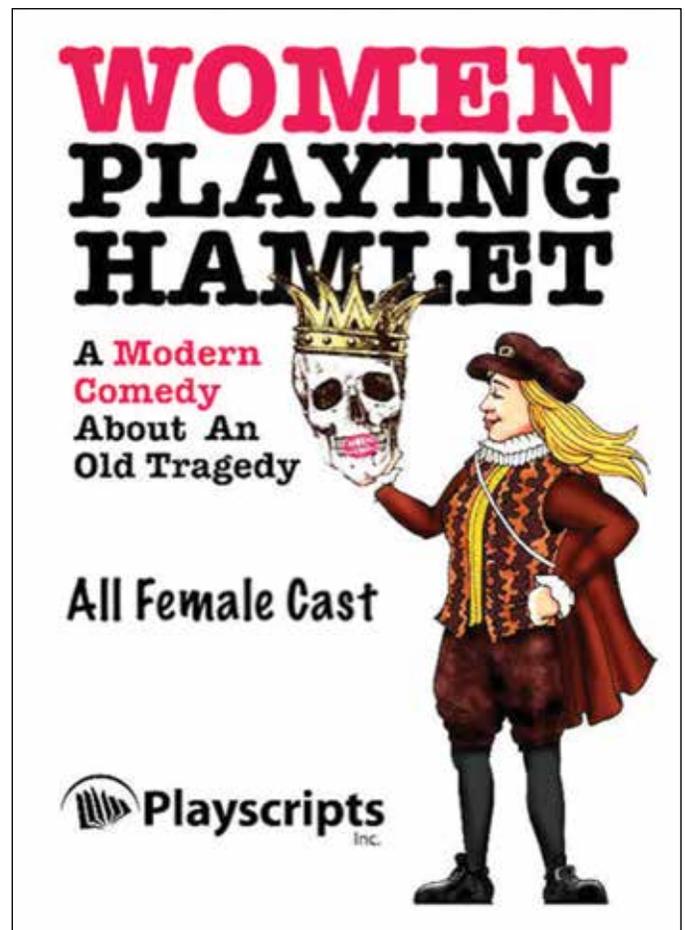
Winston handles event registrations, data entry, and assists with the AACT website.

Darlene DeLorenzo, Vendor Services Coordinator
darlene@aact.org

Ask Darlene about *Spotlight* advertising, renting the AACT mailing list, and exhibiting at the national festival.

Jill Patchin, Conference and Sponsorships Coordinator
jill@aact.org

Jill manages AACT's Corporate Partners program, matching vendors with opportunities to increase their visibility by



USITT Encourages Community Theatres to Attend Conference & Stage Expo



The United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) will celebrate its 60th anniversary with a Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas, April 1-4, 2020. USITT is actively encouraging community theatres to attend.

Providing education, products and services for every stage, the Houston event provides an opportunity to connect—and reconnect—with friends and colleagues from around the world.

In addition to networking opportunities and new ideas coming out of conference meetings and sessions, the Stage Expo floor functions as the “excitement center” of the event. Expo goers look there for the latest state-of-the-art technology on display, alongside innovative resources to enhance their own productions.

Why should community theatres participate in USITT? The answer is quite simple: all theatres have the same technical challenges to solve, no matter the size or type of performance space.

In Houston, community theatre technicians may choose the professional development workshop on OSHA10—learning about the OSHA Ten Hour Training that promotes workplace safety and health. Also offered is an introductory session on directing intimacy, another on how to be a more effective stage manager, and another on the fundamentals of platforms and decking.

Costume designers and costume shop volunteer can learn more about shop management, or innovations in costume technology that may make lives easier in their own theater space. Many community theatres are interested in digital media and projection design, and there are plenty of sessions planned, thanks to the introduction of USITT’s newest commission, which focuses on this explosively expanding technology. Interested parties at all skill levels can sign up to explore content creation and projection mapping in this year’s Digital Media Studio.



