



AACT Launches AACTEd Units

By Harv Thompson

The American Association of Community Theatre is committed to providing continuing education opportunities for its members who ultimately improve the quality of community theatre operations throughout the country. Furthermore, AACT, through its members, provides the singularly most qualified entity to identify current and long-term educational needs of community theatres throughout its national and international networks.

Throughout its twenty-five year existence, the elected leadership has consistently developed national programs that expand knowledge and personal skills for actors, directors, technicians, educators, managers and community leaders. For instance, AACTFest has always provided public adjudication and discussion not only for company members but the audience as well. Though identifying the best overall production at a state, regional or national festival is a required outcome, teaching everyone involved has been a parallel, though perhaps less obvious, intentional goal.

During its steady growth, the organization created national and regional conferences and festivals as well as intensive classes and unique workshop experiences that provide life-long learning opportunities. The programs were developed not only for trained professionals and long-time theatre veterans but volunteers as well.

AACT joined forces with the University of Wisconsin in the mid 1980s providing valuable support for the highly regarded biennial Full-time Managing Directors Conference held over three days on the Madison campus. Subsequently three additional national training conferences were established directly by AACT for artistic directors, educational administrators and local community theatre management staff (paid or volunteer). To complement the growth and expansion of AACTFest, the organization established the Adjudication Workshop, a nationwide program to sharpen the skills of adjudication at all levels. And most recently AACT launched its multi-day Technical Theatre Conference also held just before each national AACTFest.

In addition, dozens of educational workshops covering the range of diverse topics that build quality within community theatres are

now scheduled as part of every national AACTFest. Dozens of members from throughout the country have registered for each of the wide variety of educational programs offered.

Similar to other professional organizations, the current AACT Board recently adopted AACT's own unique recognition system to strengthen its commitment to continuing education programs for its members. **AACTEd Units** were developed by the AACT Education Committee and will launch at the 2011 AACTFest National Festival in Rochester this June. AACT members who choose to begin earning AACTEd Units will register on-site in Rochester as part of their check-in process. As part of AACTFest 11, the Community Theatre Management Conference (1.5 Units), Adjudication Workshop (3.0 Units) and Technical Theatre Conference (1.5 Units) as well as combining several AACTFest11 workshops (.5 Units) will all offer recognition for lifelong learning participation. One AACTEd Unit is awarded for each 10 hours of instruction. Five hours will earn one-half Unit. Instructional hours are determined by AACT after negotiation with the program instructor and advertised in advance of registration.



Units are cumulative over a lifetime and added to individual folios after earned. Members will be honored with public recognition from AACT after achieving levels of 10, 25, 50, 75 and 100 Units. All future AACT educational conferences and multi-day workshops will offer AACTEd Units.

In June, participants can register when checking in for the AACTFest11 National Festival to earn AACTEd Units with this innovative program. Launch your own opportunity, not only to expand your lifelong learning for personal or professional growth, but be recognized by AACT for your efforts. **Come to Rochester. Earn AACTEd Units.** ♦

Harv Thompson is a member of the AACT Education Committee. He retired from the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension as emeritus professor in 2004 following 34 years as the statewide Director of Continuing Education in Theatre as well as department chair many of those years.

I ♥ Virgil



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Rod McCullough
AACT President
2009-2011

Help Wanted.

AACT meets as a big group twice a year. We'll have meetings in Rochester, NY during AACTFest11. You're welcome to come say hello and sit in on a meeting or two. We also get together in February and we try to choose fun places: Las Vegas, New Orleans, San Diego. You're invited to be part of the fun.

Where do you come in? We'd like your input and your ideas and your involvement.

As I write this, AACT has completed its winter 2011 meetings. I am thinking of what comes next for our organization and hopefully for you. AACT operates under a strategic plan that looks out three years and sets a number of goals. We're beginning the third year of our current plan and next winter, creating a new plan will be a major part of our agenda.

Where do you come in? We'd like your input and your ideas and your involvement. Committee work is a great place to start. Not only do you have an opportunity to find new ways to serve community theatre in America, but also you get to work with a group of community theatre "true believers." That network contains a fountain of knowledge and, since we're theatre people, you know we're not shy about spouting off!

In the next couple of months, committees will be appointed so feel free to volunteer. If you're not quite ready to join a committee but have an idea of how AACT can better serve community theatre (that's what we're all about), pass it along. One of our members did just that and it has resulted in the Playwright Services Task Force.

Stay with me - I'm shifting gears!

In February, New York Times reporter Patrick Healy interviewed Vanessa Redgrave in her dressing room at *Driving Miss Daisy*. I recommend the entire article*. James Earl Jones sat in. My first revelation was that someone gets to call him "Jim" – I'd just never thought of that before.

My second revelation was this quotation from Redgrave, "We all come to the theater with baggage," she said. "The baggage of our daily lives, the baggage of our problems, the baggage of our tragedies, the baggage of being tired. It doesn't matter what age you are. But if our hearts get opened and released — well, that's what theater can do, and does sometimes, and everyone is thankful when that happens."

Never hurts to be reminded of theatre's power, and its gift.

* www.nytimes.com/2011/02/16/theater/16vanessa-redgrave.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Vanessa%20Redgrave%20interview&st=cse

You can contact Rod via email at rmccullough@dmplayhouse.com, by fax to 515-974-5367, or you can call him at 515-974-5353.

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Come Fly With Us in Rochester

ZFX will present a workshop on the onstage and backstage aspects of flying effects at the Technical Theatre Conference in Rochester, NY, June 20-22.

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BIG Comedy, Small Cast

Laime Inventions by Sapperstein & Murway

ADVERTISEMENT



CAST SIZE: 12

LENGTH: 1 hour, 30 Minutes
(not including intermission)

Efram Davenport is a very dashing, fastidious and wealthy elder gentleman. These are supposed to be his retirement years but peace and quiet do not seem to be the order of the day.

Living with him are his daughter, Lavinia; her two children, Trudy and Nigel; and regrettably, his son-in-law, Ogden Laime. While Nigel delights in the pictures of naked tribes-women in the National Geographic, and Lavinia and Trudy are sweet, agreeable, kind people. Ogden on the other hand is a definite problem.

The arrogant, pompous and self-centered Ogden Laime wants to go down in history as one of the world's greatest inventors, but he has no talent as an inventor himself. His solution is to hire true inventors to create great things for him while his business, Laime Inventions, maintains ownership of everything his employees create.

This might not be so bad except that he is infamous for cutting corners. "Mr. Laime's Inventions" have a habit of not working out so well and for some reason, the Mayor always seems to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. For the sake of his daughter and grandchildren, Efram Davenport is continually picking up the pieces from all the disasters.

After firing one of his inventors, Percival Good, and following the "sound" advice of his clever and in-love secretary, Ms. Caruthers, Ogden releases the object of her affections (Percival), from any contractual obligations to Laime Inventions.

Soon after leaving Laime Inventions, Percival's simple yet amazing "Good" inventions skyrocket to major acclaim and financial success, causing Ogden so much angst, he begins to lose touch with reality.

Laime Inventions is a humorous journey through the lives of this turn-of-the-century family as they navigate their way through the industrial revolution to find love, success and happiness.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Ralph Maffongelli
215-485-8591
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Upcoming AACT Meetings**AACT Summer Board and Committee Meetings**

June 20-22 & June 25, 2011

AACT State Contacts Meeting June 22, 10:30 am

AACT Annual Membership Meeting June 25, 9 am

(changed from Friday to Saturday)

Hosted by Theatre Association of New York State

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Educational Conferences**Technical Theatre Conference**

June 20-22, 2011 in Rochester, NY

Community Theatre Management**Conference**

June 20-22 in Rochester, NY

National Community Theatre Directors Conference

November 20-22, 2011 in Madison, WI

Did you know?

You can get help on most any theatre topic through the AACT Resource Roster.

Find the Roster at www.aact2.org/?page=ResourceRoster.

Grow Your Contacts by Volunteering!

Interested in becoming more involved in AACT? Volunteers make connections across the country, raise the quality of community theatre, and share their passion for theatre. Now is the time to express your interest in serving on AACT Committees or volunteer with AACT in other ways. Contact the AACT office: info@aact.org or toll free 866-Our-AACT (687-2228).

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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.

Editor: Julie Crawford
Design: Jim Covault

AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org or at the phone numbers below.

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Contacting AACT

AACT
1300 Gendy Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-732-3177 • Fax 817-732-3178
866-Our-AACT (toll free) • info@aact.org

AACT Insurance Program

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

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theatre.mysgp.com

Liability Insurance: Why COPE?

by Ken Roberts



In the November/December 2010 issue of *Spotlight*, the underwriting principles of the insurance acronym, “COPE” were explained in regards to applying for *property insurance*. However, those same principles are often utilized when a theatre is applying for general liability insurance as well, and the exact same information is used for two completely different reasons. This creates a lot of confusion when completing an insurance application as to what questions are relevant to getting a quote and why. The thing to remember here is this: in regards to general liability insurance, it's all about *life safety issues*.

As previously explained, COPE is an acronym for the four main areas of concern for property insurance underwriters. As a reminder, those areas are: **C**onstruction - What is the building made of? (brick, wood, concrete, etc.), **O**ccupancy - Who occupies the structure, and for what purpose?, **P**rotection - How far to the nearest fire hydrant or fire department? Are there sprinklers, fire extinguishers, alarms, etc.? and **E**nvironment – What other structures or potentially unsafe conditions exist around the immediate area of the building? While it's fairly easy to see how those issues would apply to property insurance, when applying for only liability insurance, it's not quite as clear why this information is needed. Liability underwriters use this because those very same areas help underwriters determine the safety of the audience inside a theatre venue.

