



March 2020

# CALLBOARD

## Here are all the exciting details for our travelling Spring Conferences!

If you can't make it to the spring conference, we will bring the conference to you...or at least your region! Everyone is so busy, work, rehearsals, kids, rehearsals, classes, rehearsals, meetings, rehearsals and we understand. Although, we love to have everyone together in one place, we would really love to have more of our members and affiliate groups in attendance.

So, like we did in 2018, CTAM is going on

the road for Spring 2020. Each conference has the exact same workshops, which we bring to each of the 3 major regions (East Region, West Region and North/U.P.). The conferences will be hosted by Pit & Balcony in Saginaw (East Region) on March 21, Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City (West Region) on April 25 and Players de Noc in Escanaba (North/U.P.) on May 9. Choose the conference closest to you or whichever one fits your schedule! See page 3 for individual details.

Classes will be two hours long and you get to select one morning class and one afternoon class. You can arrive to take the two classes in one day or you can stay at a nearby hotel – our host theatres have reserved blocks of room with special reduced rates for our attendees. Additionally, some host theatres have a show going on that weekend and you will also receive with a discount code to purchase tickets to their show. Since these conferences now take place on one day, the cost is greatly reduced and is an amazing value, based on our instructors, so sign up today at [ctam.online/2020-spring-otr-registration/](http://ctam.online/2020-spring-otr-registration/).



Pit & Balcony, Saginaw -- March 21  
Old Town Playhouse, TC -- April 25  
Players de Noc, Escanaba -- May 9

HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1961!



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Association of Michigan**

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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). Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to [ctamthrives@gmail.com](mailto:ctamthrives@gmail.com)

**Don't forget your volunteers this year -- National Volunteer Week coming up April 19 to 25**

National Volunteer Week during the third week in April is an opportunity to thank all the many volunteers who keep your group running. We often don't think of our members as volunteers. "We're not volunteers...we're actors!" With stretched budgets all around, think of creative ways to say 'thanks' to your volunteers:

- ☆ Give them a candy bar on a specified Saturday when they come in to work.
- ☆ Reserve your premium parking spot for a selected volunteer for each week. And give 'em a big sign with their name on it!
- ☆ Send everyone a private, hand-written and hand-signed letter of thanks.



- ☆ Stick individualized post-it notes all around your building or rehearsal space, thanking individual volunteers for specific wonderful things they do for your group. Members will look for and love finding the note to them!
- ☆ Bring a fancy treat for the cast at rehearsal -- with a big Thank You note sticking out of it. Could be cheesecake, or individual chocolates.

**CTAM Calendar of Events**

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 9, 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



# Spring Conference details

Available details for the Spring Conferences, please check the website for information updates.

## March 21: Pit & Balcony (Saginaw)

Pit & Balcony  
805 N Hamilton  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
(989) 754-6587

Please note, due to a schedule conflict, the Acting Class by Ben Zylman will be taught by Callboard columnist Dexter Brigham (using an alternate text) – the content will remain the same.

Attendees will also receive a link to purchase discounted tickets to see their show, *Meteor Shower* by Steve Martin.

### Hotel Information:

SpringHill Suites  
5270 Cardinal Square Blvd.  
Saginaw, MI 48604  
989-792-2800

There are a block of \$99 rooms available for March 20th and 21st, simply call the hotel and mention the CTAM conference in order to get the discount prior to March 9th.

## April 25: Old Town Playhouse (Traverse City)

Old Town Playhouse  
148 E Eighth St  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
(231) 947-2210

The Registration cost for Traverse City version of the Spring Conference is only \$39 and includes lunch on Saturday. If interested, registrants will receive a link to discounted tickets to their performance of the musical *Chicago* on the OTP Mainstage.

### Hotel Information:

If you want to stay over, OTP has arranged for a block of rooms at \$109.95, being held until April 13 at:

Park Place Hotel  
300 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
844-740-2027

Be sure to mention “Community Theatre of Michigan” when registering to get this rate. (Please note that they left out the word Association!)

