



CTAM
Community Theatre Association of Michigan

September 2020

CALLBOARD

CTAM Fall Conference: October 12-17 A Virtual Experience this year!

This year's CTAM Fall Conference will be held virtually. The conference begins on Monday, October 12, and runs daily through Saturday, October 17. Each evening at 6:00 p.m., a virtual interactive class/webinar will be available. Additionally, on Tuesday and Thursday a virtual roundtable discussion will follow at 7:00 p.m.

The subjects of this year's workshops are listed, beginning on page 3, as well as planned roundtable topics. The Conference will conclude on Saturday with a keynote speaker at 4:00 p.m., followed by our Annual Meeting and Elections at 5:00 p.m., and a roundtable table discussion at 6:00 p.m.

Corresponding with the Board's focus on diversity in community theatre, the keynote speaker on Saturday early evening, October 17, will be Kristofer Geddie, Director of Diversity and General Manager for Venice Theatre (Florida). In addition to being a stellar actor, Kristofer has a background in diversity implementation and will share some insights for all of us to be thinking about.

The Fall Conference will be presented free of charge, but we would ask that everyone register for the conference on our website in order to receive a Zoom link to the classes you select. <http://ctam.online/virtual-fall-conference-2020/>

Notice of CTAM Annual Meeting and Elections

The CTAM 2020 Annual Meeting will be held virtually on

Saturday, October 17, at 5:00 p.m.

Zoom access codes will be sent to everyone registered prior to the meeting.



Kristofer Geddie, keynote speaker appearing virtually at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 17.

HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1961!



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2019-20 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.
Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to CTAMthrives@gmail.com.



Another in the Birmingham Village Players clever use of their very prominent signage on Woodward Avenue!



Your Affiliate or Individual CTAM dues for fiscal 2021 are due now! Our fiscal year begins on August 1, so to remain current, your dues are due, so to speak!

Check out the website for application forms and more information about all the great benefits of membership!



CTAM Calendar of Events

October 12-17, 2020

Fall Conference and Annual Meeting. New virtual format.

2020 Virtual Fall Conference workshops now available for your selection

All workshops/webinars at the Fall Conference begin promptly at 6:00 p.m., followed on Tuesday and Thursday by Roundtable Discussions at 7:00. Below and on the following pages is more information about the subjects and instructors.

You must register (at no charge!) for the sessions you are interested in so that the Zoom contact numbers can be sent to you in advance of the sessions!



October 12 @ 6:00 p.m.

Disaster Recovery for Community Theatres

Description: *This presentation will address the five biggest challenges community theatres in Michigan will face as they reopen during COVID-19 and how to solve them. It will cover volunteer management, production, operations and much more. It will also cover the most likely long-term modifications that will need to be made in communication, leadership, and other elements of the theatre.*

Presenter: Patrick Hardy

Patrick is CEO of Hytropy Disaster Management™, a leading disaster management company in the US for cultural institutions. A Certified Emergency Manager, Certified Risk Manager and a FEMA Master of Exercise Practitioner, he has extensive experience working in the public, private and non-profit sectors in disaster management from micro-businesses to Fortune 500 companies, such as Google, Merck, and Parsons corporations. During the BP Oil Spill in 2010, he was in



charge of 23 emergency sites and thousands of employees in three states. In the summer of 2012, he became the first small business owner ever to be selected as the National Private Sector Representative to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), spending three months in Washington D.C. constructing the first model small business disaster planning framework. Patrick has been featured on Good Morning America and other national programs, and has been published in dozens of industry publications. His experience is so extensive, he has been termed "America's Disaster Planner™."



October 13 @ 6:00 p.m.

Creating Faux Food for the Stage

Description: *Prop Master Michael Wilson from Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, will demonstrate how to make and create faux foods items from very versatile and inexpensive silicone clay that looks realistic on stage. Using the faux sub sandwiches he made for the lunch lady in their production, Junie B Jones, Michael will demonstrate the steps of how to prep, use, and craft with this medium.*

Presenter: Michael Wilson



Michael is currently serving as President of CTAM after several years on the Board. Michael has been creating props for stage productions for over 25 years. Not only is he the Prop Master for Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, he also has created props for Opera Grand Rapids, Circle Theatre, Grand Valley University, Aquinas College and Mason Street Warehouse. Over the years, Michael has developed a special focus on the creation of specialty and faux food stage props.

