



CALLBOARD

April 2026

National Volunteer Month:

Honor your volunteers with a CTAM nomination this year!

CTAM offers several annual awards that recognize outstanding individuals who serve their local theatre communities and CTAM at large. There are so many shining, hardworking members in our organizations and this is one of the small ways that we can help say 'thank you'! If you know anyone that meets the criteria for any of our awards, make sure to nominate them. Below is a list of the awards that are available.

Robert A. McKenna Award

CTAM's most prestigious award was established in 1987 to honor Robert A. McKenna – a longtime CTAM friend, supporter and actor in Michigan – who epitomized the spirit of community theatre, The McKenna is given annually at our Fall Conference to a living person who exhibits, through action, commitment and dedication, his or her support of community theatre on the state and local level, with 10+ years of service to their local theatre.

The Dorothy Arnett Volunteer Service Award

This award offers an opportunity for your group to have CTAM recognize your volunteers for long-term service within your group. This award is presented by CTAM to those individuals who have given valuable, long-term service to your theatre organization. Each year any CTAM affiliate member is allowed to recommend an individual or couple who has given valuable and significant service to their local group for at least ten years. CTAM may grant up to six such awards per year.

CTAM Rising Star Award

This award recognizes individuals who have had an impact on the advancement of CTAM, made contributions that develop higher standards for Michigan community theatre, or who have made far-reaching contributions to their local community theatres. These awards will be presented at the Fall Conference, or in the recipient's home theater.

Nomination forms can be found on the CTAM website, and the deadline for nominations is June 30. We look forward to hearing from all of you about your amazing members and how they make your theatre sparkle. <https://ctam.online/ctam-awards-nomination-form/>

APRIL 19–25, 2026

**SHINING A LIGHT ON THE PEOPLE
AND CAUSES THAT INSPIRE US TO
SERVE**

Commemorating 50 years! Since 1974, National Volunteer Week has been an opportunity to recognize the impact of volunteer service and the power of volunteers to tackle society's greatest challenges, to build stronger communities, and be a force that transforms the world.

Many thanks to our beautiful
CTAM volunteers across Michigan!

HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1951!



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2025 -26 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.*

**Playwriting Contest
deadline is Memorial
Day -- May 25, 2026**

The theme for your 10-minute play for this year's CTAM Playwriting Contest is **Winning and Losing**. For the short play section of the contest, your play must focus on some aspect of **winning or losing** something or someone!

The CTAM 2026 Playwriting Contest is underway with a submission deadline of **Memorial Day 2026**, giving you two months to get your entry ready. Winners will be announced at this year's Fall Conference toward the end of September.

There are two categories: Full-length plays and ten-minute plays. The full-length plays do not fall under the topical suggestion above.

Full-length plays must be a normal evening's entertainment of 90+ minutes; the short play should not be longer than 10 minutes. Whereas the full-length play can involve any number of characters, settings, scenes and costumes, the shorter play should be a single location (no scene changes or passage of time), contemporary language and minimal set dressing, props and costumes.

The contest in both categories is open to residents of Michigan and should be accompanied by a letter of acknowledgement from a CTAM affiliate group. This letter only states that the theatre group is aware of the playwright and supports their effort, but not that the author is necessarily a member. The purpose of the letter is to connect the affiliate group with additional talent in the community and to remind the playwright that CTAM affiliate groups are interested in their new work and supportive of the effort.

To enter, email your .pdf file to playwriting@CTAM.online by midnight of Monday, May 25, 2026. -- Memorial Day! Questions to the same address, please!



Escanaba in the winter light!



In spite of the difficult weather this winter, Players de Noc in Escanaba had a busy season. Here are photos from their production of *The Producers*, as well as a lighting workshop. Below, Guest instructor JR Bornemann discusses the Elements of Intelligent Lighting with Jesse Traub from Players de Noc during a recent lighting workshop they hosted for the community.



Board looking for host for Michigan AACTfest27

Here's an opportunity for your affiliate group to host the statewide AACTfest competition next year. It should be a weekend event between mid-February and mid-March. Your performance stage should be available all weekend (starting Wednesday or Thursday!), ancillary meeting space and party rooms should also be available. Arrangements with a local hotel (and a price break) are also very appreciated by the performing troupes and attendees who must stay overnight!

The maximum number of groups to compete is generally ten; that many groups will cause a very complex and crowded schedule, trying to give each group appropriate set-up, strike and rehearsal time on stage! There is a terrific Festival manual on the AACT website that can guide you.

If you are interested or just need more information, please contact our Administrator Mary Jo Denolf at ctamthrives@gmail.com.

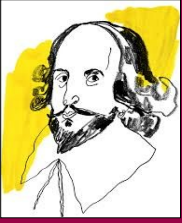


Busy spring for Kalamazoo Civic

Laura Zervic reports that Kalamazoo Civic just completed three very successful productions:

- ◆ Photo lower right, our Penguin Project Production of *The SpongeBob Musical Teen Edition* had a final sold out performance in our 500 seat venue! The program continues to grow, year after year, with this year seeing a 19% increase in Artists and Mentors.
- ◆ Bottom photo, *Dogfight* was a moving and inspirational run, which included partnering with the Battle Creek Veterans Medical Center and a Military Appreciation Night.
- ◆ Photo directly below, the bold, provocative *Angels in America, Part One Millennium Approaches* opened on March 13. This is a production not to be missed; we have a discounted rate for CTAM members.





