

# CALLBOARD

## AACTFest Needs You!

Michigan AACTFest is fast approaching, and there is room for *one more team* to compete! Sponsored by Community Theatre Association of Michigan and hosted by Owosso Community Players, AACTFest is a three-day acting festival happening March 15-17, 2019. Seven theatre teams have already registered, including:

- ✓ Bay City Players performing *35mm: A Musical Exhibition*
- ✓ Grand Rapids Civic Theatre performing *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*
- ✓ Kalamazoo Civic Theatre performing *Red*
- ✓ Monroe Community Players performing *The Tempest*
- ✓ Players de Noc (Escanaba) performing something amazing! (title coming soon)
- ✓ Rosedale Community Players (Southfield) performing *Turbulence*
- ✓ The Sauk (Jonesville) performing the first act of *The Flower Girls (Act I)*

Who will be team number eight? For more information or to register your team, visit <http://ctam.online/2019-michigan-aactfest/>.

Hotel information is included with the registration form on the website. Best to get your reservations in now!



This is the sidewalk in front of The Historic Vista Theatre in Negaunee, around 3pm on December 3! (Pretty much an average day in the Yoop!) The **Peninsula Arts Appreciation Council at the Historic Vista Theatre** is one of our newest members...and in the Upper Peninsula! Here's hoping that our warm welcome will help melt some of this snow!



## 2018-19 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - **Betsy Willis**  
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Treasurer - **Jamie Peterson**  
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### Callboard

Editor..... Mary Lou Britton

This is the official newsletter of the Community Theatre Association of Michigan, issued monthly to all group affiliates and individual members with e-mail addresses on record. Distribution is by e-mail with a link to the newsletter on the association website. Back issues are available on the association website. Correspondence to the **Callboard** should be sent to the Editor at [mellbee@earthlink.net](mailto:mellbee@earthlink.net).

- Productions and dates should be sent to the Editor.
- Short informational articles are accepted and will be used on a space-available basis.
- Show photos should be carefully selected and sent to the Editor, along with identifying caption and permission from photographer for us to publish.

Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Executive Secretary Nancy Peska and should be sent to her at [peska@cmsinter.net](mailto:peska@cmsinter.net).



## CTAM Calendar of Events

January 13, 2018 (by phone)	CTAM Board meeting
March 15-17, 2019 Owosso	2019 Michigan AACTfest
March 17, 2019 Owosso	CTAM Board meeting Time TBD
April 7-13, 2019 Everywhere!	National Volunteer Week
April 11-14, 2019 Kokomo, IN	AACTfest Region III Festival
May 5, 2019 Clio	CTAM Board meeting Clio Cast & Crew
June 16-22, 2019 Gettysburg, PA	AACTfest nationals at the Majestic Theater
July 19-21, 2019 Higgins Lake	Master Class Weekend MacMullen DNR Center
July 21, 2019 Higgins Lake	CTAM Board meeting MacMullen DNR Center

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**CTAM**  
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Association of Michigan



## *In My Opinion:* **An Editorial**

By Mary Lou Britton, Editor

**I**t seems as though we all like consistency. Consistency is good. But is consistency good all the time? Do we become complacent too much with things being the same, time after time. How often have we found ourselves 'playing it safe' to avoid change?

*Too much consistency can eventually lead to quotes like "Well, that's the way we've always done it" and "if it isn't broken, don't fix it." That type of atmosphere can be helpful in some circumstances, but then, we must be on the lookout for the backlash to that -- which is 'getting stuck in a rut.' We must strive for getting unstuck from that infamous rut! (Excerpted mostly from December 2018 Stage Directions.)*

### **Change is inevitable; suffering is optional!**

How many of you have been around long enough to remember adhering the muslin to the wood flats with fish glue? Fish glue! It was a slippery granule you measured

into water in a double boiler. You melted down the fish scales into a smelly gunk with which you painted the stiles and rails. (Heaven forbid you would ever let it boil dry and burn the stinky mixture...as we did. Difficult to explain to the fire department!)

After years of doing it that way (in the '60s), I can still remember how I doubted using Elmer's instead! The fish glue had worked for years and years, why would we ever change? How ridiculous! Well, now we buy Elmer's by the gallon!

Now I can rant against the people who use staples to attach the muslin and expect the paint to hold the shrinking fabric. Oh, these kids!

How we all deal with change is what will eventually define the success of our theatre groups.