## May 9: Players de Noc (Escanaba)

Players de Noc  
700 1st Ave S  
Escanaba, MI 49829  
(906) 786-8760

Escanaba will be offering two Youth level workshops. We are offering sections of Youth Improv and Musical Theatre. The Youth instructors are Enda Breadon & Micah DeShazer (both presenters come to us from Children’s Theatre of Madison WI).

Escanaba will once again be hosting a Welcome Mixer/Registration Pick-up on Friday night at the Terrace Hotel.

The Registration cost this year will be \$52.00.

Registration will include Friday night Mixer/Registration Pick-up with light refreshments and cash bar from 8pm-11pm; Saturday workshops, two of which must be selected at registration; CTAM & Theatre Round Table; a ticket to their Saturday evening performance of *Cemetery Club*; and a closing reception with refreshments following the performance.



# WORKSHOP CLASSES

## **Acting Class: Character Study with Ben Zylman**

**CLASS DESCRIPTION:** Using Neil Simon's *Brighton Beach Memoirs* as source material, students in this class will move well beyond the fundamentals of acting. With an emphasis on multi-faceted character creation we will focus on the impacts of environment, relationship and back story. Additionally, one class session will focus on the art of performing comedy. If you want to be a better actor, this is the class for you!



**INSTRUCTOR BIO:** *Ben Zylman is a multi-award winning actor and director whose career spans 40 years and 130 productions. A veteran of stage, radio, television and film, he has worked with Jerry Seinfeld,*

*Chita Rivera, Mayim Bialik, Renee Taylor, and Claire Bloom, as well as Grammy Award winning artists Meredith Arwady and Timothy Nordwind.*

## **Directing Class: The Empathetic Design Process with Stephen John**

**CLASS DESCRIPTION:** Stephen is a proud theatre generalist and enjoys working with emerging designers, actors, playwrights, and theatres alike. His lecture on the Empathetic Set Design discusses his view that Set Design is at the heart of the audience experience in the theatre. It is often the first and strongest image that sets the tone for a theatrical event, yet is often not considered with any empathetic currency. The design process that he teaches is one that starts with an empathetic reaction to the text, then leads to collaboration with your design team in a more open and effective way. It often leads to wonderful discoveries, daring ideas, and more cost-effective ways of operating.



**INSTRUCTOR BIO:** *Stephen John holds an MFA in Directing for the Theatre from the University of Idaho and a BA in Theatre from California State University at Fuller-*

*ton. Stephen is a member of the professional Stage Directors Union (SDC – Stage Directors and Choreographers), ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education), VASTA (Voice and Speech Trainers Association), and has been awarded over fifteen Special Recognition Citations for Design by the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival where he is also an active respondent to local university productions. He is currently the Director of Theatre Design and Production for Interlochen Arts Academy and resides in Interlochen Michigan where he and his wife are raising their three-year-old son Andrew.*

## **Administrative Class: They Call It Show Business For a Reason with Betsy Willis**

**CLASS DESCRIPTION:** The success of a community theatre certainly depends on production quality, entertaining staging, and audience pleasing productions, but for most theatres there is also a need for effective leadership from its Board of Directors/Trustees. The Board must understand the business side of running a theatre, be aware of the need to supplement earned income with unearned income (and know the difference), and act as the conduit for community relations. The degree to which each of these needs is important depends, to some degree, on the size of the theatre's budget and its stage of development.

By the end of the workshop(s), participants will better understand the responsibilities of Board members, how to build an effective Board for now and for the future, and what your Board members need to know to be successful. Additionally, each of you will leave with a better, more effective water cooler/elevator speech to share with patrons or community members.



## Part One (morning) – Building the Best Board for Your Theatre

- Learn where you are on the Stages of Community Theatre Development
- What type of Board you should have for that stage?
- Are you ready to move to the next level?
- What does that mean in terms of Board Development?
- Strength and weaknesses of your current Board
- Why a community-based Board is valuable to you
- Balancing business with creative thinking
- What role should your Board play in governance
- What role does your Board play in fundraising?

## Part Two (afternoon) – What Your Board Needs to Know About Your Theatre in Order to Serve You Well

- Board orientation
- Mission statement – required for class
- Yearly budget or expenses – required for class
- How to figure your local economic impact
- What words will sell your theatre to the uninformed
- Water cooler/elevator speech

It is strongly encouraged that participants take both sessions of this class, but those choosing to attend only one session will still receive beneficial information.



