



CTAM
Community Theatre Association of Michigan

CALLBOARD

January 2020



Pit & Balcony, Saginaw -- March 21
Old Town Playhouse, TC -- April 25
Players de Noc, Escanaba -- May (TBD)

Travelling Spring Conferences scheduled again for 2020

After a successful travelling dog-and-pony show in 2018, CTAM is again taking the Spring Conference to the members! The same workshop presenters and the same content, just in East and West Lower, and in the Upper!

Mark your calendar for the weekend that best suits you and the gang from your theatre -- and plan now to join with your fellow CTAMers for a great weekend of theatre!

Clio Cast and Crew and the Show To Go Singers presented The Day Before Christmas in December to great acclaim. Looks like a fun show to do!

2019 Playwriting winners and shows available on CTAM website

A summary of the 2019 playwriting winners and contact information for the playwrights is now available on our website at <http://ctam.online/playwriting-contest-winners/>. Affiliate members in good standing may produce the shows royalty-free through October 2021.

For more information on the contest, contact contest chairs Leo and Pat Paveglio at ctamplaywriting@gmail.com. Information about the 2020 contest will be in these pages in upcoming months. Plan ahead to be part of the party!



HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1961!



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2019-20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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ryonwillis915@hotmail.com

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theatrepat511@gmail.com

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The Sauk, Jonesville
trinitybird@gmail.com

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Mr.jamiepeterson@gmail.com

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CTAM Administrator

Sara Hartley.....ctamthrives@gmail.com
P. O. Box 693; Traverse City MI 49685
ctamthrives@gmail.com <http://ctam.online/>
ctamich@gmail.com Instagram: @ctamich

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. Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to ctamthrives@gmail.com



Gratiot County Players entertained their audiences recently with two successful shows: Shrek, Jr., Last August and with Mary Poppins.

CTAM Calendar of Events

January 18-19, 2020 Kalamazoo	Board Meeting Hosted by Kalamazoo Civic
March 21, 2020 Saginaw	CTAM On The Road Hosted by Pit & Balcony
April 25, 2020 Traverse City	CTAM On The Road Old Town Playhouse
May TBD, 2020 Escanaba	CTAM On The Road Players de Noc
July 18-19, 2020	Board Strategic Planning Retreat, location TBD
October 9-11, 2020	Fall Conference and Annual Meeting. Location TBD



Apply now to be an AACT NewPlayFest producing theatre in 2022

The theatre that produces a new play brings a brand new adventure to its company and its patrons. The world premiere of an award winning show is a feather in any theatre's cap!

- ☆ Applications to be a Producing Theatre for AACT NewPlayFest 2022 are due by February 1, 2020.
- ☆ To apply, visit NewPlayFest Call for Producing Theatre, complete the application, and submit two letters of support.
- ☆ AACT will select member theatres to produce the winning plays.
- ☆ The Producing Theatres will read the scripts that make it to the final round and select the winning shows that will be produced.

Producing Theatres will be responsible for providing fully realized productions between June 2021 and December 2022 and for bringing in the playwright for a workshopping session and a performance.

Make this one of your New Year Resolutions!

I'm going to go to New York this year with the CTAM gang!

This is the time of year that -- in addition to New Year resolutions, we are all counting our pennies but remember that the New York Trip isn't until September so there is time to save those pennies for the trip. If you can cough up a \$500 deposit, the remainder is due June 16.



This trip is the perfect blend of organized activities and free time. Everyone is anxious for us to go to the Empire State Building and what a photo op! And the Metropolitan Opera House is an icon and a backstage tour is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The two Broadway shows included in this trip will be very good seats and two of the top shows on Broadway. Once we know for sure what those two shows are, our trip organizer Nancy Peska will let us know.

But first, we need people to pay their deposits so we have an idea if we need 12 tickets or 24. Deposits can be made anytime by registering with Executive Travel at www.executivetravel.com/CTAM20.



Riverwalk Theatre in Lansing presented *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown!*

It seems to me...

By Dexter Brigham



The role of new works in a healthy community theatre

What is the creative process we go through in the community theatre world? What recurring events define the experience from show to show? While the nature of the experience is at least as varied as the number of community theatres, there are certain things that are consistent. I would venture to guess that well north of 90% of all community theatre productions follow this path:

- ✓ Pick a popular or well-known show
- ✓ Cast
- ✓ Rehearse
- ✓ Perform
- ✓ Repeat

There are slight variations on this theme, of course, that allow us to premier shows fresh off Broadway (still, known commodities), or to dig deeper into the classical canon to challenge ourselves with something older (classics are by definition well-known), but the process, by and large, holds firm for seasons on end.

