

CTAM
Community Theatre Association of Michigan

CALLBOARD

March 2026

The search is on

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR
BOARD MEMBERS!**



Becoming a CTAM board member allows you to directly shape community culture, cultivate arts in Michigan, and build professional skills in leadership, fundraising, and governance. It provides a platform to help community theatres across the state of Michigan. Besides all of this, you meet some of the most talented, creative and artistic people in the State.

If you need more reasons why to volunteer for the Board of Directors for CTAM, here are several:

- **Impact on Local Culture:** You will directly support the arts in Michigan by helping others to produce shows, learn and grow.
- **Networking Opportunities:** You will connect with, and build relationships with, community theatre leaders and like-minded professionals.
- **Strategic Influence:** You will help determine the direction, mission, and sustainability of CTAM.
- **Personal Fulfillment:** You will gain the satisfaction of giving back to a cause you are passionate about and you will feel good about collaborating with other talented people to make CTAM happen.

Most of the work of the CTAM Board is done at monthly meetings by Zoom, so the requirement to travel around the state has been pretty much eliminated. Each Board member has at least one committee assignment, in addition to the work of the Board.

Please give our request some serious thought for yourself, or pass the idea on to a friend who you think might be interested! For more information, please contact: ctamthrives@gmail.com.



HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1951!



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2025-26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Chuck Goddeeris... charlesgoddeeris@gmail.com
Birmingham Village Players / Rosedale Players

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Grand Rapids Civic Theatre / AACT Past President

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St. Dunstan's / Ann Arbor Civic / Dexter

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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.*

**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!

Just think about all the possible dramatic situations you can conjure up, using that scenario! Betting on the ponies ... investing your IRA money on a sure thing ... watching your daughter's soccer game ... losing your winning lottery ticket ... losing your hearing ... winning a crooked poker game and then losing your car keys ... the list goes on and on!

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

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 either category 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 the deadline of Monday, May 25, 2026. Questions to the same address, please!





June 30 deadline for CTAM award nominations

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 volunteers for long-term service within your group.

The Dorothy Arnett Volunteer Service 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 theatres sparkle.

<https://ctam.online/ctam-awards-nomination-form/>

Have you scheduled your adjudications yet for this season?

Everyone is busy, deep in the depths of getting ready for your next production, but remember that CTAM has trained adjudicators, ready and eager to visit your group and adjudicate one of your productions. 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.

CTAM 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 set 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.

If you want to make arrangements for an adjudication this season, contact Adjudication Chair Betsy Willis at ryonwillis915@gmail.com.



WORKSHOPS?? Did We Just Say Workshops?!

Yes, we did—and CTAM is thrilled to announce that funding has been secured to continue our *On the Road to You* workshops series!

Now is the perfect time to sign up and bring customized, 1:1 expertise directly to your theatre. Our CTAM workshop leaders are ready to work with your board, artistic team, volunteers, and patrons, offering hands-on guidance tailored to your needs.

Last year, CTAM delivered 11 workshops across the state, and we are excited to offer this opportunity once again.

Why bring a workshop to your theatre?

We understand the financial and logistical challenges of attending statewide trainings or conferences. That's why CTAM is committed to removing barriers and meeting you where you are—literally. Let us bring high-quality training straight to your doorstep at little to no cost to anyone.

How does this all work?

CTAM provides:

- ✓ **\$200 stipend** for the workshop leader
- ✓ **Mileage reimbursement** (up to 400 miles or \$200)
- ✓ **Contracting and coordination** for the workshop leader
- ✓ **Statewide promotion** of your workshop to other theatres in your region

Your theatre provides:

- ✓ Any **meal or lodging costs** for the workshop leader

- ✓ Management of any **registration fees** your theatre chooses to charge (to offset costs or generate revenue)

What workshops are included?

- ◆ Board Development
- ◆ Intimacy Direction / Best Practices
- ◆ Front of House, Ticketing & Box Office
- ◆ Technical Theatre: Sound, Lighting, Sets, Props, Stage Managing
- ◆ Directing and Acting
- ◆ And so much more!

If there's a topic you want, we can probably provide it.

Ready to Sign Up?

Just email CTAM Administrator Mary Jo at ctamthrives@gmail.com with the workshop topic(s) you're interested in. She'll follow up with details and next steps.

Have a dream workshop leader?

Tell us! Share their name and area of expertise, and we'll explore whether we can bring them to you.

