

spotlight

July/August 2015 \$2.50

american association of community theatre

Visit the NEW aact.org

The screenshot shows the AACT website homepage with a green header containing 'SIGN IN' and 'SEARCH' buttons. The main content area features the AACT logo and a navigation menu: Home, Making Theatre, Festivals & Events, Networking, About AACT, STORE, JOIN, and DONATE. A 'Welcome to AACT' section includes a paragraph about the organization's mission and a 'Join Now!' button. Below this is a large banner titled 'Welcome to AACT's New Website!' with the subtitle 'Your source for networking, resources, & support'. The banner text describes the site's features and AACT's role in representing over 7,000 community theatres. A 'More Info' button is located at the bottom of the banner. The footer contains four icons and their corresponding descriptions: 'Making Theatre' (lightning bolt icon), 'Festivals & Events' (calendar icon), 'Networking' (people icon), and 'About AACT' (gear icon).

aact
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OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

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We're America's national community theatre organization, providing expertise, assistance, networking & support to help our theatres create the best possible experience—for participants & audiences alike. [News & Updates](#) [Join Now!](#)

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Leonard Diamond
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Gary Walker
AACT President
2013-2015

Is the theatre dead?

It is an age-old question I have heard since I was in the 4th grade and landed the role of a judge in the school play – complete with powdered hair to look as grey as my hair is now.

I am older, more experienced and ready now, to bring all my knowledge and skills to answer that question. There will be charts and statistics and all the analysis my education has equipped me with to consider my response.

But as I write this, it is a chaotic evening. Baltimore is burning as questions of race and government play out in the streets; people are digging with their hands to find their loved ones buried in the rubble that was Kathmandu; the Supreme Court will hear arguments tomorrow to decide if people are less equal because of who they love; and a jury in Colorado is deciding if shooting a theatre full of people is crazy enough to spare the shooter from a death sentence.

And I sit pondering whether the theatre is dead.

Those of us who work in the theatre tell stories and expose truths and raise questions that are often hard, if not impossible, to answer. On stage, we examine the state of the world and our neighbors and ourselves and at the same time we try to entertain, inform and amuse. The theatre has always asked questions and exposed hard truths about people of many races, beliefs, cultures

and sexual orientations. Different is the blood that flows through theatre's veins.

But it is not just the stories that theatre tells, but the intimacy of the experience. In big cities and small towns, we raise these questions for audiences to ponder. We reach out to people in palaces of technology with amazing sets and skilled artists, but also in multipurpose rooms with a few props and amateurs filled with perhaps more passion than skill.

We reach out to the audience, one person at a time.

I don't know the answers for the struggles in Baltimore. I can't fathom the loss in Nepal. I'm not wise enough to tackle what makes a person equal or less equal. Random killing is a total mystery to me. I am at a loss to deal with so many struggles of the world today.

So is the theatre dead? I've come to realize the answer to that question requires no analysis or statistics.

As long as people struggle and care, we will be there to focus on their questions and reflect on their struggles.

The theatre is very much alive.

Gary Walker

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TEN MINUTE PLAY PACKS
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

PHOTO: TALLEY O'MALLEY, THE UNLUCKY LEPRECHAUN BY KATE GUYTON
ONSTAGE ATLANTA, ATLANTA, GA

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Contacting AACT

AACT
1300 Gendy Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-732-3177
(toll free) 866-OurAACT (687-2228)
info@aact.org

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

On the Cover

The homepage for the new aact.org



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Powerful, Intense, Critically Acclaimed Dramas by

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—*The New York Times*

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“*Luna Gale* packs quite the punch—lies predominantly in its intensely sympathetic portrayal of the social worker whose job it is to figure out Luna’s fate.” —*Chicago Tribune*



Caroline, a veteran social worker, thinks she has a typical case on her hands when she meets Peter and Karlie, two teenage drug addicts accused of neglecting their baby. But when she places their infant daughter in the care of Karlie’s mother, Caroline sparks a family conflict that exposes a shadowy, secretive past—and forces her to make a risky decision with potentially disastrous consequences.

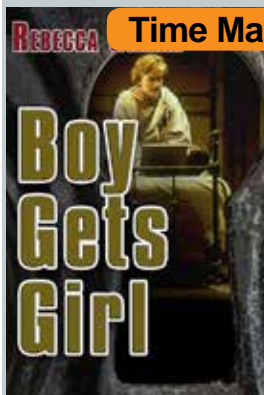


“[Gilman is] dealing with how we define one another, measure success and failure, raise celebrities up and tear them down, and create different personas to cope with all the craziness of having a public identity.”
—*Boston Globe*

The Glory of Living

A finalist for the 2002
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“Viscerally powerful ... Plays don’t come much tougher, or more compassionate, than ... Rebecca Gilman’s *The Glory of Living*.”
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August 21-22	August 28-29
Charlotte, NC	Tacoma, WA

AACT Election Results**President**

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Spotlight

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Content and resource contributions:
Susan Austin, Elizabeth Claassen,
David Cockerell, Jim Covault, Julie Crawford,
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Rich Gannon, Kyle Hadley, Beverley Lord,
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Jill Patchin, Stephen Peithman, Natalie Smigel,
Ken Roberts, Gary Walker, Ron Ziegler

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Insurance Program**

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



For more information,
contact:
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kenneth.roberts@usi.biz

Workers Compensation: Where Are the Insurance Programs?



by Ken Roberts

Not many of our theatre members have employees on payroll, but those that do are often required by the laws in their states to purchase workers compensation insurance. As most, if not all, have discovered, the appetite among insurance companies for insuring theatre employees is extremely limited, if it exists at all. There are many reasons for this, and those reasons are preventing any kind of national program for workers compensation insurance.

First and foremost, while the basic structure of any workers compensation policy is mandated and regulated by the Federal Government, every state has its own set of rules and statutes that

The rules governing who is required to purchase workers compensation insurance vary greatly from state to state.

shape the rates, classification codes and even claims handling, and no two states' statutes are exactly alike. Any insurance company wanting to write coverage in all 50 states would have a tough time keeping up with all of the various rates and rules that are constantly changing at the whims of those states' departments of insurance. And that's assuming that it would even be legal for a private insurance company to write coverage in all 50 states. There are currently four

monopolistic states where private insurers are not allowed to sell workers compensation insurance. Employers in Ohio, North Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming have no choice but to purchase workers compensation insurance from their state funds, as private insurance companies are prohibited from selling it.

Secondly, the rules governing who is required to purchase workers compensation insurance vary greatly from state to state. In most states, the rules are clear – if you have any payroll, regardless of how much or how little, you are required to have workers compensation. Those are the *mandatory* states. However, there are currently two states where workers compensation coverage is *elective*, meaning employers can choose whether or not they want to insure their legal liability for employee injuries. In Texas and Oklahoma, employers are no less liable for employee injuries, but they can choose to pay for those out-of-pocket rather than purchase insurance. Bear in mind, those employers are also responsible for paying lost wages in addition to any medical expenses, so a serious injury that is uninsured can bankrupt an organization.

Finally, the classification codes for theatres are prohibited classes in most states for many mainstream insurance companies who regularly write workers compensation. Just because a private insurance company readily writes coverage in your state, doesn't mean that they will write coverage for a community theatre. More often than not, theatres have no choice but to purchase coverage from the state workers compensation fund in their state, which is often the coverage of last resort when it is unavailable elsewhere.

It's not hard to see why there is yet no national program that provides workers compensation for community theatres. It will prove to be a Herculean task for whichever company attempts to tackle it first, but we'll keep hoping. ♦

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FROM THE ACCLAIMED AUTHOR OF

Three political power brokers lock horns in a battle of manipulation and political intrigue. As charges escalate and the battle swerves in unexpected directions, these women serve up blackmail, power plays, and plenty of media spin. In other words, politics as usual!