Knowing what a building is constructed of and when it was built tells an underwriter about the integrity of the structure, and how long an audience might have to vacate the building in the event of a fire. The occupants of a building also tell a lot about fire safety. For instance, a restaurant with a deep fryer is at a much higher risk for fire than a theatre, but if that theatre is sharing the building with a restaurant, they're also sharing the fire risk, and the theatre is exposing their patrons to that risk as well. Along those same lines, the distance to the nearest fire hydrant, fire sprinklers, and alarm systems can help an underwriter determine how quickly those patrons would be made aware of an impending emergency, and how quickly it could be brought under control. The immediate area around the building will indicate what the risk would be for a fire or similar catastrophe to ultimately affect the building itself, and thus, its inhabitants.

In short, when asked to answer these questions when only needing liability insurance, it should be very clear why insurance company underwriters insist on having this information. They are truly looking out for the safety of the theatre and its patrons. ♦

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Spotlight Award Goes to Eeva Stromski

The **AACT Spotlight Award** partners AACT with theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of their local theatres. Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award.

Gail Steele, Director of Theatre, **Theatre at the Mount (TAM)**, in Gardner, MA presented the AACT Spotlight Award to **Eeva Stromski**. The presentation was made on Friday, February 25th before the performance of TAM's production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

Theatre at the Mount considers itself lucky to have Eeva. Gail says, "When you look up 'community theatre volunteer' in the dictionary, there should be a picture of Eeva Stromski. Her pleasant demeanor, good nature, ability to take the initiative and her 'can-do' attitude represent the very best qualities of service and volunteerism." For more than 25 years, this very special 81 year old has been a fixture at TAM.



Director of Theatre Gail Steele presents the Spotlight Award to longtime Theatre at the Mount volunteer Eeva Stromski.

Possessed with unparalleled vitality, Eeva can be counted on to perform any task, with excellence, on schedule. In 1985, Eeva was urged by her son Ed, who played the trombone for TAM, to audition for *Anything Goes* and was cast in the production. While she was a charming performer, it was clear that her true passion was for the "behind the scenes" action. Since then, Eeva has donned her theatre blacks to work as stage crew for almost every TAM production. It quickly became clear that her best skill was dressing performers and she has been TAM's resident "dresser" ever since. No task is too big or too small for Eeva.

Beverly Lord, AACT Region I Representative, could not be in Gardner for the presentation due to icy roads.

In expressing her regrets, Beverly said, "It is through the selfless, tireless volunteer work like Eeva's that our communities are greatly enriched." ♦

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Designers Are Gods!!!

By Robert Frame, AACTFest11 Technical Director

So did that get your attention?

I hope so, as it is true. What, you don't believe me? Well then you will just have to wait and see the art designers exhibit at the AACTFest11 Design Competition and Exhibition.

So what kind of design work can be exhibited? Why anything that was on a stage or used to promote a show. The specific requirements are on the AACTFest11 website: www.aactfest11.org.

Basically all that is needed is an AACT membership by the designer or the producing company, the entry fee, a design statement, and the design entry itself, shown in a way that best demonstrates how it was used in the production.

Take pictures and put them together in an exhibit. Design a nice display for that stunning poster and graphic work. How about a costume on a mannequin? That would be lovely.

Lighting? Hey, without light, it's dark. Let us see the work you did. Hair, make-up, Special f/x! SHOW US THE MONEY! (Oops, sorry, wrong show....)



Even if you didn't "design" the set, you just sort of put it together and painted it – HEY - That is DESIGN! Take some pictures and show us what you did and why!!! Anything you are proud of and want to show us!!

And don't forget your theatre website. Submit the address and our judges will do the rest.

Let's all work together to make the AACTFest11 Design Competition and Exhibition the biggest and best ever. Designs will be on display in the lobby of the Geva Theatre Center starting on Wednesday, June 22 and will be open all week for Festival attendees to enjoy. Judging will take place Saturday morning, June 25.

For more information, contact me at framer@cayuga-cc.edu. ♦

AACTFest11 Design Competition and Exhibition

Guidelines: www.aactfest11.org
Questions: Robert Frame - framer@cayuga-cc.edu
Register your entry: www.aact2.org/event/DesignEntry
Deadline to register: May 31

AACTFest11 Will Be a Memory Maker!

You can take home a very special memory of AACTFest11 with original Amos Kennedy commemorative posters.

Kennedy, of Gordo, AL, has become legendary for his color letterpress work. He uses a traditional relief printmaking process to create posters that are exciting, bold, beautiful and often thought provoking. There is no question, these posters will make an impression on you.

The multi-colored posters for AACTFest11 will have witty theatre phrases developed by the creative team at Partners+Napier and AACTFest11 committee members.

Amos Kennedy limited-edition AACTFest11 posters will be on display at Geva Theatre Center and the Radisson Hotel Rochester Riverside throughout the Festival. Don't pass up your favorite poster – it may be gone the next time you look.

Just think, AACTFest11 may start you on your way as an Amos Kennedy fan and collector. ♦

Show Us YOUR Slogan!

A fun way to capture the spirit of Festival week is with a custom-designed AACTFest11 t-shirt. The shirts are available on CafePress (via the festival website) where you can select from a variety of colors. These are high quality t-shirts with full color printing.

The best part - you can customize your t-shirt with your favorite slogan from the list the AACTFest11 creative geniuses have prepared.

The Music Theatre International party on Friday, June 24, will be "Show Us **YOUR** slogan" night. There will be a runway parade, so you can model your shirt. The cameras will flash as you walk by to show everyone the theatre slogan you selected.

Keep in mind that those without AACTFest11 t-shirts will not be allowed to dance on the tables.

The AACTFest11 website www.aactfest11.org will link directly to The CafePress site. Take a look and start thinking about your shirt today.

You can start creating your t-shirt May 1. ♦

Questions about AACTFest 11? Go to page 17 for contacts who have the answers.

Come Fly With Us in Rochester

By Ruth Legg
and ZFX, Inc.

Come fly with ZFX, a world-class leader in flying effects! These Technical Theatre Conference workshops will get basic training with one of our experienced Flying Directors. Technicians will learn rope pulling technique and the technical side of all things flying right down to what size cable to use and why. Every participant will garner the basics of flying and will be able to “fly” out of this workshop with a better understanding of flying effects in live performance.



A ZFX flying effects workshop in action

No previous experience necessary to participate! Flying impacts every aspect of theatre and is integral to many popular Broadway shows. We invite you to join us for this unique and special opportunity with AACTFest11. ZFX is dedicated to instilling each participating member with as much information, creative expression, and hands-on experience as possible.

Flying since 1994, ZFX Inc. is a complete service provider for all flying effects, including pre-production planning, proof of concept workshops, custom-built flying equipment, flying props, professional installation, original choreography and even flying performers. ZFX also supplies full costume and scenic rental packages for *Peter Pan* and *Beauty and the Beast*. ZFX has offices in Europe and the US with over 30 employees, and has flown more than 4,000 productions. For more information about ZFX, visit zfxflying.com.

Each workshop is limited to 25 participants. ZFX Flying Workshops are included in the registration fee for the Technical Theatre Conference.

The three-day conference is designed around Progression Workshops in three core technical areas: sound and lights; costuming, make-up and millinery; and set design and dressing, props and technical direction.

These workshops include:

Design, Painting and Dressing a Set presented by Curtis J. Phillips, Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota, Duluth

Foam Puppets and Costumes presented by Gail Argetsinger, Costume Designer, SUNY Brockport and Crystal Farrell, Costume Designer, SUNY, Geneseo

Millinery for the Theatre presented by Arnie Levine of Levine Millinery, New York City

Gobos and Projections for the Stage and **Color in Stage Lighting** presented by K. C. Hooper, Apollo Design Technology

“Who Screwed Up My Theatre and Why?” presented by Peter Scheu, Theatre Architecture, Scheu Consulting

Stage Management, presented by Michael C. Krickmire, Lecturer, Production Manager, SUNY Brockport

Costuming presented by Amanda Doherty, Costume Designer, Geva Theatre Center

Properties by Samuel S. Sheehan, Properties Coordinator, Syracuse Stage

Technical Theatre Conference

June 20-22, Rochester, NY

Register: www.aact.org/event/TechConf

The Technical Theatre Conference is at the Roberts Cultural Life Center, Roberts Wesleyan College, June 20, 21, 22, 2011. Cost for TANYS and AACT members is \$165 (includes early bird discount if registering by May 31).

The Technical Theatre Conference registration includes admission to workshops, lunch, two dinners, and transportation to and from the Roberts Wesleyan College Campus from the Radisson Rochester Riverside Hotel. Full participation in the Conference will earn 1.5 AACTEd Units.

