



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2020-21 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Callboard

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



CTAM Playwriting Contest

Celebrate now! From National Barbie Day (March 8) to National Earmuff Day (March 13), there are days to celebrate in March. We advise you to celebrate **TODAY** by sitting down and starting (or finishing) a play to enter in the CTAM Playwriting Contest. The contest rules, tips, suggestions and judging criteria are on the CTAM website - <http://ctam.online/playwriting-contest/>.

If you've always thought about trying your hand at writing a play, this is the perfect year to do it. What else are you going to do? Do it now while your life is somewhat slowed down.

The entry deadline is May 15th so don't be caught napping on National Napping Day (March 15) or goofing off on National Goof Off Day (March 22).

CTAM Calendar of Events

Wed., March 3 7:00 p.m. by Zoom	CTAM Board Meeting
Thurs., March 18 7:00 p.m. by Zoom	Reopening Theater Doors Michigan Roundtable
Wed., April 7 7:00 p.m. by Zoom	CTAM Board Meeting
Wed., May 5 7:00 p.m. by Zoom	CTAM Board Meeting
Saturday, May 15	Playwriting Contest entry deadline
Wed., June 2 7:00 p.m. by Zoom	CTAM Board Meeting
June 14-20	National AACTfest



Welcome to Catch The Answers Monthly with CTAM

Starting with this issue, CTAM will ask you a question each month about your knowledge, experience and love of community theatre. These questions will appear in our monthly issue of the *Callboard*, as well as our Facebook page, and we want to hear your responses. Share your answers in a brief one-minute video via CTAM's Facebook Messenger. You can record your response and send it to CTAM via the Messenger link on our Facebook page. CTAM will then share your responses throughout the month on our Facebook page. You may also want to submit a question of your own that we can share and find the answers to together. To suggest a question for Catch The Answers Monthly, simply type or video record your question and submit it via the Messenger link on our Facebook page.



This month's question is:

What is something you miss the most about being involved in live theatre?

If you aren't already signed up for our Facebook page, now is the perfect time to do so. In addition to these questions from across Michigan, you will hear more about all the programs CTAM provides to help your theatre thrive in these unusual times. Simply search Facebook for 'Community Theatre of Michigan—CTAM'. Join the 1600+ other Michigan theatre-lovers who follow CTAM on a regular basis.



Your Affiliate or Individual CTAM dues for fiscal 2021 are due now! Our fiscal year began 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!



AACT's Community Theatre Management Conference brings together administrators from all levels of theatre— from the volunteer who "runs things around here" to the "just starting" part-time administrator, to the full-time professional manager. Participants learn through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, large and small group discussions that speak directly to participants' unique challenges and experiences within their own theatre and community. AACT is offering a choice of *two* convenient virtual conference dates:

- ◆ Friday, March 12, through Sunday, March 14 (*Eastern Time Zone*), or
- ◆ Friday, April 9 through Sunday, April 11 (*Pacific Time Zone*)

The CTMC's virtual format will allow more people to take part, while protecting the health of participants and eliminating expenses for travel and accommodations. Go to aact.org/ctmc

AACT's Adjudication Seminar provides adjudication training, as well as an opportunity to learn more about theatrical critique, and even to enhance directing skills. AACT's 2021 Adjudication Seminar will be held virtually over the course of six weeks beginning *March 20-May 8, 2021—six sessions, two hours per session*. During AACTFest, participants also will attend two 2-hour-long virtual sessions that include how to negotiate with fellow adjudicators to determine award outcomes, and how to prepare for work as an adjudicator. Go to aact.org/seminar

Virtual AACTFest 2021 will celebrate those stories of resiliency, moving you from survive to thrive, as it showcases and celebrates the best of community theatre in America. Keynotes, workshops, educational programming, and special events will focus on supporting you through this evolutionary journey. Registration is open now, so join us for an exciting week in June. Go to aact.org/21



Green quiz for St. Patrick's Day

1. What famous comic book hero's powers were ineffective against the color yellow?
2. Who played David Silver in Beverly Hills 90210?
3. What soulful singer's hits include *Let's Stay Together* and *How Can You Mend a Broken Heart*?
4. What football team won the first two Super Bowls?
5. What *Friends* character had the last name of Green?
6. What country's flag consists of a simple green field with no other characteristics?
7. What 1941 Best Picture was a film adaptation of a Richard Llewellyn novel?
8. What is the title of the tales of a red-haired orphan written by L. M. Montgomery?



It seems to me...

By Dexter Brigham



What Now? The shutdown has been lifted. The vaccine is (slowly) making its way into the arms of our friends and neighbors. There is a distant light at the end of the tunnel that we can be reasonably certain is not an oncoming train. And so, scarred and battle-weary, armed with masks and hand sanitizer, we dust ourselves off and prepare to reopen our theatres.