3F | 80 Minutes



"A tight drama, cleverly constructed!"
—*New York Theatre Wire*

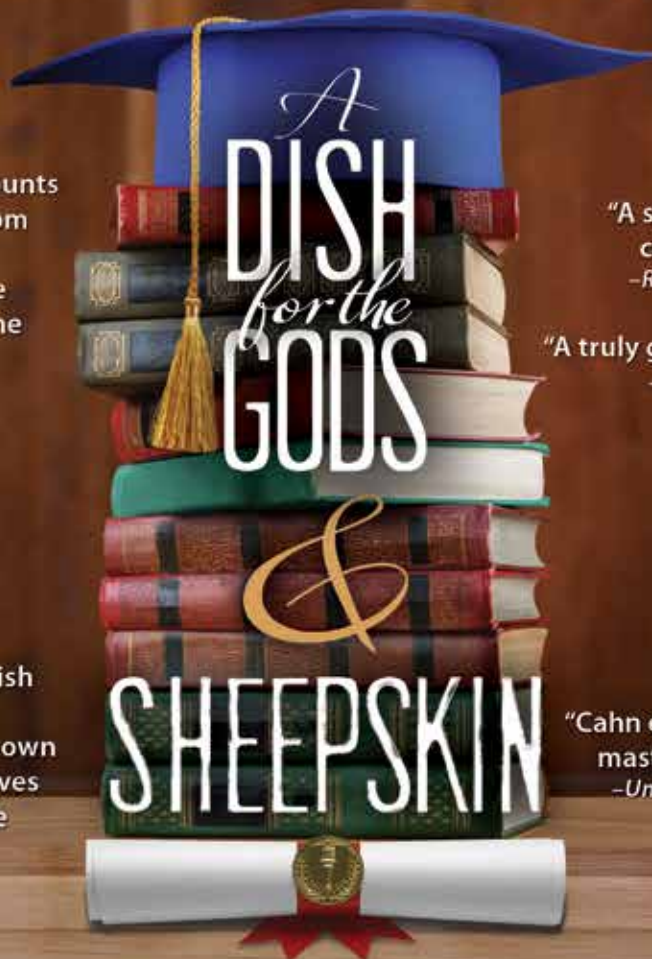
"Cahn has created three highly intelligent and articulate women. A fun evening of contemporary political blackmail."
—*Show Business*

"A brilliant piece of writing!"
—*BlogTalkRadio.com*

TWO PLAYS ABOUT ACADEMIC LIFE:

A celebrated author recounts memorable moments from her surprising life: the challenges she faced, the choices she made, and the singular man she loved.

1F, 1M | 75 Minutes



"A strong love letter to complex women."
—*Reviews Off Broadway*

"A truly gripping, excellent play."
—*andybsports.com*

A male professor of English manipulates a female graduate student for his own amusement, but she proves more resourceful than he expected.

1F, 1M | 90 Minutes

"Cahn establishes himself as a master of black comedy."
—*United Press International*

BY VICTOR L. CAHN

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Have You Seen AACT's New Website?

AACT has a totally new website. It combines the features, programs, and resources of the old aact.org, aact2.org, and aactfest.org into one completely reimagined and easy-to-use site, located at aact.org. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out! Be sure to visit the tips for signing in and navigating at aact.org/welcome.

AACT's web history is long

AACT has had an online presence since 1996 when its first website launched at aact.org under the direction of webmaster Stephen Peithman (who is still our webmaster). As AACT grew and AACT programs increased, sections and even ancillary domains (web addresses) were added. Despite efforts to mesh the various parts and domains, the more places there were to look, the harder it was for members to find what they needed.

The road to a new site seemed longer

In 2012, the AACT Board included redesigning the website in the Strategic Plan for 2012-15 and assigned the project to the Electronic Communications Committee. A totally new site was researched and proposed by committee member Scott Bloom. (Scott's background and living are in information technology, and he also creates and manages websites for theatres in Maryland.) He laid the groundwork, hired developers, and work on AACT's new site began in earnest in the summer of 2013. However, it soon became obvious to Scott that the project was multi-layered and complex.

In spring 2014, Executive Director Julie Crawford appointed a Website Team to push the project forward. Scott Bloom, Stephen Peithman, Julie Crawford, and AACT Marketing/Communications Director David Cockerell met almost weekly for over a year to develop the look, navigation, and features of the site. They also had the job of communicating AACT's needs to and overseeing the work

of the outside development company that would do the necessary programming.

Thus, AACT's new site would be built from scratch to meet AACT's unique needs. During the planning period, those needed features—such as member profiles and event registration—took two pages to list.

Drupal was selected as the content management platform to power the site, with data management handled by CiviCRM software. Drupal is extremely powerful, but very little comes “out of the box.” Almost every process has to be built—and it has to communicate with CiviCRM.

The work became so complex that in late 2014, AACT changed developers, hiring an Austin firm, Favish, that specializes in Drupal. They did excellent work, and we thank Michael Favia and his team for their expertise and fabulous customer support.



AACT's new site is awesome

The new AACT site launched with over 200 pages of content, plus numerous links to additional resources. It is fully responsive to adapting to various size devices, from desktops to tablets to smart phones. It also has built-in accessibility for those with special needs. Visitors can join AACT (or simply become website participants), register for events, make purchases from the AACT Store, and learn about AACT's many program opportunities. Members and organizational contacts can update their profiles, search for other

members and member theatres, then visit their profiles to learn more about them, and access other members-only areas of the site. And that's just for starters.

If you haven't already, now's the time to begin exploring the great resources on aact.org. We think you'll be impressed. ♦

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AACTFest 2015 National Companies

AACTFest 2015, the National Community Theatre Festival, will present twelve winning productions at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre this June. Profiles of six of the AACTFest 2015 National Companies are featured here; the additional six were featured in the May/June 2015 issue of *Spotlight*.



Region II

Rochester's Black Sheep Theatre

Rochester, New York

Feeding the Moonfish by Barbara Wiechmann

The edge of a saltwater lake. A young man who talks to fish. A curious teenage girl obsessed by his private ritual. This story explores the influence of natural forces, significance of memory, and power of human connection to weave a supernatural tale of loneliness and violence, yet filled with hope.

Rochester's Black Sheep Theatre is a coalition of artists promoting community awareness and education through the



performing arts. Located in the historic Neighborhood of the Arts, the group produces several productions each season, with emphasis on new and emerging playwrights and works of an interactive, innovative, or unusually creative nature.



Region III

Elkhart Civic Theatre

Bristol, Indiana

The 39 Steps adapted by Patrick Barlow
from an original concept by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon

Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python, and you have *The 39 Steps*, a fast-paced whodunit for anyone who loves the magic of theatre.

For more than 60 years, Elkhart Civic Theatre has been performing a wide variety of theatrical entertainment in Elkhart County, Indiana. From small beginnings as the Elkhart Little Theatre in the late 1940s, presenting one or two plays a year in borrowed or rented facilities, the organization has grown to a



full-fledged arts organization. Today, Elkhart Civic Theatre owns and operates the Bristol Opera House, a 100-year-old theatre in Bristol, Indiana, where it performs the bulk of its productions. Elkhart Civic Theatre produces a six-show season along with two youth theatre productions and other special events throughout its season.



Region III

Kokomo Civic Theatre

Kokomo, Indiana



Freud's Last Session by Mark St. Germain

On the eve of World War II, Sigmund Freud invites the writer and former atheist, C.S. Lewis to his home in London. Freud is irascible and highly opinionated; Lewis, sunny, warm, and unflappable. They debate religion, love, and the meaning of life, just weeks before Freud took his own life.

Kokomo Civic Theatre was established in 1949 in the central Indiana community of Kokomo, approximately fifty miles north of Indianapolis. Kokomo Civic Theatre produces a four to five show season of musicals, comedies, and dramas, primarily




at Havens Auditorium on the campus of Indiana University Kokomo. Kokomo Civic Theatre occasionally offers cabaret or dinner theatre productions in other venues. In addition, Kokomo Civic Theatre offers free acting classes for the community. In recent years, Kokomo Civic Theatre has twice hosted the Indiana Community Theatre Association State Festival. This is Kokomo Civic Theatre's first appearance in a national competition.

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Lyrics by Kirsten Brandt, Haddon Kime & Rick Lombardo

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"A FAIRY-TALE THAT ROCKS!"
–*The New York Times*



Region V

**Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/
FungusAmongus Players**

Dassel-Cokato, Minnesota

The Romancers by Edmond Rostand

Separated by their fathers' mutual hatred - and a wall - two young lovers strive to fulfill a forbidden romance, a la Romeo & Juliet or Pyramus & Thisbe. This play, written by the author of *Cyrano de Bergerac* is the prototype for the popular musical, *The Fantasticks*.

