

# CALLBOARD

## Well, shiver me timbers! 2019 Fall Conference to be held at Treetops Resort, October 11-13

After months of negotiating for the best possible prices and the most convenience for the most people, the Board is proud to announce that we're all going to Gaylord for our Fall Conference this year! Treetops Resort and Spa is very convenient to I-75 and is a golfer's paradise with five courses available! The conference facilities are top-notch, too.

Next month's Callboard will have more information, including workshops and prices, but for the time being, just be sure to mark the date on your calendar and let no other activities preclude your attendance at this CTAM annual event (and Annual Meeting).

The theme of the conference this year will revolve around PIRATES, so you can start thinking about preposterous parodies 'bout plundering pirates with their parrots and peg legs. There undoubtedly will be a party or two where your



pirate costume would be appropriate dress! (Not so sure about the parrot and definitely not the monkey!)

Get the details next month and plan to attend a fun, educational and informative weekend!

*If you can identify these two roustabouts below, you will be able to claim the title of Master of Useless Information! Hint: One ex-wife has a birthday on September 19!*

### Exciting News!

Special all-day programming for your kids has been added to the Master Class schedule on Saturday, July 20! See article on page 3.

***It's not too late to register!***



## 2018-19 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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).

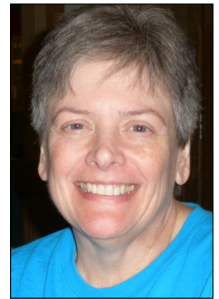
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Community Theatre  
Association of Michigan

## Scholarships available for Master Classes and Fall Conference

Scholarships are available to help with the registration costs for the Fall Conference at Treetops Resort in Gaylord. (Not for room and board!) All that needs to be done is to fill out the application found on our website: <http://ctam.online/>. If you do not have access to a computer, please feel free to contact Christy Frick at [cfrick9898@charter.net](mailto:cfrick9898@charter.net). Scholarships are available for members of affiliate groups and we award two per theatre group and will cover the cost of registration only.



Christy Frick

Please apply for the scholarship before you register. Once your application has been approved, you will receive an email stating that your scholarship application has been approved and will include a code to enter while registering.



## CTAM Calendar of Events

July 20, 2019 Downeaster Theatre, Lansing	Master Class
July 21, 2019 Downeaster Theatre, Lansing	CTAM Board meeting
October 11, 12,13, 2019 Treetops Resort, Gaylord	CTAM Annual Fall Conference
October 13, 2019 Treetops Resort, Gaylord	Board of Directors Organizational Meeting



# Youth component added to Master Class Day on July 20 in Lansing



The Downeaster Theatre in Lansing is hosting our traditional Summer Master Class on Saturday, July 20, at their facility. After several months' planning for special programming for the kids, here are the details for the kids' classes!

There will be three 2-hour classes, covering Acting, Directing and Properties. The classes will run from 10 am – 5 pm with an hour for lunch. Participants are asked to bring a sack lunch.

## **Class descriptions:**

**ACTING** - PK Van Voorhees, instructor. This session will cover some of the basics of acting, as well as more advanced experiences -- based on the skill and knowledge of the students. Active, hands-on activities will keep the kids interested.

**DIRECTING** - Kate DeMaat, instructor. A two-hour Intro to Directing intensive, brought to you by the founder of The Downeaster Theatre. Students will discuss the director's vision and how the puzzle comes together, from start to finish, in-



Van Voorhees



DeMaat

cluding the opportunity to direct their peers in a one-page scene!

**PROPERTIES** - Kate DeMaat will also lead this session, along with Bill and Marisa Nosie, who run Props for Downeaster Theatre. They will give a tour of their shop, discuss creative ways they've made props, materials they've used, and challenges they've had. Kate will lead the students in a hands-on prop-making activity of Bill and Marisa's design.

The adult sessions going on that day will also cover Acting and Properties, but they are separate classes and will not be intermingled! The adult registration fee is \$90 for individual CTAM members and \$100 for non-individual members. The fee for the children is \$50 per attendee. Remember that our Scholarships apply to Master Classes, too. See article on page 2 for more information on Scholarships.