Register on line at www.aact2.org/event/TechConf. ♦

AACTFest11
June 20-26 Rochester, NY
www.aactfest11.org

For best prices reserve hotel by May 20;

Register by May 31

Two New AACTFest11 Workshops

Catch these nationally known presenters who have been added to the workshop schedule:

John Prignano - new theatrical resources available and in development from Music Theatre International

Jim Carver - Directing

For a complete listing and workshop schedule go to www.aactfest11.org. ♦

AACTFest11 National Companies

Arlekin Players

www.arlekinplayers.com



Representing the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre, Arlekin Players from Newton, MA won the top slot at the New England AACTFest in March, and represents Region I

at AACTFest11 with Anton Chekov's *The Bear*. In this classic, cleverly adapted by the company and performed in Russian and English, Popova hasn't seen a ray of sunshine ever since the sudden death of her husband. Suddenly, her grief is disturbed when Smirnov arrives to demand an old debt her husband owed him. Popova delays, sparks fly as they both realize that love can happen in an instant.

Although Arlekin Players only opened its doors in 2008, the company has quickly gained stature as a strong emerging voice in Russian-American theatre. Their unique approach utilizes both the Stanislavsky and Vakhtangov techniques in their native form - as taught in Russia where they originated. The new company is already recognized

Region I



by regional and international critics alike, and has been invited to participate in theatre festivals in Connecticut, New York and the prestigious International Theatre Festival "Golden Lion" in Ukraine.

Wetumpka Depot Players

www.wetumpkadepot.com



Wetumpka Depot Players from Wetumpka, AL make their first trip through the festival process, and is one of two theatres representing Region IV at AACTFEST11. *Second Samuel*, written by Pamela Parker, is a comical and touching play about life in a small Georgia town. The young and simple-minded B Flat takes

the audience on a tour of his world and introduces us to characters who must deal with a shocking surprise that none could imagine in their wildest dreams.

The Wetumpka Depot Players has been performing comedies, dramas and musicals for River Region audiences for over three decades. Recent accolades include touring one of their original shows to the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the state's regional professional theatre. Operating on a \$50,000 budget with one paid staff

Region IVA



member and countless hours of volunteer support, original plays, classics and children's theatre continue to be staged in the intimate setting of the Depot Theater.

Manatee Players

www.manateeplayers.com



National AACTFest veteran Manatee Players from Bradenton, FL also represents Region IV at AACTFest11, presenting Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's musical *Sunday in the Park with George*. In the play, artist

Region IVB

Georges Seurat is working on his latest painting with the woman he loves, Dot, posing for him. The work is to become the impressionist masterpiece *Sunday Afternoon on the Isle of La Grande Jatte*. Georges interacts with the various people who happen through the park who later become characters in his painting as he struggles to find connection between life and his art.

In late 1947, several aspiring actors who were members of the Bradenton Junior Women's Club formed a community theatre group calling themselves the Manatee Players. The following year the fledgling ensemble presented a full season of performances at either the

Women's Club or Ballard School, playing to expanding audiences and gaining popularity. The organization gradually took its current form, and today operates with a budget of over one million dollars and a staff of eight guiding more than 600 volunteers. Construction and fund raising for a new state of the art facility are currently underway; the new Manatee Players Performing Art Center will contain two stages, several multi-purpose rooms and catering facilities.



Evergreen Players

www.evergreenplayers.org



Evergreen Colorado's Evergreen Players took top honors at the Region VII festival, and brings their production of Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney's 2-woman comedy, *Parallel Lives* to AACTFest11. With boundless humor and humanity, the women in *Parallel Lives* take the audience on a wild ride through life and love.

The Evergreen Players began in 1950 as a group of friends gathering in each others' homes to read plays aloud. Today it maintains four part time staff and approximately 100 volunteers, utilizing a budget of \$82,000. Together, they produce the theatre's six show season for the Colorado foothills community and the greater Denver area. The Players perform in a 166-seat theater at an elevation of 7,040 ft. located 30 miles west of Denver. Offerings range from classics to regional premieres, comedies to musicals to dramas. Annually the group involves profes-

Region VII



sionals and amateur volunteers of all ages and walks of life, on stage and behind the scenes. Entering its 61st season, the theatre maintains a focus on its mission: to create professional quality theater to inspire, engage, and entertain.

Chino Community Theatre

chinocommunitytheatre.org

Region VIII



Chino Community Theatre, Chino, CA returns to the national festival, performing Jonathan Rand's comedy *Check Please!* at AACTFest11. The play: Dating can be hard, especially when your date happens to be a raging kleptomaniac or even a mime! *Check Please!*

follows a series of blind dinner dates that couldn't get any worse...until they do. Could there possibly be a light at the end of the tunnel?

Chino Community Theatre has achieved twenty-seven years of excellence with an eclectic season consisting of one comedy, one drama, one musical, one holiday production, and an award winning weekender series featuring three plays on the cutting edge. The theatre operates in its own space, the Seventh Street Community Theatre in downtown Chino. With an annual budget of \$32,000, the theatre is an all-volunteer organization.



Chino Community Theatre was the 2009 National AACT Fest winner for Best Production and Best Actor with *Scooter Thomas Makes It to the Top of the World*.

Spokane Civic Theatre

www.spokanecivictheatre.com

Region IX



Spokane Civic Theatre from Spokane, WA represents Region IX at AACTFest11 with *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. The show is a musical comedy conceived by Rebecca Feldman with music and lyrics by William Finn, book by Rachel Sheinkin and additional material by Jay Reiss. The show centers around a fictional spelling bee set in a geographically ambiguous Putnam Valley Middle School. Six quirky adolescents compete in the Bee, run by three equally-quirky grown-ups.

Incorporated in 1947, the Spokane Civic Theatre produces eight main stage and four studio productions per season. In addition to producing musicals and plays, the theatre supports an Academy program for students ages four through adult year round. The theatre opened its current facility in 1967 after performing in two other



spaces during the early years. A 1972 three-story addition adjoining the backstage area provides space for set construction, rehearsal space, the costume shop, and offices. In 1979, the lower level rehearsal space was converted into the Studio Theatre. In 1989 the space was named after Firth J. Chew, a long-time volunteer who headed the original building fund drive. Spokane Civic Theatre is guided by the Board of Directors, 10 full-time, 16 part-time staff members and a volunteer force of 1,000. The theatre's annual budget is nearly one million dollars.

SHAPE Players

sites.google.com/a/shapeplayers.org/homepage/Home

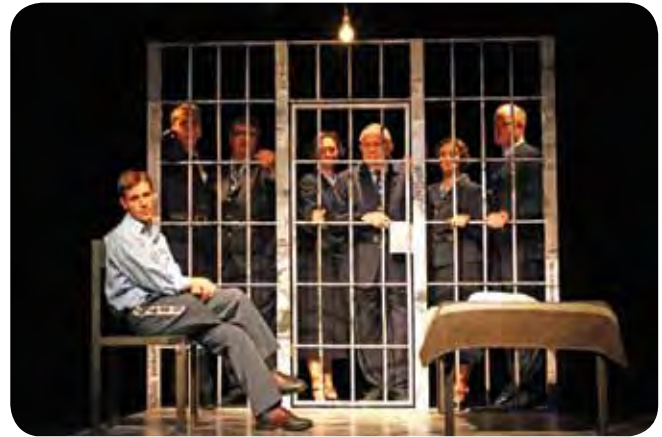
Region X



SHAPE Players makes its third appearance at the National AACTFest representing Region X with its production of John Logan's *Hauptmann*. This compelling drama begins just moments before the 1936 execution of Bruno Richard Hauptmann, the German immigrant who was convicted of murdering Charles Lindbergh's baby. The play is completely absorbing, forcing the viewer to question aspects of the justice system.

SHAPE Performing Arts Centre was founded in 1967 and the SHAPE Players was created to serve the 26 countries that make up the SHAPE community. SHAPE is the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe located in Mons, Belgium. The theatre offers a season of five plays and a five week youth Theatre Summer Camp along with other activities provided by the Centre. The

Players performed *Wings* at the national AACTFest '07 in Charlotte, NC, and performed *Hold Me!* at AACTFest '09 in Tacoma, WA. During the last few years the organization has undergone major growth, earning it the awards for Best Small and Medium Size Installation Entertainment (Recreation) Program in the US Army for 2007 & 2009, the 2008 Employee of the Year for Entertainment Director Dan LaMorte, AACT's Twink Lynch Award in 2008, and another award for Dan LaMorte, AACT's Special Recognition Award in 2010.



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AACT Awards AACTFest 13 to Carmel, IN

The American Association of Community Theatre has named Carmel, IN as the site for the next National AACTFest, to take place in June 2013. The Carmel Repertory Theatre, in conjunction with the City of Carmel (pronounced CAR-mull, rhyming with full), will host the festival, which returns to the



Carmel Repertory Theatre Chair Larry Creviston presents the theatre's proposal to host AACTFest 13.

Midwest for the first time since 2005 when the festival took place in Kalamazoo, MI.

AACT selected Carmel as the national festival site from an initial field of seven prospective host theatres. A team from the Carmel Repertory Theatre presented a proposal to host the

event at AACT's winter meetings in Las Vegas, NV.

"This was a roller coaster ride for us," said Larry Creviston, Chairman of Carmel Repertory Theatre. "But our city leaders

have always said that with our new arts infrastructure we will be able to compete against larger cities. We will be able to face the Mayor and the Carmel City Council and be able to say we are bringing a tangible economic boon to the city."

AACTFest 13, the culmination of a two-year cycle of state and regional theatre festivals across the country, will present twelve community theatre productions, as well as a technical theatre conference, a theatre management conference, theatre educational workshops and top theatre vendor displays. "To be able to see and experience the new and latest of what is going on in the theatre world is a community theatre's dream," said Deb Rothchild co-presenter. "What will be coming to Carmel in 2013 will benefit all theatres in the area. We cannot wait to share this with them."