Interested in becoming a workshop leader yourself?

We're always looking for passionate individuals to share their knowledge with theatres across the state. Reach out—we'd love to hear from you.

Happy learning, and here's to thriving theatres across Michigan!





Gene Miller

We have just received word that Eugene Herbert Miller passed away peacefully on Monday, October 6, 2025, at the age of 100 years young. Eugene was very avid about community theatre, serving many terms on the Board of Flint Community Players, as well as acting, directing, and almost every other aspect of theatre. He enjoyed attending productions at other theatres around the state. A part of that passion was attending the annual CTAM conventions for many years. He served on our CTAM board, including terms as President. He will be sorely missed.



Monroe Community Players offered Silent Sky in February and March this year.



Above, St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook presented Jukebox for the Algonquin.



The folks at Avon Players in Rochester are presenting a stirring version of Holmes and Watson during March.





The Prez Sez...

BY CHUCK GODDEERIS
CTAM PRESIDENT

Winter may finally be giving way to Spring in Michigan, but we just received a very late Christmas present. On Friday, February 27th we learned that we have been awarded a very generous amount of money for this coming year. Most of these funds will help support our On The Road Workshops, Fall Conference and our beloved Adjudication Program. We would not have received this generous amount of money if not for the dedicated and diligent work of Betsy Willis. Three cheers for Betsy!

So, if you have any hesitation about asking us for an adjudication or coming to your area with a workshop, let this be the kick in the butt you need to ask us for help. We have an extensive network of contacts with highly trained professionals and practitioners that we can help bring to your area to lead a directed workshop on whatever skillset your organization desires.

We are so dedicated to our On The Road Workshops that we are looking to coordinate with theatres throughout the state to host a couple leaders for a one- or two-day event (whatever fits your organization's schedule) with multiple instructors. We want to bring the instructors to the theatres and give your theatre and other theatres in your area every opportunity to fill in or enhance your skill gaps to help your theatre thrive. Not only will hosting theatres get to level up their organization but we'll also be able to donate additional funds to your coffers for hosting the instructors. If this is something your group would like to learn about, please do not hesitate to reach out to our fantastic CTAM Administrator Mary Jo DeNolf at ctamthrives@gmail.com.

Also, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention our webinars. In fact, we have one lined up for the end of March that will educate you on connecting with community foundations and how to improve your grant writing. Learn more about it



You don't want to miss out.

We are working on more webinars to follow about using partnerships, as well as a webinar on building audiences. If you have other topics you'd like us to cover just let us know and we will collaborate with our contacts to get one scheduled! Our webinars may be free (donations always welcome), but they are taught by the same experienced professionals and practitioners that lead our in-person workshops throughout the year.

These are just several of the many great benefits we offer at CTAM. Remember, we are here to help your community theatre thrive!

CTAM March Webinar

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 @ 7 PM



Fundraising – Using
Community Foundations and Grant
Writing Basics

Taught by Lisa Cripps

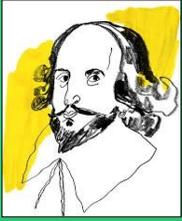
Learn about local
community foundations in the State of
Michigan and how

you can utilize them to help your group. We'll also go over the basics of grant writing, including tips and tricks to help get your grants noticed so you can secure additional funds for your organization. Webinar is offered on Zoom.

ABOUT LISA:

Lisa Cripps is the President of the Berrien Community Foundation (BCF). Serving Berrien County, the BCF was established in 1952 and currently manages over \$120 million in assets. Lisa is one busy person, but she does find time to volunteer in the Rotary, FIRST Robotics of Michigan and in Community Theater. She is active with the Twin City Players, as well as being a published playwright, a director, performer and makes a darn good Omelet costume.

[SIGN UP FOR THE FUNDRAISING WEBINAR](#)



Playwright's Corner

By Mary Lou Britton

Writing remarkable characters for your plays

What is the one thing the audience remembers long after the lights go out and everything else fades away: Your Characters.

Your characters are defined and revealed by how they interact with the other characters in your cast. You need to work hard to make your characters highly individual and force them into some sort of conflict with another character.

If your characters are based on people you know in real life, as a playwright, we often shy away from revealing the highly personal conflicts people have with each other. Stop it! The very essence of writing plays is to reveal highly personal situations and conversations to the whole world.

Differentiation:

Make sure your characters are different from each other in significant ways.

