



CTAM  
Community Theatre Association of Michigan

# CALLBOARD

MAY 2024

## May Roundtable: Tuesday, May 21, at 7 o'clock **Marketing Strategies in the Social Media Age**

Butts in seats, that's what everyone's after. That secret sauce to sell as many tickets as possible. This job has been increasingly challenging to handle in the digital age so we've assembled a trio of panelists to help your organization navigate marketing and how to integrate Social Media into your plan. We'll cover some dos and don'ts and go over best practices to get the most out of your Marketing Team.

So, join us Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm via Zoom for a roundtable on *Marketing Strategies in the Social Media Age*. We will be joined by Marcus Chapman, Amy Jo Brown and Chuck Goddeeris to discuss the dos and don'ts of Marketing and how to best utilize Social Media to help your organization put the most butts in the seats.

This fearsome threesome have a wide knowledge of Michigan community theatre and will share that knowledge with you on the 21st. You can learn more about our presenters on [our website](#).

Our CTAM roundtables this spring are FREE, but we do ask you to register so we know who to expect.

[REGISTER ONLINE HERE](#)



Chuck Goddeeris



Marcus Chapman



Amy Jo Brown

**HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1951!**

*\*Do you know who this is and why he's on the front page of our newsletter? It's Brian MAY, lead guitarist for rock-band Queen! Happy May!*



**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 [maryloubritton@gmail.com](mailto:maryloubritton@gmail.com). *Updated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to [CTAMthrives@gmail.com](mailto:CTAMthrives@gmail.com).*

**CTAM friend Roger Ellis  
passes away**



Longtime friend, CTAM supporter and theatre enthusiast, Roger Ellis passed away on April 13. Locally, Roger was best known for being a professor at Grand Valley State University and, in the late 1970s when they were experiencing financial difficulties, the college cut the theatre program to two faculty members. Roger spent the next 15 years rebuilding the program to its current level of offering six major productions annually. Roger also introduced the Diversity in Theatre initiative in 1992 and co-founded the Shakespeare Festival in Grand Rapids in 1993.

Born in Chicago, he and his family moved to California when he was eight, helping his mother run several college boarding houses for female students. An adventurous teenager, Roger had collected a few friends who perpetuated the urban legend that a masked avocado-chucking teenager would appear after sunset, pranking officers driving by in their cruisers. The identity of the avocado avenger was never revealed.

Roger remained strong-willed and stubborn through his final act and will be remembered for his big heart, endless monologues, terrible driving, obsession with honking the car horn, quirky sense of humor, affinity for crazy music, and making super weird comments on Facebook. But, most of all, Roger will be remembered for the way he empowered everyone to be a better version of themselves by virtue of his unconditional love.

May the curtain never close on your amazing show, wherever it may be playing next. Thank you Roger for all that you have done for CTAM through the years. You will be missed!



# Join the Survey! Be part of the national database!

The O\*NET Data Collection Program, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, is seeking the input of expert **Actors**. As the nation's most comprehensive source of occupational data, O\*NET is a free resource for millions of job seekers, employers, veterans, educators, and students at [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org).



You have the opportunity to participate in this important initiative and your participation will help ensure that the complexities of your profession are described accurately in the O\*NET database for the American public.

**Actors:** Play parts in stage, television, radio, video, motion picture productions, or other settings for entertainment, information, or instruction. Interpret serious or comic role by speech, gesture, and body movement to entertain or inform audience. May dance and sing.

Alternate titles for this occupation include: Comedian, Comic, Stand Up Comedian, Community Theater Actor, Theatre Ensemble Member, Dramatic Reader, Understudy, Narrator, Voice-Over Artist

You are considered an Occupation Expert if you:

- ☆ Have at least one year of professional experience working in the occupation.
- ☆ Have a minimum of five years combined professional experience practicing, training, teaching, and/or supervising others who perform in the occupation.
- ☆ Are currently actively involved in the field and based in the United States.

## How to Participate

If you meet these criteria and are interested in participating, please contact Constance Bite at RTI International, the O\*NET data collection contractor, at [cbite@onet.rti.org](mailto:cbite@onet.rti.org) or 877-233-7348, Extension 965.

Please provide the following:

- Full Name
- Company Name and Title
- Daytime Phone Number
- Email Address
- Address with City and State

## Process and Participation Incentive:

A random sample of experts responding to this request will be invited to complete a set of questionnaires. Experts who are selected and agree to participate will receive a **\$40.00 VISA gift code** and an **oak-framed Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Department of Labor**.

We encourage you to consider helping to keep information about your profession accurate and current for the benefit of our colleagues and the nation. Thank you for your support.