Mark Blackmon

USITT attendees network with colleagues while waiting for the opening of the Stage Expo

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In addition to the conference’s education sessions, community theatres are encouraged to explore the offerings of more than 350 exhibitors on the Stage Expo floor. Stage Expo covers every aspect of production, offering information on the latest products, ways to replace lighting instruments with newer and more cost-effective ones, opportunities to re-imagine seating plans, and even to outfit an entire theatre or performance venue.

USITT is also seeking more representation from community theatres on its programming commissions and committees. The community theatre segment is one that is generally underrepresented in technical theatre discussions, and the Institute plans to change that. If there is a meeting or gathering that interests you, then simply show up. Your participation is welcomed.

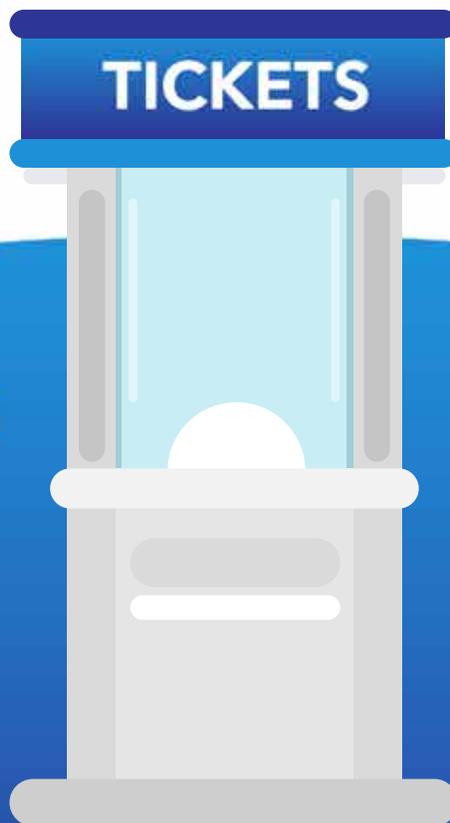
The conference setting, Houston, is America’s fourth-largest city, touted as a cosmopolitan destination where Southern hospitality meets urban chic, offering world-class dining, arts, hotels, shopping and nightlife. More to the point, Houston’s nonprofit arts and culture industry generates more than \$1.1 billion in economic activity each year.

The most economical rates for Conference registration are offered *before February 7, 2020*. Visit www.usitt.org to register. After you register, USITT advises that you book your hotel as soon as possible through its housing partner, Connections Housing. (Just click on “Housing” in the registration portal.) Rooms are being reserved at a record pace, and booking through Connections Housing offers the best rates for a venue close to the action of USITT 2020. ♦



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Johnson City, Tennessee
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Waterloo Community Playhouse/
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Waterloo, Iowa
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The Weston Friendly Society
Weston, Massachusetts
135 years in 2020



Duluth Playhouse, Inc.
Duluth, Minnesota
106 years in 2020



Bay City Players, Inc.
Bay City, Michigan
102 years in 2020



Memorial Opera House
Valparaiso, Indiana
127 years in 2020



Prairie Players Civic Theatre
Galesburg, Illinois
105 years in 2020



Tacoma Little Theatre
Tacoma, Washington
102 years in 2020



Belmont Dramatic Club, Inc.
Belmont, Massachusetts
117 years in 2020



Diamond Head Theatre
Honolulu, Hawaii
105 years in 2020



Concord Players
Concord, Massachusetts
101 years in 2020



Barnstormers Theater
Ridley Park, Pennsylvania
112 years in 2020



Erie Playhouse
Erie, Pennsylvania
104 years in 2020



Cranford Dramatic Club
Cranford, New Jersey
101 years in 2020



Des Moines Community Playhouse
Des Moines, Iowa
101 years in 2020



Peoria Players Theatre
Peoria, Illinois
101 years in 2020



Theatre Jacksonville
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Theatre Memphis
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 The Dayton Theatre Guild, Inc. (Dayton, OH)
 The Hudson Players (Hudson, OH)
 U.S. Army Entertainment Division (Ft. Sam Houston, TX)

Gold (celebrating 50 years)

