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# spotlight

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

## IN THIS ISSUE

**AACTFest 2025   AACT YouthFest 2025**

**2025 Community Theatre Management Conference**

**New Friends, New Funds**

**From Community Theatre to *Chicago* and *Wicked* on Broadway**



A MUSICAL BY  
KEN JONES, CHRISTINE JONES & JAMEY STRAWN

# Snow White and the dancing dwarfs



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## President's Letter

**Kristofer Geddie**

AACT President

As the season changes and spring breathes new life into our communities, so does the vibrant world of community theatre. This time of year represents renewal, growth, and the boundless energy that fuels our passion for storytelling.

Spring is a season of possibilities, and for many of us, it marks the start of new productions, announcements of a new season, auditions, and exciting opportunities to engage with our audiences. Much like nature, it's a reminder that theatre thrives when nurtured with care, dedication, and collaboration. Whether you are an actor, director, technician, or patron, your involvement strengthens the cultural fabric of our communities and enriches the lives of those around you.

Community theatre is built on the foundation of connection—bringing people together to create, inspire, and entertain. The past few years have shown us the resilience and adaptability of our theatre family. As we move forward in a new political climate, we continue embracing innovation while staying true to our core mission: helping theatres thrive. This evolving landscape presents challenges and opportunities, urging us to foster inclusivity, dialogue, and creative expression through the arts. We are committed to making community theatre accessible and meaningful for all.

The arts have long been a powerful force in reflecting and shaping society, and as policies and perspectives shift, our role as storytellers becomes even more vital. Community theatre pro-

vides a platform for diverse voices, promotes understanding, and sparks essential conversations that resonate beyond the stage. Our responsibility is to ensure that theatre remains a space where people of all backgrounds can find belonging and inspiration.

As we "March" into spring, I encourage you to celebrate the beauty of community theatre. Bring others into the family! Support your local productions, volunteer your time, or take the leap and audition for that role you've always dreamed of playing. Every contribution, no matter how big or small, plays a vital part in sustaining our shared passion.

Thank you for making community theatre possible. Because of you, the arts remain an essential part of our lives. May this spring bring you inspiration, creativity, and the joy of storytelling.

See you at AACTFest!

Kris

# The Rainbow Fish

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# In This Issue

## Features

### **AACTFest 2025** 8

Look forward to an unforgettable experience, June 25-28, in Des Moines, Iowa. Information on Registration and Travel, Performances, Festival Schedule, Workshops, Silent Auction, Design Competition, shows moving on from their state or region, Keynote Speaker, and more

### **AACT YouthFest 2025** 15

Now a separate festival, taking place June 22-24, just before AACTFest, hosted by the Des Moines Playhouse, in Des Moines, Iowa

### **Community Theatre Management Conference** 16

AACT's annual CTMC conference runs June 22-24 at the Des Moines Marriot Downtown, just days before AACTFest

### **2025 Adjudication Seminar** 17

Six virtual sessions, beginning in April, followed by in-person sessions during AACTFest 2025

### **Step Into the Spotlight with an AACT Membership** 20

Membership is your ticket to unlocking a treasure trove of resources, connections, and opportunities

### **The AACT Advantage** 22

Theatre company leaders talk about the impact of AACT membership

### **Contributed Income Survey** 30

An AACT survey of theatres from all regions

### **New Friends, New Funds** 32

Fundraising is about building relationships with friends of the theatre

### **Community Theatre to Broadway** 41

A profile of Dan Micciche, Broadway actor and music director of *Wicked*

## News

Announcements	7
New AACT Website	29
New Team Member: Andy Snyder	35
Legacy Gifts	35
Friends We'll Miss	37
World Theatre Day	38
Regionally Speaking from Region I	39
AACT Corporate Partners	44

## Networking

President's Letter	3
Member Theatre Hub: Stage Left Theater of Spokane, Washington	23
Spring Webinars	28
Breaking Barriers in Community Theatre	36
Building a Safety Committee	40
Advocacy Matters	42
Resource Center	45
Calendar	46
Advertisers	46

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AACT welcomes Spotlight input and requests for advertising rates. Contact Andy Snyder at **advertising@aact.org** to submit articles for publishing consideration, and visit **aact.org/advertise** for advertising rates and specs.

**On the cover:** Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines, site for AACTFest 2025 performances

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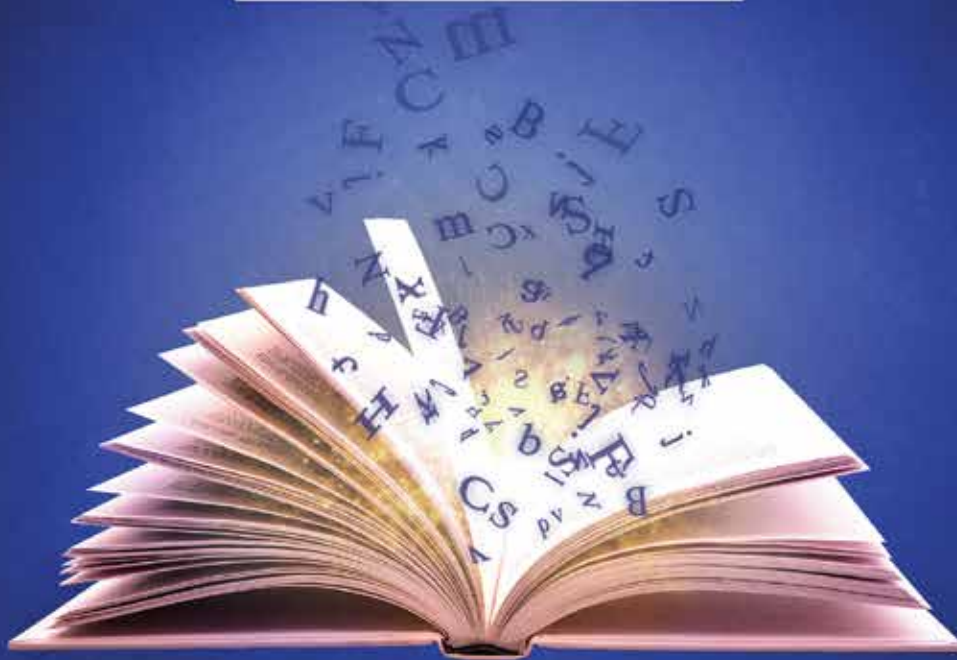


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Festivals/Engagements Coordinator

**Shawn Cummings**  
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**Susan Austin**  
NewPlayFest Coordinator

## Upcoming Events

**Spring Member Roundtables**  
[aact.org/roundtables](https://aact.org/roundtables)

**Spring Webinars & Masterclasses**  
[aact.org/webinars](https://aact.org/webinars)

**USITT's 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & Stage Expo**  
March 5-8, 2025  
Columbus, Ohio  
[usitt.org](https://usitt.org)

**World Theatre Day 2025**  
March 27, 2025  
[aact.org/world-theatre-day](https://aact.org/world-theatre-day)

**Adjudication Training Seminar**  
Virtual Sessions Schedule:  
April 26, May 3, 10, 24, 31, June 7, 2025  
Onsite Session Schedule (Des Moines, Iowa):  
June 25-28, 2025  
[aact.org/seminar](https://aact.org/seminar)

**Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy**  
May 6, 2025  
[americansforthearts.org/events/nancy-hanks-lecture](https://americansforthearts.org/events/nancy-hanks-lecture)

**2025 Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC)**  
June 22-24, 2025  
Des Moines, Iowa  
[aact.org/ctmc](https://aact.org/ctmc)

**AACT YouthFest 2025**  
June 22-24, 2025  
Des Moines, Iowa  
[aact.org/youthfest](https://aact.org/youthfest)

**AACTFest 2025**  
June 25-28, 2025  
Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines, Iowa  
[aact.org/25](https://aact.org/25)

**AACT Summer Board/Committee Meetings and AACTFest 2025**  
Held during AACTFest 2025  
June 23-25, 2025  
Des Moines, Iowa

## Spotlight

*Spotlight* is published quarterly by the American Association of Community Theatre for its members, and is annually distributed to an expanded list of known community theatre organizations and interested individuals.

**Spotlight Editor:** Andy Snyder  
**Assistant Editor:** Stephen Peithman

**Spotlight Editorial Team:** Quiana Clark-Roland, Michael Cochran, Mary Doveton, Kristofer Geddie, Jon Montgomery, Stephen Peithman, Katrina Ploof, Dorinda Toner, Lou Ursone, David A. VanCleave

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# Countdown to AACTFest 2025!

## Join Us and Celebrate Community Theatre

### June 25-28, 2025



We are less than six months away from celebrating Community Theatre with a festival that you will not forget!

Register now to attend AACTFest 2025 in Des Moines, Iowa, for amazing theatre productions and a host of workshops, parties, and special events.

Festival registration includes tickets to all 12 AACTFest shows, vetted and sought-after workshops, Keynote Leslie Kimbrell (see page 9), exhibitor booths and giveaways, plus access to Design Competition displays, the festival awards show, and social events.

Since some festival offerings have limited capacity, we encourage you to register early so you don't miss any of the fun, excitement, and great theatre that only AACTFest can offer.

Registration and more information is available at [aact.org/25](http://aact.org/25).

### Festival Performances

State festivals are taking place now that will lead to the national festival. Theatres that have been selected to advance to regional festivals are listed in the Moving On to Nationals page at [aact.org/moving](http://aact.org/moving) and here in *Spotlight* (see page 15). You'll also find information on upcoming state and regional festivals on the AACT Calendar (page 46) and [aact.org/calendar](http://aact.org/calendar).

Leading up to the excitement of the national festival are approximately 40 state festivals, with more than 200 productions, followed by regional festivals that involve nearly 60 theatre companies across the country.

The national festival will feature 12 productions that have received top honors in their respective state and regional festivals, in performance at Des Moines' Hoyt Sherman Place Theatre. All participating theatre companies adhere to a common set of rules documented in the AACTFest 2025 Handbook ([aact.org/handbook](http://aact.org/handbook)).



*"Several years ago a theatre from Oklahoma won a top place at the National AACT Festival. Several Oklahomans attended that festival and I was one of them. The next festival year I insisted that our small rural theatre enter AACTFest. Every festival year since then, Duncan Little Theatre has entered our Oklahoma AACTFest—and since then, I have attended every national festival. I will see you in Des Moines in 2025!"*

— Sharon Burum, Duncan Little Theatre, Duncan, Oklahoma

### VIP Package

Enhance your AACTFest experience with the VIP Package! This exclusive offering includes:

- Full registration for all AACTFest activities
- AACTFest welcome gift package
- Reserved seating for all 12 shows
- Express check-in
- Access to a VIP-only special event

Contact Conference Coordinator Jill Patchin by email ([jill@aact.org](mailto:jill@aact.org)) for VIP Package availability, questions and group-seating reservations.

### Registration Rates

Dates	AACT Member	Non-Member
<b>Advance</b> March 2 – May 31, 2025	\$415	\$490
<b>Onsite</b> Begins June 1, 2025	\$500	\$595
<b>VIP Festival Package</b> Check for availability	\$550	

**AACT Youth Discount** (18 and younger): \$75 off registration

**Competing/Advancing Company Member:** \$10 off registration

### Special Events, Training, and Competitions

#### Adjudication Training Seminar

[aact.org/seminar](http://aact.org/seminar)

Limited to 15 participants: \$150

Adjudication Training is an add-on event that will be held before (virtually) and in person in Des Moines during the national festival. The \$150 fee helps cover the costs of the five-plus days of intensive instruction. Registration for AACTFest 2025 is required. As a part of the curriculum, participants will view AACTFest performances and receive additional training/assignments during festival week. Register for the training when you register for AACTFest.

Note: Adjudication Training 2025 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Scholarships are available. AACT will be providing two scholarships to support and mentor theatre-makers of color. More information at [aact.org/seminar](http://aact.org/seminar).

#### Adult & Youth Monologue Competitions

[aact.org/monologue](http://aact.org/monologue)

Entry Fee: \$25

Registration for the Monologue Competition should be completed with your online festival registration. There will be a youth division and adult division. Participation is limited, so early registration is highly recommended.



Hoyt Sherman Place Theatre



Design Competition

aact.org/design

The AACT 2025 National Design Competition is an opportunity for both your theatre and designers to shine. AACT-member theatres and their designers may enter examples for projects occurring between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2025.

There are five design categories: Scenic, Lighting, Properties, Costume, and Special Design. Cash prizes for top designs will be awarded in each category.

- Onsite Display: First entry is free with AACTFest registration. Additional entries are \$25 each
- Virtual Entry: \$50



*"My first experience in 2003 with AACTFest was as production manager for the Theatre Company of Saugus' entry Of Jean-Claude van Itallie's The Interview (from America Hurrah), representing Region I—and has resulted in my continued attendance. I've not missed a single festival. AACTFest has given me the opportunity to befriend like-minded individuals from coast to coast as well as across the ocean. Though the festival is a biennial celebration, the fellowship, camaraderie, and sense of community extends across the interval years."*

—Susan L. Harrington, Theatre Company of Saugus, Saugus, Massachusetts

AACT YouthFest

Sunday, June 22 – Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Des Moines Playhouse, Des Moines, Iowa

aact.org/youthfest

AACTFest attendees can extend their festival experience by adding on the Youth Festival shows for just \$50.

YouthFest will now be held in the days leading up to AACTFest, hosted by the Des Moines Playhouse. This gives us the flexibility to offer extended youth performances, welcome more youth performing companies, and expand the number of youth-centered workshops. We're also planning to introduce even more YouthFest events and opportunities—including exciting social activities, like Showtune Karaoke with a live pianist!

All YouthFest registrants will also receive a special discount on AACTFest registration, opening the door for up to seven days, packed with performances, workshops, keynotes, mentoring, networking, and lifelong memories.

AACT YouthFest Registration Rates

Dates	AACT Member	Non-member
Advance		
March 2 – May 31, 2025	\$350	\$490
Onsite		
Begins June 1, 2025	\$425	\$595

Chaperones receive a discount

Things to Do in Greater Des Moines

With so many things to do in Des Moines, your best, up-to-date guide on what to do and see is the Catch Des Moines website [catchdesmoines.com], which offers details on a host of attractions. Those include the awe-inspiring Pappajohn Sculpture Park, the nationally-ranked Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market, Adventureland Amusement Park, Science Center of Iowa, Blank Park Zoo, and all the local dining options, like Lucky Lotus, Big Tomato Pizza, and Zombie Burger, to name a few.

Des Moines has a vibrant arts and culture scene, including music, theatre, hands-on science exhibits, and the thrill of cheering "bravo" for a favorite live act. Experience festivals celebrating cultural heritage, enjoy the tunes of a street corner guitarist, and laugh at improv theater, all in one day! Explore galleries and witness how art transforms every downtown block, making the city a cultural hub waiting to be explored.

Mark your calendar to join your colleagues and friends for a great time—and great theatre.

Jolea Brown/Creative Photography



AACTFest 2023 National Company Wetumpka Depot Players from Wetumpka, Alabama, presents A Storm Came Up by Kristy Meanor and Doug Segrest, at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Louisville, Kentucky in June 2023. Tony Davison (second from left) received the Outstanding Achievement in a Featured Role Award from the AACTFest 2023 Adjudicators.