This company from rural Dassel-Cokato, Minnesota is housed in a venue listed on the National Registry of Historic Buildings. Now renovated and repurposed as museum and History Center, it was formerly an ergot processing plant. (Ergot is a fungus, which grows on rye, used in pharmaceuticals - hence the name



"FungusAmongus".) This unique building is the site for one small-scale theatre production per season: in recent years, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Diviners*, and *The Foreigner*. A larger summer musical - such as *Seussical* and most recently *Les Miserables* - is performed yearly at Dassel-Cokato High School's Performing Arts Center.



Region VI

**The Lantern Theatre/
Conway Community Arts Association**

Conway, Arkansas

God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza
translated by Christopher Hampton

After an altercation between two eleven-year-olds in a park, the parents meet to discuss their children's behavior. Despite all their best efforts, it becomes apparent the grown ups have not "mastered the art of coexistence," and the parents become more childish than their children.

The Lantern Theatre/Conway Community Arts Association began over forty years ago and continues to contribute to the



artistic culture of the community through unique and engaging theatrical experiences. The Lantern Theatre/Conway Community Arts Association is a vital part of Central Arkansas, seeking to integrate traditional and progressive values into the drama scene of our region and striving to make theatre relevant, entertaining, and exciting to all.



Region VIII

The New Group West

Cardiff, California

I Am My Own Wife by Doug Wright

The Pulitzer and Tony award winning play is based on the true story of Charlotte von Malsdorf, a real-life German transgender who managed to survive the Nazi and the East German Communist regime in a pair of heels. Based on Wright's interviews with Charlotte, a vivid portrayal of her life by one actor enacting 35 roles, it challenges the audience with questions of identity and integrity.

The New Group West was formed in January 2014 by Mark Zweifach, James P Darvas, and Elaine Litton out of their passion for theatre that provokes and raises emotional consciousness and the inspiration forged by Doug Wright's *I Am My Own Wife*.



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- American Eagle News

"Superb!"
- The 10 News

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Winning Plays of AACT NewPlayFest Announced

AACT NewPlayFest 2016 has selected the winning scripts that will be produced at the selected Producing Theatres. Productions will be between July 2015 and December 2016. Look for profiles of the Winning Playwrights and Producing Theatres, and dates of performances in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

In addition to the full productions, Dramatic Publishing Company publishes the winning plays in an anthology. The first anthology, *AACT NewPlayFest Winning Plays: Volume 1 (2014)*, with plays by Cece Dwyer, Paul Elliott, Jim Henry, Nedra Pezold Roberts, Barry Weinberg and Bo Wilson, is now available from the publisher's website: dramaticpublishing.com

Congratulations to the AACT NewPlayFest 2016 winners!

Lighthouse by William Baer will be produced by Windsor Community Playhouse, Windsor, Colorado

Gracefully Ending by Anthony DeLauder will be produced by Theatre Arlington, Arlington, Texas

Get Out of Dodge by Jeanne Drennan will be produced by Omaha Community Playhouse, Omaha, Nebraska

The Emperor of North America by Thomas Hischak will be produced by Silver Spring Stage, Silver Spring, Maryland

Shades of Valor by Karen L. Lewis to be produced by Twin City Stage, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Laguna Beach, Ohio by Malcolm MacDonald will be produced by Stage Right Productions/2nd Street Theatre, Bend, Oregon

Wash, Dry, Fold by Nedra Pezold Roberts will be produced by Chicago Street Theatre/Community Theatre Guild, Inc., Valparaiso, Indiana

The finalists for AACT NewPlayFest 2016 also included:

Alceste's Return by Dr. Andrew Vorder Bruegge

Community by Nancy Beverly

In the Shadow of his Language by Jacob Juntunen

Jesus in Gray by Ariadne Blayde

Keepers by Chris Widney

The Night We Bombed Lincolnville Towing by Steven Young

Where the Hell Am I? by Norman Simina

Spotlight Award Goes to Glenn Fournier

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.

Mansfield Music and Arts Society (MMAS) Black Box Theater in Mansfield, MA, honored **Glenn Fournier** with the coveted Spotlight Award on March 6, 2015, at the theatre's annual Gala. Glenn was recognized for his invaluable contribution to MMAS as Scenic Art Director, Board Member, and Gallery Curator. Beverly Lord, AACT Region I Representative, made the award presentation, and Ken Butler, MMAS's Founder and Executive Director, was on board to congratulate Glenn.

Glenn became involved with MMAS in 1999, when he volunteered to help work on production sets. He had always loved to paint and decorate, so he felt that he could be of service to the theatre. That was just the beginning!

Over the years, Glenn developed professional skills in faux painting, wall treatments, and floor design. He can transform any stage floor from its original surface, to wood, stone, tile or marble with the stroke of a brush! MMAS' audiences marvel at the life-like scenic treatments that have become the theatre's signature.

Glenn has served on the MMAS Board of Directors since 2004. When the board made the move to acquire more space, he led a campaign that raised \$20,000 for the naming rights of a new gallery, now the Morini Gallery, of which Glenn is Curator.

There is another interesting aspect of Glenn Fournier's history with Mansfield Music and Arts Society Black Box Theater. The building it calls home was once a family supermarket, the Morini Market, owned by Glenn's great grandparents, strong supporters of the arts! ♦



Ken Butler, Founder and Executive/Artistic Director of Mansfield Music and Arts Society (MMAS) is on deck to congratulate Glenn Fournier as Bevie Lord, AACT Region I (New England) Rep presents him with a coveted Spotlight Award for his invaluable contribution to community theatre as Gallery Curator, Scenic Art Director, and Board Member of MMAS at their Annual Gala, March 6, 2015.

New Regional Reps

The AACT Board of Directors welcomes two new Regional Representatives.



Lucinda Lawrence

Lucinda Lawrence is the new Region III Representative. Lucinda was a student worker in the University of Illinois Music Library and accompanist in the Dance Department when she was first published – in a Hal Leonard collection of solos for tuba that is still widely used more than 35 years later. She has taught in the Departments of Dance at the Universities of Illinois and Michigan, then provided some “glorified go-fer” work in the University of Illinois School of Music, and eventually served there as Band Librarian 1995-2012. In retirement,

she pursues additional composing and arranging, as well as learning the ropes of marketing for her works and for other literary works of her collaborating writing partner Robert Picklesimer. She and her husband, Bob Hart, have two adult children not living at home, and all the pets have moved on as well.




Larry D. Fisher

Larry D. Fisher is the new Region VI Representative. Larry grew up in Southwestern Michigan where he went to a three-room school where he began his lifelong love of theatre, appearing in the school’s annual Christmas pageant. He continued his love for theatre in High School and throughout his military service. Larry has a BA degree in Criminal Justice and Business Management. He is a past president of the Las Cruces (NM) Community Theatre and is currently in his second term as President of Theatre New

Mexico. He has hosted state festivals and most recently the AACTFest 2015 Region VI Festival in Albuquerque, NM. Larry is married to Jacki; they have two children and two grandchildren. The Fishers reside in Las Cruces, NM. ♦

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Open to anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for their theatre's educational programs. Share materials, exchange ideas, and tackle theatre education issues guided by an experienced education director.

August 21-22 in Charlotte, NC

Facilitated by Sandy Davisson, Director of Education/Outreach at Venice (FL) Theatre.

August 28-29 in Tacoma, WA

Facilitated by Chris Serface, Managing Director at Tacoma (WA) Little Theatre.

Artistic Directors Conferences

Choose the right plays for your next season; learn solutions for choosing directors, recruiting actors, and solving technical problems; and examine long-range planning.

Open to anyone, whatever his or her title, who is responsible for the artistic direction of their theatre. Roundtable discussions will address hot topics chosen in advance by the participants.

August 21-22 in Charlotte, NC

Facilitated by Rick Kerby, Producing Artistic Director of Manatee Players in Brandon, FL.

August 28-29 in Tacoma, WA

Facilitated by Keith Dixon, Artistic Director of Spokane (WA) Civic Theatre.

Details at aact.org/conf or 866-OurAACT

Arts Advocacy Day 2015

Representatives of America's cultural and civic organizations attended the 28th annual Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. on March 24. The 550 grassroots advocates representing 48 states met with members of the U.S. Congress to encourage the promotion and support of the arts. The message of the day was simple: every American should have access to the arts.