But then what? What does “reopening our theatres” mean when we are likely facing another year of restrictions, and the threat of new variants of the virus is on the horizon? I’ve been speaking with many of my colleagues about the nuts and bolts of how performances will work, and what we can expect to see in terms of the regulatory environment. Here is a list of ideas and plans that you might experience at various theatres across the state and country in the coming year:

Ongoing Capacity Restrictions: It’s reasonable, if not certain, to expect that limits of 25-50% will stay in place for much of the year.

Outdoor Performances: Patrons have demonstrated a higher level of comfort in the open air, and theatres can sometimes seat a larger number of patrons than they would in an indoor venue.

Small Cast Programming and Double Casting: In order to limit both health and financial risk, theatres will be programming 2-4 person plays and, in many cases, double casting them in order to ensure the show can continue in the event of illness, as well as engaging more volunteers who are hungry to get back onstage.

Socially Distant Staging: No kissing or close physical contact, and look for designs that cleverly incorporate masks. There may also be barriers erected between the audience and players.

Extended Early Seating and Dismissal By Row: In-

stead of the usual 30 minutes of seating prior to curtain, expect to see 60 minutes or more. At the end of the show, ushers will dismiss the patrons by row in order to avoid crowds and bottlenecks.

No Intermissions: Let’s all remember that we managed to sit through a 3-hour Avengers movie without a bathroom break, so we don’t *really* need to get up and crawl over each other.

Bathrooms: If you do use the restrooms, though, you may find yourself providing contact information for contact tracing.

Mandatory Masks: Venues will be required by law to ask patrons to mask up, covering both their nose and mouth. I anticipate some variation in this area, as some venues may allow patrons to remove their masks once they are at their seat, depending on their seating policy.

No Concessions: Concessions are a tough one, since they offer a significant source of sales during a time when ticket revenue is down. They also involve long lines, direct interaction, and the removal of masks to eat. Every theatre will make a different call, I expect.

Cabaret-style Seating: One way to make patrons safer if concessions are a necessity is to seat them at spaced cabaret tables by party, so they can safely and comfortably remove their masks, similar to a restaurant setting.

Digital Programs: I think it’s safe to say that no one will be printing programs this year. It’s not in the budget and it’s a high-risk point of shared contact. Expect to see credit and bios being shared via an advance email or QR code in the lobby. And if I were to prognosticate, I would say this is one of the areas where we might see a permanent shift away from old models.

Please be kind to the people at your theatre who are making these decisions. No matter what they decide, they will make someone angry. It is important to keep in mind that there is no way to completely eliminate risk. All we can do is try to keep everyone as safe as we can with the information we have at the moment. Be well, my friends, and I’ll see you on the other side of the footlights!



Don't Panic!

*Monthly musings by
Chuck Goddeeris*



It's a new year and there is new hope for theatres. Vaccines are being released, as efficiently as the government will allow, and [Michigan has started to slowly open up their public gathering restrictions](#). (Click this for the official word from Lansing!)

This gives us plenty of hope to see that theatre and live events may start to resume some normalcy at some point this year. This means, if you haven't already, we'll have to re-evaluate our cleaning and safety procedures and possibly re-configure our audience arrangements to implement physical distancing.

But tell me something you don't already know, right? That's why you're here reading this article. You need help, advice, counsel of some sort to help you through these next 3-6 months. And hopefully I can provide you with some guidance.

First, make sure you have cleaning and safety procedures written down and distributed to your volunteers and workers. Please make sure you have someone in charge of following these guidelines anytime someone is using your facilities. Also, much like any of your theatre's other administrative tasks and processes, NOW is the time to document these processes, review them and make sure they are accessible to your volunteers.

Second, make sure you have the cleaning supplies necessary to ensure the safety of your thespians, staff, volunteers, patrons, etc. Hand sanitation stations, plexiglass shields, disposable masks, etc. will soon become regular sights at many events and I have no doubt most community theatres will, and should, implement these, even if they aren't required. Make sure you budget accordingly and realize this may impact how much you can spend on your shows moving forward.

Last, but certainly not least, make sure you set SMART goals for your organization. They should

be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. Unless you are operating on a big budget (and you know who you are) then most of your goals moving forward should be focused on getting your theatre through the next 12-18 months without going under completely.



For many that time frame of 12-18 months will cover the end of the fiscal year interrupted by the pandemic and take you into hopefully the first full fiscal year where we can trend back up towards full audience capacity. Utilizing the SMART tactics above, you will want to keep financial goals reasonable: in most cases breaking even will be great, but don't get upset if you lose money over all this first season. Just make sure you do everything in your power to minimize those losses and set your organization up for future success.

