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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE SAUK PRODUCES AWARD-WINNING WORLD PREMIERE

The American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) is pleased to announce that The Sauk is producing the AACT NewPlayFest winning play, On Pine Knoll Street by Mark Cornell. The world premiere will open February 7 and run through February 16, 2020. Tickets are available at thesauk.org or by calling the box office at 517-849-9100.

In On Pine Knoll Street, Thelma, a colorful and quick-witted 87-year old woman, is battling with her memory. Her devoted daughter, Marilyn, with whom she now lives, is trying to make the best of the situation. Curtis, her neighbor, is a writer and stay-at-home father of a special-needs child. His wife, Kristie, struggles to balance family and work. When Marilyn asks Curtis to care for her mother and her beloved cats while she is at the beach, a friendship is set into motion that tethers two families. Set in a small town in North Carolina, On Pine Knoll Street is an intimate look at the joy and fragility of life, the meaning of home, and the things we do for love.

The Sauk is located at 240 E Chicago Street, Jonesville, Michigan. Started in 1961 as the "Broad Street Players," the organization purchased the former Jonesville Opera House in 1971 and converted it into what is now the Sauk Theatre. The Sauk, also known as Hillsdale Community Theatre, produces a five-show mainstage and a three-show SaukSeconds season and hosts both a local improvisational troupe and a professional Shakespeare company annually. Each summer, Plays-in-Development readings are produced; a program created in 2015 to give local playwrights an opportunity to workshop their plays. The program expanded nationally and, in 2018, internationally. New plays are also presented as part of the annual Sauk Shorts, an evening of 10-minute plays. In addition, local schools and a local children's theatre company use the theatre for their productions. An annual series of workshops is offered ranging in topics from stage combat, to improv, to understanding Shakespeare's texts.

Trinity Bird directs The Sauk's world premiere production of On Pine Knoll Street. The cast features Anne Conners, MJ Dulmage, Trinity Bird, Andrea Ortell, and Keegan Oxley. The production crew includes stage management by Allison Cleveland, dramaturgy by Kathy Pingel, scenic design by Bruce Crews, costume design by Roene Trevisan, lighting design by Tracy McCullough, sound design by Joella Hendrickson, properties design by Travis Blatchley, and set dressing by Cyndi Baldermann.
AACT NewPlayFest addresses the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences around the globe. This AACT playwriting competition is unique with the guarantee that an established theatre will produce each play as a world premiere, and that Dramatic Publishing Company will publish the script in an anthology of winning plays. Dramatic Publishing, one of the major licensors of plays and musicals in the United States and beyond, includes the winning plays in their catalog and licenses the performance rights.

Playwright Mark Cornell lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and has had more than 75 of his plays produced in theatres around the world. His plays include Sprucehaven B, Two Turtle Doves, All the Answers, Theater More Like Baseball, and The Other Half, which won the 2019 Getchell New Play Award. He has an MFA in English and Creative Writing from UCLA and is an ensemble member with Moonlight Stage Company in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is also partner with Paul Newell at Full Nelson Theater, and co-creator of Marked Men Films with Mark Jantzen. He has taken master classes with playwrights Jon Robin Baitz, Terrence McNally, Alan Ayckbourn, and Doug Wright. While at UCLA, he studied screenwriting with playwrights Jon Robin Baitz, Terrence McNally, Alan Ayckbourn, and Doug Wright. While at UCLA, he studied screenwriting with Lew Hunter, Richard Walter, Hal Ackerman, Oliver Stone, Ernest Lehman, and Ron Bass.

The AACT NewPlayFest world premiere production of On Pine Knoll Street by Mark Cornell at The Sauk is made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation, created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin Jack, who participated in theatre productions at Drew University in New Jersey and at a community theatre in Connecticut in his younger years. Mr. Lee was also an avid aficionado of theatre and had dabbled in playwriting. The family is pleased to honor both men through a lasting legacy promoting new works for theatre through AACT NewPlayFest.

AACT’s mission is to help theatres thrive by providing networking, resources, and support for America’s theatres. It represents the interests of thousands of theatres across the United States and its territories, as well as theatre companies with the U.S. Military Services overseas.

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Mark Cornell

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