Arts Advocacy Day was organized by Americans for the Arts along with 85 national organizations working on behalf of the arts in America. AACT was once again a co-sponsor of this important national event. Representing AACT at Arts Advocacy Day 2015 were AACT Board Member/ Region III Representative Joanne Berry and AACT Marketing/Communications Director David Cockerell.

Participants urged members of the U.S. Congress to support a budget of \$155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts in the 2016 Fiscal Year in an effort to preserve citizen access to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of the arts and to advance creativity and innovation in communities across the United States.

On the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, it was stressed how the arts are a powerful economic engine that provides a return on investment for taxpayers rarely seen in other industries.

The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$135.2 billion in economic activity and supports 4.13 million full-time jobs. For every dollar the United States spends on federal arts initiatives, nine non-federal dollars are leveraged, generating roughly \$600 million in matching support. Last year's federal arts appropriation was \$146 million, but the industry returned \$9.59 billion to the federal government in income taxes.

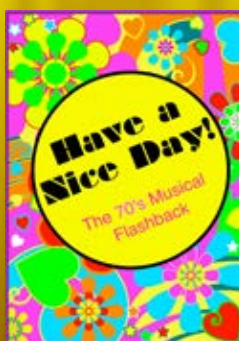
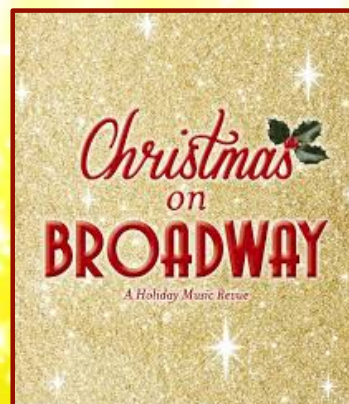


Dr. Jane Chu, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, visits with AACT Marketing/Communications Director David Cockerell at Arts Advocacy Day 2015

The 28th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts & Public Policy preceded Arts Advocacy Day on Monday evening at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. Groundbreaking TV producer, author, and social activist Norman Lear gave a moving lecture to a sold-out crowd. The lecture included an introduction by Grammy, Oscar, and Golden Globe award-winning artist Common and inspiring musical performances by the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra. Mr. Lear stated, "I truly believe that the shared experiences we have when viewing art – like how we feel when we hear a great piece of music and look around to see everyone feeling the same way – will provide the pathway for leading us out of our spiritual, political desert. But that art will not flourish, and those experiences will wither, without the support our government

and we as individuals provide." The full lecture can be viewed on the Americans for the Arts website, americansforthearts.org. ♦

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Keeping Your Audience Safe

by Stephen Peithman

Audience safety is of most concern at intermissions and after the show, when hundreds of people want to go to the same place at the same time. They are also talking to each other about the show (we hope!) and may not always be watching where they walk.

Therefore, one of the best safety measures is to improve traffic flow and to make sure your audience has sufficient time during intermission. Have clear signage for directions. Use ushers to give directions and assistance.

Exit halls and stairs must be well-marked and well-lighted. They cannot house folding chairs, coat racks or technicians' bicycles.

A typical intermission problem is refreshment and concession stands, which often are understaffed and too close together. If your lobby space permits, consider the use of several refreshment islands located far apart. Staff them with enough people to serve everyone during the first two-thirds of the intermission. That will give patrons time to finish their refreshments without hurrying. Then workers can spend the last third collecting cups or glasses while the audience returns to its seats at a casual pace. Be sure

sufficient waste containers are present and located near, but not obstructing the audience route.

These containers should be removed before the final curtain, when the audience makes its mass exodus.

Also remember that although the emergency exit paths may never be used, most state laws require they be checked within an hour before the house is opened for every performance. Some organizations require that a staff member inspect every exit path all the way to the street and report to the house manager before the house is opened. Any blockage that requires correction should be noted in the house manager's daily report, so it can be taken care of before the next performance.

(This is the same thing the stage manager does for the backstage areas. Although backstage emergency exits may not be intended for public use, the law generally requires they be treated the same. They are not spaces to store half-empty paint buckets, fake muskets for Act II, or semi-retired directors.)

Exit halls and stairs must be well-marked and well-lighted. They cannot house folding chairs, coat racks, or technicians' bicycles. Anything loose can be knocked down and fallen over. Such passages also must be free of any combustible matter such as costumes, extra stage draperies, unused decorations, stored paper products, and old programs.

In many cases, the exit path leads down a fireproof stairwell



Hilarious Comedy Plays!

How To Train Your Husband

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

Three generations of the Smith family attempt to turn their men into fully trained and obedient husbands. Nothing quite goes according to plan and the result is hilarious comedy with plenty of unexpected twists and turns.

My In-laws are Outlaws!

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male **Length:** Two Acts

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

The Old People Are Revolting!

Cast: 5 Female, 2 Male

Length: Two Acts

Hilarious comedy about seniors seeking revenge! The residents of the Sunshine Retirement Village have had enough: they're revolting! Bursting with eccentric characters and crazy shenanigans the play is great fun to stage and a huge audience pleaser.



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or corridor. All doors that open into these passages must be equipped with “panic bars” with latches and automatic door closers that prevent air pressure of a fire from blowing doors open and filling the exits with smoke and toxic fumes. *Never allow workers to prop those doors open with stage weights or to tape down the latches.*



Note that you don't have to have a catastrophe in order to have a serious injury and consequent legal problems. A single patron who chooses to use the emergency exit for any reason must have a clear passage to the street. One stumble over a backstage broom that shouldn't have been there will leave your company liable for medical bills and a host of other expenses - possibly including fines for obstructing the passageway. Post signs that inform all workers that these exit passages must remain clear; mark the path with industrial marking tape. Be sure the passages have emergency lights in case of a power failure and test them to make sure they work.

Look outside as well. Exterior emergency exits should have a clear eight-foot space beyond the door opening.

Remember that all doors through the proscenium wall are supposed to be fireproof. They should have automatic closers and latches like those on emergency stairways. Again, do not allow workers to prop open these doors with stage weights or other objects, or tape down the latches. Doorways through the proscenium that have only a drapery covering are strictly illegal; they won't block fire or smoke and are easily pulled down and become a trip hazard when many people try to make a hasty exit.

Look outside as well. Exterior emergency exits should have a clear eight-foot space beyond the door opening. Do not allow unused scenery, trash cans, dumpsters, or parked cars to infringe on this space.

If the exit path includes a fire escape, check it by following it all the way to the ground. If the lowest section of the escape descends mechanically, check to confirm it is not chained off, that it operates smoothly, and descends fully to the ground. Do not permit obstacles to impede its descent. Again, mark off the “clear area” below the escape with signs, paint, and industrial marking tape.

The last thing to do is to check all public areas before the lights are turned off and the doors are locked. Although it is rare, there have been cases where people have fallen asleep or fallen ill and then were locked in the building. (Thieves sometimes hide as well—always have two people check the facility.)

When you are confident that everyone has left the building, you can smile, lock up, and go home.

Stephen served as founding Editor of Stage Directions magazine, Principal Editor for the University of California, Davis, and Director of Community Relations for American River College. He has also been a community theatre actor, director, and company president. Since 1984 he has hosted a weekly radio program for Capital Public Radio in Sacramento, CA.

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MTI Continues AACT Member Benefit

Music Theatre International is continuing its AACT Member Discount through September 2017. "This is in response to the overwhelming popularity of the program and signifies MTI's ongoing commitment to American Community Theatre," said MTI Senior Operations Manager John Prignano.

The program has returned more than a half million dollars to AACT member theatres since its inception five years ago.

The program works like this:

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

The following stipulations apply:

1. To participate in the discount program, a theatre must be a current, paid AACT member for the year the production occurs.
2. AACT has created a group on MTI's website. Eligible participants must sign up and join the AACT

group at MTISHOWSPACE.com to be eligible for the discount.

3. 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 and August 31 of the given AACT member year.

5. The agreement is retroactive for productions that have occurred during the period of the agreement (that is, occurring earlier than the date of application, but during that member year). If a member theatre has already paid rental fees for the period covered by the agreement, the cost difference will be refunded. Note: Request for discounts for the prior member years' productions will not be honored.

6. Organizations applying for the discount must indicate on their paperwork if they are requesting it even if they have received the discount for a prior show.

