



MTI Renews Discount Partnership with AACT

By Ron Ziegler

One of AACT's most popular member benefits has been renewed. AACT's partnership with Music Theatre International, allowing for discounts on rental packages, will continue for the 2012 membership year.

Under the agreement, AACT organizational members receive substantial discounts on standard rental fees on MTI musicals through August 2012.

The discount structure is:

- For the first four MTI musicals produced during the year beginning September 1, 2011, paid member theatres will receive a 20% discount on standard rental fees.
- If a theatre produces 5 MTI musicals in the year, the fifth standard rental package is free.

The program has its genesis in an idea conceived by MTI Senior Operations Officer John Prignano after he attended the National Community Theatre Directors Conference in Madison, WI in November 2009. The first version of the program has been in effect since April 2010 and is open to current members through August 31 of this year.

According to Prignano, most standard rentals cost between \$750 and \$1,200 per license. With a 20% discount AACT member theatres will save between \$150 and \$240 for the first MTI musical. A theatre producing 5 MTI musicals in the season will save between \$2,100 and \$3,360. Using that scale, theatres with budgets up to \$99,999 can save more than the cost of their AACT membership with the first rental.

"Music Theatre International has long been not only an excellent business partner, but also a great friend, to community theatre in America," said AACT President Rod McCullough. "Whether it was their simplicity, forthrightness, and efficiency in licensing issues, their leadership in such

programs as the Jr. series, or their sponsorship of AACT programs, we have always been able to depend on MTI."

The following stipulations apply to the program:

1. To participate in the discount program, a theatre must be a current paid AACT member for 2011-12.
2. AACT has created a group on MTISHOWSPACE; all eligible participants must sign up and join the AACT group at MTISHOWSPACE.com to be eligible for the discount.
3. New for this year, a member organization will work directly with their MTI agent to receive the discount.
4. The discount will apply to any MTI shows produced between September 1, 2011 and August 31, 2012.
5. The agreement is retroactive. If a member theatre has already paid rental fees for the period covered by the agreement, the cost difference will be refunded.
6. Rental discount applies to standard rental fees only.



"This latest decision to provide expense relief to our member theatres through rental discounts is just another example of what we've learned to expect from MTI," McCullough said. "Thank you, MTI, for your commitment to high-quality service to our members, and for your support of community theatre in America." ♦

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-Florida Sun Sentinel

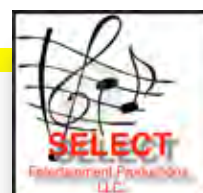


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Rod McCullough
AACT President
2009-2011

As I write this, final preparations are being made for AACTFest11 in Rochester, New York. Gathering theatre people together every two years for a festival that celebrates the best of community theatre is a huge undertaking. AACT depends on the leadership of a host organization, its supporters and its volunteers. Thank you to the Theatre Association of New York State, its member companies, and AACTFest11 co-chairs Ruth Legg and Joan Luther for all their work and commitment.

Theatre is made up of many elements but at its core, to me, it is about words. Playwrights find new ways of stringing together words to make a world make sense. Over my past two years as AACT President, the words of a number of people have helped me communicate with you. Here are some of my favorites.

"We can survive the current economic downturn if we keep our programming vital and work harder than ever to convey our message. Those arts organizations who compete well will survive and recover when the economy recovers. Those that continue to cut away at their programming are likely to become irrelevant." – Michael Kaiser

"We do community theatre for passion, not a paycheck." – Kathy Chitwood

"The beauty and grace of international theatre is remarkable. In skillful hands of directors, actors and technicians, audiences learn they don't need to understand the language used on stage." - Larry Nielsen

"A small group of women gathered around the big dining room table at the home of Mrs. [insert a name] to discuss the possibility of starting a drama group." - Multiple community theatre histories

"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." – Vanessa Redgrave

"Just for the magic." – Unknown copywriter

And here's one more. On February 9, 1997, while reading the Sunday New York Times, I turned to a full-page ad which read "...because Good is the enemy of Great." I thought to myself, "That's why we keep doing theatre. That's why we keep raising money. That's why we keep rehearsing. Because we want to get better." I clipped those words, framed them, and use them to remind myself when work seems too hard and the challenges seem too daunting.

Thank you to the AACT staff, led by Julie Crawford, for their leadership and support the past two years. Thank you to the AACT Board of Directors and all of the AACT committees for their commitment and work. Thank you to AACT members, who support community theatre in America. Although we say these words often, they are still true: "we couldn't do this without you."

This is Rod's last issue as President. He continues his AACT service as Past President. If he can be of service, contact him 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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AACT Member Discount!

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Election Results

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Ruth Legg

Thanks to all who ran!

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One of America's best-loved musicals about the greatest female country superstar and her most devoted fan. Songs include "Crazy", "Walking After Midnight", "Sweet Dreams" and "I Fall To Pieces".

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A Bible-Thumping Auntie Mame! Southern Storytelling at its Best!



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Scarlett and Rhett Go Wilde!



Oscar Wilde's comic masterpiece is transplanted from Victorian England to the antebellum Old South. Blast those English accents! Drawl and lilt your way through these delicious words in the hoop-skirted wonder of this moonlight-and-magnolias adaptation!

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Assistant

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)

Rochester, NY

Hosted by Theatre Association of New York State

AACT Executive Committee Meeting November 19-21, 2011

Madison, WI

Hosted by the University of Wisconsin - Madison

Meetings are open. Contact the AACT office for details.

Upcoming Educational Conferences**Tecnical 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 renew your AACT membership online?

Update your contact info when you renew.

www.aact2.org

Celebrate Arts in October

October is National Arts and Humanities Month, sponsored by Americans for the Arts. For celebration ideas go to www.artsusa.org, click on "Advocacy."

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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American Association of Community Theatre

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Contacting AACT

AACT
1300 Gendy Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-732-3177 • Fax 817-732-3178
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Medical Payments Insurance: The Faults with "No Fault"!

by Ken Roberts



In previous articles over the years, I've attempted to explain the various elements that make up a typical general liability policy. One of the most confusing and often misunderstood coverages in most liability policies is medical payments coverage. It is the only aspect of general liability insurance that is considered to be "no-fault" coverage, meaning that claims can be paid out of that limit even if the insured is not legally liable. However, there are those who might say that there are plenty of faults in this type of coverage.

The International Risk Management Institute (IRMI) defines medical payments coverage as "a general liability coverage that reimburses others, without regard to the insured's liability, for medical or funeral expenses incurred by such persons as a result of bodily injury or death sustained by accident under the conditions specified in the policy." This means that even if a theatre didn't do anything wrong, or was not "negligent," their policy will pay the medical bills for anyone who makes a claim. While that is certainly a goodwill gesture on the part of the theatre, it also easily makes it the leading cause of claims on theatre liability policies. Would you really want your policy to pay any and all claims that were made for injuries, even if you were not at all responsible?

The insurance companies who regularly insure community theatres have recognized this as a problem, and therefore have addressed it by either reducing the medical payments limit, excluding volunteers from coverage, or

excluding the coverage completely. Their reasoning is simple: the annual premium for a theatre's general liability policy is often less than even one medical payments claim. They could not afford to offer liability coverage for a reasonable price if they included that coverage. This doesn't mean that volunteers aren't covered by the liability insurance, it just means that before the insurance would pay any claim, the theatre must be proven to have been negligent, and therefore could have prevented the injury. Once negligence is proven, the full limit of liability, usually one million dollars, is available to cover any injury.

The typical limits for medical payments coverage is \$5,000, and anyone who has received medical treatment recently can tell you that it doesn't take long to run up a bill for \$5,000 or more, which then forces the insurance company to determine if negligence has occurred anyway. So it really makes no difference if the limit is reduced to \$1,000 or excluded entirely. Fault must still be established before additional limits are made available.

The no-fault nature of medical payments coverage is the very thing that makes it financially inefficient for insurance companies when it comes to community theatre. To help protect the theatres and keep the premiums low, they have made adjustments to the coverage that make it tougher for anyone to file an injury claim against a theatre without any just cause. There's not much fault to be found with that approach. ♦

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AACTFest11 National Companies

Chapel Street Players

Region II

www.chapelstreetplayers.org



Representing Region II at the national festival is Chapel Street Players from Newark, DE with Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*. On a bright, sun drenched Sunday afternoon in Central Park, Peter, a successful book publisher is happily enjoying his weekly ritual of reading on his favorite bench. . . that is, until Jerry appears.

