



CTAM
Community Theatre Association of Michigan

CALLBOARD

October 2025

Words from the President:

Thanks for a successful Fall Conference in Midland

I'd like to thank all of our attendees for attending the Fall Conference this year. A special thank you to **JR Bornemann** and his team at Midland Central Auditorium for being great hosts, as usual. That's such a great location for our conferences and we're grateful for their continuing support.

Thank you also to **Ludus** and **Associated Controls and Designs** for sponsoring the conference as speakers and presenters. Plus, lunch was great and nice to have it right at the event, rather than having to rush out to a restaurant somewhere. Thanks for lunch!

A gracious thank you to our presenters -- **Jason Applegate, Emily Anderson, Trinity Bird, Marty Golob, Scott Bradford** and **Amy Spadafore** -- for leading some great classes that were very well received.

And last, but not least, a thank you to the readers from Grosse Pointe Theatre and Northern Lites Readers Theatre (Cadillac) for presenting some great readings from our three winning Ten-Minute Plays – a great addition to the conference.

On another matter: For those who are worried about state funding (aka MACC Grants) as a possibility for this upcoming year, it sounds like a last minute agreement by our State government was reached. More news should be forthcoming from MACC this month about what that looks like but, in short, there should be some MACC funds available in the coming months. We hope everyone's grants are successful and arrive at the proper time.

As CTAM makes adjustments to our goals for this upcoming fiscal year, we still plan on offering as many Adjudications and On The Road Workshops as we can. So please continue to submit your requests online using our [Help Center form](#).

Remember, we are here to serve you so let us know how we can continue to help your theatres thrive!



*CTAM President
Chuck Goddeeris*

HELPING COMMUNITY THEATRE *THRIVE* IN MICHIGAN SINCE 1951!



**Community Theatre
Association of Michigan**

2024-25 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.*

At the Fall Conference...



BIG THANKS to CTAM –

CTAM's "On the Road Workshop" grant made it possible for Northern Lites Readers Theatre (NLRT) to bring Kirk Wahamaki to Cadillac to present "Using Your Voice to Tell Your Story." Other theatres in the area and the general public were invited to join in.

Kirk had them projecting their voices to the front row, the back row, the building exit and, finally, the parking lot. They stuck out their tongues, buzzed their lips and scrunched up their faces. As they read from prepared scripts, they did their own interpretation of the character and the mood.

After a lunch catered by the After 26 Depot Café, a noted Cadillac eatery, attendees presented short monologues as Kirk suggested techniques that might make them even more effective. We learned a lot and had an opportunity to socialize with other thespians.

Thanks again to CTAM for the chance to hone our acting/reading skills and thanks to Kirk for being such a great presenter.

-- Pat Pavegio



Add some value to your volunteers' annual membership

As we all go through the gut-wrenching considerations of how to keep our members and volunteers active and coming back for more, one goal could be to give them value-added, low-cost features to their annual membership.

Through the *CTAM On The Road to You* workshop program, member groups have a wonderful opportunity to provide their members with educational, in-person workshops in the theatre arts.

CTAM will help bring in a quality workshop leader for whatever topic you and your members feel the need to work on. CTAM will pay the full stipend of \$200 and mileage. Take advantage of this great opportunity. Bring to your theatre a workshop on intimacy, acting, sound or lights, directing, marketing/sponsors, board development and more.

For more information, please contact CTAM administrator Mary Jo Denolf at CTAMthrives@gmail.com.



2026 Ten-Minute theme announced **Winning isn't everything...**

Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing! You know what that means? It could mean that to win everything in the 2026 CTAM Playwriting Contest, you'll probably have to lose something! Maybe. But that's a decent premise for your 10-minute play for next year's CTAM Playwriting Contest! The theme for next year is **Winning and Losing**.

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 plenty of time 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, but all ten-minute plays must address the subject of Winning and Losing.

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.