7. Rental discount applies to standard rental fees only. ♦



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Thanks to AACTFest Hosts and Chairs

Thank You to AACTFest 2015 Regional Festival Hosts and Chairs

Region I

New England Theatre Conference
Warner Theatre
Torrington, CT
Chair: Ed Bassett

Region II

Eastern States Theater Association
Port Tobacco Players
La Plata, MD
Chair: Cynthia Johnson

Region III

Association of Region III
Center Stage - Midland Center for the Arts
Midland, MI
Chair: Emily Anderson

Region IV

Southeastern Theatre Conference
Chattanooga Theatre Centre
Chattanooga, TN
Chair: Lori C. Chase

Region V

Region V Association
Newton Community Theatre
Newton, IA
Chair: Sue Beukema

Region VI

Region VI Theatres
Theatre New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM
Chair: Larry D. Fisher

Region VIII

Arizona Community Theatre Association
Theatrikos Theatre Company
Flagstaff, AZ
Chair: Stan Sutherland

Region IX

Oregon Community Theatre Alliance
Gallery Players of Oregon
McMinville, OR
Chair: Carolyn McCloskey

Region X

Installation Management Command -
Europe Region Entertainment
KMC Onstage
Kaiserslautern, Germany
Chair: Dane Winters

Thank You to State Festival Hosts and Chairs

Region I

Maine

Maine Association of Community Theatre
Gardiner, ME
Chair: Joe Klapatch

Massachusetts

Eastern Massachusetts Association of
Community Theatres
Tewksbury, MA
Chair: Celia Couture

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Community Theatre
Association
Concord, NH
Chair: Jeff Caron

Connecticut

Connecticut Community Theatre Association
Warner Theatre
Torrington, CT
Chair: Sharon Wilcox

Region II

Delaware

Delaware Theatre Association
Milford 2nd Street Players
Milford, DE
Chair: Ruth K. Brown

Maryland

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

New York

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

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres
Gettysburg Community Theatre
Gettysburg, PA
Chair: Chad-Alan Carr

Region III

Indiana

Indiana Community Theatre Association
South Bend Civic Theatre
South Bend, IN
Chair: Steve Gergacz

Illinois

Illinois Theatre Association
Springfield Theatre Center/Hoogland Center
Springfield, IL
Chair: Richard Gannon

Michigan

Community Theatre Association of Michigan
Owosso Community Players
Owosso, MI
Chair: Cheri Ramirez

Ohio

Ohio Community Theatre Association
Perrysburg, OH
Chair: Joe Barton

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre
Baraboo Theatre Guild
Baraboo, WI
Chair: Jon Baker

Region IV

Alabama

Alabama Conference of Theatre
The Whole Backstage
Guntersville, AL
Chair: Kristy Meanor

Florida

Florida Theatre Conference
Gainesville, FL
Chair: Kristofer Geddie

Georgia

Georgia Theatre Conference
Columbus, GA
Chair: Melissa Sims

Kentucky

Kentucky Theatre Association
Richmond, KY
Chair: Ryan Briggs

Mississippi

Mississippi Theatre Association
Oxford, MS
Chair: Stephen Cunetto

South Carolina

South Carolina Theatre Association
Aiken Community Playhouse
Aiken, SC
Chair: Anita Sleeman

Tennessee

Tennessee Theatre Association
Maryville, TN
Chair: Barry Wallace

Virginia

Virginia Theatre Association
Norfolk, VA
Chair: Matthew Armentrout

West Virginia

West Virginia Theatre Conference
Bridgeport, WV
Chair: Vickie Trickett

Region V

Iowa

Iowa Community Theatre Association
Waterloo Community Playhouse/
Black Hawk Children's Theatre
Waterloo, IA
Chair: Scot Morris

Minnesota

Minnesota Association of Community Theatres
Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/
FungusAmongus Players
Cokato, MN
Chair: William P. Muchow

Nebraska

Nebraska Association of Community Theatres
Lincoln Community Playhouse
Lincoln, NE
Chair: Christine Cottam

South Dakota

South Dakota Theatre Association
Sioux Empire Community Theatre
Sioux Falls, SD
Chair: Cheryl Wyant

Region VI

Arkansas

Arkansas Community Theater Association
Pine Bluff, AR
Chair: Rebecca Burton

Louisiana

Theatres of Louisiana
City Park Players/Central LA Community
Theatre
Alexandria, LA
Chair: Jerry Havens

New Mexico

Theatre New Mexico
Artesia, NM
Chair: Regina Garner

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Community Theatre Association
Duncan Little Theatre
Duncan, OK
Chair: Sharon Burum

Texas

Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc.
Medical Center of Lewisville Grand Theatre
Lewisville, TX
Chair: Linda M. Lee

Region VII

Colorado

Colorado Community Theatre Coalition
Denver, CO
Chair: Shane Delavan

Region VIII

Arizona

Arizona Community Theatre Association
Theatrikos Theatre Company
Flagstaff, AZ
Chair: Stan Sutherland

California

Long Beach Playhouse
Long Beach, CA
Chair: Gil Savage and Andrew Vonderschmitt

Region IX

Idaho

Idaho Association of Community Theatres
Boise, ID
Chair: George Green

Oregon

Oregon Community Theatre Alliance
Theatre in the Grove
Forest Grove, OR
Chair: Jeff Zimmerman

Washington

Washington State Community Theatre
Association
Richland Players
Richland, WA
Chair: Ted Miller



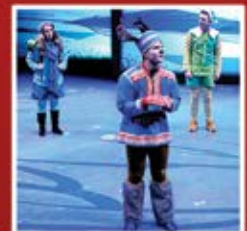
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—Santa Maria Sun

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What's Trending: Spaced Out

By Julie Crawford, AACT Executive Director

It's probably no surprise to hear that finding, maintaining, and financing usable space is a major focus of theatre companies across the U.S.

What may be surprising are the creative approaches in place for dealing with the issue.

That's what we learned from our latest What's Trending survey, which drew responses from 111 community theatres in 38 states.

For many, the issue is chiefly financial, with 65% reporting that facility costs (rent and/or maintenance) have gone up in the past three years, with 75% expecting more of the same in the next three years. Only 2.7% saw or expect decreases.

For others, the issue is finding a space they can call their own. The Nat Gold Players in Las Vegas, NM, for example are "constantly looking for rehearsal and performance space," while Applause Community Theatre (based in Saint Paul, MN and operating "here and there"), reports it is looking for "space to share with one or more similar groups."

Even those companies with their own facilities need expansion room.

"We own our theater, but never have enough storage space!" laments the Port Angeles (WA) Community Players.

Of responding theatres, 36.54% say facilities are difficult to find (19.23%) or sometimes hard to find (17.31%). Cost is the major factor in locating facilities, cited by 46.88%, while others (18.75%) report that potential spaces are booked solid, and 15.63% said available facilities are not suitable (too big, poor security, etc.). "Other," or a combination of factors, hindered 18.75% of respondents.

When asked which facilities are most difficult to find, theatres listed these:

- Storage space: 50%
- Rehearsal space: 45.31%
- Performance space: 37.5%
- Set construction space: 29.69%
- Costume shop space: 18.75%
- Classrooms: 4.69%

Over half of theatres responding (58.56%) own some or all of the space they use, but 66.67% of respondents rent at least some space. In addition many (51.35%) have negotiated free or almost free (contributed) use.

Space	% Owned	% Rented	% Contributed
Performance	47.75	46.85	23.42
Rehearsal	45.05	41.44	34.23
Storage	44.14	45.95	24.32
Set Construction	45.95	28.83	19.82
Costume Shop	44.14	25.23	19.82
Classrooms	24.32	13.51	12.61

Contributed & Shared Space

Churches (32.43%) and schools/community colleges (27.03%) were most often mentioned as sources of free or nearly-free space. Businesses contribute space for 24.32% of responding theatres, while 18.92% use space provided by the city, and 16.22% provided by another nonprofit or public building. Another 13.51% reported space contributed by a board or staff member, or other individual.

Free space has its upsides and downsides. Reports the Auburn (AL) Area Community Theatre, "Our performance space may be 'free,' but there are so many limitations on how and when we use the space. We are deeply grateful, and completely frustrated at the same time."

That said, sharing a space can have its benefits—for both parties. Actors Theater of Orcas Island, in Eastsound, WA explains: "We have a symbiotic relationship with our local grange: They could not survive without our rent and our maintaining the building, and we could not afford to rent another space."