What this means is hopefully you've all taken a step back to analyze how your seasons, shows, events, etc. do financially and how you can approach those budgets to make sure you are more financially solvent. Ideally, you've identified areas where you may have been overspending or not getting enough bang for your buck and come up with new plans to maximize the money you spend.

I would suspect your advertising methods will evolve quite considerably this next year. Most likely by spending less on ads or at least making sure you target the right demographics that will be able to attend shows. You can hopefully compensate for those concerns by ensuring those involved are sharing events regularly on their social media (Facebook, Instagram, email), as well as with their friends, family, coworkers, etc.

I have no doubt many will flock back to the theatre when it is safe for them to do so. It is even more important now more than ever that what you do is intentional (aka with purpose) and has a SMART plan behind it. So start making your theatre's comeback plans with a few of these ideas in mind and I think your organization will be on your way to a more successful, fulfilling and safe year of creating theatre.



What's going on around the state?

Many of us are trying to navigate how to do theatre during a pandemic. Here's what a few of our groups sent us. Plan to attend our Michigan-Roundtable on March 18 to find details of these groups, as well as other attendees.

Farmington Players are doing Readers Theater as podcasts. All original scripts. Most of the rehearsals have been on Zoom. Most scripts are 2-5 characters. Our members really enjoy doing the podcasts because the commitment time is anywhere between 2-3 weeks. And just a couple of days/evening a week. We do a couple of rehearsals, then we schedule a "dress" recording, listen back to it to talk about what we need to do different, then we do the "final" recording that same evening/day. So take a listen to what we have. You can find our podcasts on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google or anyplace you listen to podcasts. You can also find us on YouTube. Just search for 'Farmington Players Audio Theater'. We are always looking for original short 10-15 minute scripts. And, if anyone has any questions, or if they want to send me their scripts, that would be great. ttimmer2559@gmail.com -
- Tim Timmer, Executive Director, Farmington Players Audio Theater

Midland Center for the Arts is planning on resuming community theatre activities this summer with an outdoor production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in August. We attempted to mount a double-cast, socially distant production of *Almost Maine* back in December, but the second shutdown in November put the kibosh on that. We have kept busy over the past year by presenting weekly Facebook Live performances of the entire Shakespeare canon!

As **Grosse Pointe Theatre** continues to put the safety of our members and patrons first, we have decided to postpone any in-person performances until late fall 2021. We have been working diligently on our virtual programming to offer entertainment to the community while we are not on stage, offering monthly virtual

shows to engage our patrons.

1. Scenes from Shakespeare
2. Our Ten-Minute Play Festival
3. Love Letter from GPT: Member love connections and relevant love scenes
4. Christmas scenes from shows
5. Reruns of old rights-free shows
6. 21 show-stoppers (Song, dance and drama hits from previous shows)

When we do plan live performances later this year, we will ensure the cast can rehearse and perform without risk, as well as providing a safe environment for the audiences to enjoy the shows.



Rosedale Community Players released their first radio show - *The Maltese Falcon* - to their YouTube channel on Friday, February 26. It was free to anyone to watch and they encouraged donations. Just go to their website or search for "Rosedale Community Players" or "WRCP" on YouTube and you should find their channel. They are hoping this is the first of many radio shows we can provide as we wait to go back into a physical space and do live theatre!

Ridgedale Players is starting work on an outdoor summer production of *Freaky Friday*. For more information they can contact the director, Kellie Evans Rao, at kersongbird@yahoo.com.

Players Guild of Dearborn just presented a Zoom choir production of *Seasons of Love*, which is on their YouTube channel.



Stagecrafters is producing a Zoom musical album to their YouTube channel as well - go check it out!

Birmingham Village Players is working on another edition of monologues written and performed by their Playwrights @ Work program, which should be released in March.

Twin City Players report that they have been keeping their volunteers very busy:

1. We did a virtual production of *Bah! Humbug* for the holidays Now on our website. It was a give-back to our patrons and the greater community for supporting us through 2020.
2. We are doing a *No Show Show* now.
3. We are doing a project for March - Women's History Month, whereby women put together costumes to portray women in history. We have had a terrific response to this project.
4. We are doing a collection of monologues and 2Fers for April, again virtual.
5. We are preparing for outdoor theatre presentations this summer.
6. We may do *Women of Lockerbie* as an indoor live presentation in July - depending on the Covid-19 status. This was the show that was ready to go up when we and everyone shut down. The cast and crew want to do it. The set is amazing but not transferable to outdoors.
7. We are looking to do *Fun Home* as the first show of our 2021-2022 Season in September. This is the show we were planning on for June 2020 but had to postpone.
8. We are repainting the interior of our Playhouse - auditorium, kitchen, lobby, studio, and rebuilding our Box Office window, etc.
9. We are purchasing sanitizing stations, air filtration systems (for varying sizes of rooms), a fogger system for our large systems and other similar items for reopening and for use in our three buildings.



