

February 2023



CTAM CALLBOARD

AACTFest23 will look different this year!



With so many changes in the past two years in our theatres, CTAM is pedaling fast to stay relevant for our member groups. As a result, our Michigan AACTFest will look different in 2023.

With only two groups able to rally the forces to compete, the decision was made to send the adjudicators to the individual theatres, hoping to minimize the adjudicator's cost and, of course, for Lebowsky Center for the Arts in Owosso -- scheduled to be the host for the exciting weekend of theatre. But we are excited to announce the two groups participating! **The Sauk** in Jonesville and **Holland Civic** have both submitted an application to enter.

Our adjudicators will travel to both theatres and adjudicate them on their own stage. One of these two will represent Michigan at the Region III festival on April 27-30 in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. The National AACTFest23 will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, June 12-18. For more information on this theatre conference go to: <https://aact.org/aactfest-2023>

Many thanks go to affiliate CTAM member -- The Lebowsky Center -- for their willingness and dedication in offering to host this bi-annual event again. They have hosted before and they have the perfect set-up for the competition. The hotel is within one block of the performance space, as well as a corps of experienced volunteers, anxious to welcome us to their building.



Holland Civic Theatre



The Sauk Theatre, Jonesville

HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE THRIVE IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1951!



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2022-23 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 maryloubritton@gmail.com. Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to CTAMthrives@gmail.com.



To all Theatre Lovers and Creators in SE Michigan:

It is the year 2023 and I am writing to you to seek your help with something I hope will improve the collaboration and quality of theatre in our area. It has long been my dream to create a directory of Theatre Techies (basically anything theatre-related that isn't acting) and I have finally decided to put my dream into action.

I just need 5-10 minutes of your time to make this a reality. Just fill out this Google Form below and at the end of every month (as more people get added) I will redistribute the spreadsheet to the requested parties (there is an option on the form to SUBSCRIBE to this list).

<https://forms.gle/aYcpWiwbe2MUh6NR8>

Please feel free to forward this notice to others who might be interested. This only succeeds if everyone shares contact information so we can expand our theatrical networks in the Metro Detroit area (give or take 50 miles).

As of now, this is not a CTAM project, so please contact Chuck directly if you have any questions: charles-goddeeris@gmail.com.



CTAM Calendar of Events

March 17-19, 2023 Jonesville and Holland	Michigan AACTfest
April 14-17, 2023 Hartford, WI	Region III AACTfest
June 12-17, 2023 Louisville, KY	National AACTfest



CTAM - ON THE ROAD TO YOU!

The CTAM board is working hard to support our passion for theater and the collaborative spirit that moves us to create. It is time to rebuild, and the Community Theater Association of Michigan is reaching out across Michigan in a new way to help to encourage and educate our members.

We understand the difficulty and costs of attending a typical statewide workshop or conference. CTAM has an answer for that! Let us facilitate bringing a workshop to you with CTAM -ON THE ROAD TO YOU!!

Our new outreach program will give our member theaters the opportunity to choose and bring expertise and artists to your home theater for a program/workshop designed specifically for you and your needs!

How will this work? CTAM Responsibilities:

- ✓ CTAM agrees to pay \$100 workshop stipend and all mileage for workshop leader (up to 400 miles round trip)
- ✓ CTAM will facilitate the contacting and arrangements through the application process
- ✓ CTAM will review the application information and make connection within 15-20 business days of workshop leader name and availability. If this meets with theatre approval, CTAM will send a contract to both parties for signature and payment information.
- ✓ CTAM will assist in promotion with other theatres in your area

Theatre Affiliate Responsibilities:

- ✓ Theatre agrees to pay \$100 workshop stipend
- ✓ Theatre agrees to pay for any meal/lodging if needed for the workshop leader
- ✓ Any fees collect by the theatre will be theirs to

offset costs. CTAM will facilitate the contract and the arrangements through an application process.

CTAM is compiling a list of available workshops/leaders that we hope will continue to grow as we learn what needs are out there. CTAM hopes to include ALL facets of what we do in theatre, back to front. Anticipated workshops would be 2-4 hours as agreed upon by the artist and contracting theater.

Example of workshops (but not limited to - we will provide workshops of all kinds)

- ✓ Board Development
- ✓ Fundraising / Grant Writing
- ✓ Front of House / Ticketing / Box Office
- ✓ Technical: Sound / Lights / Set Building / Props
- ✓ Directing and/or Acting

How to apply!

How it will work: Interested members may fill out the application form at: <http://form.gle/NYdWekpzttQZn8Cq8> or email us at ctamthrives@gmail.com

Let us know your specific interests or ideas for a workshop tailored to your theater. Once CTAM has your information we will facilitate a connection through our workshop/artist listings.

After that connection is made, it will be the responsibility of the theater to finalize arrangements with the artist/administrator as to the time and space for the workshop in accordance with the contracts.

See page 4 for photos from the Very First Session!