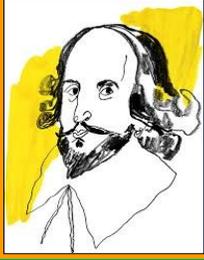
Please see the article on page 5 for informational guidelines on writing 10-minute plays. Further information about the 2026 Playwriting Contest will be in future issues of the Callboard. Please address your questions to Chair Mary Lou Britton at playwriting@CTAM.online.



Above are the winners of the three ten-minute plays after having received their prize checks of \$50 each: Left, Larry Nielsen from Twin City Players and Pete DiSante and Mary Lou Britton from Grosse Pointe Theatre.

Below, readers for this year's three winning ten-minute plays at the Fall Conference in Midland: Top to bottom: Pete DiSante, Stella Woitulewicz, Arlene Schoenherr, Pam Holmquist, Mary Lou Britton and Dan Woitulewicz. All are members of Grosse Pointe Theatre, except Pam Holmquist who belongs to Northern Lites Readers Theatre in Cadillac.





Playwright's Corner

With the Ten Minute Play category added to the annual CTAM Playwriting Contest, it seems logical that we should talk about what the play consists of. We've listed below some brief descriptions you might find helpful in pulling your 2026 entry

together. The submission deadline is next Memorial Day -- May 25, at midnight!

The short play is eight to ten pages, maximum. It serves us well because the shortness enables you to keep the whole play in mind as you write and allows you to examine your technique each time you write a line. Many times, the craft of playwriting gets lost in the momentum, problems and length of a full-length play. Remember that once you've mastered the short-play technique, you can expand your ideas and characters into a longer piece...either one-act or full length.

The short play must have a beginning, a middle, and an end – and all the other pieces: a protagonist, an antagonist, a dramatic question, a climax.

Keep your play 'realistic' or 'naturalistic.' Because it is a form that you know well, you can master the basic craft in your attempt to explore style. A 'realistic' play is about contemporary people who you might know and who are executing their contemporary activities. Realism also involves contemporary, ordinary speech. Avoid dialects. Of course, realism does not mean boring or even serious.

Limit your play to two or three characters. Each character must have a complete character arc. Therefore, you may not have utilitarian characters. *You are encouraged to work with two characters.* Be wary of using a Narrator to set things up or summarize. That's just plain lazy writing! There are always ways of getting that information included in your dialog.

Keep all of your characters on stage as long as possible. Entrances and exits create activity, but many times deflate the dramatic action. You do not need blizzards or other phenomena to keep characters on stage. If characters have dynamic goals, they will stay on stage to pursue those goals. If you have written a character that keeps leaving, let him/her leave the play entirely because the goal is not strong enough for dramatic impact.

Keep the setting in one locale. There are to be no breaks, no scene shifts, no blackouts and no time lapses. A short play cannot support the loss of momentum that each stage machination requires. For our purposes, you are to stay in one locale for a real-time conversation or dialog.

Create an early point of attack. The short form has no patience for introduction and exposition. Let this information find its way into the rising action.

Avoid speeches. If your characters' needs are strong enough, they will not allow each other to talk too much. Make sure your crisis and your climax are 'onstage events' rather than 'now I realize' speeches.

Keep the action onstage. Keep all action on your stage in your play; avoid referencing other times or places.

Get rid of greetings. When a new person enters a scene, drop the hello's and the how-are-you's. Although we say it all the time in real life, it's just plain boring on stage. There are other ways to reveal relationships.



(Continued, page 7)

Stage directions. In most cases, the fewer directions you have, the more concentrated and focused the actual action of the play will be.

Things to include in stage directions:

- Basic description of the setting.
- Entrances and exits.
- Physical action that must be performed or the dialog makes no sense.
- Pertinent pauses in the dialog not filled by previously described actions.