Chad William Baker



Rodel Salazar

Changes on the Board of Directors

Due to the press of personal concerns, Chad William Baker from Pit & Balcony, Saginaw has found it necessary to resign from the CTAM Board. During his time on the Board, Chad has assumed responsibility for our Facebook presence and keeping our name out among the public. Many kudos to Chad for his innovation and efforts on our behalf.

Replacing Chad is Rodel Salazar. Rodel is a member of Stagecrafters in Royal Oak and is currently serving on their board as a member-at-large. He has directed multiple shows around the Metro Detroit area such as *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Titanic*, *Full Monty* and *Sister Act*. He's also performed in many shows such as *In The Heights*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Once On This Island* and *Evi-ta*. He's heavily involved with the youth theatre at Stagecrafters where he's taught several workshops on acting and directing. Off stage, Rodel teaches French for Wayne State University and Oakland Community College and is currently working on his PhD in French on the contemporary French and Francophone theatre at Wayne State.

Thanks, Chad, and Welcome Aboard, Rodel!



The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western



I love this job! I just finished singing the songs from *The Stinky Cheese Man*—what fun! Playscripts' website indicates that that show has never been done in Michigan! Huh.

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales

by John Glore is based on the popular children's book by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. This 2015 comedy with music is 55-65 minutes long. The set is flexible to non-existent, requiring a minimum cast of seven, or very large! The attitude is tongue-in-cheek to outrageous, suitable for

all ages. Like *Toy Story* and *Shrek*, adults will enjoy this almost as much as kids. The humor is

silly, snarky and irreverent, reminiscent of *Fractured Fairy Tales* from *Rocky and Bullwinkle*.

Jack of "Jack and the Beanstalk" fame is the narrator. He has on-going problems with Cow Patty (yep!), the Giant (of course!), and the Surgeon General who warns the audience of the dangers of this show to their health—it's just too stupid. Characters from ten fairy tales appear along with Cow Patty who regularly (no pun intended) pops up scaring the bejeebers out of the others. In revenge, Jack beckons the Giant's giant cow to drop a giant cow patty on Cow Patty! Other (or low?) highlights: the princess sleeps on a bowling ball, not a pea; the Frog Prince is just a frog who tricks the princess into kissing him; the Ugly Duckling becomes DJ Ugly and raps "DJ Ugly in the House." The song lyrics are hilarious and sung to well-known tunes. There's "Boo Hoo-the Really Emotional Crying Song" to "Greensleeves", "The Cow Patty Song" to "Camptown Races", "The Ride of Stinky Cheese" to "The Ride



of the Valkyries".

Sound and lights are pretty basic, with ample room for creativity with costumes and props. Your prop master/mistress will have a field day creating enormous Styrofoam letters and numbers that fall from the sky scaring Chicken Licken, but it's just the demolished Table of Contents. The Giant's huge hand and the giant cow patty will challenge the "lazy prop guy" as the Little Red Hen calls him. As they say, fun for the whole family, cast and crew!

Playscripts' *Recommended Reading for Girls*

by Ellen Struve ©2019 is a comedy/drama with a cast of seven women. Marilyn, the mother, 59, is fighting breast cancer, unsure about an experimental treatment. Jackie, 36, is 36 weeks pregnant, and Amy 32, is heart-broken and has recently been laid off. This two-act play works through the family angst with love, anger, compassion, and humor. Amy is the first one to see a character from a children's classic—Heidi. Yes, Amy and her mother's favorite childhood characters are in the house: Heidi is Swiss and



speaks German throughout; Sara Crew, British from *The Little Princess*; Anne Shirley, Canadian from *Anne of Green Gables*, and Penny Parker, an American, Nancy Drew clone. As Jackie, Amy, and Mom discuss their issues, the story-

book girls help with housework and comfort Mom. After a soul-searching talk with the characters, Mom disappears. Amy and Jackie panic. When Amy and Jackie start reminiscing about their mother, they start to see her as an individual. When they make up a new "story" of Marilyn, not Mom, she returns in a "night sky of swirling stars" as if she is the center of the universe. And aren't we all the center of our own universe? This play is about the power of story: the ones we read, the ones we assign to others, and the ones we tell ourselves. Struve's set as written requires three levels. But basic needs are a living room, a bedroom, and four places for the storybook girls to hide. This would be a lovely Mother's Day event.