CTAM Community Theatre Association of Michigan

CALLBOARD SEPT 2026

CTAMthrives@gmail.com





Photos from CTAM Files

CTAM ANNUAL CONFERENCE SET TO EMPOWER & CONNECT

September 26, 2026 - 8:30am-5:30pm, at Midland Central Auditorium

The time is almost here, the time when Michigan's community theatres come together to share, learn, connect, and recharge their creative batteries. The 2026 CTAM Annual Conference is fast approaching, and at its heart is something that has always made community theatre special: we are better when we help each other.

Every community theatre has its own challenges. How do we recruit and retain volunteers? How can we make a small budget stretch? What do we do when our lighting equipment is outdated? How do we reach new audiences? How can we make the experience better for the actors, technicians, board members, and volunteers who make everything possible? Chances are, another theatre has already faced the same challenge.

That's where CTAM comes in.

The annual conference is more than a series of workshops. It is an opportunity for theatres to share the knowledge they've gained, the solutions they've discovered, and the ideas that have worked in their communities. It is a place where a theatre with a successful fundraising idea can inspire another theatre, where a technical solution can be shared instead of reinvented, and where a conversation over lunch can lead to a new collaboration.

Community theatre doesn't have to be competitive. There is room for all of us to succeed. Whether you're an actor, director, designer, technician, board member, administrator, or volunteer, the conference offers opportunities to learn from people who are doing the work right alongside you. Topics range from technical theatre to administration and everything in between. And this year, there are even more opportunities to learn together.

Community theatre is about much more than what happens onstage. It is about building relationships, creating connections, and bringing people together through the shared experience of storytelling. As theatres continue to find creative ways to engage their communities, attract volunteers, navigate changing audiences, and produce great work with limited resources, opportunities to learn from one another have never been more important.

The CTAM Annual Conference provides that opportunity.

This issue is dedicated to the upcoming conference and how it can bring new life to your theater and fuel to make this next season one of your best yet.

Registration: https://ctam.ludus.com/200540395 (discount code for those theatres who are members - email ctamthrives@gmail.com to find out how).

CTAM

Community Theatre Association of Michigan

2025 -26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Submit articles, upcoming events and any other theatre related news before the end of each month for publication in the next issue.

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.

Up-dated e-mail and postal addresses are maintained by the Administrator and should be sent to CTAMthrives@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE - SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

CTAM FALL CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars! The Community Theatre Association of Michigan (CTAM) is returning to Midland, Michigan for our annual Fall Conference on Saturday, September 26.

Registration: https://ctam.ludus.com/200540395 (discount code for those theatres who are members - email ctamthrives@gmail.com to find out how)
Whether you're an actor, director, designer, technician, board member, or volunteer, you'll find workshops, discussions, and networking opportunities designed to strengthen your theatre and inspire your next production.

NEW THIS YEAR – Master Class Opportunity!
We're excited to offer an exclusive 4-hour Master Class led by nationally recognized theatre educators Kathy Pingel and Ron Ziegler.
Many of you know Kathy and Ron from AACT Festivals, where they have served as adjudicators, commissioners, workshop leaders, and presenters. Their decades of experience in acting, directing, education, and community theatre leadership make this an exceptional learning opportunity.

Master Class Details
Title: Acting in Harmony
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Cost: $50 (includes lunch)
Registration: Limited to ensure a quality, hands-on experience.

CTAM Member Discount:
Current CTAM member theatres can email ctamthrives@gmail.com to receive a $5 discount code before registering.
Register today: https://ctam.ludus.com/200540316

Conference Workshops
We're building a conference based on the workshops you've requested over the years. We appreciate your feedback and are continuing to add sessions to make this one of our best conferences yet. More workshops will be announced soon!

Ben Zylman - You're a Character!
You've been cast in a great role—now what?
Whether you're playing the lead or singing in the ensemble, this fast-paced, interactive workshop explores techniques for creating rich, believable characters. Learn about script analysis, subtext, character motivation, and building a compelling backstory that brings every role to life.

Kathie Johnson - Working with Puppetry
Discover techniques, practical applications, and creative possibilities for incorporating puppetry into theatrical productions.

Marty Golub - Master the Mini-Plot: Designing Big with Limited Fixtures
Learn how thoughtful lighting design can create maximum impact—even with limited equipment and resources.

Marty Golub - Unplugging the Rig: Deploying Wireless (Hybrid) DMX
Explore how wireless and hybrid DMX systems can simplify installation, increase flexibility, and modernize your lighting setup.

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SAVE THE DATE - SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

CTAM FALL CONFERENCE

Lisa Cripps - Fundraising, Foundations & Grants
Gain practical strategies for identifying funding opportunities, writing stronger grant applications, and building sustainable fundraising programs for your theatre.