The question is: should it? Is this cycle that is so engrained into our culture that it has become synonymous with the experience itself helping us to nourish and expand our creativity? Or are there other ways to create theatre?

Now, I'm not in any way devaluing our traditional process, nor am I knocking our desire to perform plays we love. I cherish the canon of English language theatre, and have a long list of plays I hope to work on during my career. But locking oneself into a single way of creating art, to the exclusion of all else, is restrictive, and allows us to get comfortable as artists.

This is where new plays come into the picture.

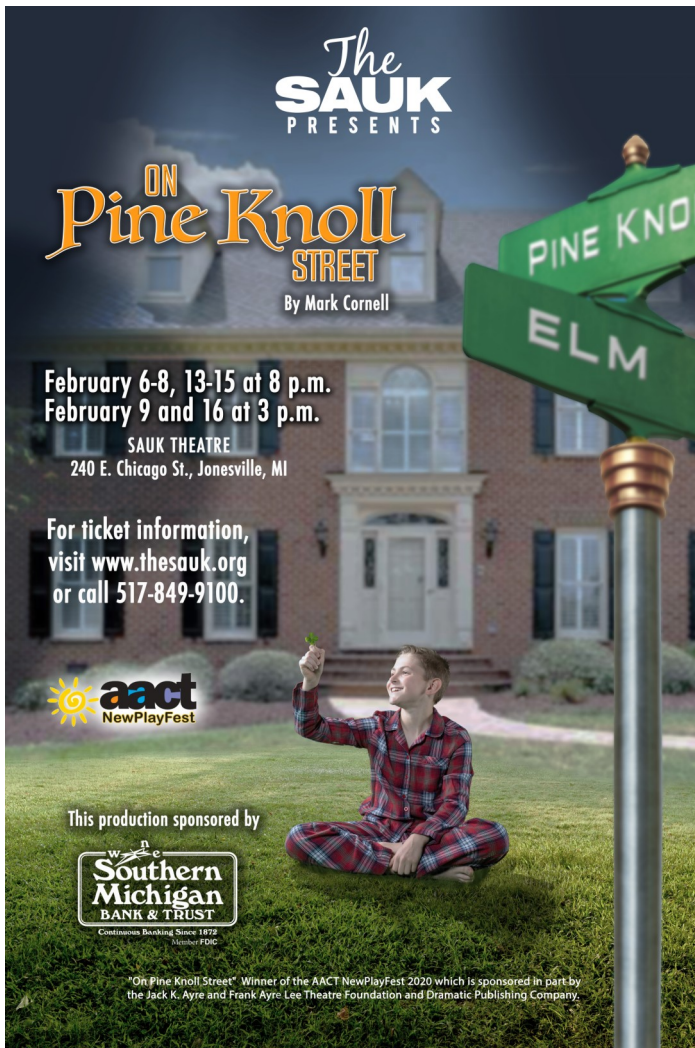
New plays are, by their nature, unfinished. They require something more of us than a standard six to eight week rehearsal schedule with the usual deadlines in place for staging and memorization. They require our active participation and input to become worthy of the audience for which we are preparing. In the best projects, the playwright is present in rehearsals, making cuts and generating new pages on a daily basis. The new pages stretch the actor's ability to find the character inside of new words, they stimulate necessary conversations between the writer and actor about what lies at the heart of the moment being explored. The actor's craft is no longer a linear experience unfolding at a predictable pace, but a dynamic and critical ingredient that is being relied upon daily for the betterment of the play.

Many new plays show up at the first rehearsal with a starting point, the latest draft. Others, such as devised works, start with only an idea, with no predetermined ending point in place, relying on the input of the whole team to determine the final product. New plays stumble drunkenly through table readings, workshops, staged readings, more workshops, improv exercises, and another table reading in an organic, non-linear growth trajectory. It's scary, messy, frustrating and endlessly rewarding. And this beautiful process, which asks for true creative input from our artists, is largely missing from the community theatre scene.

I don't know any artists who aren't interested in growing, but I know many who are at the limits on their time and energy, as family and work demand their attention. The key to a community of theatre artists who are willing to stretch themselves comes from finding a balance between continuing our more traditional process and encouraging our artists to step outside their comfort zone, secure in the knowledge they will be supported.

Dexter Brigham is Director of Theatre Programs for the Midland Center for the Performing Arts. In addition to producing the community theatre season, he programs the Center's monthly comedy series, film series and summer Matrix Festival.