Accommodations

aact.org/go25

Make the Des Moines Marriott Downtown your home base for AACTFest 2025 and YouthFest 2025. As the official festival hotel, it's not just a place to stay—it's where festival registration, exhibits, special events, keynotes, and workshops will take place, and walking distance from the Hoyt Sherman Place Theatre. Plus, AACTFest and YouthFest attendees enjoy exclusive hotel discounts (details below). Stay where the action is and make the most of your festival experience.

Booking within AACT's block of hotels helps keep registration costs down for future AACT events. Be sure to book your reservation through AACT's website to receive special event rates.

Des Moines Marriott Downtown

700 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
515-245-5500 [for general information only]

Rates & Reservations:

- Hotel reservation deadline is June 1, 2025 @ 11:59 p.m.
- King Room: \$145 + tax
  - Queen/Queen Room: \$145 + tax

Online reservation link can be found at aact.org/go25, or you can reserve by phone by calling Hyatt Group Reservations at 877-803-7534 and using code AAC3. (Note: Event rates are not available directly from the hotel)

continued on page 11 ▶



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**Transportation:**

To help with travel, AACT has contracted special airline discounts for festival attendees.

- Des Moines International Airport
- 5 miles from the Des Moines Marriott Downtown
- Marriott Airport Shuttle: \$13 one way
- Marriott Bell Staff for Departure Times (515) 245-5500
- Airport Website: [flydsm.com](http://flydsm.com)

Special Airline discounts are available for United Airlines and Delta Airlines. For discount codes and reservation details, visit [aact.org/go25](http://aact.org/go25).

**Ground Transportation:**

- Uber, Lyft, and Taxis are readily available throughout the city.
- From the Marriott, you can walk (.8 mile distance) to the Hoyt Sherman Place for the festival performances, or take the downtown Trolley or a taxi.
- A festival shuttle will also be available to take attendees to Des Moines Playhouse (YouthFest Shows), Hoyt Sherman Place, and Des Moines Marriott Downtown.
- For more information on getting around town, maps, routes, and area attractions visit [catchdesmoines.com](http://catchdesmoines.com).



Joiea Brown/Creative Photography

*Festival attendees join in celebrating community theatre at AACTFest 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky*

AACT extends heartfelt thanks to Hoyt Sherman Place, the Des Moines Playhouse, Marriott, Catch Des Moines, Des Moines Public School District, Arrowhead Conferences, Ovation Arts, and our many corporate partners ([aact.org/our-partners](http://aact.org/our-partners)) for their incredible support in making this one of our best festivals yet. If you would like to become a sponsor or partner, please contact the AACT Office at 817-732-3177.

**FESTIVAL SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE**

<b>SUNDAY, JUNE 22</b>	
ALL DAY	• YouthFest Load-ins & Arrivals
AFTERNOON	• YouthFest Registration, Community Theatre Management Conference Begins
EVENING	• YouthFest Kick-off and shows
<b>MONDAY, JUNE 23</b>	
ALL DAY	• YouthFest Shows & Workshops, CTMC Continues, AACT Executive & Finance Committee Meetings
<b>TUESDAY, JUNE 24</b>	
MORNING	• Tech Meetings, Rehearsals Begin, AACT Board & Committee Meetings, CTMC Wrap-Up & Closing
ALL DAY	• YouthFest Shows & Workshops
EVENING	• AACTFest Registration Opens, YouthFest Closing Ceremony, Silent Auction Opens, Welcome Reception
<b>WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25</b>	
MORNING	• Tech Meetings, Rehearsals, AACTFest Registration, AACTFest Workshops, AACT Committee Meetings, Exhibit Hall Set Up
AFTERNOON	• AACTFest Opening Ceremony, National Companies Perform, Silent Auction
EVENING	• National Companies Perform
<b>THURSDAY, JUNE 26</b>	
MORNING	• Tech Meetings, Rehearsals, AACTFest Registration, AACTFest Workshops, Design Competition Open, Vendor Exhibits Open
AFTERNOON	• National Companies Perform, Silent Auction
EVENING	• VIP Cocktail Party
<b>FRIDAY, JUNE 27</b>	
MORNING	• Tech Meetings, Rehearsals, AACTFest Registration, Workshops, Vendor Exhibits - Passport Prizes, Keynote
AFTERNOON	• AACT Annual Meeting & AACT National Awards Presentations, National Companies Perform, Silent Auction
EVENING	• National Companies Perform
<b>SATURDAY, JUNE 28</b>	
MORNING	• Tech Meetings, Rehearsals, AACTFest Registration, AACTFest Workshops, AACT Board Meeting II, Vendor Exhibits Open Until Noon - Passport Prizes, Design Competition Open Until Noon

Schedule subject to change. Additional special events and activities are planned. The final schedule will be available on the Whova AACTFest Event App and in the festival program.



# AACTFest Keynote Speaker Leslie Kimbell

The playwright's "insane life experiences" are inspiring, hilarious, and heartwarming

*"Community Theatre is a powerful entity. It has the power to educate, change lives, and champion diversity and inclusion. It is the root system of theatre."* – Leslie Kimbell

AACTFest 2025 just got a whole lot more exciting with the announcement of the delightful and dynamic Leslie Kimbell as the festival's keynote speaker. A celebrated playwright, actor, and theatre director, based in Athens, Georgia, Kimbell brings a unique blend of charm, humor, and passion to the stage and beyond.



She may be best known for her play, *Four Old Broads*, which has enjoyed a very successful production history in the U.S. and abroad.

Her love affair with storytelling began in the fifth grade, when her teacher, Mrs. Pugliese, "took me aside and told me that I had a real talent for details and for telling stories. I've never forgotten that."

She discovered her love of theatre just a year later.

"One Sunday at church, my friend, Jayson, told me that a new community theatre was opening in town. I had no idea what that was. He said they did plays and musicals live on a stage. I heard the word 'stage' and I knew I was all in. As luck would have it, the new theatre was opening just three blocks from my house. I practically lived there for seven years."

Her plays benefit from her "insane life experiences" and "extremely salty" sense of humor, gained from 18 years of traveling the world as a top-billed and award-winning burlesque headliner and model.

"After retiring my six-inch stilettos and ostrich fans," she said, "I immediately looked for another community theatre to get involved with. I found it in Winder, Georgia, at Winder-Barrow Community Theatre, where I became really involved for 19 years. That theatre company changed my life. In 2014, I was at an after-rehearsal gab fest at Waffle House and my friend, Billie, out of the blue, made a very salty and out-of-character joke that had me literally crying-laughing. I remember saying to the girls, 'Hey, that would be a great line in a play!' I wrote it down on a napkin and then put it on my desk, next to my computer."

One day in the spring of 2015, she found that napkin under her laptop, and felt inspired. She sat down and started writing. She wrote for three months straight.

"Somehow it just poured out of me," she said. "Every day, I would put the children on the bus and then hurry back to my computer. I would slurp my coffee and cackle at my own writing."

Her first play, *Four Old Broads*, was inspired by memories of her sassy and spunky Nannie DeVries and Aunt Sissie, who, she said, were always hysterical old broads.

*Four Old Broads* simultaneously won two festivals in 2016—one at Centre Stage Greenville in Greenville, South Carolina, and the other at Theatre Victoria in Victoria, Texas. That same year, it also received an AEA Workshop, sponsored by Playhouse Creatures Theatre Company, at The Cherry Lane Theatre in New York City.

The sold-out and record-breaking official world premiere of *Four Old Broads* opened in March 2017, at Winder-Barrow Theatre in Winder, Georgia. The play was then published by Samuel French (now Concord Theatricals). It's been a popular success ever since.

Since *Four Old Broads*, Kimbell has written and published three more plays with Concord Theatricals: *Four Old Broads on the High Seas*, *The Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Beauty Pageant*, and *Packing Up Polly*.

Upcoming works include *The Four Old Broads Christmas Extravaganza*, *Whitney's Wild Wedding*, and *And There I was Butt Ass Naked - An Almost One Woman Show*.

Kimbell is a proud Dramatist Guild Member, the recipient of Georgia Theatre Conference Hall of Fame Award 2021, and the Theatre Partners Chair on the board of The Del Shores Foundation.

A wife, mother, and grandmother, Kimbell continues to work with community theatre as much as possible—currently at OnStage Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia, and at Town and Gown Players in Athens, Georgia.

With her unique perspective and magnetic presence, Kimbell promises to bring a keynote address that's equal parts inspiring, hilarious, and heartwarming. Enjoy it Friday, June 27, 2025. More details at [aact.org/25](http://aact.org/25).

More **AACTFest 2025** on page 14 ▶



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# AACTFest 2025 National Design Competition

Designers and technicians, now is the time to begin planning how you'll share your artistry with the greater AACT community. Whether virtually or in-person, the Design Competition at AACTFest 2025 in Des Moines, Iowa, lets you showcase your talent and passion for theatrical design.

Start gathering your plans, pictures, and supporting materials to celebrate the craft and vision behind your designs. This year, a fresh Design Competition team is stepping forward to guide this event into 2025 and beyond. The team is also exploring innovative ways to invigorate the on-site exhibition, ensuring that your work is displayed in a way that fully captures its artistry and technical brilliance.

Cash prizes will be awarded for top designs in each of these five categories: Scenic, Lighting, Properties, Costume, and Special Design.

Whether you are an AACT Individual Member or part of an AACT Organizational Member production, this competition is your chance to display

designs from productions staged between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2025.

- **Onsite Display Entry Fee:** Free with your AACTFest Registration. Additional Entries are \$25 per entry.
- **Virtual Entry Fee:** \$50

Awards will be presented to a combined pool of on-site and virtual entries. The adjudicators will recognize designs that embody excellence and innovation, ensuring every entry has the chance to be celebrated.

- **Submission Deadline:** May 19, 2025
- **Outstanding Overall Design Prize:** \$300
- **Outstanding Design Awards in Each Category:** \$100, at the discretion of adjudicators

We can't wait to see your work and celebrate your contributions to the vibrant world of community theatre. To learn more and apply, visit [aact.org/design25](https://aact.org/design25).

## Speak the Speech!

### Enter the Monologue Competition at AACTFest or YouthFest!

The Monologue Competition is an established highlight of the AACTFest national festival, and the 2025 edition will be no exception—whether you're there to perform, learn the ropes, or to support your fellow actors.

The competition is a unique opportunity to perform individually and receive feedback from an experienced acting teacher and adjudicator, while sharpening your performance skills and networking with other artists.

Anyone may enter the Monologue Competition at either YouthFest (age 18 and under) or AACTFest (over 18). The winner in each category will receive a \$100 cash prize.

Monologues must be memorized and should come from a published play by an established writer, or from a writer who has submitted a new script to a playwriting competition or for publication. You may present a piece of any

dramatic or comedic material, not to exceed two minutes in length. No props, costumes, or effects of any kind are permitted.

YouthFest participants will perform in preliminary rounds Monday, June 23 and Tuesday, June 24. AACTFest preliminaries will be held Wednesday June 25, Thursday, June 26, and Friday, June 27. Rounds will be based on participation, and the adjudicators will select finalists from each preliminary round to perform in the Monologue Competition Finals. The winner in each of the two categories will be announced at their respective festival's closing ceremony.

Registration for the Monologue Competition can be completed with your festival registration, or during the festival at the AACTFest registration desk. However, early registration is recommended, as space is limited. There is a \$25 entry fee.



## JOIN US IN DES MOINES - JUNE 22-28, 2025

Join the excitement and support the AACT Endowment Fund! Whether you're attending AACTFest 2025 in Des Moines, Iowa or not, you can participate by donating or bidding in the Silent Auction.

Proceeds benefit the AACT Endowment Festival Support Fund, providing travel grants to the 12 theatre companies representing their regions at the national festival. Your support helps them shine on the national stage and ensures the future of AACT's mission!

### CONTRIBUTE A SPECIAL ITEM TO THE SILENT AUCTION!

Donations valued at \$100+ (individual items or themed baskets) are greatly appreciated. Popular ideas include:



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Elegant Necklaces, Rings, Bracelets, Earrings, or Timepieces.



**Experiences**  
Vacations, Tours, Event Tickets, Adventures, Spa Treatments, etc.



**Unique Items**  
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**Expert Services**  
Photo Sessions, Expert Workshops, Consulting Services, etc.



**Goods**  
TVs, Tablets, Phones, Smart Watches, Video Game Consoles, etc.



**Fine Art**  
Original Paintings, Prints, Sculptures, Pottery, Stained Glass, etc.



**Gift Cards**  
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**Surprise Us!**  
Think creatively - rare, unique, or one-of-a-kind treasures!

**READY TO DONATE?** Learn more by scanning the QR Code or visiting [aact.org/silent-auction](https://aact.org/silent-auction)

Last Day to Donate: June 14th. Bidding Open: May 25th - June 28th.

Learn More: [aact.org/silent-auction](https://aact.org/silent-auction) Questions? Call 817-732-3177 or email [info@aact.org](mailto:info@aact.org)

SCAN ME! >>>





# Moving On

## Theatres recently selected to represent their states/regions

State winners moving on to their regional festival are shown below. Some states qualify to send two shows to their regional festival. Winners of the regional festivals will move on to the national festival in Des Moines, Iowa.

See all theatres representing states and regions in the AACTFest 2025 cycle at [aact.org/moving](https://aact.org/moving)

Region	Organization	City	State	Play	Author	Winner
IV	Chapin Theatre Company	Chapin	SC	<i>Stilt Girl (Act I)</i>	Lou Clyde	State
II	Hand to Mouth Players & Gojo Clan Productions	Montrose	NY	<i>Balloon Release, a drama &amp; The Rental, a comedy</i>	Keith Whalen	State
IV	Alban Arts Center	St. Albans	WV	<i>The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Competition Version)</i>	Adapted by Dwayne Hartford From the book by Kate DiCamillo	State
IV	The Roving Peregrine Theatre Company	Shepherdstown	WV	<i>Twenty Something Teenager</i>	David Veatch	State
II	Ebong Theatrix	Bethesda	MD	<i>Avinash</i>	Arindam Ghosh	State
II	Sandy Spring Theatre Group, Inc	Montgomery Village	MD	<i>The Way of All Fish</i>	Elaine May	State
IV	Tupelo Community Theatre	Tupelo	MS	<i>Tone Clusters</i>	Joyce Carol Oates	State
IV	Pearl Community Theatre	Pearl	MS	<i>The Act of Living</i>	Robert Scott	State

## AACT YouthFest 2025

Join us in Des Moines for YouthFest 2025, where talented young performers and theatre artists from across the country come together to showcase the creativity and passion of theatre through performances, workshops, and more.

Participants share performances, connect with mentors, attend workshops, and grow their peer network through social events and more.