Now in its 76th season, The Chapel Street Players (CSP) is the official community theatre of Newark, Delaware. Each season, CSP produces four main stage shows, a one act showcase in January, a yearly summer "FUN"draiser in June, and various special projects throughout the year. With a budget of \$72,000, Chapel Street Players is run entirely by volunteers. For more information, please visit



www.chapelstreetplayers.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/chapelstreetplayers.

Center Stage Theatre

Region III

www.mcfta.org/A_CST.html



Center Stage Theatre from Midland, MI brings its Region III-winning production of Mark Hollman and Greg Kotis' *Urinetown: the Musical* to AACTFest11. In an attempt to regulate water consumption during a 20-year drought, citizens must use public, pay-per-use toilets owned by Urine Good Company and run by the

corrupt Caldwell B. Cladwell. When Bobby Strong falls in love with Cladwell's daughter, Hope, he must decide if his love will keep him from leading a revolution to overthrow UGC.

Center Stage Theatre (formerly Theatre Guild) produced its first show in 1929. By 1965, the youth theatre program had been established, active today as Peanut Gallery and Interim. In January of 1971, Theatre Guild joined the Midland Center for the Arts, where seating capacity grew to 399 seats in the Little Theatre and 1500 seats in the large auditorium. With a budget of \$575,000, Center



Stage Theatre produces a season of musicals, straight plays, cabarets, and children's shows and offers an array of summer camps and classes. The theatre's programs are carried out by a large group of volunteers guided by six staff members.

County Seat Theater Company

Region V

www.countyseattheater.com



County Seat Theater Company from Cloquet, MN appears at the national AACTFest representing Region V with *Wiley and the Hairy Man* by Jack Stokes. Like Aesop's Fables, *Wiley and the Hairy Man* is drawn from native folk wisdom.

This play is presented by the "Creatures" and is told in humorous, fast-paced poetry and mime. County Seat Theatre Company has created a magical setting where Wiley and his Mammy engage in a battle of wits with the very scary Hairy Man.

The County Seat Theater Company began in 1987 as a fund raiser for the Carlton High School Band, and was an instant success. Eventually the theatre purchased an old rural church and renovated it into the Old Country Church Theatre, which served as its home until 2008 when the



organization purchased and renovated a new larger venue, the Encore Performing Arts Center and Gallery in Cloquet, MN. With an annual budget of \$90,000, the all-volunteer company produces a variety of adult and children's theatre, plus provides gallery space for local artists.

Broken Arrow Community Playhouse

Region VIA

www.bacptheatre.com



From Broken Arrow, OK, Broken Arrow Community Playhouse represents Region VI at AACTFest11 with the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *The Gin Game* by D.L. Coburn. The play uses a game of cards as a metaphor for the

struggles of aging. Act I introduces Fonsia and Weller as they square off on the porch of a seedy nursing home. Act II, which is presented for the festival, brings their struggle to a climax.

In 1979, local residents came together to bring live theatre to Broken Arrow. Through an outpouring of community support, the Broken Arrow Community Playhouse was founded. It operates today on a \$65,000 budget, and is run entirely by volunteers. For thirty-one



seasons the BACP has continued to uphold the ideals of the original charter members and their vision of nurturing an organization that would give expression to the love of performing arts, and be involved with their community through outreach programs.

continued on next page

Ohlook Performing Arts Center

Region VIB

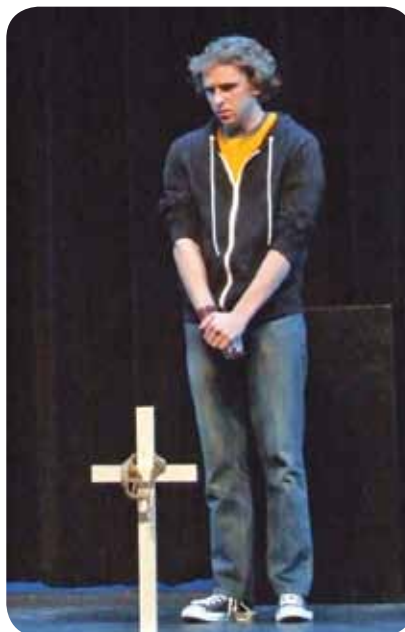
www.ohlookperform.com



Ohlook Performing Arts Center comes to the national AACTFest from Grapevine, TX, representing Region VI with Bert V. Royal's *Dog Sees God: Confessions*

of a Teenage Blockhead. When his dog dies from rabies, CB begins to question the existence of an afterlife. His friends and family, occupied with their own demons, are unable to give him any sort of solace. But a chance meeting with an artistic kid, the target of this group's bullying, offers CB peace of mind and sets in motion a friendship that pushes teen angst to the very limits.

Ohlook Performing Arts Center was founded by professional singers Matthew Lord and Jill Blalock Lord in 2002, and operates on a budget under \$15,000. Originally organized to introduce, teach, and mentor children and young adults from ages 3 to 18, it has now



grown to include an adult performing company which specializes in performing shows that often "push the envelope."

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AACTFest Covered the Map

Thank You National Festival Host and Chairs!

AACTFest11

Theatre Association of New York State
 Rochester, NY
 Chairs: Ruth Legg, Joan Luther

Thank You to AACTFest 11 Regional Festival Hosts and Chairs!

Region I

Community Players of Concord, NH
 Concord, NH
 Chairs: Chuck Emmons, Maureen Doucette

Region II

Eastern States Theatre Association (ESTA)
 Pottstown, PA
 Chair: Marsha Amato-Greenspan

Region III

Ohio Community Theatre Association (OCTA)
 Columbus, OH
 Chairs: Lisa Billing, Geri Martin

Region IV

Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC)
 Atlanta, GA
 Chairs: Rick Kerby, Lyle Tate

Region V

Salina Community Theatre
 Salina, KS
 Chair: Michael Spicer

Region VI

Medical Center of Lewisville Grand Theater
 Lewisville, TX
 Chair: Linda M. Lee

Region VII

Bas Bleu Theatre
 Ft. Collins, CO
 Chair: Matt Strauch

Region X

KMC Onstage
 Kaiserslautern, Germany
 Chair: James A. Sohre

Thank You to State Festival Hosts and Chairs!

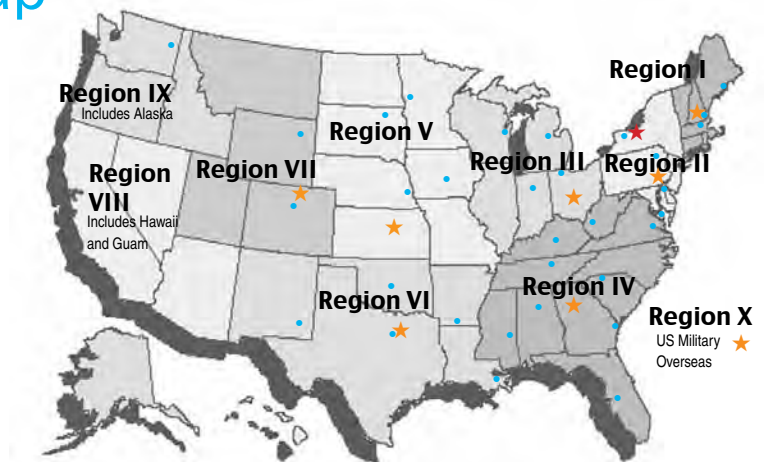
Region I

Maine

Maine Association of Community Theatre
 Rockland, ME
 Chairs: Foner Curtis, Richard D. Bostwick

Massachusetts

Eastern Massachusetts Assn of Community Theaters
 Groton, MA
 Chairs: Norma Marshall, Robert Hallisey



Stars show locations of Regional Festivals, circles show State Festivals.
 Red star = National Festival.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Community Theatre Association
 Milford, NH
 Chairs: Mariah Sefel, Robin LaCroix

Region II

Delaware

Delaware Theatre Association
 Wilmington, DE
 Chair: Ruth K. Brown

Maryland

Maryland Community Theatre Festival Association
 Lexington Park, MD
 Chair: Cynthia Johnson

New York

Theatre Association of New York State
 Batavia, NY
 Chair: Robert Sharman

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres
 Wilkes-Barre, PA
 Chair: Marsha Amato-Greenspan

Region III

Indiana

Kokomo Civic Theatre
 Kokomo, IN
 Chair: Steve Hughes

Ohio

3B Productions
 Maumee, OH
 Chairs: Gary Buerk, Joe Barton

Michigan

CenterStage - Midland Center for the Arts
 Midland, MI
 Chair: Emily Anderson

Wisconsin

Evergreen Productions, Inc.
 De Pere, WI
 Chair: Darrell G. Wagner, Jr.