THE SAUK PRODUCES AWARD-WINNING WORLD PREMIERE

The American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) is pleased to announce that CTAM affiliate member group, The Sauk (located in Jonesville), is producing the AACT NewPlayFest winning play, *On Pine Knoll Street* by Mark Cornell. The world premiere will open February 7 and run through February 16, 2020. Tickets are available at thesauk.org or by calling the box office at 517-849-9100. A Pay What You Can Preview Night will be held on February 6. In *On Pine Knoll Street*, Thelma, a colorful and quick-witted 87-year old woman, is battling with her memory. Her devoted daughter, Marilyn, with whom she now lives, is trying to make the best of the situation. Curtis, her neighbor, is a writer and stay-at-home father of a special-needs child. His wife, Kristie, struggles

to balance family and work. When Marilyn asks Curtis to care for her mother and her beloved cats while she is at the beach, a friendship is set into motion that tethers two families. Set in a small town in North Carolina, *On Pine Knoll Street* is an intimate look at the joy and fragility of life, the meaning of home, and the things we do for love.

The Sauk is located at 240 E Chicago Street, Jonesville, MI. Started in 1961 as the "Broad Street Players," the organization purchased the former Jonesville Opera House in 1971 and converted it into what is now The Sauk Theatre. The Sauk, also known as Hillsdale Community Theatre, produces a five-show mainstage and a three-show SaukSeconds season and hosts both a local improvisational troupe and a professional Shakespeare company annually. Each summer, Plays-in-Development readings are produced; a program created in 2015 to give local playwrights an opportunity to workshop their plays. The program expanded nationally and, in 2018, internationally. New plays are also presented as part of the annual Sauk Shorts, an evening of 10-minute plays. In addition, local schools and a local children's theatre company use the theatre for their productions.

AACT NewPlayFest addresses the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe. This AACT playwriting competition happens every other year in even-numbered, non AACTFest years, is unique with the guarantee that an established theatre will produce each play as a world premiere, and that Dramatic Publishing Company will publish the script in an anthology of winning plays. Dramatic Publishing, one of the major licensors of plays and musicals in the United States and beyond, includes the winning plays in their catalog and licenses the performance rights.

Playwright Mark Cornell lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and has had more than 75 of his plays produced in theatres around the world.

CTAM congratulates The Sauk on the honor of producing this world premiere production. "Tis a feather in your cap!



Spring on stage in Michigan

Center Stage Theatre - Midland	<i>Picasso at the Lapin Agile</i>	Jan 10-19, 2020
Clarkston Village Players	<i>Vino Veritas</i>	Jan 10-25, 2020
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Guys & Dolls</i>	Jan 10-19, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Tick, Tick...Boom!</i>	Jan 10-26, 2020
Master Arts Theatre	<i>The Struggles*</i>	Jan 10-20, 2020
Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>Wait Until Dark</i>	Jan 16-26, 2020
Flint Community Players	<i>Chicago</i>	Jan 16-26, 2020
Riverwalk Theatre, Lansing	<i>Boy Gets Girl</i>	Jan 16-26, 2020
Avon Players, Rochester	<i>Death Trap</i>	Jan 17-Feb 1, 2020
Cadillac Footlites	<i>Boeing, Boeing</i>	Jan 17-25, 2020
Muskegon Civic Theatre	<i>Fun Home</i>	Jan 17-25, 2020
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Indecent</i>	Jan 17-Feb 1, 2020
Fenton Village Players	<i>Exit Laughing**</i>	Jan 24-26, 2020
Pit and Balcony Theatre, Saginaw	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	Jan 24-Feb 2, 2020
Tawas Bay Players	<i>Wait Until Dark</i>	Jan 24-Feb 2, 2020
Community Theatre of Howell	<i>Wait Until Dark</i>	Jan 31-Feb 9, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Born Yesterday</i>	Jan 31-Feb 15, 2020
Twin City Players, Benton Harbor/St. Joe	<i>Savannah Sipping Society</i>	Jan 31-Feb 16, 2020
Flint Community Players	<i>Reasons to be Pretty</i>	Feb 2, 2020
Pinckney Players	<i>No Sex Please, We're British**</i>	Feb 1-3, 2020
Riverwalk Theatre, Lansing	<i>Unnecessary Farce</i>	Feb 6-16, 2020
The Sauk, Jonesville	<i>On Pine Knoll Street** (AACT Playfest winner!)</i>	Feb 6-16, 2020
Bay City Players	<i>They're Playing Our Song</i>	Feb 7-16, 2020
Farmington Players	<i>Unnecessary Farce</i>	Feb 7-22, 2020
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Love, Loss and What I Wore**</i>	Feb 7-22, 2020
Clio Cast and Crew	<i>Game's Afoot</i>	Feb 14-23, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Romance Guaranteed</i>	Feb 14-23, 2020
Muskegon Civic Theatre	<i>Our Town</i>	Feb 14-29, 2020
Master Arts Theatre	<i>Father Brown</i>	Feb 20-Mar 7, 2020
Hartland Players	<i>Proof</i>	Feb 22-Mar 1, 2020
Fenton Village Players	<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	Feb 27-Mar 8, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Race</i>	Feb 28-March 14, 2020
Owosso Community Players	<i>Cinderella</i>	Feb 28-Mar 8, 2020
Players deNoc, Escanaba	<i>Mamma Mia!</i>	Mar 5-14, 2020
Avon Players, Rochester	<i>Lend Me A Tenor</i>	Mar 6-21, 2020
Clarkston Village Players	<i>Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily</i>	Mar 6-21, 2020
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Silent Sky</i>	Mar 6-21, 2020
Flint Community Players	<i>Love, Lies & The Doctor's Dilemma</i>	Mar 12-22, 2020
Riverwalk Theatre, Lansing	<i>A Hotel on Marvin Gardens</i>	Mar 12-22, 2020