Tuesday, October 13, @ 7:00 p.m.

Roundtable: Intimacy on Stage

Description: *This panel will provide an overview of the emergence and development of the specialization of intimacy direction. Foundational principles of the work and protocols for directors and actors will be discussed as well as how to apply the principles to offstage interactions with members of the production team.*

Moderator: Keeley Stanley-Bohn

Keeley has worked as a professional actor and director at theatres across the nation, with increasing forays into Eastern Europe. Beginning her professional career as a company member with the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, she then moved on to Los Angeles (Mark Taper Forum, the Hudson), New York (Lincoln Center, American Jewish Theatre, Riverside Shakespeare), and Chicago (Theatre Wit, The Den). Most recently in Eastern Europe, Keeley directed an invited performance of *The Fireflies*, at the Theresienstadt concentration camp outside Prague, for the international project Performing the Jewish Archive. Recipient of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival's National Directing Fellowship, Keeley has also been an Artist-in-Residence at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., where she worked with such international artists as Ming Cho Lee and Viacheslav Dolgachev. Currently, Keeley is a Professor of Theatre at Central Michigan University, where she directs and teaches acting, directing, stage combat, dialects, and Theatre and the Holocaust.



Panelist: Elaine DiFalco Daugherty

Elaine DiFalco Daugherty is an educator, director, writer, and intimacy choreographer who recently completed her MFA in Theatre Pedagogy. She teaches in the Theatre and Dance Department at Central Michigan University and previously taught at the University of Maine. Elaine has studied best



practices in staging intimacy with Theatrical Intimacy Education, Intimacy Directors International, and Heartland Intimacy Design, and has worked as the intimacy director for *In the Next Room*, or the vibrator play, and *Punk Rock* at CMU. Outside of academia, she is a member of Midland Center for the Arts' Production and Programming Committee and co-host of the center's podcast, Full Circle. She lives in Mount Pleasant with her Technical Director husband and three theatre-loving children.

Panelist: Deborah Hertzberg

Deborah Hertzberg is a NYC-based puppeteer, costumer, and theater maker. Recent puppet fabrication and performance work include *SNL*, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, documentary film *George Saunders: On Story*, *Muppets Most Wanted*, *Auntie Panda*, *Avenue Q* (Broadway), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Broadway), Heineken, Optimum On-Line, and many other projects. Deborah's original puppet works include, *Zwerge*, for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center; the award-winning *Nosferatu* for NY Fringe; and her family show, *Animals in Winter*. Deborah serves as the Costume Shop Supervisor for the Department of Theater at Brooklyn College and is a Lecturer for her course, Puppets for the Theater. For Brooklyn College she has designed puppets for *She Kills Monsters* and *Camino Real*. Published works include *An Avant-Garde Approach to Comprehensive Puppet Performance Training* for Puppets International. BFA-Acting from UConn, MA Puppets UConn, and MFA Design U-Idaho. She received grants from the Jim Henson Foundation, Puppets of America, and NYSCA.



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October 14 @ 6:00 p.m.

Show 'Business' for a Reason

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, 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.*

Presenter: Betsy Willis

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 business, as well as creativity in order to thrive. Formerly the Development Director of Old Town Playhouse in Traverse City, Betsy is now the position Development Coordinator at Grass Roots Natural Area. Additionally, her consulting business, which specializes 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, IUPUI in 2014.



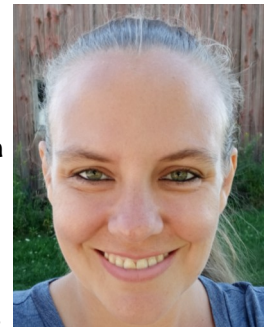
October 15 @ 6:00 p.m.

Developing a Technical Theatre Program for Youth

Description: *Youth Theater is vital to the longevity of community theater programs. Far too often, the technical side is ignored or seen as a second choice or consolation prize. Join us as we tell the story of how a technical theater program for children went from concept to reality.*

Presenter: Melissa Bornemann

Melissa is a lifelong resident of the Great Lakes Bay Region. She has been performing since the age of 9 and has been seen on several stages in the area. She gained an interest for theater in high school and has been playing on both sides of the curtain ever since. She is a mother, performing artist, coach and self-proclaimed organizer.