Region IV

Alabama

Pell City Center
Pell City, AL
Chairs: Clay Boyce, Kevin Garrett

Florida

Florida Theare Conference
Lakeland, FL
Chair: Eric Hurst

Georgia

Georgia Theatre Conference
Savannah, GA
Chair: Ray Mannila

Kentucky

Kentucky Theatre Association
Danville, KY
Chair: Brad Downall

Mississippi

Mississippi Theatre Association
Meridian, MS
Chairs: Stephen Cunetto, Thomas La Foe

South Carolina

South Carolina Theatre Association
Spartanburg, SC
Chair: Susan L. D. Smith

Tennessee

Cookeville Performing Arts Center
Cookeville, TN
Chair: Barry Wallace

Virginia

Virginia Theatre Association
Richmond, VA
Chair: Michael Snead

West Virginia

West Virginia Theatre Conference
Charleston, WV
Chair: Dennis Wemm

Region V

Iowa

Newton Community Theatre, Inc.
Newton, IA
Chair: Sue Beukema

Minnesota

A Center for the Arts, Fergus Theatre
Fergus Falls, MN
Chair: Tim Ray

Missouri

Lofte Community Theatre
Manley, NE
Chairs: Kevin Colbert, Lynn Plunkett

Nebraska

Lofte Community Theatre
Manley, NE
Chair: Suzan DeCamp

South Dakota

Aberdeen Community Theatre
Aberdeen, SD
Chair: James L. Walker

Region VI

Arkansas

South Arkansas Arts Center
El Dorado, AR
Chair: Jack Wilson

Louisiana

Jefferson Performing Arts Society
Westwego, LA
Chairs: Brian Schrader, Anna Rosenberg

New Mexico

Artesia Community Theatre
Artesia, NM
Chairs: Reginia Garner, Laney Rountree

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Community Theatre Association
Norman, OK
Chair: Doobie Potter

Texas

Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc. (TNT)
Fort Worth, TX
Chair: Linda M. Lee

Region VII

Colorado

The Nomad Theatre
Boulder, CO
Chairs: Liana Huey, Stephany Roscoe

Wyoming

Gillette Community Theatre
Gillette, WY
Chairs: Kelani Urlaub, Mary Wegher

Region IX

Washington

Spokane Civic Theatre
Spokane, WA
Chair: Yvonne A.K. Johnson

Thanks to these AACT volunteers for serving as Festival Commission Representatives providing support to 33 state festivals and 8 regional festivals.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
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- *Sacramento News & Review*



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- *Bold Life Magazine*



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- *Backstage*



"Wacky inventiveness - delightful
and inspired comic mastery!"
- *LA Weekly*



"Funny, sad, quirky
and sweet all at once."
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AACTFest 11 Participation

The 2011 AACT Fest Cycle comes to a close with the National AACTFest in Rochester, NY. It's been a busy cycle, involving many theatres and many, many volunteers from all around the country and from the US military theatres in Europe. Here's a look at the Festival Cycle by the numbers:

Number of state festivals: 33

Number of theatres entering state festivals: 196

Number of states with appointed entries to Regional festivals: 3

Number of regions with appointed entries to the National festival: 2

Number of regional festivals: 8

Number of theatres performing at Regional festivals: 73*

Total theatres performing in the 2011 AACTFest Cycle: 212

*Region X has no state festivals.

FNMS Becomes TSYS

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TSYS Merchant Solutions is the new name of the endorsed payment processing provider for AACT members. With over 50 years of experience, TSYS Merchant

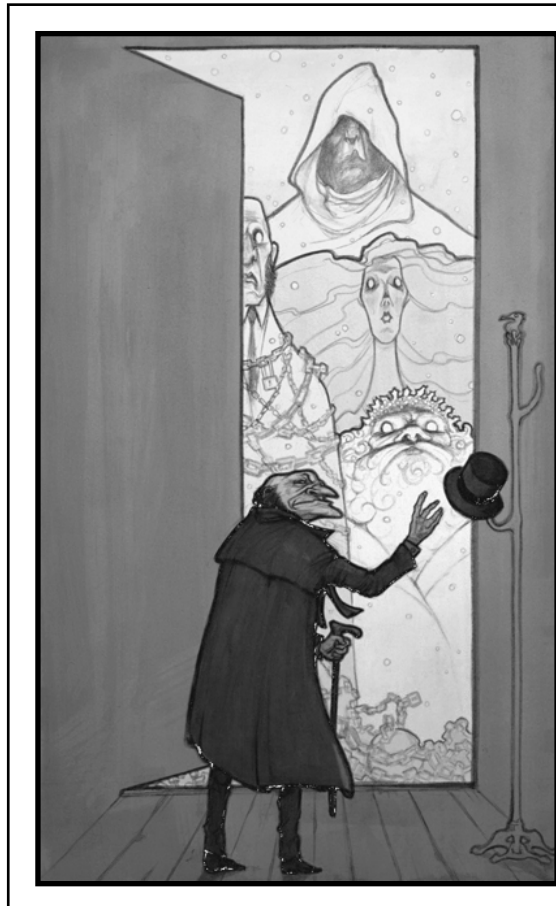


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The logo for First National Merchant Solutions, the previous name of TSYS.

ASCAP License Window Closes September 1

AACT member theatres have until September 1 to order or renew their ASCAP Community Theatre license. AACT members purchasing the license through AACT receive a 30% discount.

The ASCAP Community Theatre license covers the theatre for a year at all its venues for copyrighted pre-show, intermission, and post-show music played by means other than live performers, such as CD's and tapes. (This license does not cover music played during a show or performed live.)



For more information, contact TSYS Merchant Solutions:

- Payment Processing Info Page: www.tsysmerchantsolutions.com
- Phone: (800) 354-3988
- Link from the AACT website at www.aact.org/resources/payserv.html or www.aact.org, "Index," "Payment Processing"

ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, is a membership association of over 400,000 composers, songwriters, lyricists and music publishers. ASCAP's function is to protect the rights of its members by licensing public performances of over 8.5 million works, and distributing royalties to our members for performances of their copyrighted works.

To learn more about the ASCAP Community Theatre license and the AACT ASCAP Discount Program go to the AACT website at www.aact.org/ascap or contact the AACT office. ♦

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Spotlight Award Honors Newton Volunteers

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

The AACT Spotlight Award was presented to three outstanding volunteers, **Tim Blount**, **Wanda Blount**, and **Cindy Healy** from **Newton Community Theatre (NCT)** on April 2nd at the AACT-Fest11 Iowa Community Theatre Festival. AACT President, Rod McCullough, and NCT's Administrator, Sue Beukema, presented the awards.

Tim Blount is the go-to-guy for technical work. Tim first's experience at NCT was with the musical *South Pacific* in 1978. He has performed lighting miracles on numerous productions from that time on. Tim also has the ability to mix sound effects and find the perfect cue or song that blends well with any production. Tim has been a great asset to Newton Community Theatre for 33 years through his technical ability, as an assistant director, and serving as a board member for NCT.

Wanda Blount is a wonderful contributor to Newton Community Theatre. She became involved in 1970 with the musical *Oklahoma*, and has since gone on to help with props, sets, lighting, logo designs, stage manager, assistant director and director for many productions. Wanda has served on NCT's board and is currently the season ticket chair. Her directing ability and her embroidered shirts are enjoyed by many of NCT's volunteers. Wanda's 41 years of dedication has been an inspiration to all.