**INSTRUCTOR BIO:** *With more than 17 years of theatrical management to her credit, Betsy Willis is one of the most highly regarded community theatre Development Directors in the state. Her depth of experience encompasses board development, staff*

*training, budgeting, and oversight of daily operations. Betsy's passion for fund development in general and grant writing led her to create corporate sponsorship programs, plan fund raising events, and understand that community theatres need to have strength in busi-*

*ness as well as creativity in order to thrive. Formerly the Development Director of Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City, Betsy is now the Development Coordinator at Grass Roots Natural Area. Additionally, her consulting business, specializing in development, grant writing and strategic planning, continues to thrive. She currently serves as a grant panel reviewer for the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, and received her Certificate in Fund Raising Management from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, IU-PUI in 2014.*

## **Technical Class: Creating Faux Food for the Stage with Michael Wilson**

**CLASS DESCRIPTION:** Michael Wilson will share his extensive experience in creating faux/fake food to be used in stage productions. Some of the topics to be covered will be: Why do we use fake food items? How do you find the right materials to use and where do you find them? What is the best way to present fake food so that it appears real? Real vs fake how to decide which will work better? Tricks and shortcuts to making fake food look real. How to store and preserve the props once they are created. What to use when you must have liquid beverages on stage and what to use when you don't need real liquid. He will also have several of his food props as examples in the classroom. Bring your questions along to class and we will discuss/problem solve any of those items.



**INSTRUCTOR BIO:** *Michael is the Prop Master for Grand Rapids Civic Theatre and has been working with properties for over 20 years. Before taking the reins of the props department at GRCT he spent 14 years as the Props Master for Opera Grand Rapids. He has also propped*

*many shows for Circle Theatre, Grand Valley State University and Saugatuck Center for the Arts.*

It seems to me...

By Dexter Brigham



## Theatre Ain't No White Collar Gig

We theatre folks spend a lot of time and energy convincing ourselves and others that we are “artists;” we sip our tea with pinkies aloft and bemoan the shortcomings of the latest crop of musicals opening in the theatre district this season (sigh). We love to debate the finer points of dramaturgy, to throw themed soirées for our donors, and to speak about our art form in sweeping terms as “the American dramatic canon” and the “post-modern musical.”

But let's be honest... if I told you that every night I went to work, changed into my all-too-infrequently laundered uniform, burned over a thousand calories through sheer physical exertion, went to the bar for a drink or two with my co-workers after my shift ended, and fell, exhausted, into my bed at the end of the day, you wouldn't think there was much glamour in that.

But that's theatre. That's the life we live, day in and day out. We sacrifice the functional health of our knees, our backs, and our feet in the name of “selling it” to the audience. Most of our wardrobe is contaminated with either paint splatter, glitter or foundation smudges, if it hasn't already starred in more shows than we have. And the resumé of my clothing doesn't hold a candle to the number of star turns my couch has made.

We stay in the theatre for ten or twelve hours at a time, sometimes more, grabbing cat naps on the couch of the green room between shifts, dismantling platforms with an electric drill while still wearing eyeliner, or

moving unreasonably heavy objects through a crowded space in the dark in twenty seconds or less.

Bringing a play to the stage means that you show up, that you work hard, that you take the work home with you and bring it back better than it was, that you reach out to your teammates when you stumble, and that they take your hand and pull you along. When a play opens, it means that one group of people put over a thousand man-hours into staging, feeling, exploring, memorizing and growing into a imaginary story one day at a time; another group put over a thousand hours into designing, revising, purchasing, sawing, bolting, painting and dressing the set for the show; and a third, fourth, fifth or who-knows-how-many other groups costumed, lit, amplified, advertised, teched, tracked and otherwise willed the show into existence.

A play is a machine, with people as its parts. The stage manager calls for “places!” and the machine begins to move, its gears repeating the same, well-rehearsed motions to generate the same output as the day before. We are the gears in that glorious machine.

The theatre is not a place, not an empty space to be filled. It is the blue-collar laborer who shows up every day, puts on the uniform, and gives her sweat and spirit to the machine, to the audience, to the art form.