Canyon Theatre Guild (Old Town Newhall, CA)
 Fairbanks Light Opera Theatre (Fairbanks, AK)
 Maury County Arts Guild (Colombia, TN)
 Oconee Community Theatre (Seneca, SC)
 Oklahoma Community Theatre Association (Oklahoma City, OK)
 Sun Prairie Civic Theatre (Sun Prairie, WI)
 The Barn Theatre, Inc. (Stuart, FL)
 The Theatre in the Park (Shawnee Mission, KS)
 Theatre Winter Haven (Winter Haven, FL)

Silver (celebrating 25 years)

Academy of Children's Theatre (Richland, WA)
 Adobe Theater (Albuquerque, NM)
 Byron Civic Theatre (Byron, IL)
 Crow River Players (New London, MN)
 Gaylord Community Productions, Inc. (Gaylord, MI)
 Grove Community Playmakers (Grove, OK)
 Main Street Players of Boone County (Belvidere, IL)
 Montana TheatreWorks (Bozeman, MT)
 Region V Association (Independence, MO)
 Rockwall Community Playhouse (Rockwall, TX)
 The Center for the Arts (Murfreesboro, TN)
 The Merlin Players (Owatonna, MN)

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New Roles

Bay City, Michigan—**Bay City Players** announces the hiring of **Jessica Lowe** as their Operations Administrator. Some of Jessica's tasks include coordinating all communications with Bay City's audience



Jessica Lowe

through email, mail, and social media; maintaining the master calendar for the organization; and updating and maintaining the company's administrative procedures. Jessica received her bachelor's degree in social work from Central Michigan University, and her master's degree from Michigan State University. Before accepting her position in Bay City, she worked in the field of applied behavior analysis therapy for children on the autism spectrum. Reflecting on her new role, Jessica says, "I have always dreamed of working for a nonprofit organization, and have

dedicated my career to helping others. This position allows me to fulfill my altruistic passion and personal interest in the performing arts. I absolutely love my new job at Bay City Players, and I am grateful to become a part of providing high-quality theatrical experiences for the entertainment, education, and enrichment of the community." (baycityplayers.org)

Valparaiso, Indiana—After an extensive search, **Chicago Street Theatre** has chosen **Krystina Coyne** as its new Managing Director. Krystina graduated with a B.S. in theatre from Illinois State University, and has worked closely with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival,



Krystina Coyne

spending two seasons in audience services, then managing group sales and community outreach. She has 11 year of sales experience, beginning in nonprofit merchandising, and a diverse background in management and staff training. "Chicago Street Theatre has invested so much in challenging 'safe' theatre," Coyne says. "What drew me to this position was how daring the board was willing to be and how invested they are in choosing materials that will make the audience and actors reflect on themselves. I am thrilled to work with such an exceptionally knowledgeable and welcoming company. Chicago Street Theatre is such an integral part of the Valparaiso community—I cannot wait to join in educating and entertaining the vibrant audience it attracts." (chicagostreet.org)

Alton, Illinois—**Alton Little Theater** launched its 86th Season with an organization-wide restructuring, appointing **Lee Cox** as Executive Director, **Kevin Frakes** as Artistic Director, and **Brant McCance** as Technical Director. Importantly, these three core staff members also direct 90% of the 12-14 theatrical productions the company mounts each year. ALT also hired an administrative assistant and a lighting designer in part-time positions, and has greatly expanded its box office hours. Because its wide array of offerings has made it a regional destination center for the greater St. Louis/Southern Illinois area, the company plans to build a new state-of-the-art performance space that will double its seating capacity. Given ALT's increasing prominence,

Artie's Advocacy Tip

Become more aware and involved in political arts advocacy. Learn how at americansforthearts.org/advocate.

AACT is once again a National Partner for the National Arts Action Summit/Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, DC, March 30-31 And you are invited to join us.



Hosted by Americans for the Arts, in partnership with over 85 national arts organizations (including AACT), this is the largest gathering of its kind, bringing together a broad cross-section of America's cultural and civic organizations.