The festival is anchored around seven performances from youth theatre companies from across the country, which will be adjudicated in an open forum that fosters a learning and educational experience for all. The performances are:

- *Disney's The Little Mermaid JR*, performed by Landmark Community Theatre in Thomaston, Connecticut
- *Avinash*, performed by Ebong TheatriX in Bethesda, Maryland
- *Runaway Princess*, performed by Central Park Players in Grand Haven, Michigan
- *Mac Beth*, performed by Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette in Lafayette, Indiana
- *Dark Road*, performed by Northern Starz Center for the Performing Arts in Ramsey, Minnesota
- *Lost Girl*, performed by Clark Youth Theatre in Tulsa, Oklahoma
- *In the Tank*, performed by Terrace Playhouse Youth Theatre Troupe from the United States Army Garrison in Ansbach, Germany



In addition to the outstanding performances, youth registrants will attend a variety of hands-on workshops including:

- Acting Through Song
- Puppet and Character Creation
- College Audition Panel
- Choreography
- Intimacy Direction
- Playwriting
- Improv

Additional opportunities and social events round out the schedule, including the Youth Monologue Competition and Broadway Karaoke, with a live pianist.

All YouthFest registrants will receive a special discount on AACTFest registration, opening the door for up to seven days packed with performances, workshops, keynotes, mentoring, networking, and lifelong memories. To learn more and to register, visit [aact.org/youthfest](https://aact.org/youthfest)

# Community Theatre Management Conference 2025

AACT's annual Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) runs June 22-24 at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown, just days before AACTFest, allowing attendees to maximize hotel and travel savings.

Registration is now open for this dynamic conference, open to administrators of all kinds—full-time professional managers, part-time office administrators, board members, or the dedicated volunteers who do it all. Regardless of position or organization size, all participants gain valuable insight, best practices, and new perspectives through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, large and small group discussions that speak directly to your unique challenges and experiences.

Topics typically include sales and marketing, fundraising and development, season selection, volunteer recruitment and retention, how to deal with burnout, and box office operations, among other things.

*"I was blown away by the scope, quality, productivity, and professionalism of the organizations represented. 'Community' means 'service' and these amazing theatre companies provide meaningful services and quality of life for their hometowns and beyond."*

*- Susie Prueter, Executive Director  
Southeastern Theatre Conference, 2018-2022*



for Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres, and Eastern

Chad-Alan Carr returns to facilitate the 2025 conference. Carr is the Founding Executive/Artistic Director of Gettysburg Community Theatre in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He serves on the AACT Board of Directors and was YouthFest Chair in 2017, 2019, and 2023. His accomplishments include directing the Eastern States regional premiere of The Penguin Project (theatre for youth with special needs), chartering the International Thespian Troupe for Gettysburg Area High School, and serving as a board member

States Theatre Association, as well as AACT. A frequent presenter at AACTFests and participant in AACT Roundtables, Carr brings to CTMC a wealth of experience and an ability to create dynamic group interactions.

*"My favorite part of the experience? Hands down, the networking. Getting to know other theatre practitioners was rewarding and fulfilling. There are so many other community theatre leaders across the nation doing the same kind of work as me, and making a difference in their communities."*

*- Dorinda Toner, Producing Artistic Director  
Twilight Theatre Company, Portland, Oregon*

## CTMC Registration Rates

Dates	AACT Member	Non-member
Until May 31, 2025	\$295	\$370
June 1, 2025	\$325	\$400

**AACTFest attendees:** \$15 off registration

Registration closes Friday, June 20, 2025.

Register at [aact.org/ctmc25](https://aact.org/ctmc25).

## Scholarship

AACT is providing two BIPOC scholarships for this year's Community Theatre Management Conference to support and mentor theatre-makers of color. Travel, lodging, and registration for AACTFest is the responsibility of the recipient. Deadline to apply is March 15.

To apply visit [aact.org/ctmc25](https://aact.org/ctmc25)

## Hotel and Travel

Since CTMC is held just prior to AACTFest 2025, conference attendees will receive the same special hotel and airline rates found on [aact.org/go25](https://aact.org/go25). Consider spending the entire week at AACTFest to continue networking, attend workshops, and enjoy fine theatre!

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# Adjudication Seminar 2025

Adjudicators are key to the success of AACTFest—at the state, regional, and national level. Their role is not only to highlight outstanding productions, but to create a learning experience for the participating companies and audience members, as well.

With so many festivals across the country, demand is high for trained adjudicators, which is why AACT offers its Adjudication Seminar every two years, as part of the national festival week.

With the week's 12 performances and adjudications, workshops, and other activities, it might seem impossible to experience it all and attend the seminar as well. Thankfully, the Adjudication Seminar uses a virtual/in-person hybrid model that does provide time for other AACTFest events. The hybrid model also enhances the seminar with more in-depth discussions and guest speakers—and maximizes the overall festival experience for participants.

AACT's 2025 Adjudication Seminar, facilitated by Kristi Quinn and Dennis Yslas, will begin with six virtual sessions, two hours each, scheduled April-June. Having completed the training, participants will view the performances at the national festival in Des Moines, and respond to them with techniques learned in training, receiving feedback designed to polish both message and delivery. In-person sessions during the festival will include how to negotiate with fellow adjudicators to determine award outcomes, and how to prepare for a work as an adjudicator.

## About AACT Adjudication

The purpose of AACT adjudication is threefold:

- to accurately reflect to the performing company what has been successfully achieved;
- to outline reasonable steps that might be taken to enhance interpretation of the story;
- and, finally, to select which of the companies will receive awards. At its best, adjudication both educates and illuminates."

## About the Facilitators



**Kristi Quinn** has been active in community theatre for over 25 years. Her theatre experience includes acting, directing, set decoration, and costume design, as well as public relations, grant writing, and development. She has adjudicated festivals at all levels and has participated as a core committee member and chair of several state and regional festivals. She has served as executive director of the Sioux City Community Theatre, development director of the Sioux City Art Center, artistic director for the Pioneer Valley Players in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, and leads the theatre and speech programs at the Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community Schools. She also served as a board member of the Nebraska Association of Community Theatre, and as AACT's 2022-2023 President. Previously, she was AACT's Vice President for Festivals and served for six years as the Region V Representative on the AACT Board.



**Dennis Yslas** has adjudicated for AACT at the State, Regional and National levels, including Virtual AACTFest 2021, YouthFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and as alternate adjudicator for AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota. He completed the AACT adjudication curriculum in 2001 in Memphis, Tennessee. Dennis is the Executive Director of Theatre

Network of Texas, Inc. He is a member of Actors' Equity Association, having started his acting career on the Bozo the Clown show over 40 years ago. He is an award-winning actor and director in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas area.

## Registration Information

\$175; limited to 15 people. Registration to AACTFest 2025 is required.

## Scholarship

AACT is providing two BIPOC scholarships for the 2025 Adjudication Seminar to support and mentor theatre-makers of color. Travel, lodging, and registration for AACTFest is the responsibility of the recipient. Deadline to apply is April 1, 2025.

Visit [aact.org/seminar](https://aact.org/seminar) for complete registration information and program details.

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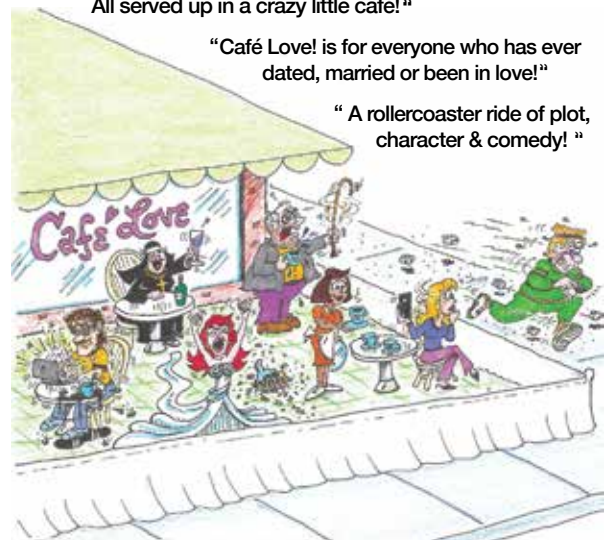
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"Café Love! is for everyone who has ever  
dated, married or been in love!"

"A rollercoaster ride of plot,  
character & comedy!"





# AACTFest 2025 Workshop Preview

*AACTFest is so much more than the inspiring performances from across the country. A variety of workshops are offered every day, giving attendees the opportunity to discover new ideas and enhance their skills in all areas of theatre, including Accessibility, Artistic, Design, Development, Directing, and more.*

*Below are just a few of the exciting workshops being offered at AACTFest 2025 in Des Moines.*

## ACCESSIBILITY

### ★ There's a Place for Us: Integrating New Players in Your Community Theatre

*presented by Chelsea Haaland*

We know that clarity precedes competence. What needs to be clear when working with youth, the young at heart, or newcomers to your program? Learn successful, simple strategies that can be implemented tomorrow.

### ★ Facilitating Neurodiversity in Community Theatre

*presented by Joe Parrish and Annie Mielke*

Building in socially equitable activities provides an inclusive theatre experience for all ages and abilities. Experience performance-based strategies that utilize the strengths of neurodiverse individuals within your community.

## ARTISTIC

### ★ The “4 Ps” for Performing Accents

*presented by Lori L. Engler*

Learn how to do accent research, build empathy with your accent donors, discover the physical adjustments needed to achieve the

distinctive sounds of an accent, and incorporate aspects of musicality that can make your accent performance come alive.

### ★ Farce Ain't Just Silly

*presented by Kathy Pingel and Karen Schaeffer*

Karen Schaeffer writes farce and Kathy Pingel directs them. Together, they've dismantled the genre and found the key to constructing physical bits, mastering word play, and elevating humor above slapstick. Find out how farce is constructed, why farce is a daring demonstration of an actor's craft, and what a director can do to gild the lily.

### ★ Relax, Relate, Release with Choreopoetry

*presented by Ms. Latrice P. Young*

Guided by Ms. Latrice Young's facilitation, attendees (inexperienced to professional) are encouraged to relax, relate, and release in this interdisciplinary arts wellness workshop. This workshop engages multiple art forms, games and activities, and storytelling to connect with oneself and others. There is a strong emphasis on individual and collective identity/narrative, restorative healing theatre, and community-play.

## DESIGN

### ★ I Am a Costume Designer; I Solve Problems

*presented by Rebecca Fry*

This workshop will explore the skills required to design and create costumes for community theatre, including project management, budgeting, collaborating with creative teams, and tips on mixing purchased, rented, stock, and built costumes to create a cohesive production.

### ★ A Director, A Designer, A Collaboration

*presented by Ruth Neeman and Mark Baumhardt*

A great collaboration happens when both the director and the designer start with an open mind and elevate each other's ideas. The presenters will share their process from research and brainstorming sessions, to dinner-napkin sketches, from practical considerations and useful tools, to how the magic happens. They will use case studies of successful collaborations to engage the attendees to identify the goals, define the challenges, prioritize the “must haves,” and review and critique the solutions they used.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

### ★ Advanced Administration – Challenging Thinking

*presented by Michael D. Fox*

Challenge the traditional non-profit model with specific techniques & tools to refashion your business. Gain insights into mindset adjustments regarding sales, money-handling, feedback, and social and stats analysis.

*And this is only the beginning.* Scheduled presentations include those from Music Theatre International, Broadway Media, keynote speaker Leslie Kimbell, and many others. Topics include intimacy direction, marketing, development, directing, choreography, design, and much more.



"*Swing State* is perhaps the first of the great American post-COVID plays, the first work I've seen not just to wrestle with what happened during the pandemic but also to explore, and call out, the fundamental changes it has wrought on our collective psyche."

—Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune*

# SWING STATE

BY REBECCA GILMAN

*Author of Spinning Into Butter, Luna Gale and Twilight Bowl.*



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# Step Into the Spotlight with an AACT Membership

In the vibrant world of community theatre, where creativity knows no bounds, the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) stands as a pillar of support, connection, and innovation. Whether you're a theatre veteran or just stepping into the spotlight, an AACT membership is your ticket to unlocking a treasure trove of resources, connections, and opportunities.

Let's take a deeper dive into what it means to be part of the AACT family and why membership is more than just a subscription—it's a commitment to the growth and success of community theatre.

## AACT: A Theatre Community Like No Other

AACT isn't just an organization; it's a thriving community that brings together individuals and theatres from across the country. With members representing a diverse range of talents, from actors and directors to set designers and administrators, AACT fosters collaboration and celebrates the unique voices that make up the tapestry of community theatre.

Being a part of this network means you're never alone in facing the challenges and triumphs of theatre production. You're connected to a supportive community of peers who share your passion and are eager to help you succeed.

## Why Join AACT? The Membership Benefits!

Here are just a few reasons why AACT membership is an essential investment for individuals and theatres alike:

### 1. Access to Expert Resources

AACT members gain exclusive access to an expansive online library of resources and articles. From guides on theatre management to contract templates, AACT equips its members with the tools they need to thrive. For those navigating the complexities of fundraising or looking to expand their audience, AACT's resources provide clear, actionable solutions.

### 2. National Events and Networking Opportunities

Membership opens the door to AACT's premier events, including AACTFest, YouthFest, NewPlayFest, and WorldFest. These events are more than gatherings—they are immersive experiences where you can learn from industry leaders, discover innovative practices, and forge life-long connections.

### 3. Education and Training

AACT provides an array of educational programs, from member exclusive roundtables and virtual masterclasses to in-person conferences. These sessions cater to all aspects of theatre, ensuring that both seasoned professionals and newcomers find opportunities to grow their skills and knowledge.

### 4. Recognition and Awards

The AACT National Awards celebrates excellence in community theatre, recognizing outstanding achievements by individuals and theatres in your communities! You can participate in these awards as a member, by nominating your theatres and people in your theatre community to be recognized on a national level.

### 5. Advocacy and Representation

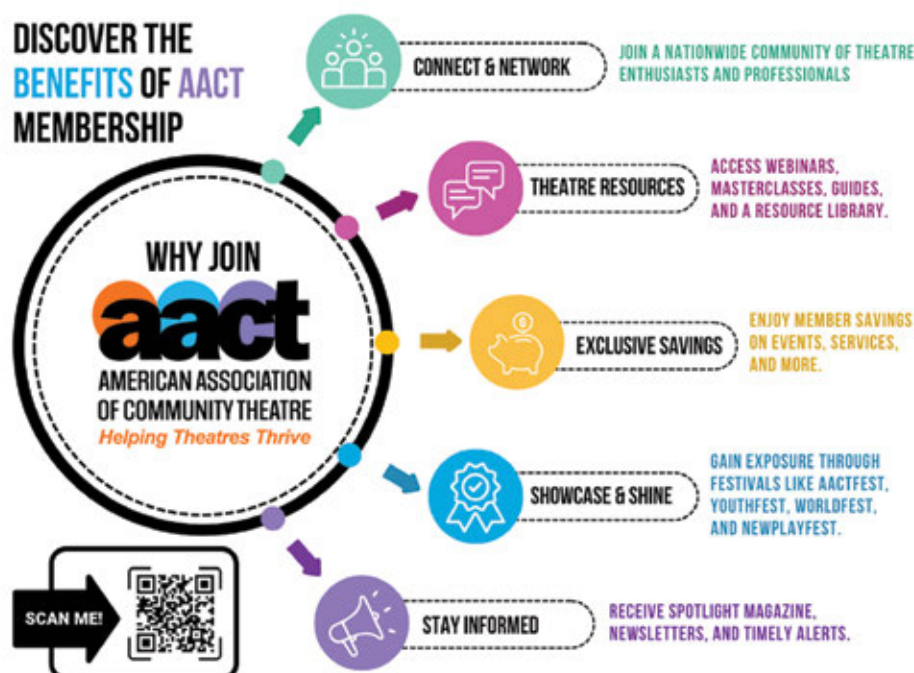
AACT champions community theatre across the country. As a member, you support initiatives that promote theatre's value and its impact on our communities, ensuring that this vital art form continues to thrive.