- ✓ Are you dealing with the fact that season

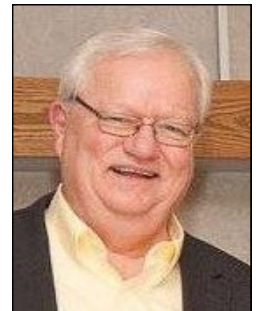
tickets are on their way out -- and that more flexible ticket options are needed to keep your patrons coming back for more?

- ✓ What are you doing about attracting younger volunteers who will stay around for the grunt work, as opposed to just snagging the leading roles and moving on to another group for their leading roles?
- ✓ Are you keeping up with technology? Yes, it's expensive and you need experienced, educated people to make it work, but are you investing your resources in the right places to keep your group up-to-date?
- ✓ And, technically, are you still using Elmer's and staples, or have you moved along to experiment with rear projection, creative lighting or even cardboard and Foamcore?

Change is wonderful, exciting and heart-pounding; but it's also threatening, disheartening and defeating. How you choose to react will tell your story.

## **Start the new year right by having all your shows adjudicated**

CTAM has trained adjudicators ready and eager to visit your group and adjudicate one of your shows. As a benefit of your CTAM annual affiliate dues, each member group gets one free adjudication per membership year. After that, your group pays a modest fee for additional adjudications.



Adjudication Chair  
Larry Nielsen

Adjudicators are an independent second pair of eyes, looking at your production and seeing things you may not have noticed. Adjudications are not 're-directing' or a pass/fail situation, but rather a starting spot for improvement in future shows.

Contact Adjudication Chair Larry Nielsen to make arrangements.

# Care and Feeding of Your Volunteers

With National Volunteer Week approaching (April 7-13, 2019), it's important to recognize that retaining good volunteers can be a challenge for your group. Yet in order to reap the maximum benefits of using volunteers, it's important to keep them coming back over the long term. If you can maintain a loyal corps of volunteers, you will get more done for less money, create community involvement, and increase your organization's visibility in your community.

Yet all too often, we spend long hours recruiting and training volunteers, only to have them leave after a few times. Read on to learn how to keep your volunteers coming back.

## 1. Tap into Volunteers' Motives

Don't volunteers just want to 'be in show business?' Well, yes and no. They no doubt have good hearts and believe in your group's work, but most volunteers have additional reasons for volunteering -- perhaps looking to meet new people, develop skills, and feel needed. Ask volunteers at the outset what they'd like to get from their experience, and look for ways to satisfy that need.

## 2. Tell Volunteers What You Expect

Start by giving each volunteer some formal training. Explain the work of your organization and the volunteer's place in it, including the importance of seemingly busy work. Discuss what you normally expect volunteers to do and what more interesting tasks they might "graduate" to after proven good work.

Be ready to provide feedback on how your volunteers are doing, particularly if they're trying to develop job skills. At the initial training, tell the volunteer that you'll try to periodically sit down for a review -- and make clear that the volunteer will then have a chance to tell you how he or she is enjoying the volunteer experience and what would make it better.



## 3. Make Volunteering Convenient

Most nonprofits want volunteers to commit to work a certain number of hours per week or month, but often creating alternatives to this model can be a good idea. Allowing the flexibility to avoid rush hour, for example, may be important to some volunteers. Also, consider parking. If they have to hunt for a space or pay, they could easily be turned off, regardless of how much they love what you're doing.

## 4. Make Volunteering Fun

You don't have to create a party atmosphere for your volunteers, but realize that some tasks are innately more fun than others. Remember that theater folks are social animals, so make introductions and work sessions enjoyable. Be sure that 'new people' are included and invited to after-show parties and suppers.

## 5. Show Appreciation

Every volunteer wants to know that he or she is making a difference. It's your job to make sure the volunteer knows this, for example, by:

- ✓ Saying thank you, early and often;
- ✓ Planning some organized volunteer-appreciation activities, particularly if you have a large volunteer corps;
- ✓ Holding an annual volunteer party;
- ✓ Inviting volunteers to other events, such as a holiday party, special performances, and your annual dinner or picnic; and
- ✓ Giving little speeches at events, saying how much particular volunteers have done for your organization, and accompanying this with awards, certificates, or small plaques.

Common sense and good manners will keep your volunteer pool full and splashing around to everyone's benefit!

Plan something special for your volunteers during their special week in April. You've got three months to organize something really wonderful to say "thanks."



## 2019 CTAM Playwriting Contest

# Is 2019 the year of YOUR play?

Don't let it get away from you! You've been thinking about it, running dialogue through your mind, writing and editing it. Life intrudes and suddenly months have gone by with no pro-gress. You have a great plot. It's engaging, funny in the right spots ... but it is sitting there unfinished. Perhaps it isn't even pixels on a screen yet. Maybe you need to gather some friends to workshop it, to hear it actually spo-ken, to help with the final edits.