NCT Administrator Sue Beukema (L) and AACT President Rod McCullough (R) presented Spotlight Awards to (L-R) Cindy Healy, Tim Blount and Wanda Blount.

Cindy Healy has been a special friend to Newton Community Theatre since 1969. She started in high school working lights and doing make-up for a summer children's workshop. She has been an assistant director and a director for several productions. Cindy has taken the role of stage manager for many shows, with *Annie* in 2010 being her latest. Cindy has been willing to lend a helping hand for the last 42 years. She can do wonders with her make-up expertise for any face and any show.

Newton Community Theatre feels very privileged to have these wonderful volunteers, Cindy Healy, Tim Blount, and Wanda Blount. The AACT Spotlight Award was a special way to show NCT's appreciation! ♦

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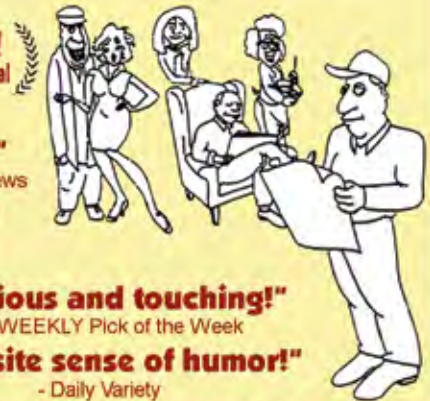
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- Daily Variety

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- The Toluca Times

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- American Radio Network

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Recruiting Volunteers . . . again and again and again

By Tracy Alexander, Director of Performance and Volunteer Services, Midland (Texas) Community Theatre

“Great Egos and Hams”

I began pursuing an acting career in junior high school. It wasn't until my second semester at California State University at Sacramento that I became enthralled with the backstage and all things “techie”! Oh, I had helped out with painting sets, and costuming, and typed my share of mimeographed programs. (*sigh . . . Google it*) But I hadn't really keyed into the fabulous fact that Dressers, Props Runners, and Designers all had skills and traditions as intriguing and beguiling as those who were attracted by the lure of spotlights and the smell of greasepaints. I have come to discover that we ALL are attracted by those things . . . just in different ways. *Some of us want to be in the spotlight and others want to master iris-ing down during a solo and then winking out on the Button.** And isn't it crazy that all y'all know what I'm talking about!

I have only had fifteen years of experience as a “volunteer coordinator,” but I have noticed a few things . . . Theatre is exciting! Theatre is glamorous! Theatre is magical! Theatre is fun! Theatre has a built-in structure and by publicizing that you can use your volunteer base to greater effect.

Theatre is Exciting!

Hey, Gang! Let's put on a Show!

It happens in the same order for every production. It's easy for the actors – you audition, you're cast, you rehearse, you perform, you party. What is the structure for construction crews? Technicians? Front-of-House? And how do they relate to each other? To have a successful program – create a Production Calendar.

Start with Closing Night, add in the number of performances, your Tech/Dress routine, how many rehearsals the director needs, etc. and count backwards. Repeat this schedule, three, six, or eight times (*or 18 – like MCT*) depending on your Season. You will soon see with only 52 weeks a year that show schedules begin to overlap.

One of the best recruitment tools that I use is a Production Breakdown (*see example*). I send this out to every MCT Volunteer in October (*or once we have a Production Calendar*) so that everyone can plan out their involvement for the whole year. *“Let's see . . . I'll audition for this show, run props on Jane's show, too busy in May, but the holiday musical is always fun onstage or off . . .”* How does it work?

While “no” is a perfectly acceptable answer – Life Happens! – with a Breakdown it is soooo much easier to entice a volunteer to consider a show later in the season or perhaps a small part here and there . . . between wanting to work with certain directors or on a certain stage or try out a new area of interest – there is always something to engage a volunteer.

The Breakdown assists everyone by understanding the scope of each production – a huge multi-set musical, an intimate drama, etc. by listing the type and number of persons needed for Crew positions. With “theatre volunteers” there is an obvious interest in all things theatrical – so take advantage of it! Here is the plan – how do y'all want to take part?

Theatre is Glamorous!

Theatre Volunteers are – more likely than not – involved in more than one aspect of theatrical production! They act, design, direct, shove scenery around, work the Box Office . . . and sometimes they do it all on one show. I had a Dresser during *Oklahoma* who worked Box Office because she wasn't needed until the end of Act One and she likes seeing who's coming to the show. (*Some techies like working the bar at Intermission . . . but that isn't all that hard to figure out.*)

Let's face it – most of the time – getting actors is pretty easy. Much easier than finding Technicians! But now you have a captive audience – The Cast and their . . . *Partners, Parents, Friends, Family, and Co-Workers!* All of these folk are already involved as potential “audience” and a little extra effort can get them backstage.

Try making assistance a requirement like “Kid Wrangling” for the parents of your Youth Ensemble or requiring Actors to put in time with the Costume Shop (*and not just on their costume*). A family that plays together . . . usually has a few Techies in the closet! Schedule work calls that coincide with rehearsals – a great way to pass the time while waiting for your next scene or to occupy the parents or children of someone in the Cast. Use a “Production Board” to personally call and contact prospective volunteers in construction and crew areas.

Theatre is Magical!

Articles in your program, lobby displays on upcoming shows and/or events, displays about the design, construction, and rehearsal process for a show, or inviting your patrons

** If, like our editor, you need to look up the followspot terminology “iris-ing” and “winking out at the Button,” go to www.aact.org/resources/terms.html or www.aact.org/Running a Theatre, “Theatre Terms.”*

to “meet and greet” the cast and crew backstage after the performance are all excellent ways to expose potential volunteers to our unique little world.

Our audiences love to see how a show was put together –

2011 PRODUCTION BREAKDOWN

OKLAHOMA

Musical *G* *Davis I*
 Dir. - Tim Jebsen MD – Bert Bostic
 CH. – Misti Tytanic SM – Gralin Coffin

Possible Crew Needs:

Lightboard Op	Soundboard Op
Dressers – 4	Prop Runners – 2
Hair/Make-up – 2	Shift Crew – 10
ASM – 2	

Schedule:

Auditions 12/5 & 12/6	Rehearsals 1/3 - 1/26
Prod. Mtg. 1/11	Tech/Dress 1/27 – 2/3
Show Run 2/4 -3/12	Strike 3/12

THE NERD

Comedy *PG* *Mabee II*
 Dir. – Beau Dameron SM – Alissa Olson

Possible Crew Needs:

Lightboard Op	Soundboard Op
Dresser/Prop Runner – 1	ASM - 1

Schedule:

Auditions 1/24 – 1/25	Rehearsals 1/31 – 3/4
Prod. Mtg. 2/15	Tech/Dress 3/5 – 3/10
Show Run 3/11 – 4/3	Strike 4/3

HAIRSPRAY

Musical *PG-13* *Yucca*
 Dir. – Tim Jebsen MD – Bert Bostic
 CH. – Misti Tytanic SM – Sandy Faulkner

Possible Crew Needs:

Lightboard Op	Soundboard Op
Dressers – 4	Hair/Make-up - 2
Prop Runners – 2	Shift Crew - 6
ASM - 2	

Schedule:

Auditions 2/27 – 2/28	Rehearsals 3/7 – 4/21
Prod. Mtg. 3/22	Tech/Dress 4/22 – 4/28
Show Run 4/29 – 5/7	Strike 5/7

One column from Midland Community Theatre's Production Breakdown.

even “not-to-scale” doodles or before/after photos of 80’s Prom dresses turned into ball gowns for *Cinderella* get great reactions. I love watching new people surreptitiously eyeing the stage crew, all decked out in black, and obviously wondering what that motley crew was up to during the show! Do take care with patrons in the wings if your backstage is fraught with trip hazards or other dangers, but sneaking a peek behind the scenes is a secret thrill for the uninitiated.

Theatre is Fun!

The #1 reason, why anyone volunteers again, is . . . they had FUN! It was a positive experience.

Remember the three “F’s” of volunteerism – *no not that “F”* – Fun, Friends, and Food. Or, my favorite, Free Beer! How can you insure that volunteers at your theatre have a “positive experience”?