Melissa has worked on more than 20 productions on stage, been a part of more than 10 production crews and assistant directed two Children's shows. She is a member of the Midland Center for the Arts' Youth Theater board and has worked with kids from ages 8 to 21 for three years. Over the past year, working with Center Stage Theater staff and volunteers, Melissa developed and piloted a successful youth theater program with nine kids from 6th – 8th grade.

October 15 @ 7:00 p.m.

Stage Management Roundtable

Description: *Join us for an in-depth conversation with a panel of the theatre's greatest asset, Stage Managers. We will be discussing best practices that are in place in both volunteer based and professionally staffed theatres. With Covid-19, how will their role change and how will they enforce new guidelines backstage?*

Moderator: Mary Jo DeNolf

Mary Jo has been with Grand Rapids Civic Theatre since July 1998. In this position she not only works with the volunteers but assists with the day to day operations with ticketing and facilities overall. As a workshop leader, Mary Jo has lead workshops on the State and National level on Volunteer Management and Front of House procedures. Currently representing GRCT on the Resource Roster for the American Association of Community Theatres (AACT) in both of these areas.

Mary Jo served on the Community Theatre Association of Michigan board for six years serving as President, Vice President, Secretary and currently serving in the Administrator position for CTAM since July. Mary Jo is also active with the National organization of AACT and was co-chair for the 2015 National AACTFest held at Grand Rapids Civic. Currently Mary Jo works part time for AACT as the onsite Event Coordinator for the National Festival. In her spare time, she works as a production assistant for KBO Group, Grand Rapids and Behind the Scenes, Memphis TN and stage manages occasionally in the Grand Rapids area.



Panelist: Amy Spadafore

Amy Spadafore was born and raised in Saginaw County and holds a BS in Arts Management from Western Michigan University. She is a self-taught stage manager, having gotten her start in Miami, FL with Shakespeare Miami in 2008. Since then she has stage managed more than 20 productions. Amy directs occasionally and acts whenever she gets a wild hair. In 2019 Amy was a member of the first class of MCACA's Rising Leaders program, a life-changing experience that she encourages all young arts leaders in Michigan to try to take advantage of.

Amy is currently the Managing Director of Pit & Balcony Community Theatre in Saginaw, Michigan. As Managing Director, Amy oversees all day-to-day business operations including fund development, marketing, education, and production activities. During the 2019-2020 season Amy served as the Resident Stage Manager at Pit & Balcony, training four assistants to develop their skills and fill a personnel gap for future productions.

Outside of her work at Pit & Balcony, Amy is cur-

rently most involved with the Arts & Cultural Engagement (ACE) Collaborative, of which she is the founder. This grassroots effort began as a community-wide reciprocity agreement between arts and culture organizations in order to collaborate and expand cultural influence in Saginaw and in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis has become a cooperative fundraising, marketing, and support system.



Panelist: Rhonda Lehan

Rhonda Lehan stage managed her first show in 1999 and was hooked! So much so that she switched her college major to theatre. Since then, Rhonda has worked with many local community, educational, and professional arts programs. Some of her favorite productions include NUMBER THE STARS at the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, SECRET GARDEN for Grand Valley State University's Opera Theatre program, HAVING OUR SAY with Ebony Road Players, and ONE NIGHT WITH FANNY BRICE for Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids. In 2017, she was invited to teach the Stage Management Master Class for the Community Theatre Association of Michigan. Rhonda runs the Mill Creek Middle School Drama Club and the Comstock Park High School Drama Club. She is an office manager for IATSE Local 26, Grand Rapids' professional stage-hand union



Panelist: Brett Finley

Brett Finley lives in Ann Arbor, MI and works as a freelance stage manager for opera companies around the country. She spent 10 years on the University of Michigan faculty teaching stage management, and frequently works for the UM Opera Department



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mentoring student stage managers. She also trained with the MET program, Creating Original Opera, where an opera is created from scratch with school children, including writing, composing and implementing an original opera. She co-created two original productions at the Ann Arbor Waldorf School. In recent years, she has stage managed productions for opera companies around the country, including the Michigan Opera Company in Detroit.