The AACTFest Chairman, Susan Creviston stated, "The Carmel Repertory Theatre will be looking for many volunteers to pull off this exciting event. We plan to contact every community and educational theatre in the area and offer them the opportunity to be a part of the festival. We welcome all questions and assistance."

For more information about Carmel Repertory Theatre and the City of Carmel, visit www.carmelrepertorytheatre.com. ♦

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Back by Popular Demand: Cruising with the AACT Endowment

By John Viars, Endowment Cruise Chair

If you were one of the lucky few in Tacoma two years ago who made it onto the Puget Sound Cruise, you know how much fun we have on the water. If you couldn't get a ticket, or missed it for some reason, this year you get a second chance – we got a bigger boat! Even with additional capacity, tickets are limited, so act now!

Join us for a 3-hour cruise on the Colonial Belle, the largest U.S. Coast Guard certified boat operating on the Erie Canal. The Colonial Belle's narrated tour will familiarize you with the rich history and traditional landmarks along the scenic route from Fairport to Pittsford, New York. You'll ride in comfort on the tranquil waters of the historic shipping and transportation



Cruise the historic Erie Canal when in Rochester for AACTFest11

route which opened in 1825, while enjoying the delicious Captain's Buffet in the fully accessible enclosed lower level, with two bars, ample dining area and restroom facilities. On the upper, open deck you will experience directly the sights and sounds of the small towns along the way, ducking when the boat passes under the low bridges and marveling as the captain navigates through a lock.

The Colonial Belle cruise is one of the finest attractions the Rochester area has to offer, and it's ours for the night. Your ticket supports the AACT Endowment, which subsidizes the mission of AACT. This year the Endowment will provide \$1825 travel assistance for each of the competing companies at the national festival. ♦

AACT Endowment Cruise

Thursday, June 23 – 6:30 – 10:30 pm

Motorcoaches depart from Radisson Rochester Riverside Hotel at 6:30 pm for a 7:00 pm sailing from Packett's Landing, Fairport, NY.

Cruiser \$80 Includes bus transportation, Cruise, Captain's Buffet.

Officer \$150 Includes bus transportation, Cruise, Captain's Buffet and two drink tickets.

To purchase your Cruise tickets, go to www.aact2.org and click on "Shop" in the top bar, then click on "Event Tickets," or add it when you register for AACTFest11 at www.aact2.org/event/aactfest11registration.

Got An AACTFest11 Question???

General AACTFest11 Questions - Ruth Legg: rrlegg@aol.com
(c) 315-945-4104 (h) 315-789-1209

Performance Venue (Mainstage Geva Theatre Center) and other **technical matters** - Robert Frame: framer@cayuga-cc.edu (c) 315-406-2139 (w) 315-255-1743 Ext. 2340

Festival Hotel – the Radisson Hotel Rochester Riverside - Ruth Brown: rkbesta@comcast.net (c) 443-320-3192 (h) 410-398-3564

Exhibition Space for Vendors - Joan Luther: Joan.Luther@co.ontario.ny.us luther_j@yahoo.com
(c) 585-245-2341 (w) 585-396-4480

Workshops - Karin Bowersock: kbowersock@bvtnaples.org
(c) 917-838-4511 (w) 585-374-9032

Technical Theatre Conference - Joan Luther: see "Exhibition Space" above, or Michael Krickmire: mkrickmi@brockport.edu
(w) 585-395-5259 (h) 585-425-4193

Community Theatre Management Conference and Adjudication Workshop - Julie Crawford: julie@aact.org
866-Our-AACT (687-2228)

AACT Festival Rules - Kristi Quinn: festivals@aact.org
(c) 712-251-1113 (o) 712-224-8903 (c) 712-251-1113
Or Ron Ziegler: ron@aact.org (c) 515-778-2374

Registration - Susan Austin: info@aact.org 866-Our-AACT (687-2228) ♦

AACT National Awards 2011

AACT is proud to recognize the 2011 recipients of AACT National Awards. Presentations will be in June during AACTFest11 in Rochester, NY.

AACT Fellows Award

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



Kay Armstrong is an AACT Board Member and serves on the Festival Commission; the Finance, Strategic Planning, and History Committees; and on the Fund Development Task Force. She previously served eight years on the Board and chaired the publishing of Twink Lynch's *Boards in the Spotlight*. Kay has adjudicated in six states and Region IV, and served as

Festival Commissioner for four states. As Executive Director of the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association (OCTA), she supervised creation of a playwriting competition, youth conference, and a traveling board development seminar. She coordinated five state and two regional festivals and assisted in formation of nine new theatres. She also served on Oklahoma Arts Council's Grants Committees and Oklahoma Arts Institute's Theatre Selection Panel. She was a Southwest Theatre Association board member for seven years, including serving as VP of Conferences. Prior to OCTA, Kay co-founded a community theatre in Glenview, Illinois. Most recently Kay was Business Manager for Contemporary Theatre of Dallas.



Dennis Gilmore has been involved with theatre since 1982, starting his career as a producer for professional theatre in Chicago. After moving to Athens in 1987, he created the position of Executive Director for the Henderson County Performing Arts Center (HCPAC). He received his Master of Arts degree with over 36 hours of theatre with an emphasis on directing from Stephen F.

Austin State University. He has held the position of Executive Director at HCPAC since 1989. During that time, he has directed over 200 plays and over 250 children's productions. As a board member of Texas Nonprofit Theatres he initiated the state youth conference and was its chairman for the first ten years. As a member of the American Association of Community Theatre, he presently serves as Vice President of Education. In 2003, Dennis co-founded Act I Productions, a community theatre based in DeSoto, Texas. The theatre has won artistic recognition since its inception.



Ginger Heath is a long time champion of community theatre spirit and purpose. She currently serves as AACT's Vice President of Public Relations and serves as a Trustee of the AACT Endowment Fund. She was Co-Chair of AACTFest '07 – Charlotte, served many years as AACT Region IV Representative, and continues to serve as

NC State Contact. Ginger is the founding Chair of the Metropolina Theatre Association and recipient of the region's Theatre Person of the Year Award in 2008. Other honors include the Herman D. Middleton Award for service to North Carolina Theatre Conference and the AACT David C. Bryant Award for service to Community Theatre. In 2011 she was honored with a Life Membership at Theatre Charlotte where she first performed over 50 years ago. An award winning actor and director she considers her greatest blessings her husband of 48 years, Bill, their three daughters and sons-in-law, and seven grandchildren!



Tim Jebson has been the Executive Director of Midland (TX) Community Theatre (MCT) since 1997. Tim helped the organization increase the size of its operating budget, purchase a 1929 downtown historic theatre, and raise \$3.6 million for renovations to MCT's Cole Theatre prior to hosting the 2006 AACT International Theatre festival.

Recent directing credits include *Hairspray*, *Oklahoma*, *White Christmas*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Les Misérables*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Producers*, *Cats*, *Proof*, *Ragtime*, *Art*, and *Evita*. Prior to working in Midland, Tim headed the Salina (KS) Community Theatre, the Mansfield (OH) Playhouse, and the Weathervane Playhouse (OH). Tim has served on the Board of Texas Nonprofit Theatres (TNT) and currently serves on the Midland-Odessa Area AIDS Support Board. He has facilitated the Community Theatre Management Conference and serves on several AACT Committees. Tim has been married to Lisa for eighteen years; they have a nine year old son Zach.



Sherman C. Ward, Jr. began his community theatre adventures the week of April 21, 1958 - the week his son Buzz, now Executive Director of the Cincinnati Playhouse, was born. (No time to get to the hospital!) He played Judge Savage in *The Curious Savage*. In the last 52 years, Sherman has acted in 30 plays, directed 48 productions, and written 19 plays. In addition, many

administrative theatre roles have come his way: Board member for six community theatres and President of four. The entire Ward family has been involved in Sherman's theatre adventures. Currently Sherman is the Region II Representative (Eastern States Theatre Association - ESTA) to the AACT Board, a board member of the Little Theatre of Watertown, an adjudicator for the Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS), and he recently compiled 400 pages of ESTA historical archives from 1957-2010. Sherman's agenda has always been the promotion and improvement of community theatre.

Art Cole Award

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



Jim Sohre began his 37-year career in Army Entertainment as a Music Specialist at Fort Dix, NJ, where he established a Cabaret Theatre, Soldier (Rock) Music Center, Fort Dix Chorus, and Trainee Chorus programs. As Theatre Specialist in Fort Ord, CA, he opened Stilwell Hall dinner theatre. In 1980, he transferred to Mainz, Germany and as the community Entertainment Director

created the new Center Stage Theatre and two soldier Music Centers. Five years later he became the Entertainment Director of the Frankfurt Military Community. Jim has been the Army Europe Command Entertainment (Theatre and Music) Director since 1995, first in Heidelberg, and currently in Kaiserslautern, Germany. He has received AACT's Distinguished Merit Award. He has been honored with the Army White Plume Award, the highest possible Morale, Welfare, and Recreation accolade, as well as the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service. Jim is the Region X Representative on the AACT Board and chairs the International Committee.