*If you know anyone within your network who is also an expert and would be interested in participating, feel free to forward this information to them .*

## Playwright's Corner

### CTAM Playwriting Contest now underway!

Spring has sprung and that means its time to dust off your scripts for the annual CTAM Playwriting contest. We will be accepting submissions until 11:59:59 PM on June 30, 2024. The play must be unpublished, written by a Michigan playwright and cannot have been given a public performance by a professional company. There is no fee to enter but we will again be requiring an acknowledgement letter from a CTAM affiliate theatre group to be submitted with your script.

For full details please [visit our website here](#), which includes the submission form to upload your script and acknowledgement letter.



# Bylaws, Committees, and Boards – Oh My!



Gary Walker, Grand Rapids Civic

Bylaws are viewed by some as a nuisance that gets in the way of getting work done, a tool for defining an organization or one more document to maintain. Regardless of how you look at them, bylaws are an essential part of any not-for-profit organization. Generally required when filing articles of incorporation, bylaws are by no means a dead document, cast in stone and unchangeable. Just the opposite, bylaws are a living document ... within bounds.

A good set of bylaws provides structure and continuity for a theatre without hampering the day-to-day operations. The key is balance and moderation. Not everything about a theatre needs to be committed to bylaws. Let's look at some basics.

The controlling documents for a theatre organization can be broadly broken into three groups – articles of incorporation, bylaws, and operating procedures/guides. Governing relates to the legal structure of the organization and establishes broad parameters – the name of the organization, membership structure and non-profit status. Bylaws define basic elements of the operation of the organization. Operating procedures and guides break down tasks – how is bookkeeping and tax information managed, how a season is to be selected, and who maintains records.

Bylaws should set the basic structure of the Board – number of members, officers and standing committees, and the fiscal year. How board members are elected or appointed and how the bylaws can be amended and who can vote on governance issues all need to be included. This provides the backbone of the theatre operating structure.

Bylaws dos and some don'ts:

- ✓ Do make the board and committees have an

odd number of members. This reduces the chance of ties when voting on issues.

- ✓ Do have term limits for board members. While some argue that this forces good board members off the board it also makes it easier to bring new blood to the board and eliminate underperforming members without 'firing' them. Good members can work on a committee for a year then be re-elected to the board as a full member.
- ✓ Do define key essentials such as fiscal year, rules of order (typically Robert's) and terms of service.
- ✓ Don't define committees that are not permanent, standing committees. It may be tempting to put every committee in the bylaws, but this limits the ability of the board to manage routine business of the organization without constant amendments to the bylaws. For example, if you incorporate a season selection committee as a standing committee, any change to the selection process requires bylaws change, limiting the operation of the organization.
- ✓ Do define a quorum for routine business (typically a simple majority) and a supermajority for bylaws changes or dissolution of the organization (typically 2/3 or 3/4 majority).
- ✓ Do define who can vote on issues (all, all except the president who only votes to break a tie, include executive on the board as a voting or non-voting position). There is no right choice, but the choice should appear in the bylaws. Consider e-voting and proxy voting issues as well. Are these allowed or must a member be present to vote?
- ✓ Do define terms for board and officers. If you have a 3-year term, for example, 1/3 of the board should come up for election/appointment each year. This provides for continuity of the board



(Continued, page 5)

(Continued from page 4) and should be considered when appointing committee members as well, so no committee ends up with all new members because of term limits.

- ✓ Don't over define job functions in bylaws. The basic roles of board members and officers should be defined but details should be relegated to operating documents which are easier to change as roles shift or new tasks are added to a position.
- ✓ Do review bylaws regularly to ensure the organization adheres to the bylaws or makes changes as appropriate. Bylaws are a legal document and need to be kept current.
- ✓ Do include the mission of the organiza-

tion. The basic definition of a theatre should be included directly in the bylaws.

- ✓ Do start small. It is easier to add to the bylaws than to delete. Deleting can have unanticipated impacts and is usually trickier than adding.

Remember bylaws are meant to work for the individual organization so take these items as guidance rather than hard rules. Bylaws are a valuable tool if they promote the goals of the organization so remember that often less is more (and you can always amend them later if needed!)

--Gary Walker



## CTAM - On the Road to Lapeer!

On Saturday, April 13, Lapeer Community Players hosted a CTAM On The Road to You workshop for Directors. CTAM Stalwart Bill Anderson of Midland was the workshop leader (third from the right!) and worked with everyone on how to be a leader of the production to more in depth processes of being a good director.

It was a great turnout and everyone learned, networked and had a great time.