Panelist: Jamie Ware

Jamie studied Stage Management at SUNY Potsdam. During her college years, she was ASM for an Opera production and was SM for her Theater Department's Mainstage production. She fell in love with musicals after graduation by taking her first freelance gig with a nonprofit in upstate NY for *The Music Man*. Jamie found her way back home to Midland, MI where she became resident stage manager at Midland Center for the Arts for two years. She left in 2010 to stage manager and produce a concert series at Six Flags America outside DC. In 2012 she moved to NYC and became the production assistant to the Stage Management team for *Sister Act* on Broadway. Since then she freelances as a Stage Manager for New York Theater Music Festival, Broadway Cares Equity Fights Aids and music festivals.



October 16 @ 6:00 p.m.

Finding Your Best Character

Description: *Participants in this character-study workshop 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, we will focus on the art of performing comedy. If*



you want to be a better actor, this is the workshop for you.

Presenter: Ben Zylman, a multi-award winning actor/director with over 125 productions to his credit, has conducted workshops and master classes throughout the Midwest. He has worked with Jerry Seinfeld, Chita Rivera, Mayim Bialik and Renée Taylor as well as with Grammy award-winning artists Meredith Arwady and Timothy Nordwind.



Keynote Address @ 4:00 p.m.

Diversity and You

Description: *Diversity, equity, inclusion and an invitation to the Party: Our world is changing, our theatre is changing and we must change. How do we begin, where do we begin, and when. Let us have a blameless conversation on the changing dynamics of the theatre world and particularly the community theatre world to help us talk less and act more.*

Keynote Speaker: Kristofer Geddie, a North Carolina native, trekked to Florida from New York City to play "Coalhouse Walker" in *Ragtime* at Venice Theatre, and never left. He is currently the Director of Diversity and General Manager. Kris holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Mars Hill University, is currently enrolled in graduate school at Goucher College for a Masters in Arts Administration and has been seen numerous times on stage at Venice Theatre. Kris has also had the privilege of directing *The Jungle Book*, *Crowns*, *School House Rock*



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Live!, *Fences*, and *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Prior to coming to Venice, Kris had been seen performing on stages around the world. Some other favorite theatrical experiences include cruising the world as a five-year Company Manager and Principal Singer for Jean Ann Ryan Productions on Norwegian Cruise Line; *Twelfth Night*; *The Secret Garden*; the premiere of the one-man show *Bert Williams, Broadway Star*; *Angels in America*; *Dreamgirls*; and hanging quite a few times as "Judas" in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

In addition to Kris' duties at Venice Theatre, he serves on the Ambassador Circle for Embracing our Differences, is the treasurer of the Florida Theatre Conference, the Florida State community theatre representative and is thrilled to serve as a Board Member of the Friends of the Venice Public Library and American Association of Community Theatre.

When that stuff is done for the day, Kris likes to cook, collect cookbooks and African American memorabilia.

Annual Meeting and Elections

@ 5:00 p.m.

Final Roundtable @ 6:00 p.m.

Where does community theatre in Michigan go from here?

Description: *Theatres have now been shut down for months, income is scarce, and the future is unclear, at best. How do we continue to achieve our missions when we are forced to stay apart? Join our panel of theatre experts as we ask, and discuss, the hard questions. As a community, we must come together in order to move forward. The show must go on, just not right now.*

Moderator: Mary Jo DeNolf

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

Mary Jo has been with Grand Rapids Civic Theatre since July 1998. In this position she not only works with the volunteers but assists with the day to day operations with ticketing and facilities overall. As a

workshop leader, Mary Jo has lead workshops on the State and National level on Volunteer Management and Front of House procedures. Currently representing GRCT on the Resource Roster for the American Association of Community Theatres (AACT) in both of these areas.



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Panelist: Bruce Tinker

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

Bruce Tinker celebrated his 20th Season as the Executive and Artistic Director of Grand Rapids Civic Theatre and School of Theatre Arts in 2019. Entering its 95th year, Civic Theatre is one of the leading community theatres in the country. It is housed in a state of the art facility and serves over 80,000 patrons, 700 volunteers and 2000 students each year. Bruce has directed more than 100 plays and musicals for community, professional and university theatres. Recent productions for Civic Theatre include *Mamma Mia*, *And Then There Were None*, *Shrek The Musical* and *Ragtime*. Bruce has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting from University of Evansville, Indiana and a Master of Fine Arts in Directing from University of Nebraska. Prior to his work with Civic, Bruce was the Managing Artistic Director for the Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre in Fargo, North Dakota and served on the board of the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT).