Sherman C. Ward, Jr. (see bio under Fellows above)

David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award

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

Dennis Gilmore (see bio under Fellows above)

Distinguished Merit Award

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



April Cochran has been the Education Director for Market House Theatre (MHT) in Paducah, KY for 12 years. She previously served as MHT's Artistic and Executive Director for 10 years and has over 150 main stage and youth theatre directorial credits. She is the founder of Footlights youth acting troupes and Story Theatre school touring outreach programs for MHT,

as well as creating its Theatre In Schools program which takes her into pre-K through high school classrooms throughout the Purchase area. She has facilitated AACT's Education Directors Conference and is a past president of the Kentucky Theatre Association (KTA) and recipient of KTA Best Director and Best Actress awards. Recently named a Kentucky Colonel, April has worked as a creative drama specialist and director of children's theatre productions for over 32 years for school systems, parks and recreation programs, professional theatre and community theatres throughout the Midwest. She is a member of MHT's Murder for Hire troupe.



Ginny Morrison has been involved in community theatre for over 40 years. She has directed, produced, choreographed, and performed in over 100 productions. Her passion and strength lie in development of new theatres and youth. She founded the Medina County Show Biz Company in Medina, OH, serving in all capacities for over 17 years. She developed a new theatre,

Galaxy Players in Wadsworth, and created a youth theatre group in Summit County where she worked with "at risk" youth. Ginny and husband Jim began their own youth theatre company, Morrison Playmakers, Inc. The youth productions were her pride and joy and taking productions to OCTA Jr. (winning three of five

Continued on page 22



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Don't Junk That Older Model Computer!

by Scott Bloom

Just bought yourself a brand new laptop for work or home use? Thinking about trading in that old Windows XP machine to one that will run Windows 7? Many of us have to upgrade to a newer model at some point – it's almost a necessity every few years, as fast as the technology changes. Don't junk that old one just yet; it may have huge value in your theatre!

In my workshop at AACTFest 2011 in Rochester I'll be demonstrating dozens of things you can do in your theatre with an older computer, from running lights or sound, to keeping inventories, to running your box office, all for little or no expense. If you can't make it to Rochester, (in which case you'll be missing out on a whole lot more than just my workshop,) don't worry, I'll be posting most of this information on our website after the festival for people to download and use.

First, let me say that it doesn't matter whether you favor Mac OS, or Windows, or Linux. Whatever your personal preference, and there are reasons to like them all, I'll have something for everyone. There are even free applications for your Smartphone, iPad, BlackBerry, and Droid that can help you in your theatre, although I won't get too much into those beyond mentioning what may be available.

"Freeware," which consists of either cut-down versions of professional programs, or applications written specifically to be used for free, are available for all operating systems. Often the developer will ask for a small donation if you find the program useful. "Shareware" is freely distributed software that you can try out for a period of time before purchasing a license in order to continue use, and will usually stop working after the trial period has ended. Programs and applications known as "Open Source" are written by individuals and organizations using non-proprietary programming languages, and are intended to continue their development process allowing everyone to openly contribute to their improvement. Although the developer will sometimes ask for donations, open source software is always freely distributed.

There are literally hundreds of websites dedicated to distributing freeware and shareware. Type the word freeware into your favorite search engine sometime and see what comes up. Some of my favorite places to download software include: download.com, tucows.com, majorgeeks.com, freewareweb.com, and fileplanet.com.

When it comes to Open Source software the first and best place to go is: sourceforge.net. It provides Open Source developers from all over the world with a support network and a way of managing their projects. It's really a network of millions of people who contribute to the development of these projects, and sourceforge.net gives them a place not only for the finished project, but all the steps along the way. But there are other websites that help you sort through all that and find what you're looking for, and one of my favorites is osalt.com, which gives you a side-by-side comparison of the commercial packages you can buy and the open source alternative available.

WHAT KIND OF COMPUTER DO YOU NEED?

Well, first of all it has to work. I can certainly give people help and advice on fixing an older computer, and most are very fixable, but if it costs something to fix it you need to consider whether it's worthwhile or not. A standard



desktop PC generally has parts that are fairly replaceable, but some name brand manufacturers have major parts like the motherboard built for them to fit in an unusual case, and getting a replacement motherboard for a Dell can cost as much as a whole new machine. A Mac can be especially

expensive to fix, and often has to be done by a trained technician. Laptops, of course, are much worse, and are almost certainly going to cost more to fix.

On the other hand, if you want to use an old PC to run sound effects and the sound card doesn't work, or in the case of a laptop, if the built-in sound just isn't very good, you can get a fairly good external sound card that plugs into a USB port for about \$10. And if the hard drive is barely large enough to hold the operating system, much less a collection of music files to be played, don't worry, you're probably going to want to keep all that on a USB thumb drive or an external hard drive anyway.

What I'm hinting at here is that whatever you want to use, it needs to be modern enough to have USB ports, or be capable of accepting a plugin card that does. And it needs

to be able to run an operating system that is capable of handling the free programs and the devices you're going to be using. Windows XP or newer, Mac OSX (preferably on a Mac that has an Intel Processor), or one of the free Linux distributions you can download. Ubuntu or Debian or Redhat Linux, by the way, require a bit less hardware resources than Windows or Mac, so are perfect for an older PC that doesn't have an OS, or the drive isn't big enough to hold Windows.

There are also tons of sources for cheap parts, new and used out there. In fact, if you're willing to pay for a couple of parts like that, very cheap PCs and "barebones" PCs that are nearly complete and ready to run are available from dozens of sources, and anyone fairly handy can throw a system together for very little money. From EBay, Tiger Direct, MicroCenter, Directron, NewEgg, ComputerGeeks, and even Amazon, you can get parts that will make almost any computer useable. And don't forget that many businesses are willing to donate their old equipment to a non-profit, and chances are that it's only going to be three or four years old at that.

Speaking of donations, if you work with a 501(c)(3) non-profit and you don't know about Techsoup.org, you really should. Register with Techsoup and you can get some of the best commercial software out there from Microsoft, Symantec, Adobe, and others for a tiny fraction of what it would cost retail.

If you need any special help or advice with any of this, please write to me at: scott@srbnet.com, or better yet, come to Rochester and attend my workshop where I'll show you as much as I can. And if you have something portable enough to bring along and you want to play, I'm sure we can find some time to get geeky. ♦

Scott Bloom has been a professional in the computer industry for more than 30 years. He can be found in the AACT Resource Roster. He also serves AACT as VP Membership.

Catch Scott Bloom and his workshop,
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—Juliana Saxton, professor emeritus,
 Department of Theatre, University of Victoria, BC

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—Yehudit Silverman, Associate Professor, Creative Arts Therapies Department, Concordia University

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—Johnny Saldaña, Professor of Theatre,
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Sally Bailey, MFA, MSW, RDT/BCT started with the drama program at the Texas School for the Deaf. Then on to TheatreVirginia and The Shakespeare Theater at the Folger.

In 1999 she became head the drama therapy program at Kansas State University and director of Barrier-Free Theatre specializing in creating accessible programming for children, teens, and adults both normally abled and with a wide variety of disabilities.

Her book shows how to use the theatre arts and drama therapy for education, joy, and involvement with others. Sally is a past president of the NADT and a recipient of NADT's 2006 Gertrud Schattner Award.

years) was a marvelous experience for both her and the youth. Ginny has served on the Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA) Board for over 16 years, filling every office, including six terms as President. Ginny is the Region III Representative to the AACT Board.

Special Recognition Award

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



Ruth Legg became involved with community theatre as a college student, directing summer productions for the Geneva (NY) Players. She joined the staff of Finger Lakes Community College in 1967. After six years as the PR director, she headed the theatre program until her retirement. She has been involved with the Theatre Association of New York State since 1987, serving as a Roving

Adjudicator, President, and chairing four TANYs Festivals and an ESTAFest. She has adjudicated festivals in four states, two ESTAFest/Original Works Festivals, and the Region III Festival. She has received the Mary Eva Duthie Award for Outstanding Contributions to Theatre in New York State. Ruth has directed and designed over 100 college and community theatre productions, co-authored a children's play and is a TANYs award-winning director and designer for her work with the Geneva Theatre Guild. She is President of the Eastern States Theatre Association (ESTA), member of the AACT Board, and national co-chair of AACTFest11.



L. Ross Rowland holds degrees in theatre and law and is a practicing attorney who enjoys acting. Ross served as President of Theatre USA, national center of the International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA). He is past president of AACT, the Indiana Community Theatre League, Muncie Civic Theatre, Heartland Stage Company, and the Delaware County Council for the Arts. He

has served as chair of the Indiana Arts Commission's Theatre Advisory Council. Ross has adjudicated festivals in the states and in Korea, Japan, Germany, Ireland, and an AACT international festival. He was named Honorary Friendly Ambassador in Japan. Ross chaired the IATA Congress six times. The Indiana Theatre Association recognized him as Theatre Person of the Year. Ross is an AACT Fellow and recipient of the Art Cole Award. He has served AACT on the Festival Commission and as chair of the International and Bylaws Review Committees. He continues to serve AACT as legal counsel and parliamentarian.

Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award

Presented to individuals above the age of 65 who have faithfully served community theatre on a non-paid basis for over 25 years.



Geri Becker was raised in Rochester, NY. Her first stop after college and finding a job was the Rochester Community Players. She had been bitten by the acting bug in college and performed in community theatres in the DC area. When she moved to Florida, Venice Little Theatre (now Venice Theatre) quickly became her alternate home and family. She has volunteered in every capacity since 1963.

In the early days, she did it all - acting, directing, costumes, set construction and decoration, play selection, board member, box office, renovations, demolition crew, fundraiser, programs, advertising - whatever! Geri is thrilled at the growth of Venice Theatre and very proud to have been part of the movers and shakers in the 1970s when the present building was bought. Geri still volunteers but limits herself to box office, ushering, and house management. Her daughter met her husband while in the cast of *Oklahoma* - truly a theatre family.