Most folk feel foolish when they don’t understand what is expected of them. Don’t assume that because a volunteer stage managed at another theatre that they know how to



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do it at *your* theatre. We all have quirks and traditions of our own. Job descriptions or job checklists are essential to training new volunteers – especially those brand new to theatre – with everything from when you arrive at the theatre to how you dress and whom you report to for the show.

What is the biggest complaint heard from volunteers? *It was a waste of my time, I stood around, but they just wasted my time, This is stupid – I'm just wasting my time . . .* PLEASE, do not waste time! Directors and Stage Managers should start rehearsals as planned regardless of who is or is not ready or present. The message is clear – No Divas!

During Work Calls, Load Ins, and Strikes simply explain the process – *Tonight we are working on hanging curtains . . .* – etc. Knowing why you are standing around while two guys in the grid re-weight the arbor is much easier to understand than just being told to “hold your horses . . .”

It is all social! - Auditions, Rehearsals, Tech, Performances, Strike, etc. – each event an opportunity for food and fellowship. Refreshments in the Green Room or Break Area, champagne on Opening Night, and pizza at Strike are just a few of the occasions theatre volunteers desire feeding. *Some of my volunteers volunteer by cooking for everybody else. It's great!* But I also have a budget and if your theatre doesn't establish one. It is that important – just like paying royalties or buying lumber. MCT has an annual budget of \$6000


for the Volunteer Areas – this averages out to \$5 for every volunteer on my database (\$20 – *if I keep the count to very active folk*) and worth every penny.

I have been an actor, director, stage manager, makeup artist, prop designer, sound board operator . . . and a followspot operator and I have mastered many skills . . . *still working on that irisng part though . . .* and I have loved all of these positions and can't wait to try them all all over again. Because it's . . . Exciting! Glamorous! Magical! Fun! It's not easy to recruit volunteers again, and again, and again, but making the structure visible and tending to the care and feeding of volunteers will keep them coming back. I keep coming back. *And boy, do I need a beer!* ♦

Tracy Alexander is the Region VI Representative on the AACT Board.

**Catch Tracy's workshop,
“Great Egos and Hams”
at AACTFest11
in Rochester, NY in June.**

Eldridge Plays and Musicals



By Robin Pond
Photo: Midtown International Theatre Festival, New York

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Putting It Together Creating a Revue of Copyrighted Songs

By Stephen Peithman

Putting together an original revue based on numbers from Broadway shows presents major challenges. First, performing your own group of copyright-protected songs requires that you get clearance from the music publishers. The best way is go through ASCAP or BMI, which represent composers and lyricists.

However, music publishers cannot authorize fully staged revues of individual numbers. ASCAP or BMI clearance is valid only for song use in a concert or cabaret setting.

“In addition, the musical numbers must not be performed with costumes or sets specifying the original musical’s content, or with the musical’s original dialogue used into or around the song,” explains John Prignano of Music Theatre International, “and normally only three songs from any one musical can be performed.”

In other words, ASCAP or BMI licenses do not permit you to present a duet of “People Will Say We’re in Love” from *Oklahoma!* using singers in western garb, or a staged “Brotherhood of Man” production number from *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

Prignano urges you to pay particular attention to proper licensing when putting together your own revues, since there are legal consequences for non-compliance.

“If you check with the licensing agency that represents the musical from which the number or numbers come—like MTI—you will save a lot of grief during or after

production,” he says. “It is also wise to check with the music publisher, since some songs need special clearance even for cabaret or concert presentation. ‘Adelaide’s Lament,’ from *Guys and Dolls*, is a case in point – composer Frank Loesser did not want it performed outside the show, and so his music publisher clears each specific performance.”

Note that some songs are handled by ASCAP, and others by BMI, and so you may need to work with both for clearances -- especially if you’re dealing with songs by different composers. For example, Stephen Sondheim (*Into the Woods*) and Cy Coleman (*Sweet Charity*) are with ASCAP, while David Yazbek (*The Full Monty*) and Alan Menken (*Beauty and the Beast*) are represented by BMI.

Not surprisingly, most theatre companies find it far simpler to produce an existing revue such as *Putting It Together* (Stephen Sondheim songs), *A Grand Night for Singing* (Rodgers & Hammerstein), or *Jerry’s Girls* (Jerry Herman). These and other revues are already cleared and waiting to be licensed by MTI, Samuel French, Rodgers & Hammerstein, and other agencies.

If you plan to forge ahead and create your own revue (following the basic rules outlined above), you’ll need to determine which music licensing organization (usually ASCAP or BMI) represents each musical or particular

continued on page 26



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Does it Matter? A Report on Arts Advocacy Day

By Joanne Berry, AACT Advocacy Committee Chair

This year's national Arts Advocacy Day, sponsored by Americans for the Arts, was held during a time when negotiations on funding for cultural agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts had reached a crucial stage. A coalition of Members of Congress had announced its intention to drastically reduce funding to this organization and to Arts in Education programs administered by the Department of Education. Some wanted to eliminate the funding completely.

The nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually, creates the equivalent of 5.7 million full-time jobs, and pays \$12.6 billion in federal taxes.

On April 4 and 5, a group of 560 arts advocates met in Washington, D.C. for meetings, briefings, and visits to Members of Congress. The object was to send a unified message to Capitol Hill in support of increased funding for the arts (or at least, the maintenance of the 2010 funding). Those advocates who couldn't travel to Washington sent more than 13,500 messages of support through an E-advocacy center.

Before Arts Advocacy Day the NEA faced a cut of over \$43 million for FY 2012. Thanks to the combined efforts of advocates across the country, the final cut was a more reasonable 7.5% cut from \$167 million to \$155 million. That funding is more than the President's budget request of \$146 million. \$25 million was restored to the Arts in Education fund which had been "zeroed out" in a previous continuing resolution. Last year it was \$40 million.

A major message that had been bombarding Members of Congress in the days and weeks leading up to Advocacy Day was that the arts are an essential economic engine. The nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually, creates the equivalent of 5.7 million full-time jobs, and pays \$12.6 billion in federal taxes. For this country to thrive, the arts must thrive. The arts infrastructure is crucial to our nation's well-being and economic vitality.

Arts organizations across the country, including AACT, urged their members to contact their Members of Congress to press for continued funding for the arts. AACT sent "Advocacy Alerts" to its members. Thanks to all of you who acted on these alerts.

Americans for the Arts felt that the reductions in funding were somewhat within reason given the current economic

continued on page 26

TALES OF THE ORPHAN TRAIN RIDERS

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—PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS, NYC



song. Typically, a song's sheet music will list this at the bottom of the first page; it also may be included in the booklet accompanying the original cast recording.

Once you have your song list, you can contact ASCAP and BMI via their websites, which provide licensing information and allow you to submit requests for performance of authors whom they represent. Both websites have search forms, so you can search for particular songs or songwriters. ♦

Resources:

ASCAP: www.ascap.com/licensing/

BMI: www.bmi.com/licensing/

Download this article from the Knowledge Base on the AACT website at www.aact2.org, "Programs/Resources," "Knowledge Base," "Articles." Then click on "Producing, Rights & Royalties."

Activity Tidbits

Volunteers

How do your volunteer numbers compare to other theatres? Here are the counts posted in AACTivity on the AACT website. Are your theatre's numbers in the count? Go to www.aact2.org, "Programs/Resources," "AACTivity."

# Volunteers	% of Responses
1-99	27.7%
100-199	21.5%
200-299	9.2%
300-399	12.3%
400-499	10.8%
500-599	7.7%
600-699	2.3%
700-799	3.9%
800-1199	2.3%
1200+	2.3%

Does group have a Volunteer Coordinator?

No 40%
Yes 60%

If yes, is the Volunteer Coordinator Paid?

No 70%
Yes 30%

Data as of 5/7/11

crisis, but will work to have funding increased or at least restored to the level of the early 1990's when it was over \$170 million.