Will 2019 be the year that you finish that play? What better resolution for the New Year than to commit to finish that masterpiece and submit it to the CTAM's playwriting contest. We can as-sist by providing a deadline, May 15, 2019. The rewards are helpful comments from the judges, not to mention cash prizes for the winners. What are you waiting for?

I resolve... (begin your resolution by visiting <http://ctam.online/playwriting-contest-rules/>)

PS: Take a look at the Scoop on Scripts article this month (page 6) for several playwriting contest winners you might want to consider for your season. The first one, last year's winner, is royalty free to you until September 2020.

PPS: We also encourage you to check out 2018's Honorable Mention, *Bird of Passage*, by Colby Halloran. You can read about it at its website [www.birdofpassageplay.com](http://www.birdofpassageplay.com) including more info about its world premiere at the Bagaduce Theatre in Brooksville, MN in September 2019. Until then it's still in development and not available for production. After that it is available royalty-free to CTAM member groups through 2020.



The Tin Shop Theatre in Buchanan offered August: Osage County last Fall as part of their season.



Tawas Bay Players produced Bye Bye Birdie last fall with our own glamorous columnist Tara Western as Mae and Carter Chrvia as Conrad Birdie.



Aren't rehearsals wonderful? Here's a music rehearsal in and about the scene shop at the Players Guild of Dearborn. We just do what we gotta do ... full steam ahead!

# The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western

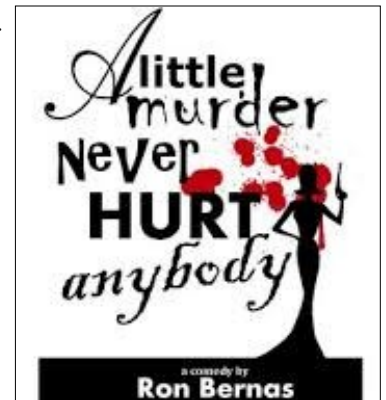


Happy New Year! Hope you have great plans for 2019, both “community theatrical” and personal! See you at AACTfest in March!?

**Town Car for Sale** by Linda LaRocque won first place in the 2018 CTAM playwriting contest. With a cast of three older men, one older woman, and one middle-aged woman, this comedy has substance and will resonate with baby boomers, their parents, and their children. Eighty-seven-year-old Rich lives in an apartment complex with two close friends nearby: Gordon and Earl. Set is simple: Rich’s living/dining room and a table at Gordon’s. In ACT I Rich tells his friends that their trips to the casino are almost over as he has lost his license and can’t afford the insurance. All are disappointed, but as they search for solutions, there’s plenty of snappy dialogue and distinct personalities emerge. Rich is determined to sell his 18-year-old Lincoln town car, especially when daughter, Mary, divulges her financial problems. She wants Rich to move into an apartment with her and her twin sons. Regarding Mary, Rich has many regrets, but he doesn’t want to move away from his friends who are his life. Trips to the casino can continue when one of the men finds Dottie, a senior citizen with a driver’s license who is willing to drive the men in exchange for the use of the car. Gordon falls in love with Dottie, Earl has a heart attack, and Mary and Rich find a wonderful solution without anyone winning the BIG prize at the casino. Audiences will enjoy the humor, touching moments and characters finding a new perspective on life. NOTE: this show is royalty free through October 2020. If you would like to read this play, email Linda at [linda.l.larocque@gmail.com](mailto:linda.l.larocque@gmail.com) or call her at 269.637.3416.

**A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody** by Ron Bernas ©2009, published by Samuel French, pays homage to the screwball comedies of the

‘30s and ‘40s. This winner of the CTAM playwriting competition in 1991, has four men and two women. Matthew and Julia, are married, play 50 years +, Buttram, the butler, 40-50, Bunny, the ditsy, shallow daughter and her fiancé, Donald both play mid-twenties. The detective, a Dashiell Hammett/Sam Spade wannabe, can play 30’s-60’s. Matthew’s New Year’s resolution is to murder Julia, and when he tells her, she makes her resolution to stay alive. It’s an amusing match of wits; Julia stays alive, but Fifi, the poodle, Aunt Bitsy, multiple friends, an entire garden party and a gardener die. Lots of costumes: the two couples are in formal dress, the men, including Buttram, wearing tuxedos. Plotnick, the detective, is Columbo-like but needs a Charlie Chan suit for the Halloween scene in Act II. All the characters need somewhat complicated Halloween costumes also.