Wayne Pressnall began acting at age four under the tutelage of his granddad, an old tent show actor. But science lead him to become a teacher. Two degrees, a wife, and two children later he tried out for a show at the North Platte (NE) Community Playhouse (NPCP). He has stayed for over 37 years; 35 as a Board member. He has acted, directed, and built sets. But people

think of Wayne as the "Light Guy." He is involved in the lighting of every production: running the board, engineering the lighting scheme, or instructing others. When NPCP acquired an historic theatre, Wayne assisted in the remodeling and with the lighting. Although nearly 80, he can still be found at the Playhouse daily, performing maintenance, setting lights, or doing what ever is needed. Without Wayne's willingness to give of his time, many of the accomplishments made by the Playhouse would not have been possible.



Bennett Wood first appeared on stage as George Washington in a second-grade historical pageant. He was hooked. He continued to act through high school and college (Yale), where he began to direct as well. His first role at Theatre Memphis (then called Memphis Little Theatre) was in 1953. Since then he has acted in more than 45 productions, and directed more than 30. He

retired from his day job (advertising copywriter) in 1994, enabling him to practice fulltime his true calling - hanging out at Theatre Memphis. His roles include Dysart in *Equus*, Elyot in *Private Lives*, Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Boss Finley in *Sweet Bird of Youth*, Dr. Sloper in *The Heiress*, Drummond in *Inherit the Wind* and The Stage Manager in *Our Town*. His Theatre Memphis directing credits include *She Loves Me*, *Follies*, *Medea*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Musical of Musicals (the Musical)* and *Souvenir*. In 1975 his production of *Schubert's Last Serenade* won the national AACTFest competition.

continued on page 24

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- Sunday News - Lancaster, PA

Twink Lynch Award

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



The **Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre** (FMCT) serves communities in eastern North Dakota and western Minnesota. It was founded in 1946, but didn't have a permanent home until 1967. Today over 1,200 volunteers of all ages and abilities work to produce high quality theatre productions to enrich and educate patrons from all over the area. In 2009 FMCT unveiled its Community Collaboration

Initiative that welcomes five other theatre and music companies to present their productions on the FMCT stage. FMCT officially launched its Children's Studio Theatre in the 2008-2009 season and dedicated new and innovative programming to enable youth to grow as artists and deepen their appreciation for the arts. FMCT also produces the only theatrical performance opportunity in the area for seniors over the age of 50 with the Silver Follies musical each year. The average age of the participants is 70 years old. FMCT is dedicated to growing and enriching the quality of life as the communities' theatre.



Theatre Memphis (TM) was established in 1922 as the Little Theatre of Memphis Players Association,

although the curtain was first raised on May 20, 1920. Fifty-six initial members grew to an all time high member count of over 9000 in the 1990s. Theatre Memphis now consists of 14 full time staff members and a volunteer base of over 700. The past seven years has seen TM upgrade facilities, expand community outreach, and balance annual budgets while increasing operational budgets by almost 50%. Staff and volunteers produce new work and classic material each year consisting

of musicals, comedies, dramas, and original cabarets, which are regularly recognized with an abundance of annual Memphis theatre awards. Theatre Memphis also has a Department of Outreach and Education producing ShoWagon, that tours original and adapted tales for children throughout the MidSouth, and conducts classes for youth and adults.

Corporate Award

Presented to businesses and corporations for significant financial support of community theatre on a regional or national basis.



SC Johnson is a family-owned and managed business dedicated to innovative, high-quality products, excellence in the workplace, and a long-

term commitment to the environment and the communities in which it operates. SC Johnson has supported community artistic endeavors and growth through several avenues. A company sponsored volunteer network assists in volunteer recruitment. The SC Johnson "Dollars for Doers" program provides cash donations in return for volunteer hours, providing tangible rewards to Johnson employees and their organizations. The SC Johnson Fund has awarded matching grants that have been instrumental in theatres' growth. In its headquarters town, Racine, WI, SC Johnson partners with theatres for educational and children's theatre programs through its Golden Rondelle Theatre. The 125-year-old company, with more than \$8 billion in sales, employs approximately 12,000 people globally and sells products in virtually every country around the world. SC Johnson previously received AACT's Corporate Award in 1994 and is still committed to community support. ♦

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American Running for IATA Vice President

Dr. Roger Ellis of Grand Rapids, MI is a candidate for vice president of the International Amateur Theatre Association (AITA/IATA or IATA). AACT, as the IATA National Center, endorsed his candidacy. He has also received endorsements from France and Denmark.



Roger Ellis

Roger has been an AACT member since 2001 and serves on the International Committee. He has worked in professional, community, and university theatre in the US and abroad for the past 40 years. He is also an editor, author, and workshop leader. Roger has acted or directed in more than 100 productions for the Grand Rapids community. He founded the Ladies Literary Club Classical Theatre in Grand Rapids and the Grand

Valley Shakespeare Festival. He is on the theatre faculty at Grand Valley State University where he also founded the University's Cultural Diversity in Theatre program. He served 14 years as president of the Theatre Alliance of Michigan.

Roger has been very active internationally for the past decade, serving as editor of IDEACTION, the journal of the

North American Regional Alliance of AITA/IATA. He has been a delegate to AITA/IATA Congresses in Japan, Korea, North Africa, Canada, and Monaco. Roger has adjudicated amateur festivals in Aruba and Germany, and has served as Chair of AITA/IATA's Artistic Development Committee.

The election will take place during the AITA/IATA World Congress in July in Tromsø, Norway. To learn more about the International Amateur Theatre Association go to www.aitaiata.org. ♦



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"Dance With the One That Brung Ya"

by Wally Hurst

How appropriate for us theatre folks that one of the rules of politics involves dancing. In this case, though, we study politics in terms of the dance. Most of you will follow this rule pretty easily, I bet!

"Dancing with politicians," getting along and building a relationship with them, should ideally be a mutually beneficial partnership. (As opposed to dancing with wolves, or dancing with the devil – although there may be similarities with either of these two situations that can and do happen!) The point is, though, that **until they completely abandon your interests, you should maintain a cordial working relationship with them.** It is very important that you demonstrate this loyalty to them.

Two other rules spring immediately to mind when we speak of this concept. "It's not who you know, it's who you *get to know*" is the first, and "it's better to receive than give" which we discussed last issue. The first is obvious; the second will become clear later on.

Politicians occasionally have to vote against your interests because of competing interests or party conflicts or a favor owed. I have had politicians vote against a bill I authored or supported on more than one occasion, and it's not the most pleasant sensation. However, I have always asked the person why he or she voted that way, and depending on their answer, have walked away satisfied that they were still "on my side." Sometimes they are "overruled" by interests more powerful than you, sometimes they owed some other politician a favor, and sometimes they just forgot (in which case the mistake is your fault for not communicating the seriousness of your needing that vote to the politician).

Whatever the reason for the negative vote, you have to decide for yourself whether the person who voted against you is still

your friend. I would suggest that, 99 times out of 100, they are. If they have done a favor for you, they probably will do so again – especially if you are a constituent of theirs, i.e., you live in their district and vote regularly. Try and mend the fences if you can, because you may need a vote next week, next month, or next year.

Politicians adore loyal constituents and voters, and if you take the time to educate them on your positions on the issues, you will find some major areas of agreement upon which you can build a good relationship. This relationship should not end based on a single vote, unless they vote to take all your funds away or dismantle your building or destroy your theatre. (And sometimes not even then, actually. I'm not kidding.) In the midst of this disappointment over the vote – whatever it is – is there any light at the end of the tunnel?

Of course there is. This is the perfect opportunity to have them "make it up to you" by doing you a favor on the next vote. Politicians do not like disappointing voters, so they will probably try extra hard to help you out the next time you need them. They will need your continuing presence, though. Stay connected, keep it cordial, and they may be your leading advocate next time. In any case, keep them close. We'll talk about that next issue. ♦

Wally Hurst is Managing Director of Lakeland Theatre Company in Littleton, North Carolina. Previously, he served as Legislative Director and lobbyist for the California State Firefighters Association. He helped pass several important pieces of legislation, and taught lobbying to hundreds of local firefighters. Wally was also a trial attorney in California. He is a proud member of AACT's Advocacy Committee.



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by Jo Morello

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After a 10-year courtship, Al, 65, decides to marry Barbara, 70—but there are complications: a long-missing first wife and especially Ruth, his thrice-married, 80-something mother who blocks his every effort. Things start changing when Tina, a spiky-haired teen, delivers two tiny moonflower plants.

First 25 pages: <http://www.jomorello.com/ma-info.pdf>

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by Jack Gilhooley & Jo Morello

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First 25 pages: <http://www.jomorello.com/split-info.pdf>

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**Queen Sheena,
 All Bow!**

by Milo J. Oz

Help! please. How do you teach civility when Miss Manners and Mary Poppins aren't around? Never before has the future of three hairy bedroom monsters rested in the palm of a little spoiled, rude girl! Looks like "queen" Sheena holds all the power...uh oh. Approx. 45 minutes.

