



CALLBOARD

The best of the best! **Christy Frick and Chuck Goddeeris honored at 2020 Annual Meeting**

As a highlight of a very different, virtual Annual Meeting, the CTAM Board of Directors was pleased to present our highest-of-all Robert McKenna Award to **Christy Frick!**




Christy has served many years on the CTAM board, usually as Treasurer and currently as the Chair of the Scholarship Committee. This is a well deserved award, acknowledging Christy's many years of service and advice. This award is presented annually, if appropriate, to CTAM members who have worked diligently for the cause of community theatre in Michigan and supporting CTAM's mission to help community theatre thrive.

Although it's difficult to celebrate virtually, there were many hands clapping for the second award: The Volunteer Service Award. Presented by the Board for outstanding service to CTAM,



Chuck Goddeeris was also a popular choice. As our long-suffering Webmaster, Chuck is riding high on the just completed Fall Conference! What a coup to have made all the technology come together for six webinars, three round-tables, and an interactive Annual Meeting, including the voting mechanism! Job well done, Chuck, and an award well deserved!

Although the winners couldn't be announced until they are presented by the home group, several Dorothy Arnett Service Awards will be presented through the course of the upcoming year. Congratulations to Christy, Prince Chuck and all the Arnett winners!



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!





**Community Theatre
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 maryloubritton@gmail.com.

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



We do it all! From deciding what shows to produce, directing, fund raising, acting, sewing, building, lights, sound, costumes, tickets, clean up, and now Covid-19.

As leaders in the community theatre scene across the state, the CTAM Board would like your input. You are invited to join a CTAM committee and give your opinion on what you feel the direction of the state organization should be. CTAM is looking for new ideas and out-of-the-box thinking. You can make a difference here!

Not sure where you might fit in or not sure if you have enough time, Email us at ctamthrives@gmail.com and start the conversation. It just takes a minute to send an email.



Some words from the Chair: **"Unique" Fall Conference**

This year's fall conference was sure a unique event. Due to the safety restrictions, the Board decided to hold our fall conference virtually. Now, after a week of virtual webinars and roundtable discussions, we have learned that even though we couldn't all be in the same room, we were still able to come together and have great discussions on a broad number of topics. This year's conference was indeed a successful one. We had more than 500 people register and more than half that number we able to join us over the week.

We covered a broad range of topics from Covid-19 reopening standards to creating a board of directors and a youth technical theatre program. We talked about intimacy on stage and we got tips on how to create a character's backstory. We even had roundtable discussions about the role of a stage manager and how similar that role is, regardless of the size and type of a theatre.

We have received valuable feedback from our attendees about what they thought of the week. If anyone reading this hasn't received a feedback form be sure to let us know. We will be happy to get it out to you. (ctamthrives@gmail.com)

We like to thank all of our presenters for taking the time to join us and lead us in some very educational discussions. The level of talent and expertise was top notch. We would also like to thank the conference committee for all the hard work and the countless hours of behind-the-scene work that went into this conference.

Lastly, We want to thank everyone that was able to attend, your attendance and feedback have been so beneficial. It will definitely shape how we present content in the future.



Conference Chair JR Bornemann



CTAM and social media

Facebook has a huge influence on CTAM and never more so than helping us promote our recent Fall Conference! Here are the numbers as reported by Conference Chair JR Bornemann:

- ✓ 506 people registered for individual webinars; more than half actually attended.
- ✓ 700 shares of our FB notices and videos,
- ✓ 50,000+ total views, and
- ✓ almost 1,600 Facebook followers.

We encourage everyone to follow us on Facebook to be fully informed with the latest information.

Likewise, the new kid on the block, YouTube, is also becoming very important to CTAM. We have now established our own channel and have posted all the recent webinars so that they can be accessed easily by folks who missed the original presentation. We also encourage everyone to subscribe to the YouTube channel.

Here is the link to the YouTube channel for us:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrEyd5oDmMw7lkggmX0Hh6w>

Once we get to 100+ subscribers we can make the link/URL prettier. You have to search the full name in YouTube currently to find it (community theatre association of michigan)

Our webmaster Chuck Goddeeris has set this all up for us, just like downtown!



Kudos also to Chad Michael Baker for his relentless sharing of Facebook announcements and getting the word out about our new Virtual Fall Conference. These are astounding numbers for our first effort!



Midland's Susie Polito wins AACT award

Every year, the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) honors people over age 65 who have participated in community theater for more than 25 years with the Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer award. This year, one of the honorees is Midland's very own **Susie Polito**.