Grassroots advocates from across the country attend the Summit's full day of advocacy training on Monday, March 30, learning from the experts about the latest research and priorities for legislative consideration. That evening, the Nancy Hanks Lecture at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is designed to inspire and motivate advocates.

The following day, March 31, is Arts Advocacy Day, when advocates take their passion, knowledge, and stories to Capitol Hill for meetings with their congressional leaders, in support of arts education policy, the charitable tax deduction, and funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

More information: americansforthearts.org/events/national-arts-action-summit



Kevin Frakes and Lee Cox

Executive Director Cox has set a goal to get much more involved in state, regional and national conferences—prompted in part by the company being honored with the Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award at last June’s AACTFest ceremonies in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. (altonlittletheater.org)



Jake Schaffer



Brianna McCracken

Spokane Civic Theatre in Spokane, Washington is pleased to announce the hiring of **Jake Schaffer** as its Creative Director and **Brianna McCracken** as Marketing Director. Brianna graduated from Gonzaga University with a communications degree, and served in a position with River Park Square, a shopping mall and entertainment complex in downtown Spokane. Jake began working with Spokane Civic as a creative consultant, before taking on his new staff position as Creative Director. Jake’s creative life began at Spokane Civic, attending camps and shows in his youth. Prior to Spokane Civic, Jake ran his own business, an LA-based production company called EMPHATIC.

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: Karen Matheny at karen@aac.org.

Visit the Job Postings on the AACT website at aact.org/jobs. Job postings are frequently added, so check back often.

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SETC's Charles M. Getchell New Play Contest is dedicated to the discovery, development, and publicizing of worthy new plays and playwrights. Submissions are accepted between March 1 and June 1, annually. One winning playwright receives a \$1,000 cash award and an all-expense paid trip to the annual SETC 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.

To be eligible for the contest, the submitting playwright must be a current member of SETC, reside in the SETC region, or attend a college or university within the SETC region. The SETC region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,

Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Submitted work must be by one playwright only. No collaborations or adaptations will be considered.

Submitted work must be either a full-length play or thematically related one acts that constitute a full-length play when performed together. No musicals or children's plays.

Plays must be unproduced (no professional productions) and unpublished. Readings and workshops are acceptable.

Deadline: Submissions accepted March 1 - June 1, 2020

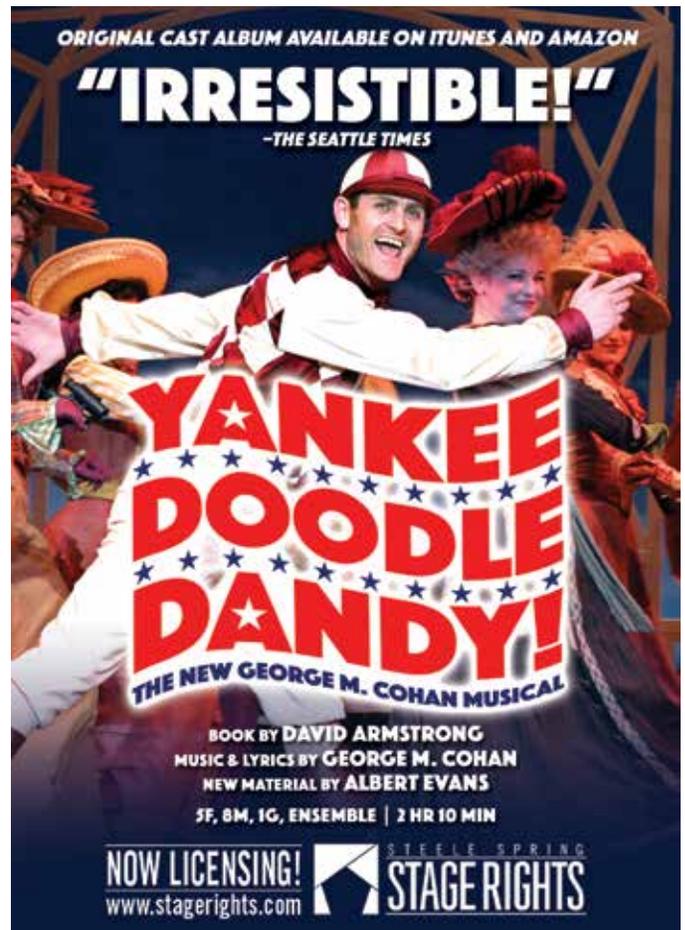
Electronic submission only, as email attachment to: info@setc.org.