Playwright's Corner

By Mary Lou Britton

And the plot thickens!

How do you approach your plot design for your new play? Do you just start writing and hope that your story is done by the time you get to your page limit? Well, I'm here to tell you it takes a little better planning than that!

Let's start by talking about some definitions and terms:

Exposition: Setting the scene and revealing the characters and their relationships with each other. Some back story may be included, but a bare minimum that gives insight to a character's action and behavior. This is what the audience needs to know to understand what's going on.

Inciting incident: This is the thing that starts the play on the road to the plot. This is the challenge that the character is thrown. It's the starting of the clock and the ball starts rolling. It's probably the reason you wanted to write the play in the first place.

Rising action: These are the scenes where you build the story. Characters are introduced and fully fleshed out within this part of the play. Conflicts are shown; alliances and allegiances revealed.

Climax: The moment where things will never be the same as a result of some action that has come in the previous scenes. Tides turn, fortunes are won, loves are lost. Audiences gasp!

Falling action: The conflicts and challenges in the previous scenes are confronted and resolved.

Turning point: This is not in all plays, but this moment is usually when the protagonist accepts or rejects everything that has just happened.

Resolution: How things work out in the end. Is there a wedding or a funeral? Does anyone get what they want?

These parts of the story would normally happen in this order. As you are thinking through the possible plot structure, here are some logical page guides to keep you on track:

ACTION	10 MINUTE PLAY	FULL-LENGTH PLAY
Exposition, background	Pages 1 to 3	Pages 1 to 25
Rising action, establish the hook	On page 4	Pages 20-25
The confrontation, forward movement	Pages 4 to 8	Pages 25 to 80
Climax	Pages 7 or 8	Pages 75 to 80
Resolution revealed	Pages 8 to 10	Pages 80 to 105

Before you start writing or come up with any dialog, most playwrights choose to outline their action in this order and decide which characters are doing what. That way, when the dialog starts flowing, the author is in control, rather than letting the characters taking over. Remember, **you** are creating this world on the page/stage, so you need to control the action. (This may be one of the only times in your life when that is possible!)

A properly constructed plot is going to mean success or failure of your play. An interesting plot with unique twists and turns will keep your audience (and actors) interested in your play and want to know how it all turns out. Good Luck!



Spring Theatre in Michigan

Vanishing Elephant Players	<i>Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue</i>	April 3 – 5, 2026
Tin Stop Theatre	<i>Welcome Back to Ivy Gap</i>	April 10 – 19, 2026
Clio Cast and Crew	<i>9 to 5, the Musical</i>	April 10 – 19, 2026
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>The Odd Couple</i>	April 10 – 19, 2026
Pit and Balcony	<i>Ken Ludwig's Baskerville: A Sherlock</i>	April 10 – 19, 2026
Fenton Village Players	<i>Company</i>	April 10 – 19, 2026
Holland Community Theatre	<i>Suite Surrender</i>	April 10 – 25, 2026
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Matilda</i>	April 10 – 26, 2026
Stagecrafters	<i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>	April 10 – 26, 2026
Monroe Community Players	<i>Putnam County Spelling Bee</i>	April 10 – 29, 2025
Pinckney Players	<i>Legally Blonde</i>	April 11 – 26, 2026
Community Theatre of Howell	<i>Seussical, Jr.*</i>	April 17 – 19, 2026
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre	<i>Rhinoceros</i>	April 17 – 26, 2026
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Mirror of Most Value</i>	April 17 – 26, 2026
Lebowsky Center for the Performing	<i>A Jukebox for the Algonquin</i>	April 17 – 26, 2026
Old Town Playhouse	<i>The Drowsy Chaperone</i>	April 17 – May 2, 2026
Rosedale Community Players	<i>My Mother, The Serial Killer**</i>	April 17 – May 2, 2026
Twin City Players	<i>Home, I'm Darling</i>	April 17 – May 3, 2026
The Sauk	<i>John & Jen</i>	April 23 – 26, 2026
Bay City Players	<i>Anastasia</i>	April 23 – May 3, 2026
Manistee Civic Players	<i>Four Old Broads</i>	April 24 – May 3, 2026
Central Park Players	<i>She Kills Monsters</i>	April 24 – May 3, 2026
Midland Center for the Arts	<i>Pippin</i>	April 24 – May 3, 2026
Southgate Community Players	<i>Calendar Girls</i>	April 24 – May 2, 2026
Flint Community Players	<i>Peter and the Starcatcher</i>	April 24 – May 3, 2026
Northern Lites Readers Theatre	<i>How Does Your Garden Grow</i>	April 25 – 26, 2026
Muskegon Civic Theatre	<i>Anastasia</i>	April 30 – May 3, 2026
Circle Theatre	<i>Elephant & Piggie: We Are In A Play!*</i>	May 1 – 3, 2026
Clarkston Village Players	<i>The Play That Goes Wrong</i>	May 1 – 16, 2026
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>The Producers</i>	May 1 – 17, 2026
Players Guild of Dearborn	<i>Hairspray</i>	May 1 – 17, 2026
Village Players of Birmingham	<i>A Little Night Music</i>	May 1 – 17, 2026

* Indicates youth production. ** Second stage production

✓ If your information is incorrect or missing and you are an affiliate group of CTAM, please send the correct information to CTAMthrives@gmail.com to be included in the next issue.