If your group would like to host a workshop, please reach out to [ctamthrives@gmail.com](mailto:ctamthrives@gmail.com) and we can get you all set up to have a workshop in directing, lighting, fundraising, board development, costumes and much, much more.





# The Night the Play Did Go Wrong!

After 22 months of planning, 18 weeks of rehearsals, and dozens of hours moving and building the set, it was finally the opening night of Grosse Pointe Theatre's production of *The Play That Goes Wrong*. I wasn't nervous. We had a relatively eventless Tech Week. The lights and sound crews plugged into the production effortlessly, the costumes, hair, and make-up all connected in time to have three solid dress rehearsals and a dark night on Thursday for good measure. We had been rehearsing on the set for the better part of seven weeks because we had rented the set and secured an off-site warehouse space, so we felt very confident that we had solved the mysteries of the set and had successfully learned how to operate the 1,000-pound platform safely. That was until the 'pop' heard around the world.

During our normal fight call, along with all other fight and stunt-related sequences, we would run the collapse of the second-level platform that is so iconic in *The Play That Goes Wrong*. This fight call ensures that we are all centered and that our cast and crew have open lines of communication to ensure that all on-stage stunts are safe and effective. We tried not to let them feel routine, but we had a good sense of the sequence by this point, so we were moving efficiently. Then, with 45 minutes to curtain, we heard a distinct metallic ping. New sounds were not something you wanted with this set! The stage managers, tech director, stage crew, and I began searching the set to determine the cause of the sound. After about 10 minutes, we could not find anything missing or broken. Then one of our stage managers found it! The head of a 1/2" Phillips head machine screw is sitting on the stage. We immediately knew this was the source of the sound. We surmised that the head had been sheered off a bolt somewhere on the platform. We are now 30 minutes to curtain. The house is about to open, and 200 patrons are ready to see our opening night. We had a missing bolt and didn't know where it went.

The first thought was to find the open bolt hole. After a few frantic minutes of searching, we discovered that at one of the connection points toward the back of the upper-level platform, there were, in fact, TWO open bolt holes. One of our Stage Managers, Danielle Caralis, ran to the local hardware store to get a replacement bolt because our stock did not have the size we needed. Moments later, our Tech Director, Gordon Richardson, discovered that the metal

platform had shifted forward, so the bolt holes would not align even with the correct size bolt. With now 15 minutes to curtain we began the dual track of trying to fix the platform and plan for the eventuality that we would not be able to. The next ten minutes were a flurry of bolts and pry bars, ladders, and more than our share of "dramatic language." With five minutes to curtain, I made the decision to ask the audience for another 30 minutes to allow us to fix the issue. They were gracious (although many thought this was part of the show), and my uneasy smile belied the truth: we weren't sure if we could fix it without major set deconstruction.

Over the next 20 minutes, we deconstructed parts of the set to access the bolt holes. Using brute strength and some understanding of physics, we finally aligned the bolt holes, installed the bolts, and tested the platform. I was happy to report to the house that the show would, in fact, go on.

Our audience waited about 45 minutes for the curtain to go up ... and only a couple people left, apologizing on the way out for having to leave!

Through the entire ordeal, the one thing that I kept noticing was the determination of the cast and crew to set this ship right. This group of volunteers who have already donated their time, effort, money, and talent to this production dug deeper than they thought possible to bring this show across the finish line. This group of friends who gather for the



love of the performing arts, going above and beyond, is all that is great about Community Theatre. Everyone dug in and gave a little bit extra to make sure that the world could have a little more laughter in it that night to make maybe one person's evening a little brighter so that this art that we all love so much could be given its breath of life one more time.

--Nick Marinello, Director



*It seems to me...*

*By Tara Western*



## Consuming Too Much? Read This!

After sending my last Scoop to Mary Lou, I felt some relief.....no deadline. I have been reading scripts and writing about them since November 2017. More time for favorite TV shows, reading for pleasure.

After a few weeks, I felt a bit unsettled--at loose ends. Something was missing. When I told my son-in-law, Garrett, a filmmaker, about it, he had a diagnosis. He had just heard a speaker, a psychologist, talk about depressive episodes and "feeling stuck". One solution is to balance consuming and creating. I was certainly consuming (reading, watching, scrolling) but not creating.

I was by no means feeling depressed, but this made so much sense. I sat down and organized the publicity plan for Tawas Bay Players' summer show, *Leaving Iowa*. Voila! Energized.

Am I preaching to the choir? Yes! But we get busy with the dailiness of life, other obligations, and all of sudden we are not getting involved anymore.