"Does it matter?" asked actor Kevin Spacey, the 2011 Nancy Hanks Lecturer, as he spoke to an audience of 1,500 at the Kennedy Center the evening before Arts Advocacy Day. Does support for the arts matter to each of us, to our communities, and to the nation? His affirmative answer was, "We must do everything we can to insure that our cultural heritage and our cultural future are protected... We must shout louder to make sure that those in positions of power and influence realize their [the arts'] value to our economy as well as to our collective soul – for we abandon the arts at our own peril." Spacey emphasized that without public support, including government support, for the arts we are focusing on bricks and mortar and "ignoring the heart and soul of who we are as a country."

The next morning at the Congressional Arts Kickoff, Mr. Spacey and actors Alec Baldwin, Kerry Washington and Hill Harper, along with several leading Congressional arts' supporters, underscored that message. ♦

Ma, Moonflowers & Me



*A romantic comedy in two acts
for people old enough to know better*

by Jo Morello

4M (50-75); 4F (40-80s); 1F (17)

(Theater may add non-speaking roles as desired.)

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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about marriage and other laughing matters*

by Jack Gilhooley & Jo Morello

2M (middle-aged); 3F (30s to middle-aged)

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Loyalty and "Enemies": Keep Dancing and Keep Them in Front of You

by Wally Hurst

The last issue dealt with issues of loyalty and the people you work with to get the job done. "Dance With The One That Brung Ya" is a maxim that underscores the importance of loyalty, and one that politicians of all stripes appreciate. Today, I'm going to talk about two important corollaries of this rule, which bear some explanation, and what I mean by "keeping your enemies in front of you."

The first corollary is – you hire your boss. All of us in management understand that you have to have bright, eager, talented, willing employees – but how many of us can gauge a person's loyalty before we know them well? The other way to state this rule is be careful who you work for and who you associate with. Their deeds (and reputation) will also be associated with you and your organization in the public eye, like it or not.

If your theatre accepts money for sponsorships from a questionable source, that source *and your theatre* will be linked forever in the eyes of many. What would be the impact on your theatre if, for instance, a cigarette company or a lawyer with a bad reputation or a sleazy car dealer offered to sponsor your season? Who you associate with matters as much as your own reputation sometimes.

Think about what you're doing when persons of questionable character offer to volunteer. We regularly run criminal checks on employees, but most of the time we do not run checks of our hundreds of volunteers unless we feel that something is "not right" about them. Reputation is a fragile thing, and one bad apple really *can* spoil the whole bunch. Sometimes, it sneaks up and gets you, as when somebody with no prior history does something wrong – but sometimes due diligence can uncover a problem before it happens. Loyalty is great, but it does have limits. Be aware, always.

The second corollary is a well-used phrase today: what have you done for me lately? Here's another way to say it: *you always need to keep yourself necessary*. Even if you do something really great for someone, over time they will forget about it. We tell actors to live "in the moment." Politically speaking, you should always be "in the moment," always relevant, and always in touch with the folks in political or governmental office who can help you. Mr. Matthews* states that one reason Congress doesn't

enact a permanent minimum wage is because they like to proudly declare that they are helping the economy every few years when they increase it. That way, they keep themselves relevant and "helping."

I highly recommend you *keep your enemies in front of you*. After the Battle of Saratoga, the two troops dined together, showing that it is "Better to have your enemies inside the tent pissing out than outside the tent pissing in."

Good politicians shake hands and easily talk with their enemies. It is a sign of strength, and many times they may have to work with each other later. Lincoln had an entire administration filled with people who were angry and all felt that they'd make a better president than Lincoln. This is smart because once you have your enemies working with you they can't bad mouth you and their interests can't collide with yours.

FDR made his opponent Wendell Willkie an envoy to Britain. Reagan had someone on the other side of the spectrum on the ticket with him before he even won the nomination because it said he wanted to bring bipartisanship. Having your enemies work for you makes people trust you to be open minded. Even if they don't work for you, keep a close eye and a cordial relationship with them. It pays off in the end! ♦

*Author's Note: Thoughts for these articles are based on my own series of political lectures delivered from 1992-1997 to firefighters throughout the state of California, and from Chris Matthews' book *Hardball*, which I recommend to anyone who is enjoying this set of articles and looks to become politically active in the service of the arts.

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 is a proud member of AACT's Advocacy Committee.



Ron Ziegler

Delaware State Contact Ann Stevens (left) greets Region II Representative Sherman Ward and Ann Ward at the Delaware Theatre Association Festival, held in Wilmington, DE on March 26, 2011.



Ron Ziegler

AACTFest11 Co-chair Joan Luther (left) talks about the upcoming national festival with Delaware Festival Chair Ruth Brown at the Delaware Theatre Association Festival in Wilmington, DE, March 26, 2011. Joan was adjudicating for the festival.

Ron Ziegler



Region V Representative Jim Walker (left) enjoys a pre-festival moment under the Capitol Theatre marquee with Festival Commission Representative Jon Skaalen at the Dakota AACTFest in Aberdeen, SD, April 3, 2011.



Linda Lee

AACT Field Services Director Ron Ziegler (right) and Adjudicator Kathy Pingel lead a directing workshop at the Region VI AACT-Fest in Lewisville, TX, April 14-17, 2011.

AACT Executive Vice President Linda Lee addresses the crowd before a performance session at the Region VI AACTFest in Lewisville, TX, April 14-17, 2011. Linda served as Festival Chair.

Ron Ziegler



Ron Ziegler



Susan Creviston, Co-chair of AACT-Fest 2013 in Carmel, IN, takes a minute to call home from the Region III AACTFest, held in Columbus, OH, April 28-May 1, 2011.

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The Care and Feeding of Volunteers

Members of AACTList recently shared their best tips on volunteers.

Regional Theatre Of the Palouse in Pullman, WA serves meals for technical crews and construction crews during weekends. We also have snacks and beverages (hot/cold) at all rehearsals and crew calls. Our ushers can see the productions for free when they usher. Performers and volunteers can get discounts on show tickets, classes or workshops that we offer.

– John Rich, Managing Artistic Director
www.rtoptheatre.org



To keep volunteers happy and content, a simple thank you, smile, or “gee, you’re great” will make almost any volunteer feel appreciated and welcome. They in turn tell friends and family to come down and volunteer. We also give our cast and crew complimentary tickets to every show they volunteer with, and they get discounted ticket price sheets to hand out to family and friends.

– Mary Jo DeNolf, Director of Volunteers and Operations,
Grand Rapids (MI) Civic Theatre, www.grct.org

A thirty plus year volunteer at Sunset Playhouse (Elm Grove, WI) told me that the biggest reason he continues to contribute is that he constantly hears the words, “Thank you!” for his work. We continually work on promoting a culture in our theatre where volunteers always feel

appreciated and thanked. We write thank you notes to all production volunteers for each and every show we produce. It’s some extra effort for sure, but it pays off in big ways.

– Jonathan West, Managing Director
sunsetplayhouse.com

We do several different things: Tech Sunday - We provide a dinner meal between dry tech and tech run. We feed crew (light stuff and LOTS of coffee) during building calls. We host a

Volunteer Recognition Reception each year with lots of great food and drink. Ushers get a pair of tix to use as they will for every five shows they work on.

– Lou Ursone, Executive Director, Curtain Call, Inc.
(Stamford, CT) www.curtaincallinc.com

To join AACTList go to www.aact2.org, “Programs/ Resources,” “AACTList.”

For more on volunteers, see Tracey Alexander's article on page 20.