The Rome (GA) Little Theatre's space is contributed by Historic DeSoto Theatre Foundation, with RLT providing office supplies and personnel, website access, and concessions during non-RLT events.

The building used by the Okeechobee (FL) Community Theatre is on a school campus. The company owns much of the theatrical equipment, but makes it available for school use. Likewise, an elementary school provides Tacoma (WA) Little Theatre with rehearsal space, and in return "the school gets to use our performance space for one week each year."

Theatre Statesville (NC) performs in a restaurant, providing entertainment in exchange for performance space. Ghostlight Theatre in Sun City West, AZ provides free advertising in exchange for storage space.

Maintaining and Financing

Of responding theatres, 55% reported their main performance spaces were converted from other uses, while 45% perform in spaces originally built as theatres.

In either case, the challenges are often the same. As Community Players, Inc. of Beatrice, NE explains, "Our challenge is two-fold. Maintaining an aging facility and finding space for all our growing programs."

Meeting the challenge often requires an infusion of cash, and 57.8% of responding theatres are considering a capital campaign in the near future, with several of them already in the midst of such a campaign—or savoring the successful results.

Reports Theatre Lawrence in Kansas, "After 28 years in a converted church we raised \$7.2 million to build a 35,000 square-foot theatre on donated land and opened it in June of 2013."

And the State Street Theater in New Ulm, MN is happy to no longer be looking for space and excited to say, "We just bought our own theatre!"

Now, *that's* the sort of trend we can *all* appreciate. ♦

[Next up in "What's Trending" is soliciting contributions. To participate in "Trending" surveys, be sure your theatre contact's email is in the AACT database. Check your record online or contact the AACT office.]

“FUN-LOVING MUSICAL THEATER”

- New York Times



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- The Minneapolis Star-Tribune

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- Associated Press

- Newsday

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**Does your theatre use an adapted space for productions?
What was the original use of the space, and what challenges have you encountered?**

Responses from AACTList

(to sign up for AACTList, go to aact.org/aactlist)

Our studio theatre is a converted space we purchased in the 1980's. The building was empty for a number of years after being the county school board offices. We had a 'Project Jericho' week where the walls came down, and with all volunteer help we converted the space into a small theatre with 88 seats. The building had many small offices, which we turned into a lobby, costume room, makeup room, box office, and a couple of larger spaces that became the auditorium and greenroom. We made the bathrooms ADA compliant.

This was our only theatre and used for productions from 1991 until 2010, but it continues as our black box studio theatre and is also used for youth programs. We have great affection for the building that we turned into our theatre home. We built a new main stage theatre in 2010.

Linda McClane, Managing Director
Amelia Community Theatre, Fernandina Beach, FL
ameliacommunitytheatre.org

We play in what was originally a twin cinema theatre. One side is our auditorium complete with the same movie seats, although fewer in number since we took out several rows to build the stage where the screen once stood. The other side is a two level maze of rooms for dressing rooms, storage, administrative offices, a rehearsal/multipurpose room, and our scene dock. People are amazed when they enter our "backstage" side and see how different it is from its twin. We have an enclosed viewing room in what was one of the projection rooms. The main benefit of this location is the street level entry for our patrons after having been in a second story ballroom with about 27 stairs to climb.

Natalie Smigel, Business Manager
Stage 212, Inc., LaSalle, IL
stage212.org

Responses from Facebook

(facebook.com/AACT.org)

Barn Lot Theater began as an outdoor theatre, moved into a gymnasium, and finally found a home in a former auto garage. The space is smaller, there is very little wing space, and we seat around 100. The biggest challenge is building sets that can only be around fifteen feet tall, and lighting around the steel trusses that support our roof. But that hasn't stopped us, we use resourcefulness and creativity to design amazing productions.

Kyle Hadley, Director of Marketing and Outreach
Barn Lot Theatre, Edmonton, KY
barnlottheatre.org

Community Players Inc. is located in a building that was a motorcycle repair shop prior to being a theater. We started with the tech booth built into the set because there wasn't a designated space. Now there's a booth, but depending on the configuration of the stage, the crew might not be able to see half (or more!) of the stage. The building has a ramp into the basement, which is a nice feature allowing easy movement of set/costumes in and out of storage between shows.

Elizabeth Claassen
Community Players, Inc., Beatrice, NE
beatricecommunityplayers.com



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Moving On

All AACTFest 2015 theatres that advanced from their state festival to regional festivals.

Some states qualify to send two shows to the regional festival. Region III and Region IV qualify to send two shows to AACTFest 2015, the national festival. Productions advancing to the National festival are in bold type.

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
I	CT	Backyard Theatre Ensemble	Cheshire	<i>Laundry and Bourbon</i>
I	CT	Warner Theatre/ Warner Stage Company	Torrington	<i>Winter Flowers</i>
I	MA	The Hovey Players	Waltham	<i>Rabbit Hole</i>
I	MA	The Lexington Players	Lexington	<i>Spring Awakening</i>
I	ME	L/A Community Little Theater	Auburn	<i>Am I Blue</i>
I	NH	ActorSingers	Nashua	<i>Dolls and Guys</i>
I	NH	Community Players of Concord	Concord	<i>The Boxer and Mary</i>
II	DC	Chevy Chase Players	Washington	<i>The Actor and the Assassin</i>
II	DE	Reedy Point Players	Delaware City	<i>Find Me</i>
II	MD	The Colonial Players	Annapolis	<i>Tough Cookies</i>
II	MD	Port Tobacco Players	La Plata	<i>Superhero Sanitarium</i>
II	NY	M&M Production Acting Company, Inc.	Amawalk	<i>Paradise Enow</i>
II	NY	Rochester's Black Sheep Theatre	Rochester	<i>Feeding the Moonfish</i>
II	PA	Hamilton-Gibson Productions	Wellsboro	<i>Miracle on South Division Street</i>
II	PA	Community Theatre League	Williamsport	<i>The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee</i>
III	IL	Byron Civic Theatre	Byron	<i>Ring of Fire</i>
III	IL	Playhouse on the Square	Jacksonville	<i>Talley's Folly</i>
III	IN	Elkhart Civic Theatre	Bristol	<i>The 39 Steps</i>
III	IN	Kokomo Civic Theatre	Kokomo	<i>Freud's Last Session</i>
III	MI	Holland Civic Theatre	Holland	<i>Revival at Possum Kingdom Community Church</i>
III	MI	Players de Noc	Escanaba	<i>The Hairy Ape</i>
III	OH	Troy Civic Theatre	Troy	<i>Angel Street</i>
III	OH	Williams County Community Theatre	Bryan	<i>Proof</i>
III	WI	Sun Prairie Civic Theatre	Sun Prairie	<i>The Coal Diamond</i>
III	WI	Baraboo Theatre Guild	Baraboo	<i>Escanaba in da Moonlight</i>
IV	AL	Wetumpka Depot Players/ South City Theatre	Wetumpka	<i>'night, Mother</i>
IV	AL	Leeds Theatre and Arts Center	Leeds	<i>Echoes</i>
IV	FL	Limelight Theatre	St. Augustine	<i>[title of show]</i>
IV	GA	Theatre Albany	Albany	<i>The Lady of Larkspur Lotion</i>
IV	KY	Actors for Children Theatre	Flatwoods	<i>Monsters Under the Bed</i>
IV	KY	The Village Players of Fort Thomas	Fort Thomas	<i>On Weapons and Wounds</i>
IV	MS	Starkville Community Theatre	Starkville	<i>A Catered Affair</i>
IV	MS	Tupelo Community Theatre	Tupelo	<i>Lone Star</i>
IV	SC	Aiken Community Playhouse	Aiken	<i>You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown</i>
IV	SC	Mill Town Players	Pelzer	<i>Dark of the Moon</i>
IV	TN	Cookeville Performing Arts Center	Cookeville	<i>Other Desert Cities</i>
IV	VA	Phantom Players	Chester	<i>Amelia's Nocturne</i>
IV	WV	Tanner Theatre at Monongalia Arts Center	Morgantown	<i>Red</i>
V	IA	Iowa City Community Theatre	Iowa City	<i>A Bench at the Edge</i>
V	IA	Great River Players	Keokuk	<i>Laundry and Bourbon</i>