### 6. Discounts and Perks

AACT membership comes with tangible benefits, including discounts on events, publications, and industry services. For theatres, these savings can add up, making it easier to allocate resources where they're needed most.

## AACT Membership Tiers: Something for Everyone

AACT offers a range of membership options to suit every need. Whether you're an individual looking to connect with fellow enthu-





sians, or a theatre company aiming to enhance its operations, there's a membership plan for you. Here's a quick overview:

- **Individual Memberships:** Ideal for theatre artists, educators, and supporters who want to access resources, to network and grow professionally.
- **Organizational Memberships:** Tailored for theatres and groups, providing benefits that extend to all staff and volunteers.

### Testimonials: Voices from the Community

"AACT has been such an incredible resource for idea sharing and learning. It is a way to connect outside my region and with theatres of like size." – *Deb Jackson, Old Town Playhouse, Traverse City, Michigan*

"Leading a new community theatre in a small Southern town was daunting. But, at my first AACTFest, I was struck by the comforting realization that I was not alone. I quickly learned that much larger theatres faced the same problems I had. I quickly realized that through AACT, my board issues, money issues, volunteer issues, and more, had solutions—and that AACT members were eager to share their experiences and knowledge. They still are. I stuck around! Now, 32 years later, AACT is still my go-to theatre resource." – *Ginger Heath, Metrolina Theatre Association, Charlotte, North Carolina*

"AACT has been an incredible resource for The Suffield Players, especially through their Member Roundtables. These sessions have been a game-changer for our board, giving us the chance to learn new skills, share ideas, and connect with other community theatre leaders. From marketing tips to strategies for creating a more inclusive environment, the Roundtables have helped us grow as a group and better support our productions. Thanks to AACT, we're more equipped than ever to face new challenges and keep community theatre thriving in Suffield." – *Hanna Madler, Suffield Players, Suffield, Connecticut*

### How to Get Involved

Joining AACT is simple. Visit the AACT website at [aact.org/membership](http://aact.org/membership) to explore membership options and find the plan that's right for you. Once you're a member, take full advantage of your benefits by:

- Attending events and conferences
- Participating in webinars and workshops
- Utilizing the online Resource Library
- Connecting with fellow members through AACT's many online platforms

For any questions about how to make the most of your AACT Membership, reach out to [karen@aact.org](mailto:karen@aact.org).

### Looking Ahead: The Future of AACT

As AACT continues to grow, so do the opportunities for its members. Upcoming initiatives include expanded educational offerings, enhanced online resources, and new programs aimed at supporting theatres in underserved communities. By joining AACT, you're not just gaining access to valuable tools and networks—you're contributing to the future of community theatre itself.

### Closing Curtain: Why Membership Matters

Community theatre is a cornerstone of cultural and artistic expression, bringing people together and telling stories that resonate on a deeply human level. AACT exists to support and amplify this vital work, and membership is the key to unlocking its full potential.

So, whether you're looking to elevate your theatre, grow your skills, or connect with a passionate community, AACT membership is your backstage pass to success. Join today and take your place in the spotlight.

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# The AACT Advantage

Lou Ursone, Executive Director of Curtain Call, Inc. (Stamford, Connecticut), AACT Board of Directors, and Spotlight Editorial Team asks theatre makers why they are part of AACT.



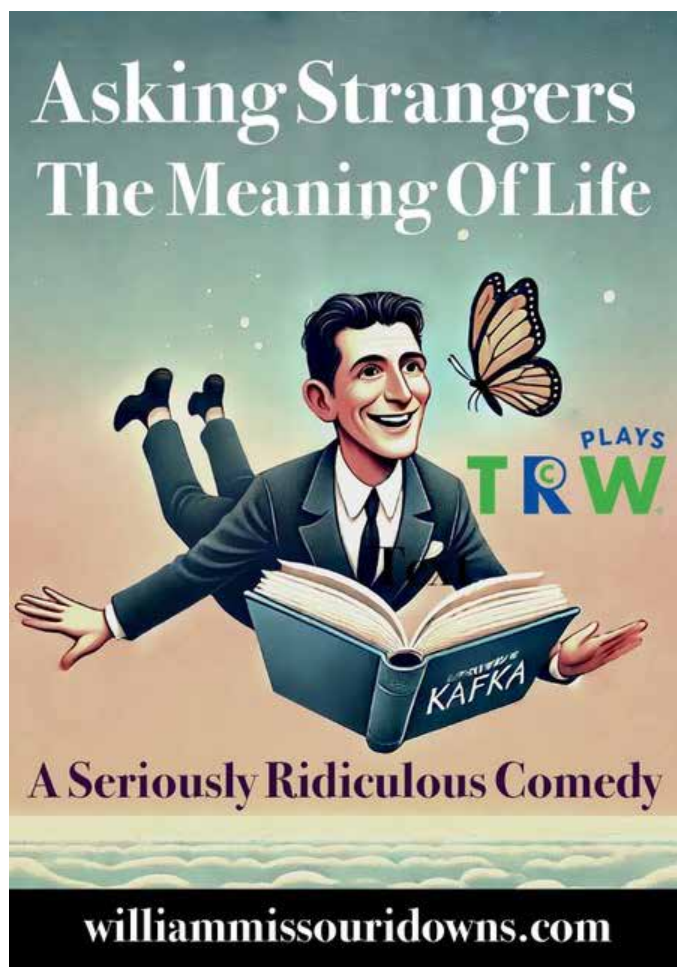
## Pattye Archer

How does a community theatre get better local newspaper representation? Try putting the local editor on your board. That's how Pattye Archer of Mississippi's Starkville Community Theatre got involved 28 years ago.

Like most community theatre volunteers, it wasn't long before Archer started working backstage, helping on sets, and eventually directing. With a warm Southern drawl and a smile that radiates even on the phone, Archer is clearly committed to community theatre—so much so that she is now an AACT Board Member.

"My first AACT experience was in 2017, and it was very exciting to meet so many people like me from all over the country," Archer said. "So many individuals encouraged me that week, and the workshops and adjudications were terrific." Fast-forward to 2023 and Archer served as Assistant Director for the SETC Best Production of *Underneath the Lintel*.

"One of the best things I've ever done through AACT has been the Adjudication Training," Archer said, and as retirement looms from Marketing and Communications Director of the Mississippi State University Libraries, adjudicating at festivals is something she looks forward to.



"As someone from a rural area where professional theatres are hours away, being part of AACT has validated my passion for theatre. It helped me realize that there are people like me all over the country who are proud of what we do," Archer said. "The friendships and relationships I've developed through AACT keep growing, because we all share the love of theatre."

If this is your first time reading *Spotlight* and you're not familiar with all that AACT does and has to offer, Archer urges you to get involved, because "the people, the resources, and the experiences are invaluable. AACT webinars are offered all year-round, and resources on the AACT website, on legal issues and more, are incredible."

"If you love theatre and want to learn more about what others are doing in similar situations," she said, "join AACT. There's nothing better."



## Riley Kruer

What's the average age of board members in community theatre? I don't really know national statistics, but based on my local knowledge, I'd say 50 is close. So when I had the opportunity to chat with a 23-year old Board Member from Michigan, I was excited.

"Being younger on an established board can be a little intimidating when you want to be sure your voice is heard, but it's exciting, too," said Riley Kruer, a Central Michigan University Graduate.

Kruer quickly became a huge AACT fan by serving as an intern at AACTFest 2023.

"Seeing all the amazing shows and meeting incredible people there inspired me to get more involved locally," he said. "There was a huge sense of welcoming by so many strangers there... it was amazing."

That's what community theatre and AACT do.

Even though he's working full time as a marketing coordinator for a travel firm, Kruer finds time to use his social media and other skills for Lapeer Community Theatre, in Metamora, Michigan. And he also performs there.

"I was involved in theatre on stage in junior high and high school, but in college I stepped back to behind the scenes, to learn more," he said. "My favorite on stage role was this past December, playing Buddy the Elf in *Elf The Musical*," he said.

"The educational value of being involved in community theatre is huge," Kruer explained, adding that through AACT—as well as regional and state theater organizations—he continues to learn and develop skills. "Workshops in directing and auditioning—the opportunity to learn about all aspects of the theater is amazing."

He looks forward to many more years ahead at Lapeer Community Theatre, "staying involved in marketing, acting, directing—whatever needs doing," he said. "The AACT network is huge, and the resources available online and through people met at festivals, will help me continue to learn and grow."

Kruer urges everyone to "Get involved in your community—and AACT."



# AACT Member Theatre Hub

## Stage Left Theater to Represent the U.S. at Monaco Theatre Festival

Quiana Clark-Roland

Stage Left Theater of Spokane, Washington, has been invited to perform at the Mondial du Théâtre, the international amateur theatre festival, held in Monaco from August 25–27, 2025. This year marks the 18th edition of the festival, which occurs every four years. Being selected places Stage Left among an elite group of theatre companies, worldwide.

The theatre's journey began with its award-winning production of *Pass Over* at the 2023 AACTFest in Louisville, Kentucky. Earning the festival's top honor as Best Production led to its nomination by AACT for the Mondial—which was accepted, paving the way for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

As Stage Left prepares for this milestone, we invite you to learn more about the cast and crew of its acclaimed production, who share their philosophies, inspirations, and insights as they prepare to step onto the world stage in Monaco.

### About the Company

Founded in December 2011 with the goal of providing an alternative theatre experience in Spokane, Stage Left Theater produces five to six main stage productions, artistic festivals, and special events. The theatre's stated mission is to "tell stories, build community, and pursue equity through the production of new and existing theatrical works." The company is "founded on the belief that live theatre provides a mechanism for interpersonal interaction not provided by television and movies, and that it should be a force for political, intellectual, and social stimulation, and be relevant to the daily lives of both audiences and players." [StageLeftTheater.org]

### About the Play

*Pass Over*, by Antoinette Chinonye Nwandu, reimagines Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* through the eyes of two inner-city black men, Moses and Kitch. Stuck in an existential cycle of trying to "get up off this block," they hope that maybe today will be different. As they dream of their promised land, a stranger wanders into their space with his own agenda and derails their plans.

### About Cast and Crew



l to r: Danny Anderson, Malcolm Pelles, Matthew Slater, Dahveed Bullis, Joy Simmons, Jeremy Whittington, Alana Shepherd, and Michael Schmidt

Dahveed Bullis (he/him - Moses) is a community-centered visual and performing artist who utilizes videography and education to highlight voices and stories that he feels deserve to be heard. His accolades include the Spokane Arts Award for Arts Advocacy (2024) and the Artist Trust GAP Award (2022). He has been nominated twice for the DECCIO Excellence in Equity Award through the Community Colleges of Spokane. Bullis believes in the power of community: "Without each other, we have nothing."

Matt Slater (he/him - Kitch) mastered improv and sketch comedy at Second City, IO Improv, and Annoyance Theatre in Chicago. Although he is an experienced improv actor, the original Stage Left run of *Pass Over* was his first scripted production—ever. He has since proven himself to be a gifted Shakespearean actor in the title role of Stage Left's production of *Macbeth*.

Danny Anderson (he/him - Mister/Ossifer) has been acting in theatre, film, and television in the Pacific Northwest for over 20 years. For *Pass Over*, he plays two roles. As Mister, he is a perplexing, goofy, White traveler who loses his way and asks Moses and Kitch for directions; his other character, Ossifer, is a racist, short-tempered, menacing street cop.

Malcolm Pelles (he/him - Director) is a director and playwright who teaches screenwriting at Eastern Washington University. His work has been performed off-Broadway and at the Kennedy Center

continued on page 24 ▶

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in Washington, DC. He is published in *Monologues for Men by Men, Vol. 2* (Heinemann). He holds an M.F.A. degree from the New York University Tisch School of the Arts and an undergraduate degree from Florida State University.

James “Moss” Landsiedel (they/he - Stage Manager/Dresser) is Technical Director and Scenic Designer at Stage Left, who says he is honored to be part of this team of top-tier artists.

Jeremy Whittington (“any pronouns” - Scenic Designer/Former Artistic Director) is Stage Left’s Scenic Designer, and served as Artistic Director during the competition tour. An artist, actor, and teacher, he is Program Director at Spokane Arts, a non-profit organization that helps fund artists and arts organizations in Eastern Washington.

Joy Simmons (she/her – Sound Operator) is a theatre administrator, playwright, stage manager, sometime-actor, and mother. She has been onstage and behind the scenes for 20 years, and in 2023 was honored with the AACT Spotlight Award for her work at Stage Left. Her short play, *Until the End*, won Audience Favorite at Spokane Civic Theatre’s 2024 Playwrights’ Forum Festival.

Alana Shepherd (she/her - Lighting Designer/Interim Artistic Director) is an award-winning lighting designer for both theatre and architecture—perhaps best known for the sequence design and programming of the Times Square New Year’s Eve ball. She is founder and co-chair of the North American Coalition of Lighting Industry Queers, and contributes to industry periodicals and podcasts. Her essay on queer inclusion in architectural lighting for the June 2022 issue of *LEDs Magazine* is a 2023 Eddie Award-winner. She has an M.F.A. in Lighting Design from Carnegie Mellon University.



Matthew Slater (Kitch) and Dahveed Bullis (Moses) list their Promise Land Top 10

### Interview with Members of the Cast and Crew

*What cultural or artistic message do you hope to share through your performance?*

Danny Anderson: *Pass Over* contains messages of contemporary truths and ancient truths dealing with love, pain, struggle, and redemption. And it reinforces the cyclical nature of these conflicting experiences, all through a very stark American lens.

*How do you see your work contributing to the global conversation in theatre arts?*

Joy Simmons: I hope that people will see how far this show has gone and realize that theatre doesn't have to be watered down to be successful. I hope it inspires more theatres to step outside their comfort zones and consider productions that their audiences aren't expecting.

*continued on page 26* ▶





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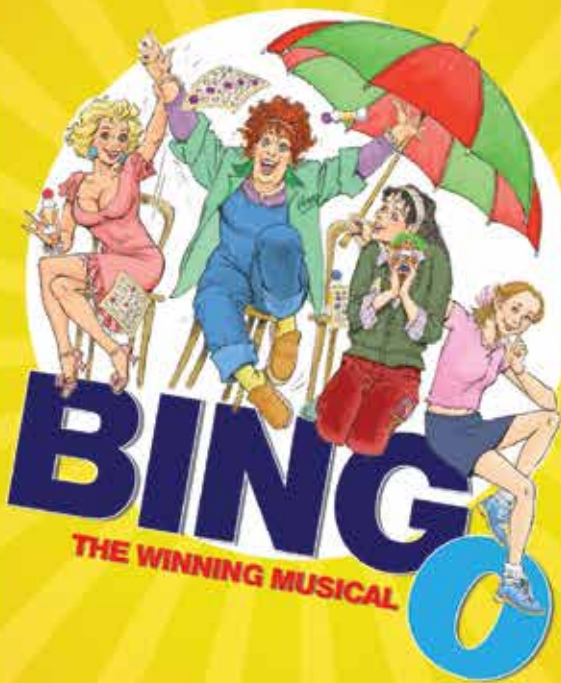
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Stage Left Theatre continued from page 24



Moses and Kitch contemplate "gettin' up off this street corner"

*What message or advice would you give to aspiring theatre groups dreaming of national or international opportunities?*

Jeremy Whittington: Just tell the story. It doesn't matter how small you are, or how unknown your theatre might be. What matters is telling compelling stories in honest ways. Fundraise early! When your community finds out that your theater has been selected for something special, they will rally around you. Everyone at the state, regional, and national levels of AACT has helped us learn and grow into the solid troupe heading to Monaco. Trust the process.