CTAM's On the Road to You kicked off in Escanaba on January 22nd. Players de Noc opened up their theater to host this first-of-its-kind workshop which featured JR Bornemann sharing his knowledge and passion for lighting and lighting design. With fifteen in attendance from two different theater groups, the workshop was a huge success, with everyone interested in expanding their knowledge of design and learning about new lighting concepts,

Players de Noc chose to have Bornemann come directly to their theater and work not just with their members, but with their own equipment and instruments. Attendees of the event praised Bornemann for his knowledge, passion, and ability to share both in a meaningful way. Players de Noc was ecstatic with the turnout for the event and is looking forward to scheduling their next On the Road to You.

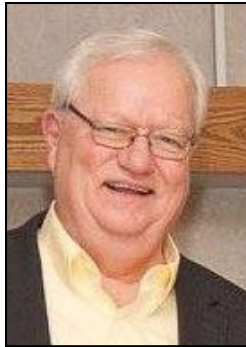


Have you had any of your shows adjudicated yet this season?

Everyone is busy, deep in the depths of producing their current season. Remember that CTAM has trained adjudicators ready and eager to visit your group and adjudicate one of your shows. As a benefit of your CTAM annual affiliate dues, each member group gets one free adjudication per membership year. After that, your group pays a modest fee for additional adjudications.

AACT adjudication is two-fold: to accurately reflect to the performing company what has been successfully achieved, and to outline reasonable steps that might be taken to enhance interpretation of the story; As a director you will learn how to interpret your productions differently and as an audience member you will watch the productions with a different understanding.

Adjudicators are an independent second pair of eyes, looking at your production and seeing things you may not have noticed. Adjudications are not 're-directing' or a pass/fail situation, but rather a starting point for improvement in future shows.



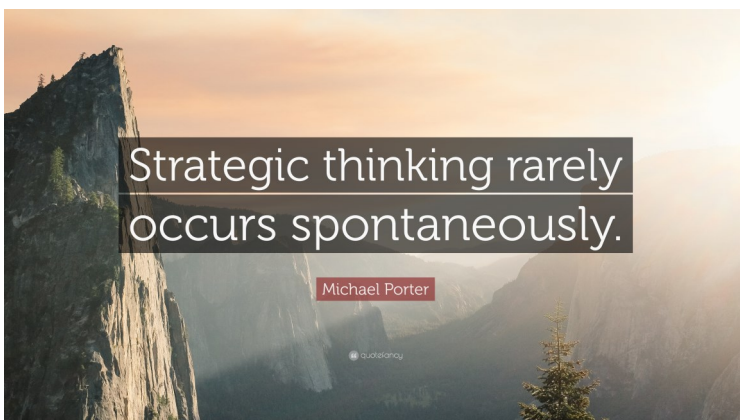
Larry Nielsen

If you want to make arrangements for an adjudication yet this season, contact Adjudication Chair Larry Nielsen at larrynielsen6619@gmail.com



I write for myself, and my goal is bringing that world and that experience of Black Americans to life on the stage and giving it a space there.

AUGUST WILSON



Now, what's going on in Michigan theatres?

Grand Rapids Civic Theatre	<i>Once On This Island</i>	Jan 20 - Feb 5, 2023
Ridgedale Players, Troy	<i>Baby</i>	Jan 20-Feb 5, 2023
Stagecrafters, Royal Oak	<i>Clue</i>	Jan 20 - Feb 5, 2023
Rosedale Community Players	<i>The Game's Afoot</i>	Jan 22-Feb 11, 2023
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Broadway Bound</i>	Jan 27-Feb 5, 2023
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Cylbourne Park</i>	Jan 27-Feb 5, 2023
Pit & Balcony, Saginaw	<i>Ramona Quimby</i>	Jan 27- Feb 5, 2023
Holland Community Theatre	<i>Sweat</i>	Feb 2-18, 2023
Bay City Players	<i>By The Way, Meet Vera Stark</i>	Feb 3-12, 2023
Community Theatre of Howell	<i>Murder on the Orient Express</i>	Feb 3-12, 2023
Farmington Players	<i>Wait Until Dark</i>	Feb 3-18, 2023
Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City	<i>The Laramie Project</i>	Feb 3 - 18, 2023
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>First Date</i>	Feb 10-19, 2023
Midland Center for the Arts	<i>Honk! the Muscial *</i>	Feb 23-26, 2023
Players deNoc, Escanaba	<i>The Marvelous Wonderettes: Dream On</i>	Feb 23 - March 4, 2023
Fenton Village Players	<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i>	Feb 24 - March 5, 2023
Flint Community Players	<i>Who Dunit?</i>	March 2-12, 2023
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre	<i>Puffs</i>	March 2-12, 2022
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>Clue On Stage</i>	Mar 2-12, 2023
Master Arts Theatre, Grand Rapids	<i>The Crucible</i>	March 2 -18, 2023
Stagecrafters, Royal Oak	<i>Jungle Book - Youth</i>	March 2-5, 2023
Central Park Players, Grand Haven	<i>Four Places</i>	March 3-11, 2023
Twin City Players, St. Joseph	<i>The Outsider</i>	Mar 3-19, 2023
Cadillac Footlites	<i>Too Much Light... Baby Go Blind</i>	March 10-18, 2023
Clarkston Village Players	<i>Blithe Spirit</i>	March 10-25, 2023
Players Guild of Dearborn	<i>Becky's New Car</i>	Mar 10-27 2023
Village Players, Birmingham	<i>Lend Me A Tenor</i>	Mar 10-26, 2023
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>The Rainbow Fish Musical</i>	March 13-12, 2023
Community Theatre of Howell	<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>	Mar 17-19, 2023
Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>Laughter on the 23rd Floor</i>	Mar 16-26, 2023
Bay City Players	<i>Enchanted April</i>	March 17-26, 2023
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre	<i>Ten for All</i>	March 17-19, 2023
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Morning's at Seven</i>	March 17-26, 2023
Lapeer Community Theatre	<i>Witness for the Prosecution</i>	Mar 24-April 1, 2023
Pit & Balcony, Saginaw	<i>Sweat</i>	March 17-26, 2023