Things NOT to include in stage directions:

- Tone of voice or delivery hints for lines. (*Leave that up to the director!*)
- Costume descriptions of what characters are wearing, unless pertinent to the action.
- Background on the sets or characters, other than the most basic information.
- Characters' thoughts or intentions.
- Never delve into the interior lives of the characters or why objects are on stage.
- Don't worry about upstage, stage right, etc. Make all references in relation to objects you've placed in their world. (EX: *BETH moves behind the sofa* or *FRED enters from the bedroom.*)

Manuscript format. The play should be typed in 12 pt. Courier New, essentially single spaced and flush left. The character names should be boldface, centered over the spoken line of dialog. Stage directions are always in italics and generally in parenthesis. You should avoid including stage directions within the lines of dialog, but rather indent them three inches (about to the middle of the page) so the stage directions are on the right side of the page and clearly distinct from the dialog. Don't forget to number your pages!

Title page. Because our plays are judged anonymously, please do not include any identifying information on the pages of your play. A separate title page should be included with the playwright's contact information, city of residence, and a three-line synopsis of the action of the play.



Adjudications available for this season!

Everyone is busy, deep in the depths of getting ready for this season. 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.

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.

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



Michigan Theatre -- Fall 2025

Bay City Players	<i>ART</i>	October 10 -12, 2025
Pinckney Players	<i>M.A.S.H.</i>	October 11-19, 2025
Southgate Community Players	<i>The Crucible</i>	October 10 - 18, 2025
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown</i>	October 10 - 19, 2025
Stagecrafters	<i>Amy and the Orphans</i>	October 10 - 19, 2025
Muskegon Civic Theatre	<i>Dracula A Comedy of Terrors</i>	October 10 - 25, 2025
Rosedale Community Players	<i>Tracy Jones</i>	October 10 - 25, 2025
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre	<i>Junie B. Jones</i>	October 16 - 19, 2025
The Sauk	<i>The Outsiders</i>	October 16 - 26, 2025
Central Park Players	<i>I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change</i>	October 17 - 26, 2025
Clio Cast and Crew	<i>Rehearsal for Murder</i>	October 17 - 26, 2025
Tawas Bay Players	<i>The Marvelous Wonderettes: Dream On</i>	October 17 - 26, 2025
Twin City Players	<i>Ken Ludwig's Baskerville</i>	October 17 - November 2, 2025
Alpena Civic Theatre	<i>Deer Camp - The Musical</i>	October 23 - November 1, 2025
Center Stage Theatre	<i>Madagascar Jr.</i>	October 24 - 26, 2025
Glen Arbor Players	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>	October 24 - 26, 2025
Old Town Playhouse	<i>The Rocky Horror Show (main stage)</i>	October 24 - November 1, 2025
Ann Arbor Civic Theatre	<i>Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors</i>	October 24 - November 2, 2025
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>Disney's Frozen Jr.</i>	October 24 - November 2, 2025
Audio Air Force	<i>Halloween Special "The Night Shift:</i>	October 31, 2025
Lapeer Community Theatre	<i>Cry of the Banshee</i>	October 31 & November 1, 2025
Ionia Community Theatre	<i>The Mousetrap</i>	November 2025
Livonia Community Players	<i>All In The Timing</i>	November 2025
Bay City Players	<i>Ten November</i>	November 1 & 2, 2025
Stagecrafters	<i>Frozen</i>	November 1 - 23, 2025
Midland Center for the Arts	<i>Sense & Sensibility</i>	November 7-16, 2025
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre	<i>The Colored Museum</i>	November 7 - 16, 2025
Avon Players Theatre	<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	November 7 - 22, 2025
Clarkston Village Players	<i>Picasso at the Lapine Agile</i>	November 7 - 22, 2025
Village Players of Birmingham	<i>Lost in Yonkers</i>	November 7 - 23, 2025
Players Guild of Dearborn	<i>She Loves Me</i>	November 7 - 25, 2025
Northern Lites Readers Theatre	<i>Tina Latigo Rides to the Rescue (radio)</i>	November 8 & 9, 2025
Players de Noc	<i>Ten November</i>	November 10 ,2025

* 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.