*What support are you currently receiving from your theatre and community?*

Alana Shepherd: When we won at Kaleidoscope, and then again at Region IX and AACTFest, the community rallied around us in celebration and support. In the short time since we announced our invitation to Mondial du Théâtre, the response has been enthusiastic. I hope it continues, and that the enthusiasm will translate into donations.

*What support do you still need and how can people help?*

Dahveed Bullis: Obviously, financially would be great. We would also love any and all voices to uplift this production to as many as possible. If you have the means to bring us over to you, we will come! Please reach out to us and we will find a way to collaboratively bring this important piece to your circle of influence.

AACT is proud to support Stage Left Theater in the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to perform at the Mondial. If you would like to help the theatre on its journey, visit [stagelefttheater.org/donate-1](http://stagelefttheater.org/donate-1).

Learn more about the Mondial du Théâtre 2025 Festival at [mondialduthetheatre.com](http://mondialduthetheatre.com).

The troupe from Stage Left Theater receives their adjudication notes at AACTFest 2023





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## AACT Spring Webinars

AACT offers a carefully curated selection of webinars covering a wide variety of topics. Here are a few of the upcoming highlights.

### Virtual Masterclasses

AACT Virtual Masterclasses are 75 to 90-minute, in-depth explorations of specific skills or topics. These online presentations are designed to provide new perspectives, powerful strategies, and ways to unleash your creativity.

Registration is \$15 for AACT members and \$25 for non-members. Each registration includes access to our Weekend Replay, allowing you to watch a recording of the session at a time that better suits your schedule.

**Thursday, March 6**

### Pitching Your Script (and Yourself!)

Join award-winning playwright Jacqueline Goldfinger and learn how to strengthen your play submissions, polish your online presence, and better prepare for in-person meetings to give yourself the best chance for success in this highly competitive field. There is no preparation required for this workshop, but if participants happen to have (1) a short bio (100 words or less) and/or (2) an artistic statement (200 words or less) feel free to bring them. Jacqueline will also provide examples that can be revised to suit your needs. If you have New Play Exchange profiles, she will offer to share your page as an example. You'll leave the workshop with practical tips for immediately strengthening your professional profile.

### About the Presenter



**Jacqueline Goldfinger** is an award-winning playwright, dramaturg, and librettist. Her work has been produced around the world, including performances at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (USA), Sydney Opera House (Australia), Contemporary American Theatre Festival (USA), École nationale de théâtre (Canada), BBC Radio 3 (UK), Disquiet (Portugal), Chiesa di Ognissanti (Italy), and Court Theatre (New Zealand). She

has taught playwriting and dramaturgy at University of Pennsylvania, UC Davis, and others. Her book, *Playwriting with Purpose: A Guide and Workbook for Playwrights* (Second Edition), can be pre-ordered on Amazon or anywhere books are sold.

[Jacquelinegoldfinger.com](http://Jacquelinegoldfinger.com)

### Member-Only Roundtables

AACT Roundtables are available for AACT members only, and provide a free and convenient forum to share experience, ideas, concerns, and solutions. Each Roundtable features a group of panelists with a diverse range of experience to share. Discussions are audience-driven through a pre-session questionnaire and a live Q&A. [aact.org/roundtables](http://aact.org/roundtables)

Interested in serving on an upcoming roundtable? Apply at [aact.org/panelist](http://aact.org/panelist)

**Tuesday, March 11**

### **AACTFest**

Get answers to all your festival-related questions by joining AACT staff and experienced AACTFest adjudicators, commissioners, and directors.

**Tuesday, April 15**

### **Technical Theatre**

An open-topic discussion on all things technical theatre, including tips, tricks, cost-saving strategies, and more.

**Tuesday, May 20**

### **Battling Burnout**

Discover strategies to improve your wellbeing, including setting and respecting boundaries, social support, mindfulness, and other ways to improve the work-life balance for yourself and your organization.

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## **A Site to Behold: AACT's New Web Presence**

Quiana Clark-Roland

AACT Executive Director

AACT's new website marks a significant milestone in our journey, as we continue to grow and improve the ways we connect with our community.

The new website has been designed with you in mind, offering a streamlined user experience, enhanced navigation, and an updated, modern look. Whether you're here to explore our offerings, stay informed, or connect with us, you'll find the site more intuitive and easier to use.

### **Why A New Website?**


In today's fast-paced digital world, we recognize the importance of having an online presence that reflects who we are, and that serves your needs efficiently. Our goal was to create a platform that not only looks great, but also provides the functionality you expect. The new website includes features like enhanced navigation, engaging content, more timely announcements and reminders, improved security, and a user-friendly interface. These improvements make it easier than ever for you to engage with us and stay connected.

We want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff and board members, whose vision and commitment made this project possible. We also extend our deepest thanks to Skvare, our development partners, for their hard work, expertise, and unwavering support throughout this process.

### **Check It Out**

We invite you to explore the new site and discover all the exciting updates we've implemented. Your feedback is invaluable, so don't hesitate to share your thoughts with us as we continue to refine and enhance your experience. Email us at [info@aaact.org](mailto:info@aaact.org).

Thank you for being a part of our theatre community. Our new website is just the beginning of all the exciting developments we have in store.



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# Contributed Income: When Ticket Sales Aren't Enough

Michael Cochran

Theatres, like all nonprofit arts groups, have a mission to provide programming to everyone in our communities, regardless of income levels. In order to be accessible to all, we strive to keep ticket prices low, and that can mean operating at a financial loss.

That is where contributed income comes into play. In fact, for many, if not most theatres, it has become the key source of funding that helps them grow and achieve their missions.

That said, its importance is not always understood by our stakeholders. There is a common misconception that by buying tickets and attending shows they have covered the operating costs just like they do on Broadway.

That's because our economy is primarily based on "for-profit" businesses who charge their customers more than it costs to make their products or provide services. I've had board members at my theatre who work in for-profit companies, and who believe that if we could just increase our show runs and sell enough tickets, or take in enough class fees, then we would break even and wouldn't have to fundraise. The reality, as good nonprofit fundraisers know, is "The more programming you do, the more contributions you need to break even."

The truth is that there are only so many shows we can do a year with the resources we have. If we look at how high ticket prices would have to be to break even, we become acutely aware that many people in our community simply could not afford to attend. Just take a look at Broadway prices if you want to know what for-profit theatre looks like.

Once you embrace this truth, you realize how important it is to raise and increase contributed income in order to keep the doors open.

Contributed income means different things to different groups, although the basic definition is the same: money received from external sources that doesn't derive from ticket sales or programs. For community theatre, this is most often a combination of fundraising events and galas, contributions from individual donors, grants, sponsorships, and in-kind donations. The biggest request asked of AACT is how to raise more money from individuals, fundraising events, grants, or sponsorships.

With that in mind, we set out to find out what is working best for community theatres as a whole, grouped by the size of both budget and community. Our survey brought responses from 109 theatres from 36 states, with all regions of the country represented. This data should be helpful in determining how your own experience compares with other theatres around the country.

## Behind the Data

Community theatres tend to serve smaller population bases, and the largest survey segment (25% of respondents) serve communities of under 25,000 people. The next largest survey group was communities with populations of 25,000-50,000 (16%), followed by theatres serving populations of 100,000-250,000 (14.9%). Overall, the majority of community theatres (55%) in our survey serve communities with populations of less than 75,000.

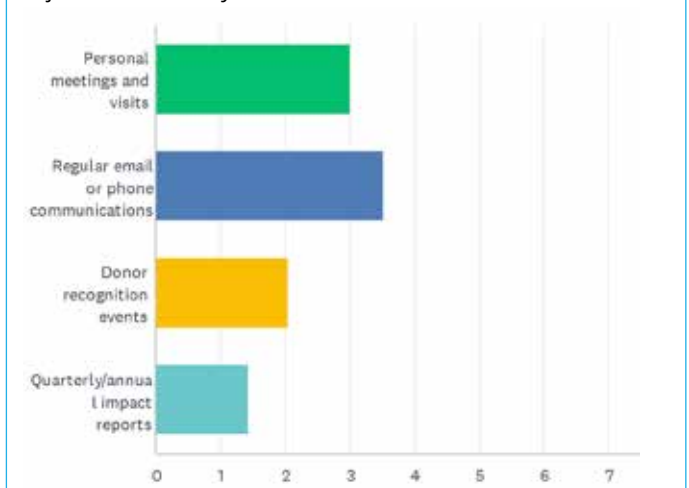
Grouping theatres by budget size is a good way to track how organizations handle contributed income. The largest group of respondents (28.4%) have annual budgets of less than \$50,000. The next largest group (22.9%) have budgets ranging from \$100,000 to \$250,000. The remaining responses break down a little more evenly, with roughly 12% each for groups with \$75,000-100,000, \$250,000-\$500,000, and \$500,000-\$1 million. Only 10% (12 theatres) surveyed have budgets above \$1 million.

Since community theatre boards are often tasked with raising money, the size of a board can make a big difference in contributed income. A little more than a third of respondents (34%) have a board of 6-10 people, and 37% have a board of 11-15 people. Only 15% of those surveyed have five or fewer people, while 14% have more than 15 people on their board.

Small theatres tend to rely more on earned income, such as ticket sales, class fees, and rental income. That fact helps shape the overall survey results to a large degree, with 70% reported receiving less than \$30,000 in contributed income. Only 11% reported receiving no contributed income at all.

The largest source of contributed income for all theatres comes from individual donors (35.5%), followed by grants (26.1%), then events, galas, auctions, and raffles (23.3%), sponsorships (8.4%), and foundations (6.5%).

How do you typically cultivate and maintain relationships with major donors? Rank your methods from most used to least used.



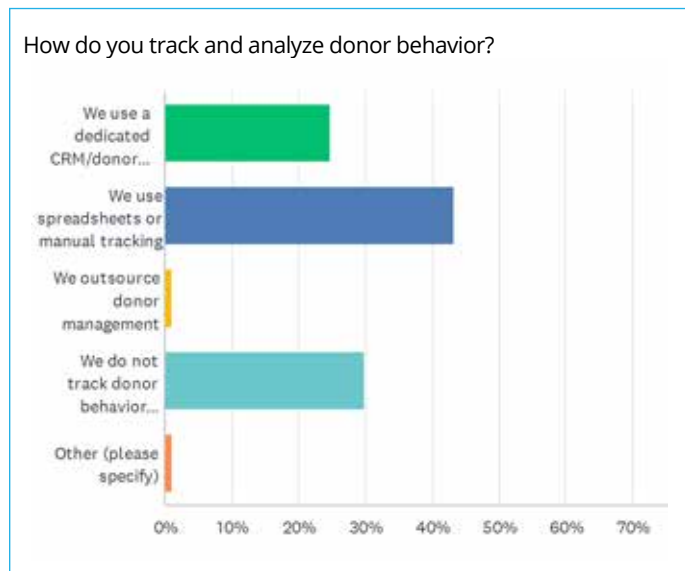
## Key Trends

Our survey results revealed important trends in contributed income:

- **Individual donations.** 47% of respondents reported an increase in income over the past year, with 18.8% reporting no change, and 18.8% reporting a decrease.
- **Grants.** 31.1% reported income had increased, 24.4% reported a decrease, and 14.4% reported no change.
- **Foundation Support.** 27.7% saw no change, 11.1% saw a decrease, and the smallest group 6.6% saw an increase.
- **Fundraising Events.** 21.1% reported a decrease, 16.6% saw no change, and the smallest group (13.3%) saw an increase.

Overall, individual donations are the largest source of contributed income, with almost half of our responding theatres reporting an increase over the previous year. Income from grants saw a slight increase, while gifts from foundations remained stable for most groups. Income from fundraising events dropped, perhaps because the return on investment has not been strong.

Looking towards the future, most theatres look to increase individual donations—most by doing more online/digital fundraising, others by targeting new demographic groups.



- Income from fundraising events or galas saw 69.4% of responding theatres taking in less than \$15,000 each, and 12% between \$15,000-\$30,000. All told, 81% of theatres took in under \$30,000 each.
- Active capital campaigns question showed 72.4% no campaign, 15.3% have an active campaign, while 12.2% have an inactive campaign.”
- In-kind income (non-cash gifts) saw 75% of those surveyed receiving under \$15,000, with just 1% receiving \$50,000-\$100,000, and 7% reporting no in-kind income at all .
- When it comes to fundraising, 34% of respondents said the responsibility fell to their board of directors, while 33% reported a mix of board and staff, 16.5% used staff only, and 6.4% relied on volunteers or a volunteer committee. About 10% of theatres relied on a single staff person.

The entire survey and a detailed breakdown of responses by budget groups is included at [aact.org/survey25](https://aact.org/survey25).

With our missions centered around serving communities and addressing societal needs, understanding the nuances of income sources is crucial for effectively managing operations and fulfilling organizational goals. As our survey shows, contributed income has become a key factor in the growth and development of community theatres around the country.



*Michael Cochran is Executive Director of Market House Theatre in Paducah, Kentucky, and serves on the AACT Board of Directors.*

## A Closer Look at the Numbers

Below is a summary of key results. You’ll also find a detailed report on the survey’s findings on the AACT website at [aact.org/survey25](https://aact.org/survey25).

- A majority of theatres (64.8%) reported online cash contributions of under \$14,999, and 13.8% reported that they do not receive any online contributions.
- Tracking grant income is a bit tricky, because groups often define grants differently. For this survey we focused on government contributions. The majority of respondents do not receive any grant income from any government sources. The National Endowment for the Arts is making a concerted effort to reach smaller groups. One of the challenges for these grants is that you often have to have matching funds to receive a grant.
- Long-term contributions to nonprofits can come in the form of endowments, reserves, and donor engagement. These help theatres plan for the future, invest in programs, and expand their services. In this survey, 75% of respondents do not have an endowment. Of the 25% of theatres who do, 24.1% have endowments of \$15,000-\$50,000, while 17.2% have endowments of \$100,000-\$300,000. Only 10.3% have endowments under \$15,000, while 10.3% reported endowments of \$300,000-\$500,000, and 10.3% reported \$500,000 and above. In terms of interest income from endowments, 18.8% of responding theatres received under \$15,000 annually, and only 3.5% received between \$15,000-\$30,000 annually.
- Cash income from corporate sponsorships saw 53.7% of theatres reporting under \$15,000, 8% between \$15,000-\$30,000, and 18.5% with no sponsorship income at all.