For complete submission rules and details, see the website: setc.org/scholarships-awards/awards/getchell-new-play-contest/

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National Arts Action Summit
March 30 - 31, 2020
Washington, DC.

Hosted by Americans for the Arts and cosponsored by 85+ national arts organizations, the 32nd Arts Advocacy Day will be the largest gathering of its kind. Attendees will attend a full day of advocacy training to learn the latest research and legislative arts priorities on Monday, March 30. That evening, The Nancy Hanks Lecture at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is sure to inspire and motivate advocates. The following day, March 31, is Arts Advocacy Day when advocates take their passion, knowledge, and

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americansforthearts.org/events/national-arts-action-summit



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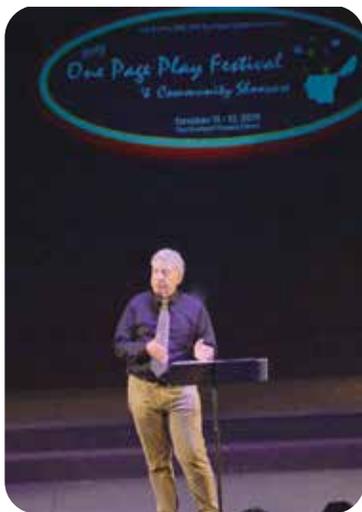
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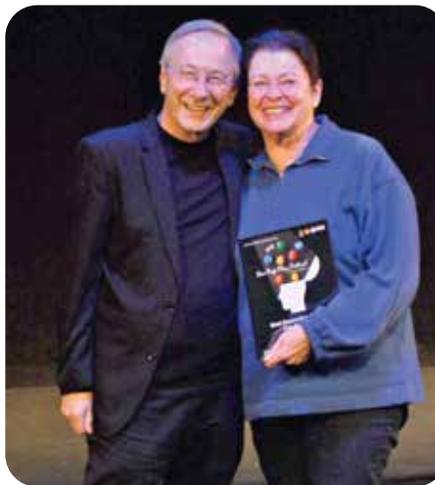
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David Schwab



AACT Region X Representative **Dane Winters** introduces the U.S. Army IMCOM Europe Entertainment One Page Play Festival & Community Showcase, held October 11-13, 2019 at the **Stuttgart Theatre Center** in Stuttgart, Germany

David Schwab



AACT Festivals Coordinator **Ron Ziegler** presents the U.S. Army IMCOM Europe Entertainment One Page Play Festival award for Outstanding Achievement as a Supporting Actress to **Margie Ritcher** from **Ansbach Terrace Playhouse** in Ansbach, Germany. The festival was held October 11-13, 2019 at the **Stuttgart Theatre Center** in Stuttgart, Germany

Patti Finley



(l-r): Idaho Association of Community Theatre (I-ACT) President **Patti Finley**, I-ACT Vice President/Membership and AACT Idaho State Contact **Debbie Hertzog**, AACT NewPlayFest Dramaturge **Kathy Pingel**, and I-ACT Board Member and Boise Little Theater NewPlayFest Committee Chair **Patti O'Hara** in Boise, Idaho, prior to workshoping the AACT NewPlayFest winning play, *Casserole*, September 24, 2019