Eldridge Publishing
hiStage.com

New Roles

Listings do not imply AACT endorsement

Lenny Bart of Summit, NJ has been hired as Managing Artistic Director of **Quincy Community Theatre**, Quincy, IL, succeeding **Dominic Cattero** who led the organization since 2004. Lenny has been working in New York City/New Jersey for the last 27 years as a professional actor, director and designer. He toured to 46 states, performed in Europe twice and performed or directed in many off & off-off Broadway venues, as well as in many theatres in New Jersey. For the last 10 years Lenny was Artistic Director for 12 Miles West Theatre Company as well as an actor and director for Pushcart Players (both in NJ). He began his duties in Quincy in March.

New Jersey native **Greg Thornton** has been hired as the first Artistic Director of the **Cloverdale Playhouse** in Montgomery, AL. Greg has been a resident actor at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival (ASF) for more than 20 years. During his tenure at ASF he taught acting in the master of fine arts program and co-created the ASF/AIDS Benefit for Montgomery AIDS Outreach. He joins Development Director Emily Flowers on the Cloverdale staff. The new theatre organization will open later this year in the newly-acquired Cloverdale Christian Church building. The theatre venue will host plays and art exhibits, among other events, and will host its inaugural theatre season in 2012. ♦



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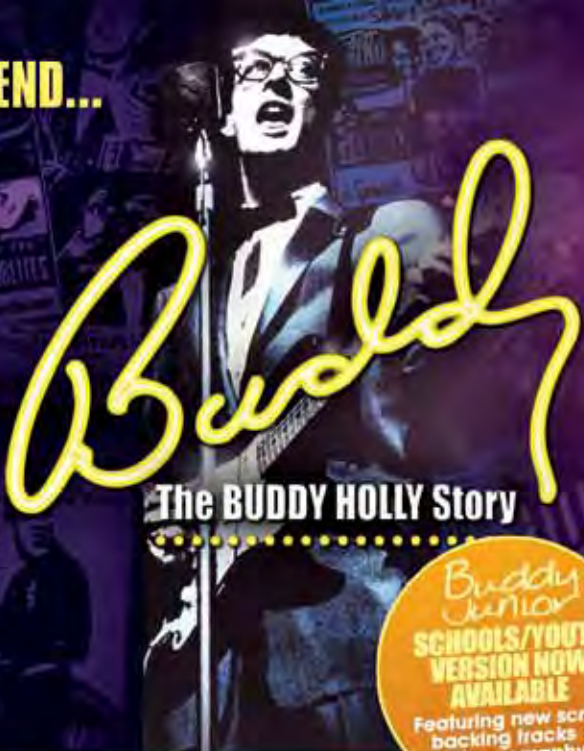
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Steven Lloyd, Executive Director
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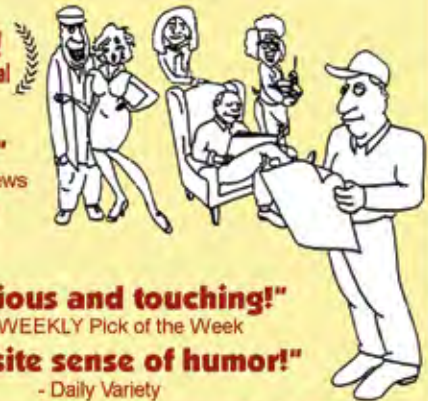
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- Daily Variety

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- The Toluca Times

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- NPR

ANiceFamilyGathering.com

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A love story with singin' and stuff



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- Sons of Norway

"A great time!"
- Tom Barnard KQRS

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"A loopy Valentine!" - Back Stage West

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- Los Angeles Times

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Who will win Miss Walleye Queen?



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National Community Theatre Directors Conference

This is the year of the Madison Conference, when full time community theatre directors will gather in Madison, WI for the biennial National Full Time Community Theatre Directors Conference. The directors will share stories of challenges and solutions, learn about various theatre operations, and meet with colleagues from throughout the country. This intensive conference will be November 20-22, 2011 for individuals employed in a full-time administrative position in a community theatre organization. The conference is conducted by the University of Wisconsin - Madison and co-sponsored by AACT.

Each conference participant brings expertise to share. Topics (identified in advance from those attending) are developed in order of highest group need. The facilitator keeps discussions on track and adds details pertinent to

the topic under discussion. All who wish to contribute may do so by asking questions, identifying specific problems, or providing useful input.

Registration and Housing

The Lowell Center on the UW-Madison campus serves as conference headquarters. The conference fee (\$375) includes instruction, multiple handouts, administrative support, conference leadership, morning and afternoon coffee/soda breaks, two noon lunches, Sunday group dinner and incidental conference expenses. Lowell Center housing daily rates in their remodeled rooms are \$88/single, \$99/double (no room tax). Parking (if needed) and daily breakfast are included.

For further information go to www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsc/theatre/directors.htm or contact the AACT office. ♦

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Stay in touch even after a disappointing vote. They may find a way to make it up to you.



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Social Networking Tips

Social networking is providing new and economical avenues of communicating and promoting for theatres all over the country.

Facebook is our new website. We are finding it a much more fluid vehicle than our web page—easier to update and keep fresh. A link on the website says “Join us on Facebook.”

Deena Dray, Diamond Head Theatre, Honolulu, HI,
www.diamondheadtheatre.com

Every cast member is asked to post something about the show on Facebook every day. 75% of *Rent* tickets were sold online.

Tim Jebesen, Midland (TX) Community Theatre,
www.mctmidland.org

Cast members are asked to post comments about rehearsals and the show on Facebook, but to post only positive comments.

Heather Cunningham, Playhouse 2000, Kerrville, TX,
www.caillouxtheater.com

An actor announced on Facebook that he had been cast before others had been told they were not cast. So now the audition form asks that those cast not post for 48 hours.

Sharon Wilcox, Thomaston (CT) Opera House,
www.thomastonoperahouse.org

Use viral marketing to offer customers half price tickets if they recruit a group to come to the show.

Dwight Martin, Manoa Valley Theatre, Honolulu, HI,
www.manovalleytheatre.com

Know what you want (followers, interactions, or sales) and focus on one goal at a time.

Jacob Coakley, Stage Directions magazine,
www.stagedirections.com and www.theatreface.com



Set up a private group on Facebook for the cast and crew of a show. Use it to communicate, such as rehearsal, photo call, and set reminders and notes.

Dave Wallis, Lakeside Community Theatre,
The Colony, TX www.lctthecolony.org

We use a one minute video posted on YouTube with a link from our Facebook, Twitter, and website that provides a viral pre-production conversation piece. It is easily shared and forwarded so our message reaches new audiences.

Nancy Brozek, Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre, www.grct.org

Recommended by AACT's Webmaster, Stephen Peithman: *Internet Management for Nonprofits: Strategies, Tools and Trade Secrets* by Ted Hart, James M. Greenfield, Steve MacLaughlin, Philip H. Geier Jr. Find it in the Bookstore on the AACT website at www.aact.org/bookstore/index.html. ♦

AACTivity Tidbits

Raising Funds

Funding the budget to pay the bills is a challenge for theatre boards. Here's how theatres have reported to AACTivity that they raise funds.

Data as of 3/21/11

73.8%	grants
73%	production underwriters
54.9%	annual giving program
39.3%	endowment fund
37.7%	in-kind donation procedure
36%	corporate giving program
23%	recent capital campaign
16.4%	planned giving program

If your theatre has not reported or you want to contact theatres to find out about their fundraising programs go to www.aact2.org and click on Programs/Resources, then AACTivity. ♦



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Ron Ziegler

Festival Commissioner JoAnne Nissen prepares for a session of the Michigan AACTFest, held in Midland, MI February 4-6, 2011.



Ron Ziegler

Region VIII Representative Gil Savage (left), Festival Commissioner Tom Cowley (center) and Board Member at Large John Davis participate in a planning session at the AACT Winter Meetings, held in Las Vegas, NV, February 10-12, 2011.



Jim Morrison

Region III Representative Ginny Morrison, Mark Oeffler with Experience Columbus and Ohio State Contact Dawna Kornick (left to right) prepare for their presentation to the AACT Board at the AACT Winter Meetings in Las Vegas, NV. The three represented the Ohio Community Theatre Association in its bid to host AACTFest 13.



Ron Ziegler

Festival Commissioner Rick Kerby (center) talks through the rehearsal process with the company from Octavian Foundation for the Arts at the Louisiana AACTFest, held February 17-20, 2011 in Westwego, LA.

Former AACT President and current Vendor Advisory Group Chair Jill Patchin settles in for her flight home following the AACT Winter Meetings in Las Vegas.



Ron Ziegler



Ron Ziegler

Former AACT President and adjudicator Jim Carver (center) and adjudicator Mary Schuttler discuss Evergreen (CO) Players' festival-winning production of Parallel Lives with director Len Matheo, following the awards ceremony of the Region VII AACTFest. The festival took place March 11 and 12, 2011 at Bas Bleu Theatre in Fort Collins, CO.



Ron Ziegler

AACT Treasurer Frank Peot (left), Festival Commissioner Kathie Maldonado (center) and Education Committee Chair Nancy Eppert (right) who was adjudicating the festival, share a laugh at the Awards Brunch at the Wisconsin AACTFest. The festival was held February 25-27, 2011 in De Pere, WI.



Ron Ziegler

Marsha Amato-Greenspan checks in with her office outside the theatre at the Region I (New England Theatre Conference) AACTFest, March 4-6, 2011 in Concord, NH.



Ron Ziegler

AACTFest11 National Co-Chair Ruth Legg makes a point while adjudicating a production at PACTFest 2011 (Pennsylvania State Festival), held in Wilkes-Barre, PA, March 18-19, 2011. At left is adjudicator Steve Willis.