* indicates youth productions; ** indicates second stage productions, if submitted.

If your information is incorrect or missing, please send the correct information to [The Editor](#) to be included in the next issue.

The Scoop on Scripts

By Tara Western



Dramatists' *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* by Lynn Nottage ©2013 is the most difficult script I have ever "scooped." That said, if you have the people and the ambition, it would be worth it. Lots of interesting problems to solve. Make plans now to see this wonderful show at Bay City Players, February 3-5 and 10-12.

The story follows a Black actress through pre-stardom in the '30s, her final interview in the 1970s, and her enduring legacy. Vera Stark's story follows the journey of many black actresses in that time period, such as Hattie McDaniel, and the racism and sexism of that time period.

The characters: Vera Stark is "an African American beauty" and personal assistant/maid to "America's Sweetheart," Gloria Mitchell. Lottie, a pretty, heavy-set, brown-skinned woman, and Anna Mae, a "very, very fair-skinned African-American woman." ACT I, it's 1933 and the three friends are desperate to be cast in *The Belle of New Orleans* (basically, *Gone with the Wind*) and are in their 20s. Also, we meet Leroy, a "new Negro" musician; Slasvick, the white director of *The Belle of New Orleans*; and Maxmillian, the white producer. The four women and Leroy discuss the difficulty of getting into the business as Negroes. Lots of comic moments as each woman tries to capture the attention of the film's head honchos.

As Max describes his dream to use "real Negroes," Vera and Lottie hilariously morph into the stereotype of slave women, trying to capture his attention. Gloria spends most of the encounter drunk, and "finding her light". Act I ends with Vera saying she has sold her soul and her identity in order to be in films.

Act II is now 2003 and we find a colloquium of scholars discussing the Black experience history in film, especially Vera Stark's career. The black and white film, "*The Belle of New Orleans*," circa 1855, is shown. Gloria plays the "belle," the dying octoroon mistress of a wealthy merchant; Vera is Tilly, her loyal slave; Anna Mae plays Gloria's

French (!) friend, and Lottie, a slave/maid. Confused? Find tips at www.bythewaymeetverastark.

The panel consists of Herb (Leroy), Carmen (Lottie), and Afua (Anna Mae). Each member has a different opinion of Vera and the film. Herb declares that Vera's performance is revolutionary and political.

Next, we see Vera's final interview on a typical '70s talk show, "The Brad Donovan Show". The host, Brad (Slasvick in Act I), and British rock star, Peter Rhys-Davies, (Maxmillian) welcome a vivacious, 60+ Vera Stark. Vera flirts, and sings, but avoids talking about the past. Surprise guest, Gloria Mitchell arrives and she and Vera have a warm, and then tumultuous reunion. The scene reverts to the Colloquium discussing the racial and gender discrimination Vera suffered throughout her life, and where she is now: a maid, or a bag lady?

Basically, the history of Blacks in the entertainment business is dissected. A lot of humor and



light-heartedness are evident and the characters, especially the women, in the '30s, are especially vibrant.

The last scene is the film of *The Belle of New Orleans*, where young Vera and young Gloria step out from behind the screen. In a light-hearted, but important conversation, the two women summarize the idea of freedom, that was depicted in the movie and throughout their lives.

Sets: a 1930s Hollywood living room, a small apartment, a studio back lot and Gloria's living room. In Act II the black and white film of *The Belle of New Orleans* circa 1855, a 2003 academic panel and a 1973 talk show. Also, many slides of old photos from the height of Vera's career and an old documentary of Leroy. A costume challenge with lots of magnificent period costumes. Adult language. 16+