The content of your character's speech, and their feelings toward that content, is generally enough to differentiate them from the other characters in the scene.

Conflict:

Characters should be in conflict with each other ... with something important at stake. The more diametrically opposed your characters are – and the more staunchly they hold their views – the greater the potential for drama in your play.

Vary your characters:

It's like having a box of brightly colored crayons ... versus a box of all beige ones!

There are many ways to separate your characters from one another:

- ✓ Emotional tendencies
- ✓ Beliefs or convictions
- ✓ Socioeconomic class
- ✓ Education or intelligence levels
- ✓ Sexual tendencies
- ✓ Strongly conflicting desires
- ✓ Family feuds
- ✓ Clashing backgrounds or cultures

Before you make any final decisions about your characters, think about how they all fit together and complement one another.

Each character must want something. How they get them are called TACTICS. Here are some examples of tactics that Alice could use to get vital information from Paul!

1. Bribe him
2. Seduce him
3. Be nice to him
4. Trick him into revealing it
5. Sympathize with him
6. Beat him up
7. Guilt-trip him
8. Threaten him
9. Hack into his phone or computer

That's nine different ways your scene could go, so when you are stuck, remember to look at tactics and pick another sequence that will lead your characters off in another direction.

When you get to the point of worrying if the audience will like your characters or not, audiences are very forgiving. They will like your characters who are just like our friends ...

- ☆ Courageous
- ☆ Compassionate
- ☆ Social
- ☆ Loyal
- ☆ Humorous

In the world you are creating on stage, remember that -- like friends! -- remarkable characters stick with us long after the lights go out! With just a little extra effort, we can create those characters.



Spring Theatre in Michigan

Twin City Players	<i>Emma</i>	February 20 – March 8,
Northern Lites Readers Theatre	<i>Pack Your Bags – Travel Tales</i>	February 21 – 22, 2026
Central Park Players	<i>Marjorie Prime</i>	February 27 – March 8,
Flint Community Players	<i>Pipeline</i>	February 27 – March 8,
Midland Center for the Arts	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	February 27 – March 8,
Monroe Community Players	<i>Silent Sky</i>	February 27 – March 8,
Port Austin Community Thea-	<i>Get Smart</i>	February 27 – March 8,
Portland Civic Players	<i>Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors</i>	February 27 – March 8,
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre	<i>The Thirty-Three Little Pigs*</i>	March 6 – 8, 2026
Three Rivers Community Players	<i>She Kills Monsters</i>	March 6 – 15, 2026
Players de Noc	<i>The Producers</i>	March 6 – 14, 2026
Northland Players	<i>The World Goes 'Round</i>	March 6 – 14, 2026
Avon Players Theatre	<i>Holmes and Watson</i>	March 6 – 21, 2026
Clarkston Village Players	<i>All The Better To Kill You With</i>	March 6 – 21, 2026
Players Guild of Dearborn	<i>Next to Normal</i>	March 6 – 22, 2026
Village Players of Birmingham	<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	March 6 – 22, 2026
Buckham Alley Theatre	<i>Alligator Hotel (Improv Comedy)</i>	March 11, 2026
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre	<i>She Kills Monsters</i>	March 12 – 15, 2026
Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>Finding Gladys</i>	March 12 – 22, 2026
Old Town Playhouse	<i>Paint Night (studio)</i>	March 13 – 21, 2026
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Angels in America, Part 1</i>	March 13 – 22, 2026
Grosse Pointe Theatre	<i>The Wizard of Oz*</i>	March 13 – 22, 2026
Enter Stage Right	<i>The Hobbit</i>	March 13 – 29, 2026
Bay City Players	<i>Peter Pan Jr.*</i>	March 14 – 22, 2026
The Sauk	<i>Sauk Shorts**</i>	March 19 – 22, 2026
Stagecrafters	<i>Daddy Long Legs</i>	March 20 – 29, 2026
Old Town Playhouse	<i>The Giver*</i>	March 26 – 28, 2026
Midland Center for the Arts	<i>13 Jr.*</i>	March 26 – 29, 2026
Center Stage Theatre Kalamazoo	<i>Pirates of Penzance</i>	March 27 – 29, 2026
Pinckney Players	<i>Legally Blonde</i>	April 11 – 26, 2026
Vanishing Elephant Players	<i>Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue</i>	April 3 – 5, 2026
Tin Shop 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

* 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.