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Panelist: Dexter Brigham

Midland Center for the Arts

Dexter Brigham serves as the Director of Theatre Programs for Midland Center for the Arts where he oversees community theatre and comedy programming. Recent projects include a production of *Mamma Mia* which sold over 9,000 tickets and was the first regional co-production of three community theatres, and a newly commissioned, modern adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* by Claire Frances Sullivan. Current projects include a Covid-era series of performances of every play in the Shakespeare canon, and an outdoor festival of one-act plays by playwrights of color coming in the spring. Prior to coming to Michigan in 2013, Dexter was the founder and artistic director of Festival 56, a summer theatre festival in Princeton, Illinois for 12 years. A monthly columnist in the CTAM Callboard, he lives in Midland with his two sons and wife,



Find the Donate Button!

You will need to register online for each individual workshop, class or roundtable you plan to virtually attend! (That's so we can send you the contact names and numbers for you to use when the time comes!)
<http://ctam.online/virtual-fall-conference-2020/>

We've added a 'donate' button on the conference registration pages so you can easily make a donation in lieu of a registration fee. It's all FREE, of course, but wouldn't this be a nice time to make a donation?



Nominees for the 2020 CTAM Board of Directors

The following four nominees have agreed to stand for election to the CTAM Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 17. Please review these bios and prepare to vote for your favorites!

RHONDA LEHAN

Rhonda's love of theatre began at an early age, but she discovered it was a passion when she became an intern at GRCT in 1998. After receiving her theatre degree, she has worn many hats; working in the box office, as a House Manager, Stage Manager, Director, Props and Costume designer and as a teacher at both theatre classes and summer camp. She was even seen onstage a few times! Although Rhonda loves both stage management and design, her favorite role is TEACHER. For local educational organizations, she has taught classes in acting, technical theatre, and summer programs. She even created an educational performance based on the life cycle of apples that she performed for local school group tours at an apple orchard! At the West Michigan High School Theatre Festival, Rhonda has taught workshops in Properties Design and Management, and Puppetry and Storytelling. At the Regional level, she was invited to teach the Stage Management Master Class for the Community Theatre Association of Michigan. Rhonda runs the Mill Creek Middle School Drama Club and the Comstock Park High School Drama Club. She is an office manager for IATSE Local 26, Grand Rapids' professional stage-hand union. Rhonda met her husband Jeff while performing in a GRCT production. They have been married for 19 years and have three wonderful children!



N'JERI NICHOLSON

Over the past four years N'Jeri has become increasingly involved in the Detroit theatre community as a choreographer and actress. Her previous roles include: Miss Hannigan (*Annie*), Tess (*Crazy for You*), Rizzo (*Grease*), and a sword-fighting princess and mercenary at The Michigan Renaissance Festival. Earlier this year she was chosen by *Broadway Princess Party* to share the stage with original Broadway princesses and legends during their tour stop in West Bloomfield. During the quarantine, N'Jeri has participated in multiple virtual cabarets. She's also partnered with *The DATC* to create her own series of Facebook Live cabarets titled "Lift Every Voice." These cabarets showcase African American talent around the Detroit area, and so far, have benefitted and raised awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement and a local, Black-owned children's theatre. During the day, N'Jeri works fulltime as a Copywriter at an Advertising agency.



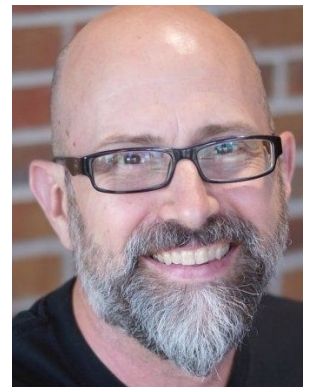
JAMIE PETERSON (Incumbent)

Jamie has been part of Players de Noc since he was 15 years old and since has acted, directed, produced, set design, construction, lighting, sound, props, costumes. Running crews....to mopping the stage. Jamie has served on the Board for Players de Noc and held positions of Treasurer, Publicity, and President. While serving on their board, Jamie believes that every action the group takes should be in fulfilling their mission statement, and achieve those goals. Jamie state he is interested in joining the CTAM board, and is confident that he will have something to offer the board. Jamie is also very active in his community and has served as a volunteer firefighter for 20+ years as well as the Coast Guard Auxiliary and various community sports coaching and after school programs. During the day he is a Claims Specialist for the Social Security Administration.