Go to the [CTAM website](#) to see last month's Callboard for all the details on the adult classes and to register online. There is still time to register!





## The prez Sez...

by Betsy Willis

I spent the week of June 17<sup>th</sup> at the national AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg PA and experienced many wonderful things during the festival.

- ☆ Even without a “horse in the race,” the state of Michigan was well represented by more than 20 people there to take workshops, watch a dozen adult shows and five youth shows, hear outstanding adjudications, and spend time networking, making new friends, and visiting. There were also opportunities to sightsee and learn about the historic location.
- ☆ We were there to see Joanne Berry receive her 30 years of service to AACT pin. Joanne continues to be a valuable contributor to community theatre, and it was wonderful to see her recognized.
- ☆ A Region III meet and greet was put together so we could celebrate the strength of our five states in AACT. It was a great time to talk about shared experiences, find connections that could benefit each other’s groups, and just have some fun.
- ☆ Everyone present celebrated as two African American women received the only two Outstanding Actors in a Leading Role awards at the final awards ceremony. One of them was Ama Ofirowaa Aduonum from the Region III show *Walking with my Ancestors*. Each of these women appeared in solo performances that brought the house to its feet. Ama’s show is an original work about communing with her ancestors from Ghana as she wrestles with her children’s fears of growing up black in America. Jessica Washington presented *Who Will Sing for Lena?*, a script based on the true story of woman put to death in the electric chair for killing the white man who raped her. Both of their shows were nominated as



the Overall Outstanding Production with *Who Will Sing for Lena?* taking that honor. All of this was made even more significant to me when I considered where it was taking place. As I listened to the history of the Battle of Gettysburg during my stay, I was reminded that this historic battle is regarded as the moment it became clear that the Civil War would end with those enslaved gaining freedom, and the reunification of our country. Ama’s and Jessica’s talent would still exist were the outcome of the Civil War different, but it is likely the hundreds of people in attendance at AACTFest would never have seen it. And that would be an unthinkable loss for the theatre world.

- ☆ We saw outstanding performances by youth companies that ranged from *Once Upon a Mattress* to an adaptation of *1984*. I can tell you that community theatre is alive, well, and in good hands with these young people.

It was a week to remember for sure. I now return to my mundane life, but I am forever changed by all that I was part of. I am once again reminded that theatre changes lives! Aren’t we lucky to be a part of that?



Among our Michigan representatives at AACTfest in June are, I to r, the award-winning Joanne Berry and her husband, Kerry; CTAM president Betsy Willis, center; and Kalamazoo Civic exec Steve Carver and Krista Angelique.

# Welcome to our new CTAM Administrator!

The CTAM Board is pleased to introduce Sara Hartley, our new CTAM Administrator. Sara is filling the position held for more than 20 years by Executive Secretary Nancy Peska. We decided that the title of Executive Secretary was outdated as Nancy was, and Sara will be far more than a secretary to our organization. Read on to learn of another connection between these two women.




*Sara Hartley  
CTAM Administrator*

Sara has been a lifelong member and advocate for community theater in Michigan, starting out with her family in STAGE-M in Big Rapids. She got a BA in Music from Alma College and was actually directed onstage by Nancy Peska with Gratiot County Players. For the past three years she has been volunteering with Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City and currently serves as Vice Chair of the Artistic Committee.

Professionally Sara worked as the Music Program Manager for Washington National Cathedral and as an Executive Associate for the Association of Performing Arts Presenters in Washington, DC. She spent several years in education and non-profit development and administrative support in Baltimore before returning to Michigan. She is now the Grocery Manager for Oryana Natural Food Co-op in Traverse City and is thrilled to be able to also join the CTAM team.

Sara and Nancy already are working together to make this a smooth transition. Your first opportunity to meet Sara will be at the Master Classes in Lansing this month.

Welcome Sara! We are all anxious to meet you and have you become part of the CTAM family.