Debbie Hertzog



(l-r): Idaho Association of Community Theatre (I-ACT) Board member and AACT NewPlayFest Committee Chair at Boise Little Theater **Patti O'Hara**, AACT Marketing/Communications Director **David Cockerell**, Boise Little Theatre Box Office Volunteer **Carolle Skov** (volunteer at BLT since 1967, in the Box Office since 1984), and Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation representative **Linda M. Lee** tour **Boise Little Theater** in Boise, Idaho, October 18, 2019

continued on next page ▶

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5 Female, 3 Male | Two Acts
Sophia has been conned into buying a derelict theatre. Now with crushing bank loan payments to make and no money, the jobless Sophia decides to defy the odds and dig her way out of her financial mess by reopening the theatre as a cafe. Her already dire situation worsens, when she soon discovers that the theatre is inhabited by the pompous ghosts of dead Shakespearean characters who are hell bent on keeping their home just as it is. By chance, Sophia discovers that the only way to get rid of the ghosts is to murder them as they were killed in their original plays. At Sophia's cafe, Murder is now on the menu.

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Jailhouse Frocks
3 Female, 2 Male | Two Acts
Shattering dimwitted Officer Dwayne's tranquil evening is the arrests of three unlikely women; the mayor's wife, the local mad cat-lady, and a dangerous looking New Yorker. The already chaotic situation descends into mayhem with the arrival of a New York gangster, disguised as an FBI agent, hell-bent on exacting revenge on his wife. By the end of the night, the ladies have formed a gang, sang some songs, escaped from jail and locked up the gangster leaving Officer Dwayne wondering how on earth he's managed to make the arrest of a lifetime. Featured songs include "Respect" and "Monster Mash".

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(l-r): Idaho Association of Community Theatre (I-ACT) Board member **Patti O'Hara**, I-ACT Board member and Casserole cast member **Jeanna Vickery**, Encore Theatre Company Executive Director and I-ACT Board member **Jonathan Perry**, I-ACT Board President **Patti Finley**, I-ACT Board Secretary **Joseph Wright**, AACT Idaho State Contact and I-ACT Vice President **Debbie Hertzog**, and, I-ACT Board Treasurer **Kathy Green** enjoy the opening night gala following the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere opening of Casserole by Pam Harbaugh at **Boise Little Theater** in Boise, Idaho, October 18, 2019

Adam Miller



(l-r): **Theatre Tuscaloosa** Executive Producer **Tina Turley**, Alabama State Council on the Arts Program Manager **Yvette Jones-Smedley**, and AACT Alabama State Contact/Alabama Community Theatre Festival Chair/Theatre Tuscaloosa Managing Director **Adam Miller** at the Alabama Conference of Theatre's Annual Community Theatre Festival, November 3, 2019, Shelton State Community College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Adam Miller



(l-r) Director **Lisa Ponder** and cast members **Autumn Brown** and **Rachel Pike** from the Best Show winner, **South City Theatre's** production of *The Gulf*, with AACT Alabama State Contact/Alabama Community Theatre Festival Chair/Theatre Tuscaloosa Managing Director **Adam Miller** at the Alabama Conference of Theatre's Annual Community Theatre Festival, November 3, 2019, Shelton State Community College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama



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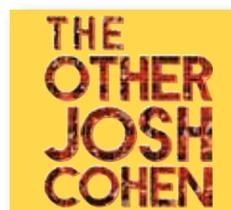
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While that may be true for just about every kind of *personal* insurance, in the wide, wonderful world of *commercial* insurance—especially when it comes to community theatres—there are no geckos or price guns to expedite the quoting process. With that in mind, theatres should start the quoting process at least 30 days in advance of the new policy's start date, to ensure receiving accurate quotes well before coverage is needed.

Consider this: houses and cars have fairly standard, designated uses. That makes quoting insurance coverage for those items just as standard and straight-forward, which means it can be done relatively quickly and easily. Theatres, on the other hand, can be as different as apples and oranges, and all those differences have to be disclosed and properly evaluated to make sure the policy can respond as intended.

When property insurance is needed, underwriters rely on "COPE" information--an acronym for the four main areas of concern for property underwriters:

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Environment - What other structures, or potentially unsafe conditions, exist around the immediate area of the building?

Concerning general liability, a plethora of questions must be answered before a quote can be generated. From annual attendance and life safety issues, to the age and condition of the performance venue, each theatre has its own unique circumstances that will determine how much or how little it pays for insurance.