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Details: www.auroratheatre.org/gap.php

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www.dchornfoundation.org/rules.htm

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Moving On

Theatres selected to represent their states in the 2011 AACTFest Cycle

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

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
I	MA	Arlekin Studio	Newton	The Bear
I	MA	The Wellesley Players	Wellesely	<i>Steel Magnolias</i>
I	ME	Slightly Off-Center Players	Dover-Foxcroft	<i>The Fag Variations or The Conversion of the Straights</i>
I	NH	M&M Productions	Hudson	<i>Six Nights in the Black Belt</i>
I	NH	Milford Area Players	Amherst	<i>Animal Farm</i>
II	DE	Chapel Street Players	Newark	The Zoo Story
II	DE	Wilmington Drama League	Wilmington	<i>No Child</i>
II	MD	Montgomery Playhouse	Gaithersburg	<i>Conversations With the Spanish Lady</i>
II	MD	Newtowne Players	Lexington Park	<i>woman: revised</i>
II	NY	Auburn Players Community Theatre	Auburn	<i>Two Women and a Chair</i>
II	NY	Wyoming County Bicentennial Singers	Warsaw	<i>Physical Therapy</i>
II	PA	The Barnstormers	Ridley Park	<i>Colorblind: The Katrina Monologs</i>
II	PA	Hamilton Gibson Players	Wellsboro	<i>The Boy Who Ate the Moon</i>
III	IN	Chicago Street Theatre	Valparaiso	<i>The Pillowman</i>
III	IN	Premier Arts	Elkhart	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>
III	MI	Center Stage Theatre	Midland	Urinetown: the Musical
III	MI	Old Town Playhouse	Traverse City	<i>Doubt, a Parable</i>
III	OH	Actors Guild of Parkersburg	Parkersburg, WV	<i>The Story of My Life</i>
III	OH	MTV Arts	Mount Vernon	<i>Donkey Baseball</i>
III	WI	Kettle Moraine Players	Campbellsport	<i>Almost, Maine</i>
III	WI	La Crosse Community Theatre	La Crosse	<i>Almost, Maine</i>
IV	AL	South City Theatre	Alabaster	<i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>
IV	AL	Wetumpka Depot Players	Wetumpka	Second Samuel
IV	FL	Manatee Players	Bradenton	Sunday in the Park with George
IV	GA	Arts Center Theatre	Moultrie	<i>Early Frost</i>
IV	KY	Artists Cllaborative Theatre	Elkhorn City	<i>Honky Tonk Angels</i>
IV	MS	Just Over the Rainbow Theatre	Hattiesburg	<i>Driving Miss Daisy</i>
IV	MS	Starkeville Community Theatre	Starkeville	<i>The Dixie Swim Club</i>
IV	NC	Haywood Arts Rep	Waynesville	<i>Falling In Like</i>
IV	SC	Sumter Littler Theatre	Sumter	<i>The Harry and Sam Dialogues</i>
IV	TN	Cookeville Peroprmng Arts Center	Cookeville	<i>Dead Man's Cell Phone</i>
IV	VA	Caroline Community Theatre	Bowling Green	<i>Laundry and Bourbon</i>
IV	VA	Springfield Community Theatre	Springfield	<i>Heroes</i>

continued on next page

Moving On *continued from page 33*

IV	WV	Summit Players	Bluefield	<i>The Passing of Pearl</i>
V	IA	Newton Community Theatre	Newton	<i>Godspell</i>
V	IA	Theatre Cedar Rapids	Cedar Rapids	<i>Horatio's Purgatory</i>
V	KS	Salina Community Theatre	Salina	<i>The Dixie Swim Club</i>
V	MN	County Seat Theater Company	Cloquet	<i>Wiley and the Hairy Man</i>
V	MN	Fungus Amoungus Theatre Group	Cokato	<i>Toys for Men</i>
V	MN	Sweet Charities Theatre Company*	Minneapolis	<i>Glengarry Glen Ross</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>
V	SD	Aberdeen Community Theatre	Aberdeen	<i>Perfectly Normal and Healthy</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	OK	Broken Arrow Community Playhouse	Broken Arrow	<i>The Gin Game</i>
VI	OK	Ponca Playhouse	Ponca City	<i>Proof</i>
VI	TX	Bastrop Opera House	Bastrop	<i>Souvenir</i>
VI	TX	Ohlook Performing Arts Center	Grapevine	<i>Dog Sees God</i>
VII	CO	Coal Creek Theatre	Louisville	<i>Senior Moments</i>
VII	CO	Evergreen Players	Evergreen	<i>Parallel Lives</i>
VII	CO	Gravity Defied Theatre*	Denver	<i>The Wild Party</i>
VII	MT	Grandstreet Theatre	Helena	<i>The Great American Trailer Park Musical</i>
VII	WY	Jackson Community Theatre	Jackson Hole	<i>Good Honest Food</i>
VIII	CA	Chino Community Theatre	Chino	<i>Check, Please!</i>
IX	WA	Spokane Civic Theatre	Spokane	<i>The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee</i>
X		Belgium SHAPE Players	Mons	<i>Hauptmann</i>

*Selected for the regional festival but chose not to advance

Boldface denotes company advancing to the National festival



The Best of All Possible Worlds

by Twink Lynch

I love the time of year when I know spring is coming. Each day my anticipation builds, because I know what's possible when temperatures mellow and April showers nourish the earth.

So since spring is here, and festivals are underway across the country, let's talk about possibilities – for our community theatre organizations and for us as leaders and potential leaders of our organizations.

We know from attending festivals that community theatres are capable of producing good, sometimes brilliant, work. We know organizations entering AACT/Fest, at least, are organized and creative and know how to raise enough money to get to festival.

But does festival participation tell the whole story? Is this all they're capable of? How many of them have developed a vision statement, spelling out what they want to become? Are community theatres consciously trying to live into their possibilities – or are they content to be only what they are now, ignoring the enormous potential of their members to grow and get better and move from "good" to "great."

I have recently read a wonderful book on leadership called *The Art of Possibility* by Benjamin and Rosamund Zander*. Ben is the Conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and his wife is a life coach and family therapist. Their basic thesis is that the job of a leader is to empower others to become all they can be – to fulfill their possibilities – and that leaders should never doubt the capacity of the people they lead to accomplish whatever they dream for them.

Unfortunately, many of us have perceived barriers to accomplishing our dreams. A major barrier is ignorance of what's possible. Another is what the Zanders call "the voice in the head," that whispers at auditions: "you aren't going to make it," or at a board meeting: "there's no point in you saying anything, they never listen to you anyway," or dozens of other putdowns which depress our efforts to live into our possibilities.

The Zanders also talk about downward spiral talk which is "a resigned way of speaking that excludes possibility." It's based on feeling that we can't change anything and things will just go from bad to worse. Have you been there when board members discuss the aging of our audience and how no one is coming along to fill their place, or how "the school

board will never provide transportation for kids to come to our theatre," or "the new performing arts center is going to steal our audience away."

The Zanders' advice is to recognize the downward spiral and "enroll people in the journey to radiating possibility.... Enrollment is the art and practice of generating a spark of possibility for others to share." One of my favorite concepts is their practice of "giving everyone an A." They developed this practice when Ben realized that his students at the New England Conservatory of Music were so tense, nervous and competitive, they were not performing up to their potential. So he told the students on the first day of class that each of them would get an A for the semester. All they had to do was write him a letter within 2 weeks as if it were the end of the semester and describe why they had deserved an A. He said his students became more relaxed, worked harder to build their skills, and developed greater self-esteem.

I wondered if giving an A could be done in a non-academic setting – and I remembered back when I was 11 years old I was writing puppet plays and creating the puppets and the scenery. My stage was a kitchen chair with no back, turned upside down so the legs could hold the scenery. The director of my neighborhood playground asked me to perform it for the younger children at the playground, which I did. Then she asked me if I could write a one-act play to enter in the city-wide one-act play contest. I did, she directed it, and we won! We did it again in my sophomore year of high school and again in my senior year, winning both times. I didn't know that she was "giving me an A" at the time, but she sure made me feel special by nurturing my writing talent and my passion for the theatre.

Can each of us give the people in our lives an A? Sure we can. Every time we notice a volunteer and encourage him or her to be part of our theatre operation, every time we give someone a responsibility just a tad more than they've ever had before, every time we ask someone's opinion and really listen to it and let it affect our thinking, every time we respect another person's effort, even if it isn't the way we would have done it, we are giving people an A.

Why is this important? Because when people feel accepted and respected, when they are listened to and feel they are cared about, they are more likely to be able to tap into their

own potential. Remember Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – people need to feel safe before they can work on belonging needs, and they need to fulfill their belonging needs before they can work on their esteem or achievement needs.

If our people are fulfilling their potential, then our theatres will fulfill their potential. The responsibility for creating an environment in which people can fulfill their potential belongs to each one of us. Each of us can exert leadership from wherever we are in the organization by giving others an A, by being watchful for downward spirals, and also by not taking our own selves too seriously, which is the Zanders' "first rule of leadership" or "Rule #6."