MIKE WISNIEWSKI (Incumbent)

Michael has been involved with Bay City Players for many years. He currently serves on the Board of Directors, is a past President, and has volunteered in almost every capacity of the organization. He is the current chair for the Play-Reading Committee and Set Design and Decoration. Michael has performed on stage in dozens of shows, has spent countless hours designing and decorating sets and has directed many shows for Bay City Players including *Rent*, *Company*, *Les Miserables*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Crazy for You*, and *Annie*, just name a few. Michael has also directed *Blithe Spirit* and *Anything Goes* at Pit and Balcony and *Assassins* at Midland's Center Stage Theatre. He has also been in several productions for Midland's Music Society and most recently was seen on



stage in Midland's Center Stage Theatre's production of *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. After serving on the Board of Directors for CTAM he is excited to take on another term to help foster community theatre in our great state. Obviously his hobby is theatre but in his free time he enjoys gardening, trips to Stratford and spending time with his two adorable Boston Terriers.



CTAM to coordinate new AACTFest process and applications

Applications to perform at AACTFest 2021 are now being accepted. Final date for submission is *November 1, 2020*.

Groups in Michigan planning to enter are asked also to notify CTAM President Michael Wilson at michaelwilsonprops@yahoo.com.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, and a possible resurgence in the fall, AACT is restructuring the AACT-Fest festival system to better support the mission of the AACT National Festival. AACTFest is where we gather to learn, trade stories, and see compelling theatre from across the nation. It is still scheduled for June 14-19, 2021 in the great state of Kentucky. And Louisville is ready for us!

The new structure has been put into place because the festival system—the state-to-regional process that chooses 12 productions to be featured at nationals—has been compromised. Early festivals have been cancelled or postponed, and fall festivals may suffer equally with the predicted resurgence. Some festivals may be possible, but there is no denying that the cost factor—producing a festival and/or participating—may be prohibitive for a significant number of AACT-member theatres.

To search the nation for outstanding productions worthy of sharing at a national festival, AACT will use an invitational system to choose the 12 featured productions at AACTFest 2021.

Application Process

Applicants must:

1. Be a current AACT-Member Theatre.
2. Obtain the support of your Board, Executive Committee, or President.
3. Submit two letters of support from persons unrelated to your theatre, illustrating the support of your community for your theatre, and/or testifying to your theatre's creative and artistic abilities.
4. Before completing the online application, both read and understand the changes in the AACTFest

Handbook, which has been adapted for the 2021 invitational format. (You can find the handbook [HERE](#).)

5. Complete and submit the application with support materials by *November 1, 2020*

Overview

- AACT will accept applications from member theatres who are willing to produce a play to be evaluated by traveling adjudicators within a set timeline. A theatre must also be able to demonstrate financial capability, and (should it be selected) support from its governing body to attend AACTFest 2021 in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Theatres may choose to do a full-length production within their season, or present a cutting specifically for the festival. If a full-length production is viewed, the theatre must also have a 60-minute cut version of the play, along with permission to do so.
- *Applications* will be accepted from July 1, 2020 to November 1, 2020. From the field of applicants, 50 theatres will be chosen to be interviewed.
- *Interviews* will be conducted between August 1, 2020 and November 15, 2020, based on the order in which applications are received.
- From the field of interviewed theatres, 25 will be chosen to showcase a performance for adjudication. Showcase notification will be issued no later than November 30, 2020.
- *Adjudicators* will travel to those chosen theatres from December 15, 2020, to March 31, 2021. Five sets of two adjudicators will attend each production. Each set will see a roster of five productions, and from that field will nominate two of the top fully realized performances. If fewer than two productions on a roster are not completely realized, an adjudication team may opt to pass its vote to another set.
- The adjudication team will be available to meet with the production director and/or company for an extended feedback session, following the adjudicated performance.
- The list of AACTFest 2021 Producing Theatres will be announced in April 2021.

How to Apply

Go to the AACT website (AACT.org) and...