**Visiting Mr. Green** by Jeff Baron ©1994, revised 2005, from Dramatist Play Service, Inc. is a lovely comedy with lots of humor. Cast: Mr. Green, Jewish New Yorker, 86 years old and Ross, 29 years old, a corporate executive. The interior set of Mr. Green’s apartment includes a kitchen, living room, fridge, old phone. Several Tech challenges: toilet flush, a huge stack of paper bags, 16 boxes of saltines, tea is made, a light bulb is changed on stage, and lighting that makes the apartment look beautiful as Ross helps Mr. Green clean up. Mr. Green, elderly and retired is almost hit by a car driven by Ross. His community service sentence is to help the recent widower once a week for six months. The story begins as a comedy of two men who could not have less in common, that becomes a moving drama as they get to know and care about each other. Secrets come out about both of them. (Ross is gay.)

# Who's doing what in the new year?

Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>	Jan 10-20, 2019
Flint Community Players	<i>I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change</i>	Jan 10-20, 2019
Clarkston Village Players	<i>Laura</i>	Jan 11-26, 2019
Grand Rapids Civic	<i>And Then There Were None</i>	Jan 11-27, 2019
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Tenderly: The Rosemary Clooney Musical</i>	Jan 11-27, 2019
Master Arts Theatre, Grand Rapids	<i>Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*</i>	Jan 11-12, 2019
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Fun Home</i>	Jan 11-26, 2019
Players Guild of Dearborn	<i>Lend Me A Tenor</i>	Jan 11-27, 2019
Tawas Bay Players	<i>Murder at the Howard Johnson's</i>	Jan 11-20, 2019
Avon Players, Rochester	<i>Marvin's Room</i>	Jan 18-Feb 2, 2019
Village Players, Birmingham	<i>Inspecting Carol</i>	Jan 18-Feb 3, 2019
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Legally Blonde</i>	Jan 20-Feb 2, 2019
Cadillac Footlites	<i>Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i>	Jan 25-Feb 2, 2019
Holland Civic Theatre	<i>Night Watch</i>	Jan 25-Feb 8, 2019
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>The Compleat Wrks of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)</i>	Jan 25-Feb 9, 2019
Rosedale Community Players	<i>Stop Kiss</i>	Jan 25-Feb 9, 2019
Stagecrafters, Royal Oak	<i>If/Then</i>	Jan 25-Feb 17, 2019
Community Theatre of Howell	<i>Arsenic and Old Lace</i>	Jan 25-Feb 3, 2019
Flint Community Players	<i>The Shape of Things</i>	Jan 27, 2019
Bay City Players	<i>August: Osage County</i>	Feb 1-10, 2019
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Sylvia</i>	Feb 1-16, 2019
The Sauk, Jonesville	<i>Nana's Naughty Knickers</i>	Feb 7-17, 2019
Farmington Players	<i>As Bees in Honey Drown</i>	Feb 8-23, 2019
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>The Father</i>	Feb 8-17, 2019
Southgate Community Players	<i>Play On</i>	Feb 8-16, 2019
Twin City Players, St. Joseph	<i>Wedding Secrets</i>	Feb 8-24, 2019
Master Arts Theatre, Grand Rapids	<i>When Calls the Heart</i>	Feb 14-Mar 2, 2019
Clio Cast and Crew	<i>The Mousetrap</i>	Feb 15-24, 2019
Pinckney Players	<i>Company</i>	Feb 15-23, 2019
Grand Rapids Civic	<i>Mamma Mia!</i>	Feb 22-Mar 3, 2019
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Once On This Island</i>	Feb 22-Mar 10, 2019
Port Austin Community Players	<i>I Hate Hamlet</i>	Feb 22-Mar 3, 2019
Hartland Players	<i>Rumors</i>	Feb 23-Mar 3, 2019
Ionia Community Theatre	<i>Legally Blonde</i>	Mar 1-10, 2019
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Moon over Buffalo</i>	Mar 1-16, 2019
Players de Noc, Escanaba	<i>Gypsy</i>	Mar 1-9, 2019
Stagecrafters, Royal Oak	<i>Sondheim on Sondheim</i>	Mar 1-10, 2019
Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>Rumors</i>	March 7-17, 2019

\* indicates youth productions; \*\* indicates second stage productions, if submitted.

Please be sure to fill out your Dues Renewal Form completely, as that is the source for this information on shows! If your information is incorrect or missing, please send the correct information to The Editor to be corrected or included in the next issue.