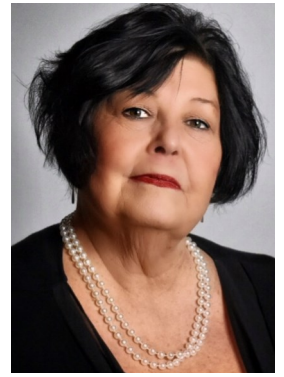
Susie became involved with Center Stage Theatre in 1981, roughly three years after she and her husband moved to Midland. After seeing a few productions, her husband encouraged her to audition for a play. While she didn't get the role she auditioned for, she was cast in the ensemble of *Hello Dolly!* – and the rest is history.

She has performed in numerous plays, including most recently *August Osage County*, but her volunteer commitments aren't limited to performing. She has been a stage manager, props master and directed numerous plays, including *To Kill A Mockingbird* in 2009 which was in partnership with the Dow Chemical Diversity Network and Northwood University where she is an adjunct professor and oversees the theatre department.



The Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer award not only reflects her 40-year involvement with Center Stage Theatre, but it also represents her broader participation in community theatre, including a third-place finish in the acting category at the national AACTfest and a top-four finish for a play she directed in the national competition.

Congratulations to Susie Polito for this wonderful and well deserved award!



Sad look ahead for Broadway

Broadway shows are expected to remain closed through at least May 2021. Productions have been closed since March 12, 2020. There were 24 shows open and running on Broadway before the shutdown.

The reopening of Broadway theaters, in particular, is made difficult by the fact that the industry said it cannot use social distancing in the audience due to the financial constraints it would impose.

The Metropolitan Opera, which hosts considerably larger productions than Broadway, announced last month that it would be closed until fall 2021.

2020 Playwriting winners announced

The curtain has closed on the 2020 Playwriting Contest. We think we received some great entries this year. The winners are:

1st Place – **Dave Durham** (Rosedale Community Players) for *Of Divine Interest*

2nd Place – **Brad Bowman** (Monroe Community Players) for *Blood Brothers*

Chuck Goddeeris found readers and taped excerpts of the plays and they are now available online for everyone to see:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrEyd5oDmMw7lkggmX0Hh6w/>

As a reminder, CTAM affiliate groups can perform either play without royalty for two years (until mid-October 2022).

The 2021 contest will be starting shortly so get your thinking cap on and start writing. Watch for deadline announcements here in the monthly Callboard from our contest co-chairs, Pat and Leo Paveglio.



It seems to me...

By Dexter Brigham



COVID Policy 101

At the (very successful) CTAM conference in October, I participated in a discussion with Mary Jo Denolf and Bruce Tinker from Grand Rapids Civic Theatre on the theme of “Where Does Community Theatre Go From Here?” and there was quite a bit of discussion around policies and procedures in the time of Covid. To that end, I thought I’d summarize some of the new policies we’ve enacted at Midland Center for the Arts, that might be worth examining at your own theatre. Please note that there is no one-size-fits-all and you should find policies that work for you and your community.

First, we acknowledged that we are now in the business of risk mitigation, not risk elimination. There is inherent risk in everything we do, and it’s our job to determine, in consultation with the local health department, what we can and should do to keep our staff and patrons safe and healthy, while still ensuring our organization survives this crisis.

Here are some policies that are now in place for our staff:

- ◆ One-way walkways in high traffic areas.
- ◆ Increased frequency of cleaning of high-touch surfaces (doors, bathrooms, etc.)
- ◆ All staff must complete a Covid symptom assessment survey whenever they enter the building.
- ◆ Staff are expected to work from home whenever possible, and definitely stay home when they are sick.

Volunteer/Performer policies that we have or plan to institute:

- ◆ Everyone coming into the building must complete a Covid symptom assessment survey.
- ◆ Performers will wear a mask at all times, unless they are onstage performing.
- ◆ We will cast family members who are quarantining together as much as possible.
- ◆ We will double cast our shows as much as possible.
- ◆ Some rehearsals will be conducted virtual-

ly, over Zoom.

- ◆ No one will share a dressing room with someone they do not live with.
- ◆ We will minimize the number of crew in the backstage area.
- ◆ The cast and the production team will stay at least 6 feet away from each other at all times.
- ◆ If a cast or crew member tests positive, or is exposed to someone who is positive, we will suspend in-person rehearsals for 10-14 days, until that person is cleared.

Volunteer/Crew policies that we have or plan to institute:

- ◆ We will minimize the number of crew in the backstage area.
- ◆ No more than three people will be in the tech booth at once.
- ◆ All booth surfaces (boards, chairs, counters, etc.) will be wiped down after each rehearsal or performance.
- ◆ All props will be wiped down after each rehearsal or performance.

Patron policies that we have or plan to institute:

- ◆ All patrons must remain masked unless they are in their seat.
- ◆ No intermissions.
- ◆ At the end of the performance, patrons will be dismissed by row.
- ◆ Digital playbills.
- ◆ All ticketing must be reserved under a name (to meet contact tracing requirements).