- **Step 1:** Read the AACTFest 2021 Invitational Festival Handbook.
- **Step 2:** Complete & submit the online Invitational Application form.



Get comfortable being uncomfortable

That has been a mantra of mine for the last five plus years. That was about the time I really dove back into doing theatre. And it has helped me grow tremendously as a person.

When I resumed doing theatre related activities (after nearly a decade of doing absolutely nothing than attending a friend's show) I jumped right in head first. I earned a role with Rosedale Community Players, joined their board the following year, started attending CTAM conferences and workshops and met a lot of crazy, but cool, people who enjoyed many of the same things I did.

After just a few years on the board they tapped me to be President (against my better judgment) and for some reason they have yet to look for a replacement. Becoming President was very intimidating to me. I had little knowledge of the extensive history of the organization (already 40+ years old) and I barely knew how to run a meeting, let alone an effective one.

Thankfully, I observed others over the years, absorbed some tricks from others who came before me, McKenna Award-winning Larry Rink, and relying on my acting skills (as limited as they are) I faked it until I made it. However, one very critical thing I took from Larry's tutelage was two simple words: "action items".

These two little words have helped keep me relatively sane these past few years. Our board meets monthly (these days via Zoom) and I rely on the action items to drive the meeting and help drive the progress of the organization. I put the action items right on our board agenda and we try to cross off as many as we can each month.



By Chuck Goddeeris

A good action item is something simple that one or two or three people can achieve given a couple of weeks. A great action item lists the specific person or persons it involves and a clear simple goal in mind. I recap them at the end of each meeting and make sure everyone's on board with them and we didn't miss any. If they stay on for a month or two I try not to get too angry, things happen, life happens, a pandemic happens. If they stay on more than a few months then you may have a problem you have to address, but it usually doesn't come to that.

I send out an agenda for the next board meeting within a week of concluding the previous board meeting so everyone gets a fresh reminder of the action items. It helps hold the rest of us accountable. Hopefully (and usually in our case) they aren't critical regular tasks your board members perform so that when they do go uncompleted for extended periods of time, you're not stuck in Shitz Creek without your paddles.

More often than not we come out of the meetings with a plan. And in this day and age you need a plan. Yes, it is still good to dream big and have a big picture goal, but what will keep you really moving forward and not pulling your hair out are those small goals or action items.

The action items allow your plan to be flexible and still give you a sense of accomplishment, even if the big plan changes seven times over (thank you pandemic!). Get comfortable being uncomfortable, but make a plan first. It will help you out in the long run and your organization will benefit greatly from it.



It seems to me...

By Dexter Brigham



Give Tech the Love They Deserve

Theatres are, for obvious reasons, geared toward actors. Actors are the most immediately visible component of a theatrical production; they give voice and life to the story and characters; they are the “face” of our theatre. The majority of participants in the theatre come to it as performers, and indeed, acting roles are the most widely available of any position in any given production. It is important to remember, however, that, while critically important, performing is not the only artistic role in the theatre. There is a reason that professional stage managers belong to the actor’s union and not the stagehand union. It is very much a creative role that has a huge impact on the expressive success of a production. Lighting designers, scenic designers, props artisans, painters, carpenters, costume designers, first hands, cutter/drapers, stitchers, audio engineers, music directors, pit musicians...the list feels nearly endless, and yet each of these positions is filled by a creator: a person whose artistic gesture leaves their fingerprint on the show.

All of this might seem obvious to you, but I would ask you to consider whether your theatre is aligned with this way of viewing artists. What sort of recruitment and training program do you have for your design departments? At what point in the rehearsal process does your stage management team join the rehearsals? What language do you use to refer to backstage volunteers? Is your organization intentional about acknowledging and nurturing their artistic identity?

Or, as is common, are there structures and traditions in place that relegate designers and production crew to “support staff” who arrive late in the production process to fulfill their function?

I’m certainly not someone who is in a position to throw stones. As recently as a couple years ago, if you were interested in a backstage role in either our mainstage or youth theatre program, you were required to fill out the audition form. Our primary method of recruiting backstage volunteers was through a question on the audition form that read, “If you are NOT cast in this production, would you be interested in volunteering in any of the following backstage areas?” We were unintentionally creating the impression that a backstage role was a consolation prize, something to do if you failed to be cast. Fortunately, this shortcoming was pointed out, and we developed a full education track for our young backstage artists, giving them an equal opportunity to engage in the theatre in the way that inspires them. My volunteer leadership and I still have a lot of work ahead of us, as we continue to look at our policies and procedures to ensure that we treat our designers and backstage volunteers with the same respect that we give our actors. As the old saying goes, without the crew, actors would be yelling naked in the dark, so give your backstage artists some love. They’ve earned it!