Taking ourselves too seriously is a sign that we feel entitled to be demanding of others. This can get in the way of leadership, especially if we feel everyone has to do things our way. Ben Zander pointed out that, although he is a conductor, all his power is in the hands of his musicians. Wouldn't this also be true of directors, administrators, presidents and crew chiefs? Can we give our volunteers and staff members an A and really listen to their input? Can we remember Rule #6 and "lighten up?"

Frankly, I don't see how we can develop the potential of our community theatres unless we believe something better is possible. I think some theatres are stuck where they are because they've never seen a community theatre do brilliant work. They think what they are doing is "true community

theatre," not very good, but hopefully not awful. They've never attended, let alone entered, a festival. They don't come to state, regional or national meetings. They haven't found articles or books that might raise their aspirations.

Other groups may want to grow but just don't see how to do it. They are enmeshed in downward spiral thinking and cannot see the radiating possibilities in their constituents. No one gives anyone an "A" and everyone violates Rule #6.

So I want us to develop the possibilities – in ourselves and in our theatre programs. At the risk of violating Rule #6 myself, I want everyone to be sure your theatre has a vision statement. And, while you're at it, why not develop a vision statement for yourselves? Wouldn't that be the best of all possible worlds?

*Order *The Art of Possibility* by Benjamin and Rosamund Zander from the AACT online bookstore at www.aact.org/bookstore.

Reprinted from *Spotlight*, June 2003

Twink Lynch wrote a regular column on boardmanship for *Spotlight* for many years. Her early articles are compiled into a still-relevant book for *Boards: Boards in the Spotlight*. See how to order below.

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July 30	Oklahoma Community Theatre Assn OCTA Summer Conference and Awards Luncheon	OK Oklahoma City	405-236-0788 www.oktheatre.org
August 3-6	Colorado Community Theatre Coalition 2011 CCTC Festival	CO Salida	740-207-0384 www.cctcfestival.com/

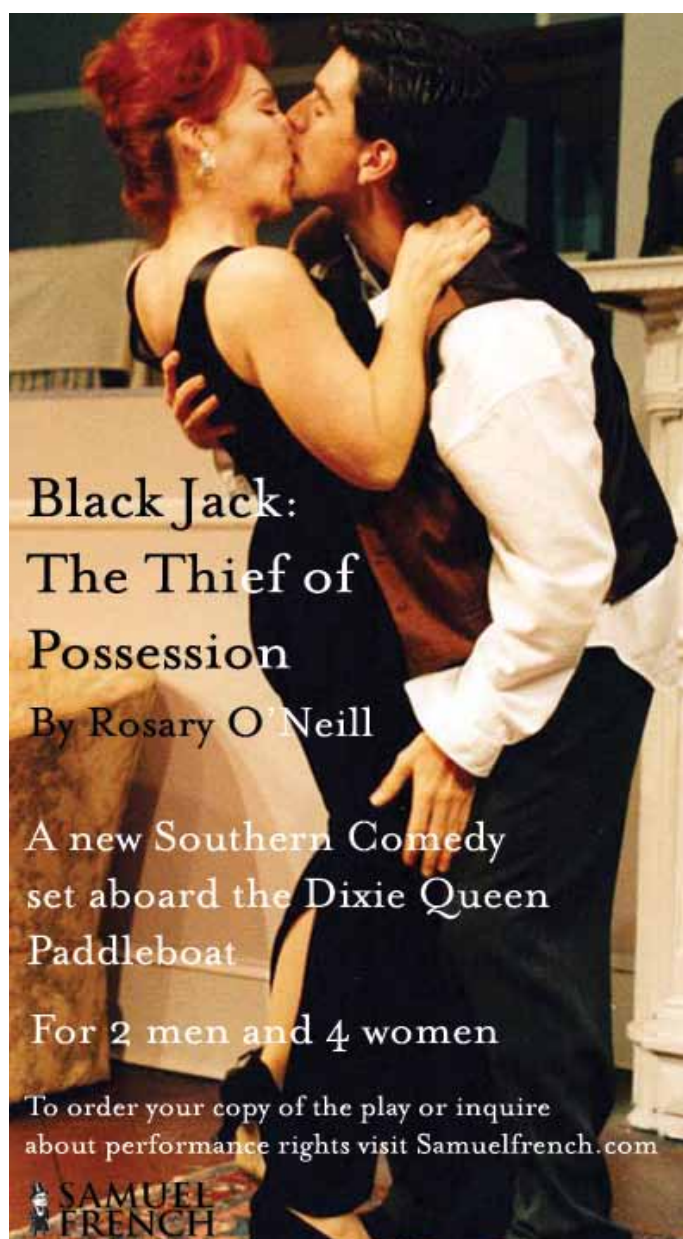
For dates farther ahead, check the website: www.aact2.org

New Roles

Vickie Brokke has been named President and Chief Executive Officer at **Topeka Civic Theatre & Academy**. Vickie succeeds **Carole Ries**, who announced her retirement last year. Vickie brings more than 15 years of not-for-profit management to the position. She served as Topeka United Way's vice president of resource development and was also an independent management consultant assisting associations and nonprofits with interim executive transition services, convention planning, organization evaluation and strategic plan development. She is in charge of the day-to-day leadership of TCTA's staff and works with the TCTA board and supporters in the community. She began her position in February.

The Geyer Theater in Scottsdale, PA has hired **Kristen Tunney** as the theatre's new manager, with grant support from the Marilyn K. Keifer Foundation. Kristen is a Pennsylvania State University graduate with a BA in Film/Video with a Thesis in Media Studies. She has been actively involved in community theatre since 2001 and has performed in over 40 productions, primarily for The Geyer Theatre. She began her new duties in April.

Appalachian State University in Boone, NC announced that it has selected **Keith T. Martin** to join its faculty in a newly created position as the John M. Blackburn Distinguished Professor of Theatre. Keith has both a BFA and MFA in communications and theatre from UNC Greensboro. He served as managing director of Richmond Ballet since 2005 and has a 35-year career in the not-for-profit sector that includes producing, artistic direction, choreography and management in professional theatre, dance, opera, symphony, film and television, for which he received an Emmy® award in 2010. He has held the positions of producer/managing director of Charlotte Repertory Theatre, registered lobbyist/legislative strategist for Arts North Carolina and visiting professor at Davidson College, and has a long time association with AACT. He will begin his new duties this summer. ♦



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This Man Is An Island, by Sapperstein & Murway



DRAMA

CAST SIZE: 12

LENGTH: 1 hour, 15 minutes
(not including intermission)

The Island of Herensia has been in Miguel Gutierrez's family since the late 1400's, and Miguel is the heir apparent. His parents were killed in a small plane accident when he was very young, and he was raised by his Grandfather.

Living in the US, Miguel Gutierrez is suddenly called home to his island birthplace. Anxious, he assumes that his beloved Grandfather may be ill...or worse! But, he is totally taken by surprise when it is his Grandfather that greets him, in fine health.

It is revealed to him that his parent's death was, in fact, no accident, and the sinister Kofi Luma and his son, Vega, intend to murder Miguel before he has a chance to produce the next heir, thus ending the

family dynasty so that they can take over and rule the Island themselves.

In the course of things, Miguel reveals a surprise of his own. He is in love with the lovely "Naya", and they plan to be wed. Naya's father is Grandfather's most trusted ally and employee. Her Grandmother is the long time cook, housekeeper, and Voo Doo Priestess, or so she thinks.

The story culminates at the wedding where the Luma's plan to explode a bomb and destroy the whole family, but the plot is foiled by the clever character known as "Gotu", and it is the villains who are destroyed instead.

In the end the Island inhabitants celebrate the fact that the Island's heir is wed to the descendent of the slaves that built it many years ago and, as a result, there can no longer be any separation or discrimination of its peoples. And, Gotu reveals the final surprise.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Ralph Maffongelli
215-485-8591
Ralph@JandGunlimited.com

J&G UNLIMITED, LLC.
Bucks County, Pennsylvania

<http://www.JandGunlimited.com>

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