Roundtable Discussion - How to Select Your Season
Join fellow theatre leaders for an open discussion on choosing a successful season. Share ideas, learn what other theatres are planning, and discuss balancing audience favorites, artistic goals, budgets, and volunteer resources.

Master Class
Acting in Harmony
One of the greatest challenges—and rewards—of community theatre directing is welcoming first-time performers while continuing to challenge experienced actors.
In this engaging four-hour, hands-on workshop, participants will:

- Explore the difference between equity and equality when working with performers.
- Learn techniques for teaching beginning actors while keeping rehearsals engaging for veterans.
- Practice innovative acting exercises and rehearsal techniques.
- Develop stronger methods of character building.
- Examine play construction and storytelling.
- Build strategies for creating casts where newcomers and seasoned performers work together seamlessly.

The goal is to expand your directing toolbox and create productions where there is no discernible difference between an actor making their stage debut and one with years of experience.

About the Instructors
Kathy Pingel retired as Director of Education and Youth Programming for the Des Moines Community Playhouse after a distinguished career spanning theatre education, directing, and performance studies. She has directed more than 50 productions and has taught and directed throughout the United States and internationally, including Germany.
A respected adjudicator for the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT), Kathy has taught the AACT Adjudication Seminar at multiple national festivals. She was named an AACT Fellow in 2017 and received the organization's prestigious Art Cole Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. Along with Ron Ziegler, she received the Cloris Leachman Award for Best Direction for The Hobbit.

Ron Ziegler recently retired as Festivals Coordinator for the American Association of Community Theatre following a career spanning more than 40 years. He has served as educator, director, producer, arts administrator, festival coordinator, and AACT President.
Ron has adjudicated theatre festivals across the United States and internationally while directing productions in Iowa, South Dakota, Kentucky, Florida, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Germany. He is an AACT Fellow and received the Art Cole Lifetime Leadership Award in 2023. His production of Blackbird represented the United States at AACTWorldFest in 2022.

Whether you're looking to improve your acting, directing, technical skills, fundraising, or theatre leadership, the CTAM Fall Conference offers something for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you in Midland on September 26!

"I believe that in a great city, or even in a small city or a village, a great theatre is the outward and visible sign of an inward and probable culture." - Sir Laurence Olivier

SAVE THE DATE

AACTFEST27
February 12-14, 2027
Midland MI
More details coming soon!

SAVE THE DATE - SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

CTAM FALL CONFERENCE

FUNDRAISING, FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS.



Presented by Lisa Cripps

Learn how Michigan's Community Foundations can support your theatre and discover practical grant-writing tips to strengthen your funding applications.

Lisa Cripps is President of the Berrien Community Foundation and an active community theatre artist, serving as a playwright, director, performer, and advocate for the arts.

NEW! MASTER CLASS
ACTING IN HARMONY

Presented by Kathy Pingel & Ron Ziegler

10:00am - 3:00pm

$50 - lunch provided

This immersive four-hour workshop focuses on directing actors of all experience levels, helping directors create casts where beginners and seasoned performers grow together.

Participants will explore:

- Character development
- Acting exercises
- Rehearsal techniques
- Storytelling
- Working with diverse experience levels

*Space is limited to ensure a hands-on learning experience, so register early!



STAGE PRESENCE & STAGE SUPPORT
ACCESSING MACC FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY THEATRE

Presented by Chad Swan-Badgero

Discover grant opportunities available through the Michigan Arts & Culture Council and gain practical strategies with MACC Arts Education Program Manager.

Chad Swan-Badgero is an active director, educator, and advocate for community-based theater across Michigan. As the founder and Artistic Director of Peppermint Creek Theatre Company in Lansing, Chad has spent over three decades championing compelling, thought-provoking productions that spark conversation and foster community engagement. In addition to his work with Peppermint Creek, Chad serves as the Arts Education Program Manager for the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC), where he supports arts organizations, schools, and cultural workers throughout the state. A longtime advocate for accessible, high-impact theater, he brings a wealth of experience in artistic leadership, grantmaking, arts administration, and community outreach. Chad holds a Masters degree in Theater from Michigan State University and remains passionate about helping theater organizations thrive at the intersection of art and community.



UNPLUGGING THE RIG:
DEPLOYING WIRELESS

Presented by Marty Golob

Explore the benefits and limitations of wireless DMX technology. Learn how to integrate wireless and wired systems safely, evaluate equipment options, and determine when wireless is the right solution for your venue.

Marty Golob is a theater systems designer with over 20 years of experience in lighting, scenic design, and venue modernization, specializing in practical solutions for community theatres.



MASTER THE MINI PLOT:
DESIGNING BIG WITH LIMITED FIXTURES

Presented by Marty Golob

Learn how to create dynamic lighting with limited equipment. Discover fixture placement, color techniques, and programming strategies that maximize impact without exceeding your budget.