# New Friends, New Funds

Mary Doveton

Spotlight Editorial Team

For most community theatres, ticket revenue alone is not enough to support the ongoing mission of our organizations. While this forces us to look at other revenue sources, like grants and membership campaigns, all too often the term “fundraising” conjures up images of endless galas, raffles, auctions, and dinners. Do those lengthy committee meetings, discussing the design of invitations, and the colors and size of table decorations haunt your dreams?

Grants, campaigns, and special events certainly have a place in all our repertoires, but perhaps what every organization really needs is some more friends. Friends? Really? Cue Mr. Rogers!

But when you really think about it, in our “real” lives, friends are the people who share our joys and triumphs, who support us, and who have our back. So, why not consider that principle for our theatres, as well?

Chris Keeshan, Founder and President of CKA, LLC, a fundraising coaching, training, and consulting company, constantly reminds clients, *“Fundraising is not about money. It’s about building relationships with ‘friends of the theatre,’ and turning them into life-long partners with your organization and its mission.”*

People give to people. And people in our communities are being asked for money every day. They need a reason to give money to you and your theatre. What sets your organization apart from the others? Do people believe in your mission? Maybe, if they know it. But how do they *feel* about your organization? Do they like you? Do their friends like you? Do they support you? Is there a *friendly* relationship?

## Courting Board Members and Other Friends

So how can you and your theatre begin to make more friends in your community and turn those friends into donors?

Let’s start with those board members who were edging out the door at the prospect of selling raffle tickets, or who said, of course they would serve on the board, but couldn’t possibly ask people for money. Your board members already believe that the theatre is great. *What if each of them was given two comp tickets to each production, and were actively encouraged to use those tickets to invite new people to come and see a show?* Right away your board member is feeling

good because they have something cool to offer a client, stylist, insurance agent, or next-door neighbor. Ideally, the board member and the potential new friend will come to a show together—and the board member will introduce their friend to *you*.

Another friend-raising idea is to *share a pair of comp tickets with select real estate agents, welcome groups, or trusted volunteers*. Again, it’s for an individual vested in the theatre who can offer a gift to another individual. Just think, if you have 15 board members (who are already champions of your organization), and five shows a season, that’s a potential 150 new friends each season.

Courting your new friends begins as soon as they accept the invitation. Get those names on your mailing list and take a tip from *The King and I* to begin the process of, “Getting to Know You”!

**Y**ou, a board member, or a staff member, can greet the new friends as they come in the door. A greeter in the lobby or near the door, with an identifying name tag, often makes for a more inviting, welcoming experience for all who attend a performance. Perhaps those newbies just want to know where the restrooms are, or what drinks the bar is serving. *But as you talk to these people before the show—or at intermission, or after the show—they will begin to seek you out when they return, and let you know what they liked or didn’t like—whether it was a performer, the color of the couch, or a drink at the bar.* Your relationship is beginning.

As they return for more shows, the conversations will get longer, and you’ll soon become acquainted. You will find out who has been on safari, who has a new grandchild, whose kid scored the winning goal, and who got a new job.

## Use Your Unique Platform

Next, think about how you can continue this courtship. *Remember, you have a unique platform—literally—to recognize people in your community.* Everyone likes to hear their name. And to hear it announced from the stage is even more special. If you do a curtain speech, consider thanking your individual board members who are in the audience, and have them stand up. This accomplishes four things: It acknowledges their work in front of other people; it enables audience members to see how their community is represented on your board; it gives au-



A *Pride and Prejudice* prequel

## Mr Bennet's Bride

by Emma Wood

[emmawoodplays.au/plays](http://emmawoodplays.au/plays)



“Rapturously elegant... delightfully Austentatious”  
*Atlanta Theatre Buzz*

“Sophisticated, stylish and clever.”  
*Sydney Arts Guide*



Beth Rundquist, Board Member, Theatre Lawrence, Lawrence, Kansas

dience members additional people to talk to about your theatre; and, knowing that they will be publicly acknowledged gives your board member an extra incentive to actually attend the shows.

For businesses or organizations who sponsor your shows, *acknowledgement from the stage in front of their clients and peers is very attractive*. So, if representatives from that business are in the audience, have them stand—give them their moment in the spotlight. (After all, they literally paid for it.) This is something that we in theatre can do that helps us stand out from other types of organizations. Recognition like this is more meaningful than a sign in the outfield, or a banner on a table. It is in real time, in front of real people whom they know.

Remember those new friends who came in? They are becoming part of a new network. Magically, you are getting more word of mouth, and maybe the chance for more friends.

If you have a smaller theatre, it also doesn't take long to say, "The following audience members are celebrating birthdays with us tonight." Or that "Jane and Joe Smith are celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary with us." Again, you are promoting that family feeling, and other audience members are likely to congratulate those people at intermission. You are establishing the theatre as a "friendly" place.

### Express Your Thanks

You might also *follow up with your new audience members immediately after the show with a thank-you-for-coming email*. You could also take the time to "hand-write" (remember how to do that?) a note to those new folks that your board member invited, saying how much you enjoyed meeting them, and perhaps asking if they would enjoy a tour of the theatre. You might follow up again with a phone invitation to do just that. Of course, you'll also want to make sure to thank your board member for inviting people—and encourage them to do so again.

Then, when your new friends make a donation, *send that thank-you letter and a tax receipt immediately*—don't make them have to ask at tax time, and do try to personalize it in some way. Of course, include all of your new donors' names in your program so they can see themselves listed among all your organization's friends. They are now part of a special community.

continued on page 34 ►

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Cast of 19-28 • Single set  
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You might even ask your *board members to call donors who contribute for the first time, or at a certain level.* This is often a welcome surprise for both the donor and the board member. First, because people aren't used to being called and thanked. When a voicemail gets left, donors often call back to thank board members for thanking the donor! This opens up a conversation with your new friend that may yield interesting observations about the theatre. Your board member will also be pumped-up by the ease of the conversation and may even be willing to make "ask" calls in the future.

Conversations like these are crucial as you start moving from friend-raising to fund-raising, because those new people who walked in the door will have become a friend to you and your organization. *They have become a part of "OUR theatre."* So, when you go to them and say, "We need to repair the parking lot," or "The carpeting is getting old," or "There is an opportunity to add a new program," it now becomes a joint project that your organization and your-friend-the-donor are undertaking together.

Consider other ways to make these friends feel even more special. These don't have to be expensive or elaborate—this is where it's truly the thought that counts. You might host a small wine and cheese reception before a performance, or let your friends know the shows in the new season before announcing titles to the general public, or share



*Audience members enjoying intermission at Theatre Lawrence*

news of a special donation or achievement. Your aim is to make them feel part of the family. Send a Valentine's Day or Thanksgiving Card, or a Halloween mask, a holiday card, or a gift associated with a particular show—*Mamma Mia* Wine, a light up sword, or a magic wand. (Who doesn't feel good about an organization that gives them something that lights up and sparkles?)

### Final Thoughts

In fundraising lingo, we may be jumping from friend-raising to cultivation and stewardship. But really aren't we just deepening the friendship by recognizing people, giving them updates, keeping them in the loop, and always, always, always saying "Thank you"? After all, that is what friends do.

There are so many worthy causes and needs in our world, and people are most likely to help those organizations they know, and the people within those organizations who make them feel good about themselves and their gift. You and your theatre can do that!



*Mary Doveton is founder and Executive Director Emeritus at Theatre Lawrence (Kansas), past AACT Board Member, an AACT Fellow, and a member of the AACT Spotlight Editorial Team.*

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# AACT Welcomes New *Spotlight* Editor

AACT welcomes Andy Snyder as our new *Spotlight* Editor and Advertising Representative. He will handle all content and advertising in the nation's only magazine dedicated to the work of community and civic theatre professionals and volunteers.



Andy has been deeply involved in community theatre as both an actor and a musician for most of his life. He also brings to his new position a wide range of talents, including experience as composer, videographer, graphic designer, webmaster, and marketing and financial consultant.

In 2014 he co-produced, directed, and edited *Mystics of the Heartland*, a four-episode series for PBS affiliate WNIT in South Bend, Indiana. The series, available on YouTube, explores the intersection of spirituality with the disciplines of science, nature, faith traditions, and healthy living

A prolific composer and musician, he has released three volumes of original music under his professional name, Andrew Brent:

- *Strange Romance* (1996): A collection of pop and Broadway-inspired songs.
- *The Fortune Cookie* (2007): Co-written with Jimmy Glenn Greenway, this musical comedy features an original score.
- *Grow* (2009): A deeply personal exploration of his spiritual journey over 15 years.

In addition to scoring music for children's shows, Andy has performed in educational programming, and pursued diverse careers across various industries, including over two decades in the hospital-ity sector, and 16 years as a self-taught database software developer and consultant.

When he's not working, Andy enjoys theatre, music, reading, gardening, travel, cooking, craft beer, and botanical gin. He resides in Valparaiso, Indiana, with his husband, Scot, and their cat Mrp.

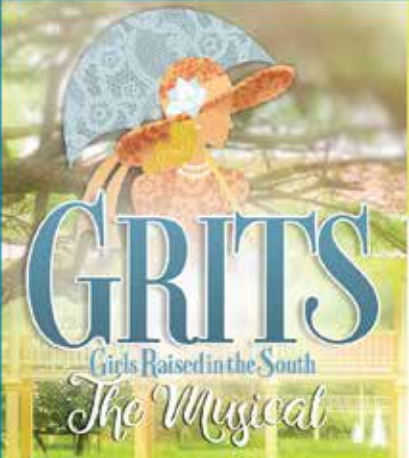
Feel free to reach out to Andy at [advertising@aact.org](mailto:advertising@aact.org) with any questions.

## Make a Legacy Gift

Please consider including the **American Association of Community Theatre** in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift.

Through these special gifts, friends like you are able to sustain AACT's mission and provide learning experiences for AACT-member companies participating in AACTFest national festivals.

To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit [aact.org/legacy](http://aact.org/legacy) or contact the AACT office at [info@aact.org](mailto:info@aact.org)

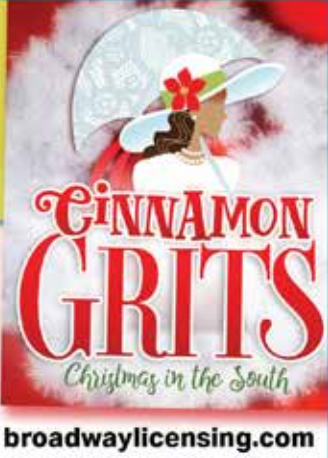


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# Breaking Barriers and Bringing Stories to Life

Susan Harrington

In the bustling community theatre scene of the Greater Boston Area, there is a significant underrepresentation of people of color in consultant and leadership roles. I am honored to share my journey as the first person of color to serve on the board of The Footlight Club—America's oldest continuously operating community theatre—during its historic 125th year. This milestone was not just a personal achievement, but a testament to progress within the theatre community itself.

The Footlight Club, a proud member of the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres (EMACT), played a key role in shaping my theatre journey. But my involvement didn't stop there. I also had the privilege of supporting The Theatre Company of Saugus (TCS) during a defining moment in their history.

The festival introduced us to a diverse tapestry of performers, including a military group from Europe

TCS had won the New England Theatre Conference (NETC) regional competition with a cutting of *The Interview*, from *America Hurrah*, by Jean-Claude van Itallie. TCS was preparing to represent Region I at AACT's national festival in Torrington, Connecticut, when the theatre's production manager had to step down. Director Laura Schrader-Johnson invited me to take on the role, and although I was only familiar with AACT as an audience member, I eagerly embraced this challenge.

Traveling 150 miles to Torrington, with a cast of eight and

a crew of five, was an exhilarating experience. The festival introduced us to a diverse tapestry of performers, including a military group from Europe. One of the most unforgettable performances came from the Circle Park Players of Alexandria, Louisiana, who presented a cutting from *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First Hundred Years*. Their 17-member cast and crew—including two women of color—executed their performance with choreographed precision and unity, embodying the true spirit of community theatre.

This powerful experience at AACTFest 2003 ignited my passion for community theatre festivals, and I have been attending them ever since. Each festival reminds me of the creativity, connection, and dedication that define our work.

As we look ahead to AACTFest 2025, June 25–28 in Des Moines, Iowa, I join in celebrating the continued growth and vibrancy of community theatre. Let's keep bringing stories to life and breaking barriers, together.

For more information, visit [aact.org/25](https://aact.org/25).



*Susan Harrington serves as the AACT State Contact for Massachusetts in AACT Region I, and is an active member of the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatres (EMACT), bringing a wealth of experience and a unique perspective to the vibrant theatre community of her Region.*



# Friends We'll Miss: Norm McPhee

Stephen Peithman

Norm McPhee, former AACT Board Member and Managing/Artistic Director of Wisconsin's Racine Theatre Guild, passed away November 3, 2024. He was 88 years old.



Norm McPhee at the Racine Theatre Guild, with the cast of his production of Tina Howe's *The Art of Dining*, presented in the company's 1985-86 season

Norm grew up in Utah and received his B.F.A. and M.F.A. in Theatre Arts from Utah State University. In 1969, he was recruited by the Racine Theatre Guild (RTG), and the trajectory of the theatre was forever changed.

"We have the responsibility of raising the standard of theater in Racine to the highest level we can attain," Norm remarked at his welcoming reception.

From 1969 to 1990, he directed every mainstage play or musical at RTG and continued to direct and be involved with the Guild through his final production, *West Side Story* in 2001.

"When Norm retired, I stole a pair of his work shoes to remind me of what big shoes I had to fill," said Doug Instenes, RTG's current Managing/Artistic Director. "His leadership set a standard that we all try to live up to. To paraphrase a line from *Wicked*: 'Because I knew him, I have been changed for good.' Many people can say that about this inspirational man."

When Norm joined RTG, it was rapidly outgrowing its cramped quarters. Norm organized a search committee that toured other the-

atres for ideas, discussed plans with the city, hired architects, and finally broke ground on RTG's current theatre facility in 1975. The new venue opened in 1976.

"It is hard to encapsulate all of the things Norm did for our organization, community theatres, and Racine," said Joycelyn Fish, RTG's Director of Marketing and Development.

Among other things, RTG hosted state, national, and international festivals under Norm's leadership, putting Racine and its Theatre Guild in the spotlight. In 1988, the Guild became the first U.S. amateur theatre to develop a cultural exchange with Russia, taking its production of *Rough Crossing* there in 1989. Two years later, RTG returned to Russia with its production of *Foxfire*, and Norm stayed behind to direct *Still a Mountain Wind* with Georgian actors, all while an attempted Soviet coup unfolded outside the theatre's doors.

Norm's work with AACT actually began with AACT's predecessor, the American Community Theatre Association. Under ACTA, Norm and the Racine Theatre Guild hosted the national festival in 1985. After AACT was formed in 1986, he served twice on the AACT Board of Directors, and 29 years on AACT committees, working closely with Julie Crawford, AACT's then-Executive Director. Not surprisingly, his efforts were focused on both the International and Festival Commission Committees.

Racine was the setting for the AACT International Festival in 1994, said Crawford, adding that throughout his life, Norm remained highly involved in international theatre, where he had made a significant impact.