* 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.

The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western

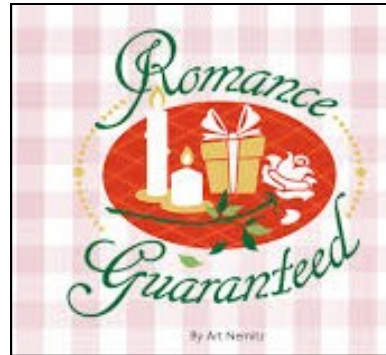


What will 2020 bring to you and your theatre group? Who knows? I'm still waiting for those individual jet cars from the Jetsons? One can only hope. January's *Scoops* include a valentine from CTAM playwriting contest winner Art Nemitz and two Southern farces.

The Red Velvet Cake War by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, Jamie Wooten, published by Dramatists Play Service Inc. ©2010, is a farce that will have your audience laughing until they cry. A cast of three men, seven women, (doubling an option) ranging in ages from 40s to 80s takes this fast-paced Southern farce into one absurd situation after another. If you know farce, you know that trying to describe the plot is pretty much impossible.....so trust me, it's funny but not too hard to follow! The only set is a "countrified" living room; all other locations can be suggested by lighting and perhaps a single set piece for an outdoor porch, a saddlery shop and TV station. Lots of props and light cues but nothing difficult. Every character has juicy lines and moments. The playwrights state in "Authors' Notes": "The characters who populate Sweetgum, Texas, should be portrayed as real people, not Southern caricatures." If you've taken any CTAM acting workshops, you've heard this many times. Always a mistake to try to make the play funnier by making the situation or character "bigger". If one veers into slapstick, make sure it's organic!

Dearly Departed, published by Dramatists Play Service, Inc. in 1992 by David Bottrell and Jessie Jones, is another farcical Southern comedy. Living in the Bible Belt, the Turpin family tries to bury its patriarch with dignity, but nothing is dignified in this family. Four men, six women (doubling an option) with Southern accents are needed. From the authors: "in order to facilitate the numerous scene changes, we would suggest a simple unit set. The play was designed to

work with minimal props, a few folding chairs, a kitchen table, a sofa and a bed." Lights will be important, of course. Funny, funny play. The author says in no uncertain terms to not bring a casket on stage. Well, Tawas Bay Players did and I have heard of other groups actually having a celebrity "body" in the casket! Director's choice, as usual. I played Marguerite, (think of Dana Carvey's "Church Lady") who took photos of the corpselots of opportunity for schtick; serious, serious schtick!



Romance Guaranteed by Art Nemitz won the CTAM Playwriting contest in 2016. When the Man (30years+) meets the Woman (30+) at a shabby Detroit Italian eatery, romance seems

unlikely although www.romanceguaranteed.com claims otherwise. This is a delightful story of a very average woman and a handsome, hyperactive, witty and educated man. His British accent, complete with British slang, his near-sightedness, and his habit of writing everything in a notebook, confuses and intrigues her. He is a hot mess, who darts from one topic to another with wit and an adorable lack of self-awareness. As they trade stories, one senses the beginning, of a glimmer, of a chance of romance....maybe! The dialogue is brilliant: fresh, lively and surprising. This beguiling romance will charm audiences as two mis-matched misfits find each other. A third character, the waitress (40s plus) adds spice and hilarity with her "whaddya wanna drink?" accent and attitude. A simple set with a table and two chairs in front of a tacky trellis. But lots of food and drink! Cadillac Footlites and the Up North Arts successfully produced RG with Northern Lites Readers' Theatre. *Romance Guaranteed* is being produced by Kalamazoo Civic at the Carver Center Studio on February 14-23, 2020.

Book it now! Recommended for 13+. Go to www.kazoocivic.com for more information.