Marty Golob is a lighting and systems design consultant dedicated to helping community theatres modernize their technical capabilities while making the most of existing resources.



YOU'RE A REAL CHARACTER

Presented by Ben Zylman

Develop richer, more believable characters through script analysis, subtext, and backstory. Whether you're in the spotlight or the ensemble, this workshop offers practical acting tools for every performer.

Ben Zylman is an award-winning actor and director with more than 45 years of experience and over 130 productions in theatre, film, television, and radio.



WORKING WITH PUPPETRY
DO YOU WANT TO BUILD A DRAGON?

Presented by Kathie Johnson

See large-scale theatrical puppets up close while learning lightweight construction techniques, transport solutions, and performance methods. Featuring dragons, marionettes, and body puppets.

Kathie Johnson is a costume and puppet designer whose innovative work combines anatomy, movement, and engineering to create dynamic theatrical puppetry.



SENIOR THEATRE

Presenters: Laurie Hinners - Margaret Anne Slawson



All of your theater programs are enriched by experienced seniors who want to be involved. Don't you want to know how to develop senior focused opportunities in your theater? This workshop will show you how to create an Aged to Perfection Readers Theater program in your town!

Margaret Anne was very instrumental in developing the Aged to Perfection program up in Traverse City. Margaret will share how they started the program from scratch. ATP" is now a vibrant part of the Old Town Playhouse. Every second and fourth Saturday at 10 o'clock Traverse City's over 55 seniors meet to enjoy listening to scripts, reading plays, poetry and short stories that can be adapted for performance. Active, fun loving folks meet at the playhouse on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays to tackle directing , performing and lunch out with friends.

Margaret Anne Slawson is a Miss America contestant dropout choosing to marry young and raise 4 beautiful daughters instead. However, the longing to sing, dance, and act is strong in this one. While living in Arlington, Virginia, she became the driver for singer-actress Gretchen Luttrell. When Gretchen got a lead Margaret Anne got chorus. Moving to Traverse City, put her into bigger parts in more shows Including Oliver, Music Man, Barefoot in the Park, Mame, Carousel, and White Christmas to name a few. She was an early member of the Aged to Perfection Readers Theater group of the Old Town Playhouse, was Coordinator of the group for 4 years, and on the steering committee for 6 years. Recently retired from that job she is filling her time adapting plays from stage to readers theater, acting and directing including Only on Pizza by Linda Larocque, Is Murder Tax Deductible by Kathleen Beeson and currently Nuts by Tom Topor.

REGISTER AT
HTTPS://CTAM.LUDUS.COM/200540395

MEMBER THEATRES - EMAIL CTAMTHRIVES@GMAIL.COM FOR YOUR DISCOUNT CODE

Member Theatre Group Shows

Lebowsky Center for Performing Arts	Come From Away	September 11 - 20, 2026
Avon Players	Come From Away	September 11 - 26, 2026
Clarkston Village Players	Steel Magnolia	September 11 - 26, 2026
Stagecrafters	Come From Away	September 11 - 27, 2026
Muskegon Civic Theatre	The SpongeBob Musical - Penguin project	September 12-13, 2026
Bay City Players	Leading Ladies	September 13 - 20, 2026
Old Town Playhouse	9 to 5	September 11 - 26, 2026
Kalamazoo Civic	Anything Goes	September 18 - 27, 2026
Midland Center Stage	9 to 5 the Musical	September 18 - 27, 2026
Players Guild of Dearborn	Diaster - The Musical	September 18 - October 4, 2026
Village Players of Birmingham	Once on this Island	September 18 - October 4, 2026
Grosse Pointe Theatre	Les Miserables	September 18 - October 11, 2026
Clio Cast and Crew	Hunchback of Notre Dame	September 25 - October 4, 2026
Flint Community Players	The Guy Who Didn't Like Musicals	September 25 - October 4, 2026
Glen Arbor Players	Blithe Spirit	October 2 - 11, 2026
Kalamazoo Civic	Some Enchanted Evening	October 2 - 11, 2026
Holland Community Theatre	The Addams Family Musical	October 2 - 17, 2026
Pinckney Players	42nd Street	October 3 - 11, 2026
The Sauk	Frozen	October 8 - 18, 2026
Fenton Village Players	Exit Laughing	October 9 - 18, 2026
Tawas Bay Players	My Summer at Acamp-o-Chemo	October 9 - 18, 2026
Muskegon Civic Theatre	Company	October 9 - 24, 2026
Twin City Players	Brave New World	October 9 - 25, 2026

If your show or shows are missing from the list please contact our webmaster and we will remedy the situation as quickly as possible.

For a full list of our Member Theatres please click here.

Proud Member of aact AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

MICHIGAN ARTS & CULTURE COUNCIL

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