Ron Ziegler

Festival Commissioner Marsha Amato-Greenspan reviews her notes during the company meeting with Maine's representative, the Slightly Off-Center Players from Dover-Foxcroft, ME, at the Region I AACTFest.

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RAH! RAH! RAH! SIS BOOM BAH!

by Twink Lynch

I don't know about your house, but mine is dominated by football in the Fall. This year, our team is 8-0 at this writing and being touted as a candidate for the Fiesta Bowl. What is amazing is that no one thought they could do it at the beginning of the season. They've been less than dazzling in the recent past, breaking hearts of students and alumni Saturday after Saturday. But this year they've got a new coach. And therein lies a lesson.

How do mediocre teams become champions? How does a business increase its market share and ultimately achieve "blue chip" status? How do community theatres grow from "Mickey and Judy" status to national festival winners? Is aiming for "good" good enough? A recent book, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins (HarperBusiness, 2001), has some ideas regarding this issue that are worth exploring.

Collins studied companies growing from good to great. This is not an overnight process. It takes hard work, focus and commitment. But, significantly, Collins believes it's no harder to build something great than to build something good. He says – I love this! - ***"It might be statistically more rare to reach greatness, but it does not require more suffering than perpetuating mediocrity."***

Collins says there are five principles involved in becoming a great company (or team or theatre). The most important one he calls "Level 5 Leadership." If we want to build champion theatre organizations, we need to start with Level 5 leaders.

Such leaders are highly capable and have good work habits. They're able to work effectively in group settings. They can organize people and resources effectively and efficiently toward the accomplishment of group goals; they not only dream dreams but communicate them in a clear and compelling way which stimulates higher performance standards. On top of this – and these are the characteristics that make them "Level 5" - they build enduring greatness through their personal humility and professional will. They channel their ego needs into the greater good of making the organization great.

Wow! Wouldn't we all love a Board of Directors or a staff or a production team composed of people like that? I loved what one of the CEO's said, on being asked to explain his exceptional performance. He answered simply ***"I never stopped trying to become qualified for the job."*** What if we all

did that? What an impact we could have!

The most important job of Level 5 leaders is to get the right people "on the bus" and into the right seats, and to get the wrong people off the bus altogether. What does that mean for us?

We need to do a better job designing job descriptions and interviewing potential candidates, maybe even learn better audition techniques for our productions. You've probably all heard it said that 90% of the success of a production is in the casting. I believe 100% of the effectiveness of a Board is in the casting, and when Board Members aren't participating in meetings, projects, and fundraising, or perhaps even attending the shows on a regular basis, they ought to be invited off the bus. And I think it's clear that everyone involved in Board work ought to be given the right job – within his/her capabilities, time availability, and commitment to learn. Sometimes that involves working with individuals in several placements before the perfect match is made.

Level 5 leaders, with their focus on the greater good, will not dither about who gets to stay "on the bus." It is not fair to everyone else to keep people in jobs for which they are not really a good match. What happens is that the "right" people have to cover for the "wrong" person's inadequacies. Often we fail to act because of the hassle it will be to do so – to find a replacement, to fill in the gaps in the meantime, to delay opening night – so we make do. And we suffer the results.

In regard to casting the "show bus," all you artistic directors out there are going to tell me you sometimes have no choice, the ideal actor didn't try out, and I know that's a reality that makes our organizations different from the ones Collins described. But for positions on the "Board bus," we definitely can and should wait to get the right person in the right seat. And we should work on it all year round!

You know what happens when we get the right people in the right jobs? We don't have to worry about motivation and management. The "right people" are intrinsically motivated to contribute their best effort and to abide by theatre discipline (Collins says rules are mostly made to exert control over the wrong people who are still on the bus).

One of the most important findings in Collins' study is that

the "rightness" of an individual for a seat on the company bus was more related to internal character traits like work ethic, character, intelligence, and dedication to fulfilling commitments than to skills, education, and experience.

Apparently, given basic internal values and traits, any given individual can be taught the basic skills of a given job. I think we've found the same thing in community theatre. Many of our Board volunteers have grown enormously in their skills at reading financials, fundraising, or supervising staff precisely because they gave each task and responsibility 100% effort and weren't afraid to "look stupid" while learning a new skill.

A major part of a Level 5 leader's work is being able to deal with the brutal facts of reality without despairing. What brutal facts might we face in community theatre? A show bombs. A director quits a week before opening. Nobody good enough showed up for auditions. We lost \$20,000 last year. The hard drive on our computer crashed. The roof needs to be replaced immediately. We lost our 501(c)(3) designation. We've had a flood or a fire. We need to release the chief staff person and he/she has threatened to sue. One of our major donors reneged on a pledge. These are very tough issues, and we need very strong leaders to deal with them.

In order to find such leaders, Collins advises us to look for situations where extraordinary results exist but where no individual has stepped forward to claim excess credit. Look at the boards of other nonprofits in your area, particularly other arts groups. Find out who led the recently successful

United Way Campaign. What volunteer quietly makes things happen behind the scenes? Make looking for leaders "job one."

And we ourselves must not be afraid to step up to the plate and become such leaders. Most of us have the passion. We have a lot of skill and experience and we are capable of great amounts of hard and focused work, since most of us do our theatre work on top of a regular job, family and church obligations. Some of us work really well in group decision-making settings, and for those of us who need help (these are learnable skills!), there are courses being taught all over the US on college campuses or offered by various nonprofit service organizations. Remember that *the reward isn't only in the outcome, it's in the journey itself*.

To become champions, many of us need new coaches. Find them! Recruit them! Nurture them and cheer them on! (Go, Irish!) ♦

Good to Great by Jim Collins is available in the AACT bookstore: www.aact.org/bookstore/index.html.

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, December 2002

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Moving On

Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest11

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival.

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
I	MA	Arlekin Studio	Newton	The Bear
II	DE	Chapel Street Players	Newark	The Zoo Story
II	PA	The Barnstormers	Ridley Park	Colorblind: The Katrina Monologs
II	PA	Hamilton Gibson Players	Wellsboro	The Boy Who Ate the Moon
III	IN	Chicago Street Theatre	Valparaiso	The Pillowman
III	IN	Premier Arts	Elkhart	Ann of Green Gables
III	MI	Center Stage Theatre	Midland	Urinetown: the Musical
III	MI	Old Town Playhouse	Traverse City	Doubt, a Parable
III	OH	Actors Guild of Parkersburg	Parkersburg, WV	The Story of My Life
III	OH	MTV Arts	Mount Vernon	Donkey Baseball
III	WI	Kettle Moraine Players	Campbellsport	Almost, Maine
III	WI	La Crosse Community Theatre	La Crosse	Almost, Maine
IV	FL	Manatee Players	Bradenton	Sunday in the Park with George
IV	AL	Wetumpka Depot Players	Wetumpka	Second Samuel

Boldface denotes company advancing to the National festival

continued on page 38

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
June 8-12	Texas Nonprofit Theatres Youth Theatre Conference	TX Bryan	817-731-2238 www.texastheatres.org
June 20-26	AACT ★ AACTFest11 - National Festival	NY Rochester	817-732-3177 www.aactfest11.org
June 20-22	AACT Technical Theatre Conference	NY Rochester	817-732-3177 www.aactfest11.org
June 20-22	AACT Community Theatre Management Conference	NY Rochester	817-732-3177 www.aactfest11.org
June 21-25	AACT AACTFest Adjudication Workshop	NY Rochester	817-732-3177 www.aactfest11.org
June 22-25	AACT AACTFest Design Exhibit & Competition	NY Rochester	817-732-3177 www.aactfest11.org

For dates farther ahead, check the website: www.aact2.org

★ Indicates festival in the 2011 AACTFest Cycle

Moving On continued from page 37

Theatres recently selected to represent their states in AACTFest11

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival.

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
V	KS	Salina Community Theatre	Salina	<i>The Dixie Swim Club</i>
V	MN	County Seat Theatre Company	Cloquet	<i>Wiley and the Hairy Man</i>
V	MO	First Run Theatre, Inc.	St. Louis	<i>American Gothic Summer</i>
V	MO	Marble State Theatre	St. Louis	<i>Medea Redux</i>
V	NE	Community Players, Inc.	Beatrice	<i>The Receptionist</i>
V	NE	The Loft Community Theatre	Manley	<i>Leaving Iowa</i>
VI	AR	Conway Community Arts Association	Conway	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>
VI	AR	South Arkansas Arts Center	El Dorado	<i>Same Time, Next Year</i>
VI	LA	Ashe Cultural Arts Center	New Orleans	<i>A-Musing</i>
VI	LA	Mahogany Ensemble Theatre	Doyline	<i>For Colored Girls . . .</i>
VI	NM	Los Alamos Little Theatre	Los Alamos	<i>Moonlight and Magnolias</i>
VI	NM	Nat Gold Players	Las Vegas	<i>The Laramie Project</i>
VI	TX	Bastrop Opera House	Bastrop	<i>Dog Sees God</i>
VI	TX	Ohlook Performing Arts Center	Grapevine	<i>Souvenir</i>
VII	CO	Evergreen Players	Evergreen	Parallel Lives
VIII	CA	Chino Community Theatre	Chino	Check, Please!
IX	WA	Spokane Civic Theatre	Spokane	The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
X	Belgium	SHAPE Players	Mons	Hauptmann

Boldface denotes company advancing to the National Festival

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