There are some additional policies that we have considered, but chose not to implement, such as taking the temperature of everyone who enters the building. We opted against this for several reasons. First, it doesn’t add much safety beyond the symptom survey. If someone has a temp of more than 100.4 degrees, they will most likely be home in bed. Second, in patron surveys, we learned that it doesn’t make patrons feel that much safer if other safety protocols are already in place. And finally, it creates the possibility of bottlenecks at entry points when we are working hard to keep everyone spaced out.

I want to reiterate that there are no completely right answers to these questions. If you lock things down, someone will be upset. If you take only a few precautions, someone else will be upset. The best you can do is to be clear about what you are trying to do, and do that to the best of your ability using your best judgement!





President Michael Wilson was one of the webinar presenters at the 2020 Virtual Fall Conference, demonstrating how to make fake food for the stage. Always a fun topic, Michael's style made it a memorable program!



Keeping the humor rolling, Village Players in Birmingham offer two of their latest sign puns!



Pit and Balcony Theatre has taken the initiative to #MaskUpForTheArts during rehearsals for the first virtual production of their 89th season, *The Winkleigh Murders* by Don Nigro, a dark comedy mystery making its Great Lakes Bay regional premiere.

The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western



If you are reading this, you have something to be thankful for! Tough times.

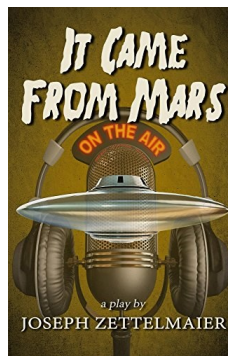


The Book Club Play
by Karen Zacarias
©2017 Dramatic Publishing, is a satirical comedy about a book club meeting being filmed by a famous documentarian. Simple set: a projection screen and a comfy

living room. The screen shows the members' names, the book titles, etc. but the rest of the story is live. The six actors sit in a half circle facing the IRL audience. Throughout the play, they are frequently reminded to NOT look at the camera. The mere presence of the camera magnifies each member's angst and issues. As in *The Office*, the self-consciousness is hilarious and confessional.

The cast: Ana is the Type A leader, married to Rob, the other half of this "golden couple" and a non-reader. Ana's best friend Jen lacks self-confidence. Ana's ex-boyfriend, William Lee, is a dapper, conservative museum curator. Lily is black, and Ana's protégé on the local newspaper. Alex, is a comparative literature professor (male). All play 30s or older, pretty wide open. Five other characters give testimonials live on stage. These so-called "pundits" can be played by one to five actors, or a freed-up actor. After the members (minus Alex) introduce themselves, Ana explains the "roving camera." Each scene is a member's book pick and each pick seems to irritate/inflate/illuminate. With *Moby Dick* we learn that Rob never reads the book, any book, and Lily assumes that Will is gay. Awkward; stay tuned. Rob actually reads *The Age of Innocence*, and starts questioning his life.

When Lily suggests *Twilight*, the literary snobs, Ana and Will, are shocked. A rousing chat about what does it mean to be "cultured" ensues. When modern literature professor Alex joins the group, the group reads *The DaVinci Code*. Snobish Will admits he has never read a bestseller and, by the way, he's gay. The last book, Rob's choice, *The Return of Tarzan* creates a cosmic break. Rob is suddenly on fire, and Ana goes berserk, showing the group three chapters of her novel, that is not flattering to the members. All are changed due to the existence of the camera, becoming hypercritical of themselves and each other. The "Epilogue" tells all. You don't have to be or have been a member of a book club to enjoy this play. It may be an opportunity to reach out to any local book clubs in your area!



It Came from Mars by Joseph Zettelmaier spins *The War of the Worlds* troupe on its little green head. A struggling radio troupe in suburban New York is starting rehearsal of *The House That Hell Built*, a Halloween radio play. It's October 30, 1938, and when the group hears the broadcast of *The War of the Worlds*, they spring into action. During the frantic preparations to save themselves from the Martians, two young lovers find each other, two old flames re-ignite and Orson Welles' success sparks new life in radio theatre. Published in 2010 by Sordelet Ink, this farce has a cast of three men and three women. Quentin Farlowe, 40-50s, is the egotistical director/writer/actor of *The House That Hell Built*. He is forced to hire his ex-wife, Julia Crane, 40s. Werner Kerlig, the sound effects technician, is German with a slight accent. He is constantly harassed by actor, George Loomis, 40s, former soldier, and suspicious of all things German. Dolores Breckinridge, 20s, plays Werner's love interest. Rounding out the cast is Maude Myrtles, 30s, the radio station's secretary. A simple set of a 1938 radio station, vintage sound effects and costumes, along with a table and chairs are all that are needed. Some adult language and situations give this show a PG.