Volunteering with community theatre is creating, whether you are the director, an actor, sound or lights. Obviously, creating props and costumes, designing and decorating sets are creating, but so are imagining the lobby décor, planning the refreshments, assembling the program, and writing biographies.

Community theatre nourishes an atmosphere of growth. Feeling stuck? Too much screen time? Go volunteer with your local group!

--Tara Western



Look at the amazing Model T Ford that two of Muskegon Civic's very talented volunteers built for their production of *Ragtime*. The two guys who built it are Mike Pallasch and Pat Harker. The vehicle is electric. *Ragtime* plays on the Frauenthal stage May 2-5. Amazing job, gentlemen! Congrats.

CTAM 2024-25 dues statements will be issued soon ... this applies to our Affiliate Theatre Groups, as well as all Individual Members.





# Theatre this Spring in Michigan

April 19-28, 2024	OWOSSO COMMUNITY PLAYERS	<i>Murder on the Orient Express</i>
May 17 & 18, 2024	GRAND RAPIDS CIVIC THEATRE	<i>Ten for All</i>
April 19 - 28, 2024	KALAMAZOO CIVIC THEATRE	<i>The Lion King Jr.</i>
April 19 - May 5, 2024	TWIN CITY PLAYERS	<i>Rumors</i>
April 19 - May 5, 2024	GRAND RAPIDS CIVIC THEATRE	<i>Murder on the Orient Express</i>
April 25 - May 4, 2024	MASTER ARTS	<i>See Rock City</i>
April 25 - May 18, 2024	FARMINGTON PLAYERS	<i>Something Rotten</i>
April 26 - 28 & May 3-5,	PORT AUSTIN COMMUNITY PLAYERS	<i>Spring Show (TBA)</i>
April 26 - 28 & May 3-	ROSEDALE COMMUNITY PLAYERS	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
April 26-28, May 3-5,	BAY CITY PLAYERS	<i>Into The Woods</i>
April 26-29 - May 2-5,	TAWAS BAY PLAYERS	<i>The Subject was Roses</i>
May 1 - 5, 2024	THORNAPPLE PLAYERS	<i>Cinderella (org version)</i>
May 2-5, 2024	MUSKEGON CIVIC THEATRE	<i>Ragtime</i>
May 2-5, 2024	CIRCLE THEATRE	<i>Curious George and the Golden Meatball</i>
May 2-12, 2024	FLINT COMMUNITY PLAYERS	<i>Joseph/ Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat</i>
May 3 - 11, 2024	PLAYERS DENOC	<i>Fantastic Mr. Fox</i>
May 3-18, 2024	CLARKSTON VILLAGE PLAYERS	<i>Guess Who's Coming to Dinner</i>
May 3-19, 2024	PLAYERS GUILD OF DEARBORN	<i>Into The Woods</i>
May 3 - 19, 2023	KALAMAZOO CIVIC THEATRE	<i>Catch Me if You Can</i>
May 3 - 25, 2024	OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE	<i>Wedding Singer</i>
May 3 - 19, 2024	VILLAGE PLAYERS OF BIRMINGHAM	<i>The Prom</i>
May 3 - 12, 2024	GROSSE POINTE THEATRE	<i>Newsies</i>
May 9 - 19, 2024	THE SAUK	<i>The Last Lifeboat</i>
May 9 - 19, 2024	ALPENA CIVIC THEATRE	<i>The Music Man</i>
May 10 - 18, 2024	LIVONIA COMMUNITY THEATRE	<i>Working, the Musical</i>
May 10 - 19, 2024	PIT AND BALCONY	<i>Wild Party</i>
May 10 - 19, 2024	COMMUNITY THEATRE OF HOWELL	<i>Once Upon a Mattress</i>
May 16 - June 1	CIRCLE THEATRE	<i>Tick, Tick...Boom!</i>
May 17-26, 2024	MIDLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS	<i>Next to Normal</i>
May 24 - June 8, 2024	AVON PLAYERS	<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>
Summer 2024	IONIA COMMUNITY THEATRE	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Summer 2024	IONIA COMMUNITY THEATRE	<i>Oops! Miscast: A Musical Review</i>
June 6-8, 2024	GLEN ARBOR PLAYERS	<i>Bus Stop</i>
June 6 - 9, 2024	THE SAUK	<i>Icarus / Pandora and the Sickle Moon</i>
June 6 - 22, 2024	MASTER ARTS	<i>Twelve Angry Men</i>

If your information is incorrect or missing and you are an affiliate member of CTAM, please send the correct information to [CTAMthrives@gmail.com](mailto:CTAMthrives@gmail.com) to be included in the next issue.