The key here is advance preparation, and patience. Be prepared to answer specific questions regarding your buildings or performance venues, as well as attendance estimates. New theatres can expect to be asked for a business plan and resumes of the principals of the organization. Again, to get an accurate quote for a policy that will include the types of claims you want covered, plan to start the process 20 to 30 days before the insurance is needed. A quote will take a minimum of 10 to 14 days to generate, rather than 15 minutes or less. ♦

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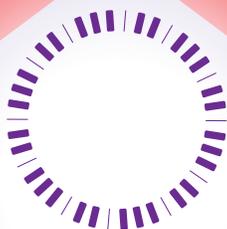
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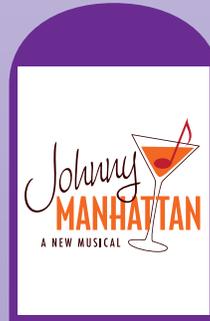
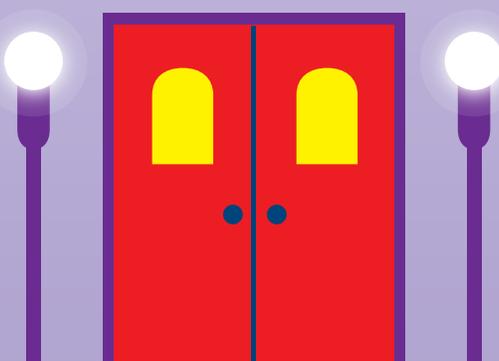
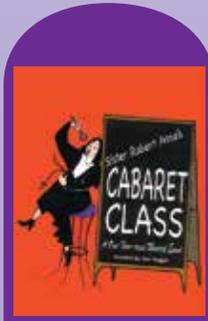
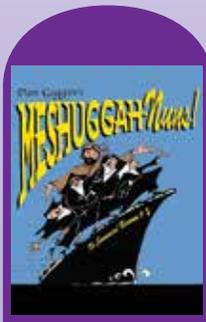
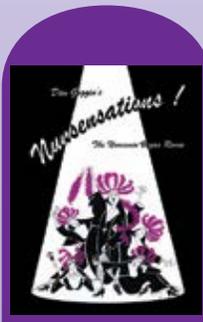
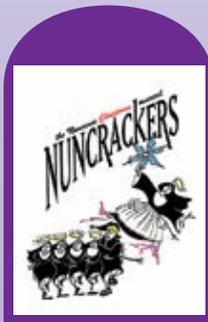
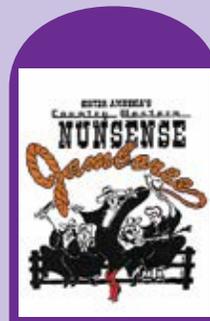
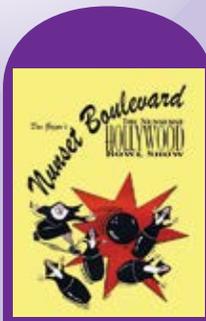
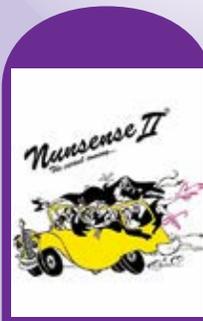
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Jan 24 - Feb 9	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>Shattering</i> , by Pat Montley, at Tacoma Little Theatre	WA Tacoma	253-272-2281 tacomalittletheatre.com
Jan 25	AACT Washington State Community Theatre Town Hall Tacoma Little Theatre	WA Tacoma	817-732-3177 aact.org/calendar
Feb 6-16	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>On Pine Knoll Street</i> , by Mark Cornell, at The Sauk	MI Jonesville	517-849-9100 thesauk.org
Feb 6-23	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>Goat Song Revel</i> , by Dan Borengasser, at Manatee Performing Arts Center	FL Bradenton	941-748-5875 manateeperformingartscenter.com
Feb 22	AACT Winter Board Meetings	Virtual/Online	817-732-3177 aact.org/winter

For dates further ahead, check the website: aact.org/calendar

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