Perhaps the larger focus was Norm's involvement with the greater Racine community. He helped establish educational outreach programs and workshops in collaboration with the Racine Unified School District and other local schools—allowing students to learn about theatre and attend productions. He served as president of the Racine Optimists and Racine Arts Council, was on the Carthage Theatre advisory committee, and was a board member for the Wisconsin Theatre Association.

continued on page 38 ▶



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Norm (center) at the groundbreaking ceremonies for Racine Theatre Guild's current theatre facility in 1975.

Norm's impact on theatre and the arts was reflected in his many honors, including AACT's David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award and Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award. Other honors included the Wisconsin Theatre Association's Life Service Award, the Cultural Achievement Award from the Theatre Society of the Republic of Georgia, and the 1994 Wisconsin Governor's Award in Support of the Arts. In 1998 he was named an AACT Fellow.

"He was a figure larger than life for many of us," said his daughters Jenny, Sara, and Rachel. "His legacy will live on through his children, grandchildren, family, and friends, as well as the creativity and talent that he nurtured in so many, many actors and productions."

Norm was a part of every aspect of RTG for decades. He was known as a teacher, a mentor, a leader, and a friend to many who remembered his love of sharing stories of the stage. Along with his impact on national and international theatre, he built an organization in Racine that continues to grow from his original vision.

"If there be any truer measure of a man than by what he does, it must be by what gives," wrote 18<sup>th</sup> century English writer Robert South. As the words of his friends and colleagues make clear, Norm McPhee did and gave so much to so many.

## Celebrate World Theatre Day 2025

Since 1962, World Theatre Day has been celebrated on March 27 by theatre organizations and theatre lovers all over the world.

Created by the International Theatre Institute (ITI), the international non-governmental organization for the performing arts, World Theatre Day is a day to underscore the value and importance of theatre as an art form, and its positive impact on individuals and communities.

National and international theatre events are organized to mark the occasion, but many activities are local. To find out how you can participate in the celebration of World Theatre Day, visit [world-theatre-day.org](http://world-theatre-day.org)



Each year, a World Theatre Day International Message is circulated, in which a figure of world stature shares his or her reflections on the theme of Theatre and a Culture of Peace. The first message was written in 1962 by Jean Cocteau, French playwright, designer, filmmaker, visual artist and critic. All messages from the first, and the years since, are published on the organization's website.

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The author of the 2025 World Theatre Day message is Theodoros Terzopoulos, Greek theatre director, educator, author, Founder and Artistic Director of the Attis Theatre Company, "inspirator" of Theatre Olympics and Chairman of the International Committee of Theatre Olympics. His message will be published on March 27 on the organization's website, listed above.



Theodoros Terzopoulos

## Regionally Speaking

*In this edition of Regionally Speaking, we hear inspiring stories of resiliency and collaboration from community theatres in Massachusetts (AACT Region I). We also highlight the results of the Region I Community Theatre Festival.*

## Putting the "Community" in Community Theatre

Susan Harrington

In November, the Hovey Players of Waltham, faced an unexpected challenge when they lost their performance space just as they were set to open their production of *The Secretary*. Demonstrating the collaborative spirit of Region I, the Quannapowitt Players (QP) of Reading, stepped in and offered their venue, located 17 miles away. This act of generosity ensured the show could go on, highlighting the resilience and unity that defines our community theatre network.

Similarly, Acme Theater overcame its own crisis after losing its longtime performance home. Following an extensive 11-month search, Acme announced the opening of its new location in Weston. The theatre boasts a raised 30-by-30-foot proscenium stage, 8-foot-deep wings, a small fly space, backstage dressing rooms, a dedicated woodshop, a costume room, and audience seating for 130–150 people. The venue also features accessibility accommodations and ample parking, ensuring a welcoming experience for all. With renewed vigor, Acme declared, "New home—same Acme. It feels great to be back!"

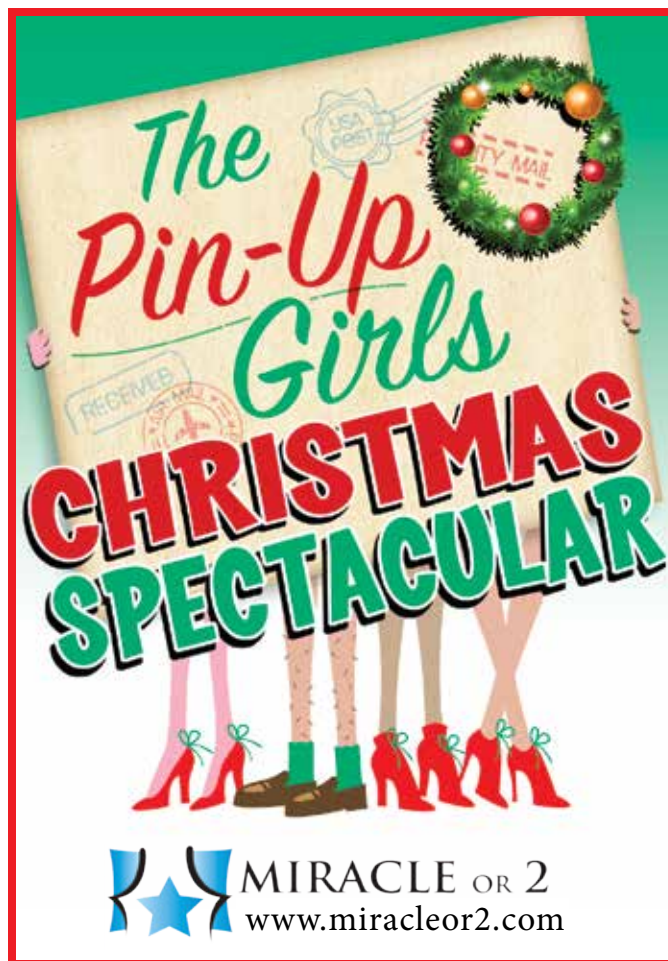
*Susan Harrington is a Massachusetts State contact and board member of the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre (EMACT) and other community theatres in the state. She is a theatre consultant and hosts Behind the Curtain with Susan Harrington, a podcast produced by Arlington Community Media, Inc. (ACMI), available on major podcast platforms.*

## Region I Moves On to AACTFest 2025

Region I has historically been the first to kick off the AACTFest cycle. Covering Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, the Region I Festival took place last September, in the charming town of Concord, New Hampshire. Three exceptional theatre groups represented their states:

- The Windham Actors Guild (Windham, New Hampshire) performed *The Yellow Boat*.
- The Quannapowitt Players (Reading, Massachusetts) presented *Time Stands Still*.
- The Burlington Players (Burlington, Massachusetts) showcased *Natural Shocks*.

Each group delivered outstanding performances, earning applause for their dedication and talent. Ultimately, the Windham Actors Guild was selected to represent Region I at the national festival in Des Moines, Iowa. Congratulations to them! Region I looks forward to cheering them on at AACTFest 2025, which takes place from June 25–28 in Des Moines, Iowa. Join us to celebrate the continued growth and vibrancy of community theatre. For more information, visit [aact.org/aactfest](http://aact.org/aactfest).





# Reducing Risk: Building an Effective Safety Committee

Presented by Adam Bell, Risk Control Specialist – Nonprofit + Human Services at Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. (a stock insurer)<sup>1</sup>

The success of any community theatre hinges not only on the talent and dedication of its participants, but also on the safety measures put in place. From the rehearsal room to the final curtain call, ensuring a safe environment is essential. Establishing a Safety Committee is a proactive way to manage risks and protect everyone involved.

Let's explore how you can form a Safety Committee that will effectively oversee and enhance safety practices in your theatre.

## 1. Representation from all levels of the organization.

To create a comprehensive approach to safety, it's essential to include representatives from all levels of your organization. Doing so provides diverse perspectives for consideration, which can help pinpoint and address a variety of risks and exposures. Your safety committee should include:

- **Board members**, who provide strategic oversight and ensure that your safety initiatives align with the overall goals and mission of the theatre. Their involvement underscores the importance of safety at the highest level of the organization and helps secure necessary resources for safety programs.
- **Directors and theatre staff**, who offer insights into production-specific risks. They are familiar with the demands of each production and can identify potential hazards related to set design, special effects, and stage movements. Their input is crucial for planning safe rehearsals and performances.
- **Technical crew**, who play a critical role in identifying hazards related to set construction, lighting, and sound equipment. They can provide practical solutions to mitigate risks such as electrical hazards, falling objects, and equipment malfunctions.
- **Performers**, who are on the front lines of on-stage safety. They can highlight concerns related to choreography, costume safety, sets, and the physical demands of their roles. Their feedback is essential for ensuring that all stage actions are performed safely and that emergency procedures are well understood.
- **Volunteers and front-of-house staff**, who address audience safety in the theatre, lobby, and other public spaces. They can identify risks related to crowd control, emergency exits, and the overall safety of the theatre environment for patrons. Their perspective ensures that the Safety Committee considers the entire theatre experience.
- **Guest speakers**: Consider inviting external guests to address a specific safety topic. This might include local law enforcement to discuss the threat of violence or vandalism, a fire marshal who can provide guidance on fire safety and evacuation procedures, or your insurance broker or carrier who can provide expertise on a variety of topics.

## 2. Regular meetings and focus areas.

Regular meetings are the backbone of an effective Safety Committee. These meetings should be scheduled consistently, whether monthly or quarterly, to maintain continuity and address any ongoing concerns. Key areas of focus for these meetings include:

- **Incident review**: Analyzing recent incidents is crucial for identifying root causes and preventing recurrence. The committee should review any accidents or near-misses, discuss what went wrong, and develop strategies to avoid similar incidents in the future. This process helps create a learning environment where safety is continuously improved.

- **Planning and inspections**: Conducting regular inspections of the theatre premises is essential for identifying and mitigating risks. The committee should focus on areas such as slips, trips, and falls, which are common hazards in theatres. Additionally, they should assess security issues, property damage, and fire hazards. Regular inspections overseen by the committee help ensure that safety measures are up to date and effective.
- **Safety training**: Planning and implementing training sessions for all members of the organization is vital. Training should cover safety protocols, emergency procedures, and the proper use of equipment. Regular training ensures that everyone is aware of their responsibilities and knows how to respond in case of an emergency. It also helps foster a culture of safety, where everyone is committed to maintaining a safe environment.

## 3. Detailed meeting minutes and inspection records.

Keeping detailed records of meeting minutes and inspections is vital for continuous improvement and accountability. These records serve multiple purposes:

- **Documentation**: Detailed documentation provides a historical record of safety discussions and decisions. This is valuable for tracking progress, identifying trends, and ensuring that safety initiatives are consistently applied over time.
- **Accountability**: Records ensure that assigned tasks and action items are tracked and completed. By documenting who is responsible for each task and setting deadlines, the committee can hold members accountable and ensure that safety improvements are implemented effectively.
- **Continuous improvement**: Using past records to identify trends and areas for improvement is a key benefit of a successful safety committee. By analyzing data from previous meetings and inspections, the committee can identify recurring issues and develop targeted strategies to address them. This proactive approach helps create a safer environment for everyone involved.

Creating a Safety Committee in your community theatre is more than just a procedural step—it's a commitment to the well-being of everyone involved. By fostering a culture of safety, you ensure that each production runs smoothly and that all participants can focus on what they do best: bringing stories to life. Ultimately, a proactive approach to safety not only prevents accidents—it builds trust and confidence within your entire theatre community.

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Adam Bell is a Risk Control Specialist in the Nonprofit + Human Services Center of Excellence at Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. (a stock insurer)<sup>1</sup>. He has nearly 25 years of nonprofit leadership experience, with knowledge in risk management, operations, program development, facility management, board relations, fundraising, customer service and more.

# From Community Theatre to Chicago and Wicked on Broadway

Lou Ursone

AACT Board of Directors and *Spotlight* Editorial Team

When a fifth grader curates and does musical direction for a school production during recess because there's no school musical (featuring songs from *Kiss of The Spider Woman*, *Show Boat* and *Mame*), odds are this young man is destined for a career in musical theatre. And so it goes with Dan Micciche, music director of *Wicked* on Broadway.



Dan Micciche

Born on Long Island, New York, but raised in Darien, Connecticut, from age 9, Micciche has reached heights in the theatre world that millions dream of each year. Not only is he a highly skilled and respected Broadway conductor and music director, but he began his Broadway career as the youngest actor to star as Mary Sunshine in the Tony Award winning revival of *Chicago*.

How did he get to where he is? He was nurtured by his local community theatre, where, he says, his experiences there “shaped me the most as a human being. Curtain Call [Stamford, Connecticut] gave me a place to be myself. They helped me develop leadership and people skills, and gave me the chance to hone my craft. They gave me opportunities to music-direct, play for rehearsals, and so much more.”

His first community theatre production there was *Mame*, “and it really made me feel like I had ‘made’ it... it felt like I was on Broadway,” he said. That was almost 30 years ago, and people in that production are still a part of his life.

What was it like to actually make his Broadway debut? “My first entrance as an actor in *Chicago* was through a hole in the onstage band stand,” he explains, “and I suddenly had that moment of ‘Oh my god’ ... and panic set in. And then it was as if a spirit just pushed me onto the stage. And, when I came off, I saw all the chorus girls and said... ‘I was just on Broadway!’”

This 2007 graduate of the Boston Conservatory said performing in *Chicago* was “everything I ever dreamed of. Playing in that amazing

historic theatre [The Schubert], knowing that Fred Astaire dressed in the same dressing room.”

He felt the same gratitude—the same nervous feeling—just before he raised his baton the first time with the *Wicked* Broadway orchestra.

Right after he graduated, he starred in the New York Musical Theatre Festival premiere of *Gemini, The Musical*, based on the hit 1970s comedy. Acknowledging that there is no real career path for a life in the arts, he took advantage of every opportunity he could, often making work for himself.

In between multiple contracts performing in *Chicago*, for example, Micciche began musical directing at regional theatres in Connecticut and Rhode Island. His first show was *Big River* in 2010, followed by *Carousel*, and then *9 to 5*. He was always coaching on the side, as well, and even created a cabaret show.

It was around that time that he had some great advice from Tony Award-winning composer Adam Guettel, who encouraged him to be a full-time music director, even though he was best known as an actor.

He had just signed on for another contract with *Chicago* when the call from the *Wicked* team came in, so he had to turn down that music-director opportunity. But he knew they would call again.

And that's where this bit of advice from Micciche comes in: “You have to be prepared for opportunities when they come your way. Practice and hone the skills you'll need. That's what I did for six months of

*continued on page 42 ▶*



Micciche was the youngest actor to star as Mary Sunshine in the Tony Award winning revival of *Chicago*

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touring with *Chicago*—I practiced the *Wicked* score every day, because I knew I needed to be prepared when they did call again.”

Obviously, he learned it well, because *Wicked* composer Stephen Schwartz said, “Dan Micciche is a wonderful musician and teacher, and as diligent a musical director as you can find. I know I can always rely on him to maintain the music and sound of *Wicked* so that it stays as fresh as the day the show opened.”



*Doing pre-recording for the Wicked movie, with Stephen Schwartz at the Power Station recording studio*

What advice does Micciche have for fellow artists? “Learn about all the departments that make up a major production—and appreciate what each team member does,” he said. And, as noted before, “Be prepared.”

“As a sixth grader on Adderall I felt like a zombie. I begged my parents to let me audition for *Fiddler on the Roof*. They agreed that if I did the show and kept my grades up, I could kick the drugs, and I never took that stuff again,” he said.