Forget  
**EVERYTHING**  
AND  
**BECOME A  
PIRATE**

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**Treetops Resort in Gaylord**  
**October 11-13**

## Are your policies in order?

CTAM reminds you to take a moment this summer to review your theater's policy statements:

- ✓ Conflict of Interest for Board Members;
- ✓ Whistleblower policy, and a
- ✓ Document Retention and Destruction Policy?

These are basic board policies and the three you need to file with your annual IRS Form 990. Before you blindly just file the forms, give them a good read to be sure they are up to date. The internet has changed everything; be sure you take it into consideration in your policies.

If needed, check out the [AACT website](#) for samples upon which to base your policies.







## Volunteers needed!

The CTAM Membership Committee wants you! We need to get the good word out to theatre groups in Michigan that CTAM is here for them. To do that, won't you please consider joining the Membership

Committee to develop a plan to increase our presence in the state and better support our current members.

The requirements are simple:

- Join us in a conference call to establish priorities, procedures, and a protocol for highlighting member theatres in future issues of the Callboard (1-2 hours),
- Attend a monthly conference call (30 to 60 minute maximum) to check in, collect data, and provide feedback about the strategies we've chosen to implement, and most of all,
- Bring an enthusiasm for building CTAM membership and an outgoing personality that you'll share with current and potential members as we reach out to them!

Please contact [Shyrl Cone](#), CTAM Secretary and Membership Chair, by July 10th to join this dynamic team!

## Act Well Your Part

*Read this before stepping on stage.*

### Don't forget the audience

Think of the audience as your acting partner. Make sure they can see, hear and understand you.

### Act with the voice AND the body

How does your character stand, walk and gesture? What kind of character does the audience see?

### Pay attention to your voice

Be aware of your diction, articulation and volume. All three are necessary on stage.

### Stay in character

Even if you forget lines or get horrible stage fright, stay in character. If you are always in character, the audience will never know there is anything wrong.

### You are never invisible

If you can see the audience, they can see you. Never assume you can goof off, squirm or break character when you're not the focus of a scene.



Stagecrafters in Royal Oak offered a rousing production of *Oklahoma!* in May.





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

By Mary Lou Britton, Editor

Overheard in most theaters in Michigan:

- I can't handle those stairs one more time!
- Would you carry these costumes to stage left the next time you go, please?
- Is there room back here in the corner for a chair? I can't stand through the whole scene...which, by the way, is much too long.
- What? I didn't hear you.
- Nope! Can't be there that early; I have my rehab therapy at 3:00! I just had surgery, ya know!
- Huh? 'Splain that again for me, will you?

And this applies on stage, as well. It's harder to focus, more difficult to memorize lines, tougher to remember the blocking and, heaven forbid, to do both at once! Forget about pratfalls and hopping on the furniture! No swordfights here.

It's good that we can most times laugh about our getting old, but the reality is that it is real! The physical and mental limitations of aging put a real damper on accomplishing the excellence for which we have always been striving. The truth is that we aren't as fast, as strong, or have the stamina we did in the 'good old days.'

I was involved in a discussion on this topic last week and we crowed about 'kids today' sure don't party like we did! Remember that party at Larry's and everyone trying to decide whether to go to mass first and then breakfast ... or the other way around? The recent discussion continued until someone said, "Oh, yes, the partying still goes on. You're just not invited anymore!"

For years, I've been concerned about who is going to replace my friends and me to keep our group running smoothly and successfully. No one seems to be as passionate and committed

as 'we' were! Oh, woe is me.

Well, not to worry, everything is in fine hands! It's when the old guard lets go that the younger members can step up and do what has to be done. It probably won't be done in the same way ... by the same people ... but it will get done with more pep in the step than we can offer.