Theatre is hard work. It aches and it chafes and it asks more than it gives. And I wish someone had told me that when I started this journey. So, consider yourself warned. And this is your five-minute call.

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*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.*



## Scholarship money available to help with Spring Conference registration

Did you see it in your email? On Facebook? Are you going? Need help with registration?

CTAM on the Road has been announced! Instead of everyone going to one place for a weekend of fun and learning, CTAM is bringing the Spring Conference to you! Check out our website (and this newsletter!) for more details.



Christy Frick

Scholarships are available to help cover registration! If you are planning on requesting a scholarship, please fill out the scholarship application online. Once approved, you will receive a registration code to enter as you register that will reduce your cost by all or partial registration (depending on your needs).

Please feel free to contact Scholarship Chair Christy Frick if you have any questions regarding the scholarships.

## Feeling lucky with your new play? Playwriting deadline is May 15

Somebody's got to win, why not you? You can't win if you don't enter. So put pen to paper and get that play written! The judges are in the wings, waiting for the curtain to go up – May 15th is the deadline. Check out the new judging criteria, tips and contest rules for entry information. <http://ctam.online/playwriting-contest-rules/>



Questions? Email contests chairs, Pat and Leo Paveglio at [ctamplaywriting@gmail.com](mailto:ctamplaywriting@gmail.com).



Kevin Cole, Terre Blair Hamlisch and Ric Roberts at the post-show reception. (Photo credit Jessica McFarland.)

## They're Playing Our Song sold out in Bay City

According to Leeds Bird, *They're Playing Our Song* turned out to be everyone's song at Bay City Players this February with six totally sold-out performances. Director Ric Roberts and music director Kevin Cole with a cast of eight and an exceptional crew brought a delightful show to life. A special reception was held for Terre Blair Hamlisch, present for the first two performances with talk-backs following. She delighted audiences with personal insights into her late husband, Marvin Hamlisch, composer of the music for *OUR SONG*. Additionally, forty patrons each night were surprised to receive a coffee-table book of photos chronicling Marvin's career. Turns out they certainly were playing our song.

### It's not too late...

...to schedule an adjudication for your spring shows! Remember that 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. Contact Adjudication Chair Larry Nielsen to make arrangements.

# Spring on stage in Michigan

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 &amp; The Doctor's Dilemma</i>	Mar 12-22, 2020
Riverwalk Theatre, Lansing	<i>A Hotel on Marvin Gardens</i>	Mar 12-22, 2020
Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>All My Sons</i>	Mar 13-22, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Disney's Frozen, Jr.*</i>	Mar 13-22, 2020
Richmond Community Theatre	<i>Clue, the Musical</i>	Mar 13-29, 2020
Hartland Players	<i>Willy Wonka Jr.*</i>	Mar 14-15, 2020
Pit and Balcony Theatre, Saginaw	<i>Meteor Shower</i>	Mar 15-22, 2020
Bay City Players	<i>God of Carnage</i>	Mar 20-29, 2020
Community Theatre of Howell	<i>The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*</i>	Mar 20-22, 2020
Twin City Players, Benton Harbor/St. Joe	<i>The Women of Lockerbie</i>	Mar 20-Apr 5, 2020
The Sauk, Jonesville	<i>Tony n' Tina's Wedding**</i>	Mar 26-29, 2020
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	Mar 27-Apr 5, 2020
Flint Community Players	<i>The Women of Lockerbie</i>	Mar 28-29, 2020
Cadillac Footlites	<i>The Lion King, Jr.*</i>	Apr 3-11, 2020
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Title of Show**</i>	Apr 3-18, 2020
Fenton Village Players	<i>Don't Mention My Name</i>	Apr 16-26, 2020
Master Arts Theatre	<i>Enchanted April</i>	Apr 16-May 9, 2020
Clio Cast and Crew	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>	Apr 17-26, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>August: Osage County</i>	April 17-26, 2020
Owosso Community Players	<i>Five Women Wearing the Same Dress</i>	April 17-26, 2020
Pinckney Players	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Apr 17-26, 2020
The Sauk, Jonesville	<i>Weekend Comedy**</i>	Apr 23-26, 2020
Farmington Players	<i>Mary Poppins</i>	Apr 24-May 16, 2020
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>Chicago</i>	Apr 24-May 23, 2020
Riverwalk Theatre, Lansing	<i>Fantastic Mr. Fox</i>	Apr 24-May 3, 2020
Tawas Bay Players	<i>Messiah on the Frigidaire</i>	Apr 24-May 3, 2020
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Frozen, Jr.*</i>	Apr 25-26, 2020
Muskegon Civic Theatre	<i>Mamma Mia!</i>	Apr 30-May 3, 2020
Bay City Players	<i>Newsies</i>	May 1-10, 2020
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Talk Radio**</i>	May 1-9, 2020
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	May 1-17, 2020
Richmond Community Theatre	<i>Cheaper by the Dozen</i>	May 5-31, 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