Looking back at the determination of that fifth and sixth grader, it’s no wonder that in addition to all the work we’ve mentioned, one of

Dan’s most exciting recent projects was spending three days at the historic Power Station recording studio in New York City, doing pre-recordings for the *Wicked* movie—“with Stephen Schwartz looking over my shoulder,” Micciche said.

Community theatre played a big part in his early development, and he remains grateful to this day.

“The friends I made there are still my best friends today,” he said.

To which we add, “Long live community theatre!”



*Conducting the 20th anniversary performance of Wicked on Broadway*



*Lou Ursone is the Executive Director of Curtain Call, Inc. in Stamford, Connecticut, a member of the AACT Board of Directors, and serves on the Spotlight Editorial Team.*

## Advocacy Matters

Lou Ursone

AACT Board of Directors and *Spotlight* Editorial Team

A new year, a new administration, a new congress—how do we navigate these uncharted waters?

The answer: Keep doing what we’ve been doing. Just as development (fundraising) takes time to nurture and grow relationships, so does advocacy. We have to find and nurture our supporters at all levels.

Start local. Be sure that all your local representatives are on your mailing list. Forget about political affiliations—focus on building relationships with your local leaders.

Those local leaders usually have relationships at the state level, so nurture and work those channels, as well. Eventually, bridge those relationships to work your federal legislators. They all have one thing in common: they listen when large numbers of voters reach out to them on a specific issue.

We all know who the biggest fans are (patrons/donors). Talk to them in the lobby, through newsletters, etc., and let them know you need their voices to reach legislators. Talk to them and find out who they know legislatively, and encourage them to speak to those leaders on behalf of your theatre. I’ve mentioned this here before, but still think it’s the most positive pyramid scheme ever created.

Granted, this takes work. And it takes time. But we all have great volunteers who help us—who’d love to help us. They will rally for us.

### How we can help each other:

Please write me at [Lou@curtaincallinc.com](mailto:Lou@curtaincallinc.com) and let me know how you are advocating for the arts to your local, state, and federal leaders. Any clever projects? Any major stonewalls you’ve come up against? Sharing those ideas here is one way that AACT can continue to help theatres thrive. (And, if you do something really fun for fundraising in conjunction with World Theatre Day in March, let me know about that, too. We’ll share it for next year’s celebration.)

**Joe Simonelli**

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For more information visit [joesimonelli.net](http://joesimonelli.net)



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*Audience members say...*

"An iconic story with a delightful twist."

"Fabulous rendition of a classic! Loved it!"

"Truly entertaining - highly recommend it."

**Visit [thespiritsofchristmas.com](https://thespiritsofchristmas.com)**  
**or scan the QR code to read the free**  
**script preview and for more information!**



A Christmas Carol  
 The Spirits Of Christmas  
 By Stephanie and Larry Johnson  
 Adapted from "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens  
 Licensed through Ellis Jay Theatricals

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# AACT Corporate Partners

Much of the work of the American Association of Community Theatre would not be possible without the generous support of our Corporate Partners, who are listed below. We thank each of them for their commitment to AACT—and to the work of community theatres everywhere.

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Dramatic Publishing

## Support Theatre in America

Become an AACT Corporate Partner! For information, visit [aact.org/partner](http://aact.org/partner).

# Resource Center: Strategic Planning & More

Stephen Peithman

Running a theatre often requires staying up to date on trends, tools, and best practices on everything from technology and social media to marketing and fundraising.

We've rounded up some helpful online resources we think are worth consulting as you set—or optimize—your organization's strategic planning for the months ahead.

In addition to the websites below, AACT members have access to the AACT Resource Library, with articles on a wide range of topics, including management, boards, fundraising and grants, marketing, and volunteers. Recent additions include "Using Copyrighted Music & Other Third-Party Intellectual Property," "Defying Gravity – NEA Conversations with Leaders from Nonprofit Theater," "Strategic Planning in Nonprofits (SPiN)," and "Fiscal Policies & Procedures: A Template and Guide." [[aact.org/resource-library](http://aact.org/resource-library)]

**SMU DataArts** is a valuable resource for organizations seeking grants, tracking their progress, enhancing decision-making, and strengthening their case to stakeholders. The DataArts website offers analytic reports, training and support, cultural data networks (data-driven arts professionals in your region), the Cultural Data Profile, various surveys, and the Arts Vibrancy Index Report & Map for every county in the U.S. [[culturaldata.org](http://culturaldata.org)]

**NonprofitReady.org** offers over a wide array of free (yes, free) learning opportunities on fundraising, grant writing, leadership, governance, accounting and finance, operations, marketing and communications, volunteer engagement, and program management. These include online courses, certificate programs, videos, and how-to guides. [[nonprofitready.org](http://nonprofitready.org)]

**The NonProfit Times.** This publication's website is a popular resource for best practices on how to manage an organization. Articles and reports focus on finance, human resources, grants, technology, legal issues, accounting, management, and fundraising. [[thenonprofittimes.com](http://thenonprofittimes.com)]

**The Nonprofit Technology Network** brings together nonprofit staff, board, volunteers, funders, consultants, and vendors seeking ways to use technology more effectively. Its website includes benchmarks and reports, webinars, and other learning experiences. Check out *Tech Accelerate*, a free assessment tool to evaluate your organization's technology, practices, and policies in four areas: engagement, infrastructure, leadership, organization policies and practices. [[nten.org](http://nten.org)]

**Classy Blog.** The blog (part of the GoFundMe website) offers everything from technology trends and industry insights to fundraising and marketing. Recent topics include enhancing donor engagement, as well as online, peer-to-peer, event, and crowdfunding strategies. Free downloadable guides, webinars, and case studies are also available. Subscribe to the blog for the latest fundraising tips, trends, and ideas to be sent to your email inbox. [[classy.org/blog](http://classy.org/blog)]

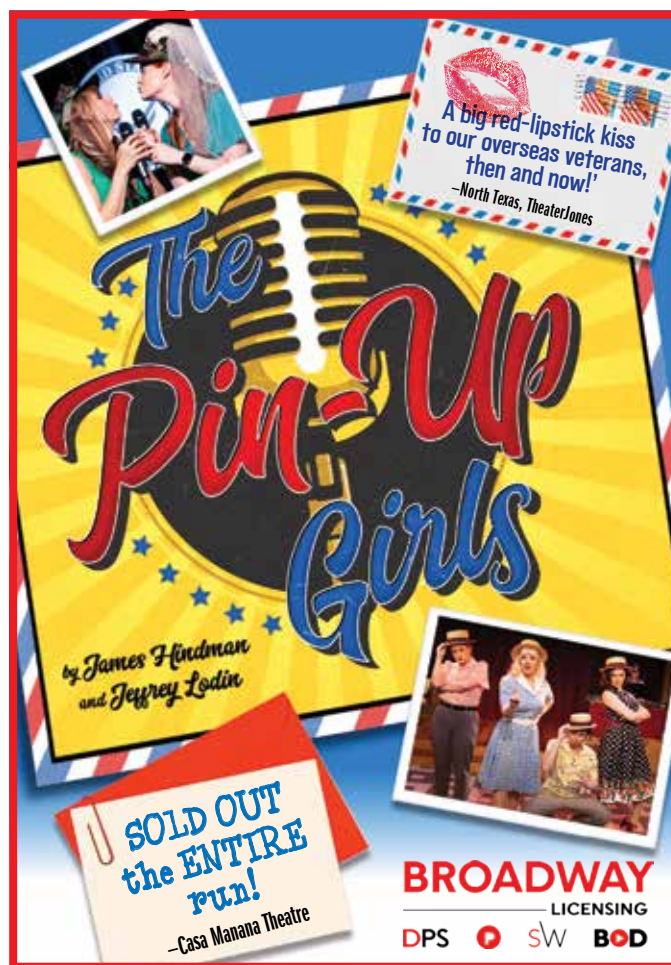
**Philanthropy News Digest.** This news service from Candid provides a digest of philanthropy-related articles and features culled from print and electronic media outlets nationwide. Each item includes a citation for the original source, so you can follow up for more information. The website also publishes current funding opportunities offered by foundations or other grant-makers. Create a free account to receive news and alerts via email. [[philanthropynewsdigest.org](http://philanthropynewsdigest.org)]

**The Fundraising Authority** offers a range of articles on fundraising, direct-mail tactics, and donor cultivation. Recent topics include "Who Qualifies as a Major Donor Prospect," "The 5 Rules of Successful Annual Appeal Fundraising Letters," and "Avoid Giving Tuesday." You can also sign up for the free weekly newsletter. [[thefundraisingauthority.com](http://thefundraisingauthority.com)]

**Internal Revenue Service.** It might seem an obvious resource, but many people aren't aware of the amount of helpful information to be found on the Charities and Nonprofits pages of the IRS website. Topics range from incorporating your nonprofit as a 501(c)(3) and handling donations, to annual tax filing guidelines and forms. [[irs.gov/charities-and-nonprofits](http://irs.gov/charities-and-nonprofits)]

**Codes of Ethics/Values Statements.** The National Council of Nonprofits provides a comprehensive set of guidelines to help you develop your organization's code of ethics to demonstrate your commitment to transparency and accountability, ensuring that supporters feel confident in their financial and emotional investment in your theatre. [[councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit](http://councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit)]

**Volunteer Management.** Volunteer managers can take advantage of the comprehensive online library offered by Energize, Inc. Recent topics include the dollar value of volunteer time, as well as implementing risk management policies to protect those who contribute their time and skills to your organization. [[energizeinc.com/a-z](http://energizeinc.com/a-z)]





# Calendar of Events

Dates	Event	St	City	Phone	Web Site
<b>March 1-2</b>	Illinois State Festival	IL	Buffalo Grove	312-340-9044	illinoistheatre.org/Community-Theatre
<b>March 7-9</b>	Indiana State Festival	IN	Goshen	574-312-3701	
<b>March 7-9</b>	Minnesota State Festival	MN	Duluth	612-598-4782	mn-act.net
<b>March 7-9</b>	Iowa State Festival	IA	Forest City	515-314-6280	bomanfineartscenter.org
<b>March 7-9</b>	Pennsylvania State Festival	PA	Gettysburg		
<b>March 12-16</b>	Texas State Festival	TX	Victoria	817-731-2238	Texas theatres.org
<b>March 19-23</b>	Region IV Festival	MD	Baltimore		
<b>March 20-22</b>	Oklahoma State Festival	OK	Enid	580-225-1941	oktheatre.org
<b>March 21-23</b>	Kansas State Festival	KS	Lawrence	785-843-7469	theatre.lawrence.com
<b>March 21-23</b>	Region III Festival	MI	Owosso	989-723-4003	lebowskycenter.com
<b>March 27-29</b>	Region IX Festival	ID	Boise	208-861-8839	idahoact.wordpress.com
<b>April 4-6</b>	Region V Festival	IA	Newton	641-792-1230	
<b>April 10-13</b>	Region VI Festival	NM	Hobbs	817-731-2238	
<b>April 14-16</b>	Region II Festival	DE	Wilmington	302-685-1353	
<b>April 26</b>	AACT Adjudication Seminar	virtual		817-732-3177	aact.org/adjudication25

## Advertisers

<i>BINGO The Winning Musical</i> .....	26
BSK Creative Consulting .....	16
Buddy Worldwide Ltd. <i>Buddy -The Buddy Holly Story</i> .....	21
Peter Colley <i>I'll Be Back Before Midnight</i> .....	36
Concord Theatricals <i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> .....	5
Disney Theatrical Group <i>Dare to Dream JR.</i> .....	13
William Missouri Downs <i>Asking Strangers the Meaning of Life</i> .....	22
Dramatic Publishing <i>Swing State</i> .....	19
Ellis Jay Theatricals <i>A Christmas Carol - Spirits of Christmas</i> .....	43
Gateway Set Rentals .....	25
Heuer Publishing <i>Snow White</i> .....	2
Historical Emporium .....	34
International Authors Society .....	36
Luigi Jannuzzi <i>A Crazy Little Café Called Love</i> .....	17
<i>Liberty Calls</i> .....	24
McGee Entertainment <i>Grits the Musical</i> .....	35
Miracle or 2 Productions <i>The Pin Up Girls</i> .....	45
Miracle or 2 Productions <i>The Pin Up Girls Christmas Spectacular...</i>	39
Miracle or 2 Productions <i>Popcorn Falls</i> .....	23

<i>Mr Bennet's Bride</i> .....	32
MTI <i>Between the Lines</i> .....	6
Pioneer Drama Service <i>Murder Mysteries</i> .....	33
Pioneer Drama Service <i>The Rainbow Fish Musical</i> .....	3
Playhouse Printers .....	12
<i>Redneck Country Wedding</i> .....	38
Joe Simonelli Plays .....	42
Summerwind Productions .....	29
Theatrical Rights Worldwide .....	27
Theatrical Rights Worldwide <i>The Hello Girls, Paint Night</i> .....	10
TLC Scripts .....	28
TLC Scripts <i>Dancer</i> .....	31
TLC Scripts <i>Nora Swan</i> .....	47
TLC Scripts <i>Paddy O'Toole</i> .....	18
Tobins Lake Studios .....	37
Twisted Plays <i>Return of the Glass Slipper</i> .....	41
<i>Two Bits</i> .....	34
Uncle Ty-Rone .....	41

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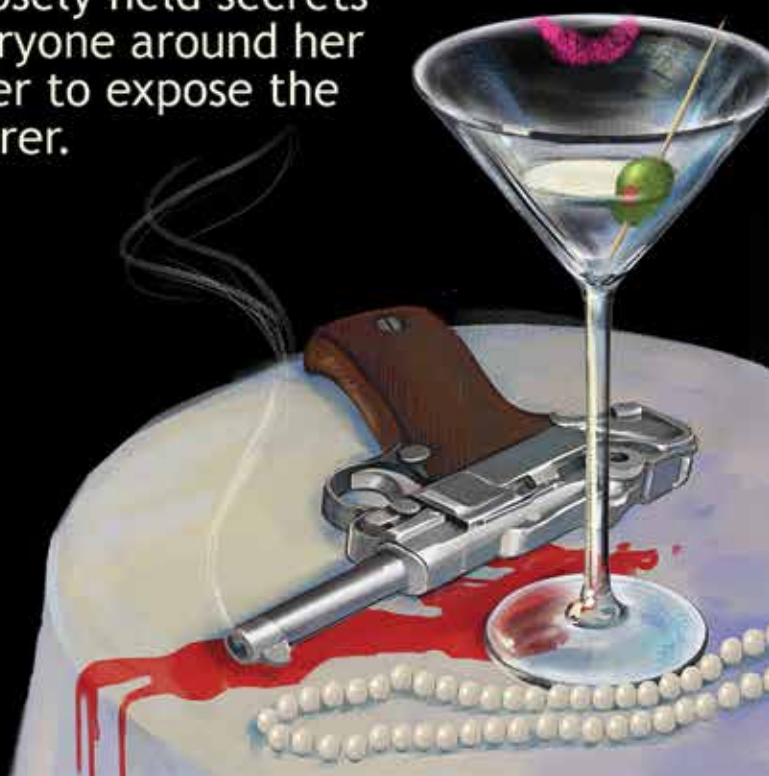


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