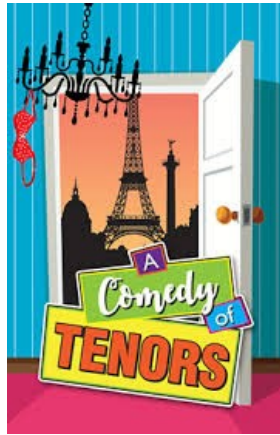
The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western



Hangin' in there? I hope you have been as awed as I am about this newsletter. In spite of the pandemic and its devastating results, the *Callboard* is always relevant and interesting.

Ken Ludwig's *A Comedy of Tenors* ©2016 is a sequel to Ludwig's 1991 *Lend Me a Tenor*. In a delightful afterword to the script, Ludwig explains not only his reason for reviving Maria, Tito, Saunders, and Max but an interesting discussion of sequels and farce in general. This Samuel French play has three female roles and four males. Maria and Tito, married for over 25



years, have strong Italian accents. She's stunning and fiery. He's the most famous tenor in the world; a large man of large appetites, gastronomic and otherwise. Henry Saunders, early fifties, produces this Three Tenors event which Ludwig based on a real event: "The Three Tenors" (Pavarotti, Domingo, and Carreras) performed on the eve of the World Cup soccer finals in Rome in 1987. Max, mid-thirties, has been Saunders' assistant for ten years, and is now a tenor of some acclaim and Saunders' son-in-law. The fourth man, Carlo Nucci, mid-thirties, is found under an afghan with Mimi, 25, Maria and Tito's charming daughter. A legendary Russian (yes, an accent) soprano, Racon, (40-50's) complicates the plot in Act II. It's a late autumn afternoon, 1936, Paris, in a living room of an elegant hotel suite. Upstage center we have a door to the corridor, and bedroom doors stage left and right. Also, stage right, is an outdoor patio; stage left, a balcony overlooking the Eiffel Tower and a soccer field.

Plot: Maria catches daughter Mimi with a young man. When Tito overhears Maria talk

to him, he assumes they are having an affair. Tito chases him off. This man, we find out, is Tito's competitor and now rival, Carlo Nabucco. Saunders finds a bellhop, Beppo, with a beautiful tenor to fill in and.....wait for it...he looks exactly like Tito but with a moustache! Everyone is at each other's throat, when the beautiful soprano, Racon, comes to visit Tito, but seduces Beppo, who she thinks is Tito. Chaos explodes, Max straightens everything out, and FOUR tenors perform: Max, Carlo, Tito and Beppo!

With performance rights, karaoke music from *La Traviata* is provided free of charge. Opera is played throughout, but as most of the sound cues are pre-1925 operas playing on the radio, I believe all are in public domain. Not an easy show to put on, but very funny. Some sexual scenes and references and adult language, so let's say, 16 or 18 years and up for your audiences.

Playscripts' **37 Postcards** by Michael McKeever



©2011 is a comedy with a cast of four women and two men. The plot: when Avery, 31, returns after six years to his family home, he finds the house tilted

downstage right (Set designers, take note!) Besides the fact that his parents, Evelyn, and Stanford, (50s), Aunt Ester, (40s) and Nana, 97, don't seem to notice, other issues arise. Ester, Evelyn, and Stanford are unsure if Nana is alive.....she is! Ester has a phone sex business. Dad is golfing at night, and Evelyn can't keep a thought in her pretty head. The dialogue is ribald, absurd, and witty. Gillian, Avery's fiancé, late 20's-30s, is upset that no one can remember her name. She leaves, then Avery follows. Both return when Avery realizes this is his only family for better or worse. The characters must be played with sincerity and sweetness; these are not caricatures. Except for Nana; she uses really foul language. Audiences 18 and up. The cause of the disarray is divulged and, although it is tragic, it is dealt with a light hand. Very funny, and a lot crazy.