Last March as I was reading *Spotlight*, the AACT magazine, I noticed that one of the winners of its NewPlayFest2020 was Pam Harbaugh from Indiatlantic, Florida. I was in Indiatlantic on vacation! The synopsis of her play, *Casserole*, was so enticing that I called Pam. She said she'd send the script after its premiere in Boise, Idaho in October 2019. I finally got to read it. I love it and I think you will too.

*Casserole* is a comedy in two acts with roles for three men and three women. Clair Wilson, is 54, with a strong Wisconsin accent. She loves to putter, cook, clean, and is very disorganized. She has a huge heart exuding love and affection. A locally famous cook, she is known for recipes such as Mayonnaise Casserole and Cheddar Corn Casserole. Leonard Wilson, 57, Clair's husband is neat, gruff, and stuck in his ways. Although very much in love with his wife, he constantly shows Clair how to organize herself. Erica Wilson, 29, is an independent, spirited artist in NYC. A successful high-powered businesswoman, Penny, 32, is tall, graceful, and strong. Rounding out the cast, are two hipsters from Brooklyn: Zachary, 35, and Nicholas, 30.

*Casserole* takes place in Wilson's comfy Eau Claire, Wisconsin home, showing a combined living and



From the AACT premiere performance and used with permission. Strictly Photography/Steve Strickland

dining area. Three entrance/exits: front door, door to kitchen and door to a hallway. It's a July morning in 2015, when Clair receives a call from a Brooklyn publisher who wants to feature her in *The Midwest Cook* because of her unusual recipes such as Barbecued Bacon Sushi. They will be sending an editor and a videographer that afternoon.

While Leonard and Clair are digesting this news, Erica calls; she is coming to visit with a new "friend."

The Wilsons find that their daughter's significant other is not at all what they expected. Clair is, of course, accepting, and Leonard is a hilarious hot mess. Then, the two smarmy men arrive, mocking everything Midwestern. When the six characters come together, worlds collide. Tensions rise as Nick argues with Zachary, Leonard argues with Clair, Erica argues with Leonard and Leonard argues with Penny. Only Clair keeps her head. When the six sit down to a glorious spread featuring Clair's cooking, tempers flare again and a food fight breaks out. After the embarrassing altercation and onstage clean up, Clair once again shows her love, wiping faces while explaining how "all of humanity is a big old casserole." Clair wants everyone to have the freedom to be him or herself as she wants acceptance from Leonard. Although *Casserole* deals in part with LGBTQ issues, the theme of the play is the acceptance of differences. Many funny, touching moments are sprinkled through Harbaugh's work. At one point, Leonard overhears Clair giving the two men a cooking lesson. Imagine the actor's joy, alone on stage, reacting to expressions like: "Here take this, rub it between your hands.... now squeeze it a bit. Now hand me the Cool Whip."

Harbaugh deals with the issue of accepting differences when they show up in our living room with common sense, humor and affection. Clair is the heart of the play, and Leonard depicts the "unwoke" person when he exhibits a very typical but understandable reaction. Every "Leonard" in the audience will see him or herself. Appropriate for 16 years old and up. I strongly suggest you read *Casserole* for yourself to see if it meets the values of your community. Unfortunately, it will not be available until all of AACT's NewPlayFest 2020 winners have premiered. Licensing will be available through Dramatic Publishing Company.