So, as one of the old guard going out sometime soon, here are some personal thoughts for everyone involved in this transition:

- Remember when you first joined the group and thought the old-timers were stodgy and out of it? What's you thinking now?
- Realize that times change! Social media makes that abundantly clear.
- You can't bottle institutional memory. There is only one place to get it ... and that's in the minds and memories of long-time members.
- There are ways to mine the expertise of older theatricians and not expect them to trod the boards or carry armloads of costumes. Boards, committees, consultants, etc. Be creative but don't forget them.
- People, young and old, just want to be recognized for their ongoing participation and occasional outstanding moments.
- Don't use the privilege of longevity to assert unrealistic or egocentric mantras on new and upcoming leadership.
- Looking back is sometimes a smart thing to do, but looking ahead is the only way to move forward!
- Know when it's time to go.

New ideas, new ways, new goals, and new results come with new and younger members who are stepping forward as we speak. Welcome them with open arms and then get the hell outta the way!





# The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western



Published by Samuel French ©1997, *Lafferty's Wake* by Susan Turlish is an interactive two-act comedy celebrating the life of Irish native, John Lafferty. Through hilarious and sometimes heart-felt testimonials by Lafferty's wife, priest, daughter, son-in-law, bartender, and "special friend," we get a picture of the man and his environs. Cast is: five men and three women. Lafferty's wife plays 50+, his daughter and son-in-law, 25+, and Molly, Lafferty's "special" friend, 40+. Lafferty's ghost, Rory, the bartender, and the priest can be almost any age.

I saw an immersive production where the venue became Rory's Tavern. Three bars: Rory's acting bar/space, a "real" bar, where the audience could get a drink before, during and after the play, and one for tech. Beer and whiskey signs lined the walls, with the casket on the stage sitting on whiskey barrels and draped with Ireland's flag. The audience was definitely a character as the actors freely roamed the tavern, singing, dancing, and playing "pass the potato" with the attendees.

Obviously, actors with good improvisation skills and Irish accents are needed. Lighting is simple. Though not a musical, this is a play with music. The daughter and her husband play guitar accompaniment for most of the songs and two songs are accompanied by music from a juke box. Not plot driven, the audience is involved throughout learning about Lafferty's life in Ballyslattery in Donegal County -- although the arrival of Molly, the special friend from Dublin, adds a lot of zest when the widow finds out about Molly and his trip to NYC. A BIG twist at the end! Could be a wonderful immersive night in Ireland.

*A Sale in Boston* by T.E. Klunzinger won first place in the 2011 CTAM playwriting contest. Based on an actual event, this dramedy is set in Boston and Baltimore in the spring of 1926. The

said incident occurred when American Mercury, H. L. Mencken's magazine, was censored in Boston. As Mencken was a famous journalist and rabble rouser, he purchases a copy, challenging the law, and is arrested so the matter goes to the courts. The uproar that ensues is the frame on which Klunzinger hangs the script. As there are fourteen scenes in two acts, simple stage pieces and lights will be needed. Scenes move from Mencken's office in Baltimore, to the offices of the Watch and Ward Society in Boston, the private, NOT public, organization that was responsible for the strict censorship that coined the phrase "banned in Boston." As the play takes place in 1926, sound effects, props, and costumes need to reflect that time period. Cast needs: 17 men with only a couple who have many lines and then it is a LOT of lines. Four small women's parts and two LARGE crowd scenes. Although the requirements of this script are many, it's a fun read that would be an excellent production in the hands of a talented director.

In 2016, Priscilla Cogan's *Summer Cottage* won second place in the CTAM contest. You can read an excellent synopsis of the plot on the CTAM website. Go to [www.ctam.online](http://www.ctam.online), to "Playwriting Contest" to "Link to Recent and Past Winners," then scroll to 2016. The cast is four generations of women playing mid-20's, 40-50, 60-70, to the great-grandmother who is a 30ish ghost. Some lighting challenges exist as the two oldest women are ghosts. Set decorators and designers will have a field day creating a Michigan summer cottage "untouched since the '20s-'30s". My own family has a cottage that is on its six generation. No ghosts so far, although it's not the same cottage! If you want more information, contact the playwright directly at [priscogan@aol.com](mailto:priscogan@aol.com).