continued on next page

Reg	State	Theatre	From	Production
V	MN	County Seat Theatre Company	Cloquet	<i>Old Jake's Skirts</i>
V	MN	Dassel-Cokato Community Theatre/ FungusAmongus Players	Dassel-Cokato	<i>The Romancers</i>
V	NE	Beatrice Community Players	Beatrice	<i>Completely Hollywood (unabridged)</i>
V	SD	Aberdeen Community Theatre	Aberdeen	<i>Working</i>
V	SD	Mighty Corson Art Players	Brandon	<i>Waiting for the Parade</i>
VI	AR	Lantern Theatre/ Conway Community Arts Association	Conway	<i>God of Carnage</i>
VI	LA	City Park Players	Alexandria	<i>Coffee With God</i>
VI	LA	UpStage Theatre Company	Baton Rouge	<i>Indigo Blues-A Love Song</i>
VI	NM	Los Alamos Little Theatre	Los Alamos	<i>The Pillowman</i>
VI	NM	Nat Gold Players	Las Vegas	<i>Sheltered Women</i>
VI	OK	OnStage Woodward	Woodward	<i>Graceland and Asleep on the Wind</i>
VI	OK	Shawnee Little Theatre	Shawnee	<i>Gidion's Knot</i>
VI	TX	Katy Visual and Performing Arts Center	Katy	<i>On the Road With Hank the Horse</i>
VI	TX	Playhouse 2000	Kerrville	<i>Bus Riley's Back in Town and Glory in the Flower</i>
VII	CO	Evergreen Players	Evergreen	<i>Apartment 3A</i>
VII	CO	Platte Valley Players	Brighton	<i>The Nina Variations</i>
VIII	AZ	Theatrikos Theatre Company	Flagstaff	<i>Almost, Maine</i>
VIII	CA	The New Group West	Cardiff	<i>I Am My Own Wife</i>
IX	ID	Modern Theatre, Lake City Playhouse	Coeur d'Alene	<i>The Last Five Years</i>
IX	OR	Beaverton Civic Theatre	Beaverton	<i>The Dining Room</i>
IX	WA	Spokane Civic Theatre	Spokane	<i>Orphans</i>
IX	WA	Richland Players	Richland	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>
X	Belgium	SHAPE Players	Mons	<i>Detachments</i>

AACT welcomes new staff member to the AACT team.

Winston Daniels, AACT Office Assistant, is a recent graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington. Having studied Theatre Performance there, he has been acting in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for about three years. Some of his favorite rolls include; Donkey, from *Shrek the Musical*, and Bobby from Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*. He aspires to one day start his own theatre, but for now is especially excited to be working with AACT, and looks forward to what the future may bring. ♦



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. **ASCAP fees for AACT members have not increased for 2015-2016!**

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 CDs and tapes. (This license does not cover music played during a show or performed live.)



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**American Alliance for
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AATE'S 28th National Conference has the theme "Tapping the Power of Creative Minds." Participants will share with one another their theatre expertise and engage with brain and mind scientists, as they explore how their work enhances the ability of young people to empathize, achieve, and create in a rapidly accelerating and complex world.

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The Yale Drama Series is intended to support emerging playwrights. Submissions must be original, unpublished full-length plays written in English. No musicals, children's plays, or translations. Plays must not have been professionally produced.

There is no application form or entry fee.

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

Deadline: Submit between June 1 and August 15, 2015
Electronic submission strongly advised, hard copy also possible.

See the website for more details:
dchornfoundation.org/competition-rules



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British theatre director Declan Donnellan is the first Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company Academy and is best known for his work with Cheek by Jowl (including their acclaimed all-male *As You Like It*) and on Tony Kushner's *Homebody/Kabul*. As Associate Director of the National Theatre his productions included *Fuenteovejuna*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Angels in America*.

Theatre Communications Group

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The Three Leaches is dedicated to creating provocative theatre. They believe great theatre should focus first and foremost on the quality and depth of the story and acting, which is why a budget of \$1000 is set for every show they produce.

The One Act Play Competition is for plays (comedy or drama) that are 30-60 minutes long and have never been professionally produced, plays that push the envelope, inspire and challenge actors and audiences alike, and have a unique voice.

Two winners will be chosen, and the plays will be produced in The Three Leaches next season. Each winner will receive a \$100 reward.

Submit your work electronically to:
Melissa@thethreeleaches.com.
Please include your name, contact information, and a brief summary about the play in your email.

Deadline: August 1

Submission fee: \$10

thethreeleaches.com/play-competition

All photos by Ron Ziegler



AACT Board Member at Large Liz Lydic and Oregon State Contact Carolyn McCloskey brief the timers before the first session of the Region IX AACTFest, held in McMinnville, OR, March 27-28, 2015. Liz served as Commissioner for the festival and Carolyn was Festival Chair.



AACT Region V Representative Nancy Eppert chats with AACT Executive Vice President Murray Chase between sessions of the Region VI AACTFest in Albuquerque, NM, April 8-13, 2015. Nancy was an adjudicator at the festival and Murray was the Festival Commissioner.



AACT Board Member at Large Emily Anderson poses with her husband Bill Anderson during a reception at the Region III AACTFest. Emily chaired the event and Bill served as adjudicator host.



AACT Board Member at Large Sara Phoenix (second from left) and Education Committee member Kathy Pingel chat with Community Theatre Association of Michigan President MaryLou Britton (far left) and AACT Conference Coordinator Jill Patchin at the Region III AACTFest in Midland, MI, April 16-19, 2015. Sara and Kathy served as adjudicators for the festival.



AACT Festival Commission member Kristi Quinn makes a point during her adjudication of a production at the Region V AACTFest. The festival occurred in Newton, IA April 23-26, 2015.



We Could All Die Laughing

by Twink Lynch

Recently, I was asked by several theatre groups to define the “best staffing structure” for their theatres. Should they hire an artistic director who would also manage the organization? Or should they hire a business manager/executive director who would manage the business and hire/supervise an artistic director and/or guest directors to get the shows up?

What the Boards seemed to want, when asking for this advice, was to get out of managing the business themselves – which is understandable, given that individual Board Members have much less leisure time to do “hands-on” kinds

An underlying concern also seemed to be, “Can an artistic person be trusted to manage the business?”

of operational tasks for our theatres. Many of our treasurers no longer have time to approve and/or record expenditures, make deposits, write the checks, and create financial reports. They barely have time to review financials prepared by staff before Board meetings. Other Board Members find it difficult to continue individual “producer” or “business manager” roles for each production. Fundraising, grant writing, and marketing tasks would also be cheerfully given over to appropriate staff by many Board Members.

But an underlying concern also seemed to be, “Can an artistic person be trusted to manage the business?” Of course, that depends on the individual “artistic person”; even some “business persons” have proven to be inept and/or untrustworthy in their jobs.

My answer was – and still is – there is no magical, one-perfect-staff-structure-for-every-theatre solution. At the national professional community theatre directors’ conference in Madison, Wisconsin, one November, we had examples around the table of very capable managing artistic directors, executive directors, producing directors, and administrative directors. What is worth noting, however, is that every person functioning as the head staff person of his or her theatre had a strong theatre background, whether he/she directed the plays or not. Therefore (and this is the

critical issue for me), each person there was able to provide artistic vision for his or her theatre.

What I worry about in the artistic person vs. business person debate is the danger of leaving the art out of the equation when business decisions are made. If a business person is hired to lead the theatre, who will speak up for theatre-as-art?

If we have only a “business of show business” mentality in making important decisions, we are surely doomed to the vicissitudes of the market place. I am very concerned that with our business hats on we may decide to produce only shows that will be sure-fire box office hits because we have to pay the bills in order to stay in business. We should, instead, put on our financial development hats and find ways to support a production such as *Death and the Maiden*, a play of substance dealing with current issues almost too terrible to face. It should be a part of our mission as performing arts organizations to do such plays.

On the other hand, I know of a theatre that went out of business because the participants insisted on doing only avant-garde, “artsy” plays whether the audience wanted to see them or not, and I think that was foolhardy.

I am very concerned that with our business hats on we may decide to produce only shows that will be sure-fire box office hits because we have to pay the bills in order to stay in business.

What I want, for every community theatre including my own, is some sort of balanced team approach – in whatever configuration it may occur (artistic person as head; business-oriented person as head; or two co-leaders). Such a balanced team approach will have artistic vision as the driving force of the theatre within responsible business guidelines, support, restraints, and oversight. While this team may be primarily paid staff, it may also be composed of paid staff and volunteer Board Members, or in many cases be completely volunteer, depending on the size of the theatre.

The collaborative problem-solving approach of this team should provide the necessary balance each theatre needs in regard to planning a season and setting long-range goals for program, human resources, and facilities.

My answer was — and still is — there is no magical, one-perfect-staff-structure-for-every-theatre solution.

In the December 17, 1995 edition of The New York Times, under the headline “Broadway Is Going to Die Laughing,” playwright Arthur Laurents stated “Entertainment will be the death of the Broadway theatre.” His point was that we need to balance each season with plays that are “stimulating, illuminating, even astonishing.” I believe that commitment to an artistic vision does not usually come from people primarily concerned with the “bottom line,” unless in some other life they have become “true believers” in the importance of doing works of true artistic merit. Of course we have to meet the needs of our communities for entertainment, but there are other needs that must be met as well, if we are to fulfill our obligations as performing arts organizations.

To quote French playwright Romain Rolland again: “It is a question of life and death, for art and for the people. If art is not opened to the people, it is doomed to disappear; and if the people do not discover the pathway of art, humanity abdicates its destinies.”

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 ad on page 36 for ordering information.

Reprinted from Boards in the Spotlight (page 55). Originally appeared in Spotlight, January, 1996.



A NEW MUSICAL FROM GRAMMY-NOMINATED SINGER-SONGWRITER BECKY HOBBS AND NICK SWEET

Becky Hobbs's and Nick Sweet's interpretive story of Nanyehi is a world-class musical production. As one of her descendants, the story of Nancy Ward is both inspirational and deeply personal to me. The stirring compositions, riveting dialogue and modern choreography make this a must-see piece of musical theater. Cherokee Nation history enthusiasts and theater fans will be mesmerized with Becky's wonderful creation.

- Bill John Baker, Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, OK

While Nancy Ward's history is intriguing and the basis for an exciting musical and Becky Hobbs original songs tell a haunting story, the 'cry for peace' that Ward made during the Revolutionary War era is one that still resonates today.

- D. Ray Smith, The Oak Ridger, Oak Ridge, TN.

NANYEHI set several attendance records in Kingsport, TN during it's 2014 run: the single night attendance record, the combined attendance record for any Kingsport Theatre Guild production in 67 years, and a new record for the venue, The Kingsport Renaissance Arts Center & Theatre, which also hosts professional touring acts.

- Tina Radtke, Executive Director, Kingsport Theatre Guild

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New Roles

Akron, OH - **The Weathervane Playhouse** announces the appointment of **Melanie Y.C. Pepe** as Artistic Director and **Lisa Mansfield** as Managing Director. The two, who each have worked at the theatre for nine years, take over the duties handled by former Executive Director **John Hedges** who left last September to become Executive Director of the Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre in Carmel, IN. Melanie formerly served as Weathervane's Director of Education and Producer of the theatre's Emerging Artists Series. She has focused on building youth education through performance during her time with the theatre. She earned a BFA degree from Kent State University, where she currently serves on the advisory board for its School of Theatre and Dance. Lisa formerly served as Education Programs Coordinator and has also served as Patron Services Manager. She also serves as president of the Akron Board of Education, having been elected in 2009 and again in 2013. She holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Akron. Melanie and Lisa began their new duties in mid-May, 2015.

Waterloo, IA - The Board of Directors for the **Waterloo Community Playhouse and the Black Hawk Children's Theatre** announce their selection of **Norman Ussery** to succeed **Constance Grimm** as Executive Director for the theatre. Norman formerly served as Executive Director of Theatre Arlington, in Arlington, TX. He was raised in the Virgin Islands where he worked in several theatres and was co-founder of St. Thomas' Pistarckle Theatre. He graduated from Duke University and has worked at Twin City Stage in Winston-Salem, NC, Theatre Tallahassee in Tallahassee, FL and the North Carolina Theatre in Raleigh, NC. Norman's background includes management in both professional and community theatres. In addition to theatre management he has worked extensively as an actor and a director, mostly in the southeastern United States. He began his new duties in April 2015. ♦



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Community Theatre Advocacy begins with YOU!

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*Rod McCullough
Fulton Opera House*

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When	Who/What	Where	Information
July 17-19	Community Theatre Association of Michigan Master Class Weekend	MI Higgins Lake	989-463-1252 communitytheatre.org
July 25	Oklahoma Community Theatre Association OCTA Summer Conference	OK Oklahoma City	405-840-0788 oktheatre.org
August 21-22	American Association of Community Theatre Artistic Directors Conference	NC Charlotte	886-687-2228 aact.org
August 21-22	American Association of Community Theatre Education Directors Conference	NC Charlotte	886-687-2228 aact.org
August 28-29	American Association of Community Theatre Artistic Directors Conference	WA Tacoma	886-687-2228 aact.org
August 28-29	American Association of Community Theatre Education Directors Conference	WA Tacoma	886-687-2228 aact.org

For dates farther ahead, check the website: aact.org



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New York, New York July 7-10, 2016

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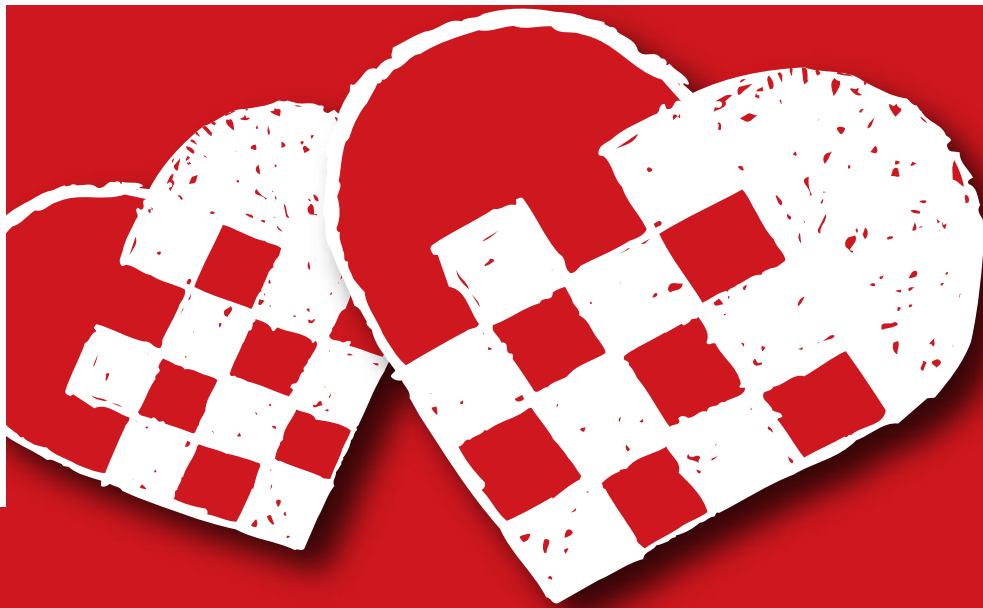


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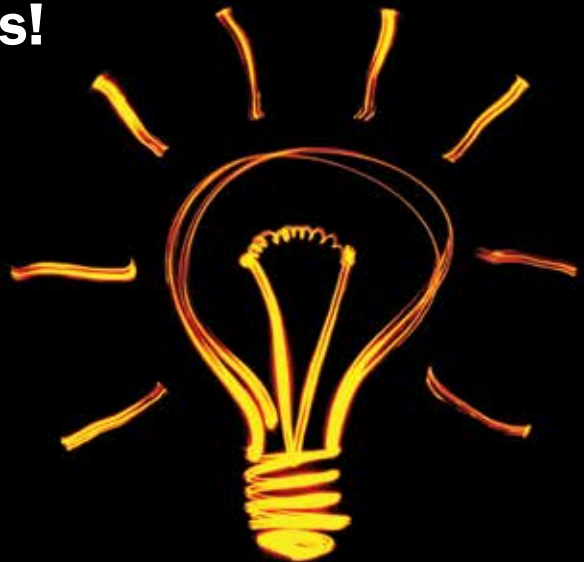
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Artistic Directors Conferences

Charlotte, NC August 21-22
Tacoma, WA August 28-29



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