

Annual Membership Meeting is Friday, April 8, 2011

The Eastern, Central and Western Regions will be connected by telephonic hookup for the Meeting in order that members in all Regions may be able to hear statements of candidates running for election to Council.

The statements will begin at 2:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) 1:30 p.m. (Central Time) and 11:30 a.m. (Western Time)

The meeting in the **EASTERN REGION** will convene at 2 p.m. in the Council Room on the 14th Floor of the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY

The agenda will also include the following:

- Presentation of the Rosetta LeNoire Award
 - Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the By-Laws
- A Sign Interpreter will be present on request. Equity's TDD telephone number—Telecommunications Device for the Deaf—is (212) 302-4306.*

The meeting in the **CENTRAL REGION** will convene at 1 p.m. in the Member Center on the 1st Floor of the Equity Building, 557 West Randolph, Chicago, IL

The agenda will also include the following:

- Report of the Central Regional Vice President
- Report of the Central Regional Director
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the By-Laws

The meeting in the **WESTERN REGION** will convene at 11 a.m. in the Bellamy Board Room on the 5th Floor of the Equity Office, 6755 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA

The agenda will also include:

- Report of the Western Regional Vice President
- Report of the Western Regional Director
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the By-Laws

Your Income Tax

Do You Dabble?

By Sandra Karas
VITA Site Coordinator

As it rears its ugly head every so often, the Hobby Loss Rule – as it is usually characterized – Section 183 of the Internal Revenue Code, has resurfaced in earnest of late. The IRS, an agency that regularly has to reinvent itself, or at least its methods of collecting

revenue, has been reviewing the forests of small businesses and independent contractors to see how much extra tax it can shake from the trees. So, woodland friends, let us review the Code and see who qualifies.

Internal Revenue Code §183 lays out several tests to delineate between ongoing, for-profit business people and dabblers or hobbyists. Both must report income from their ventures, less ordinary and necessary expenses. The chief difference is that the individuals and businesses that spend more than they bring in are restricted from doing so more than two years out of five. Those that report repeated losses are subject not only to this Code provision, but to strict penalties if they overstate expenses. If you don't know where you stand in this "business or hobby" minefield, here are the questions the IRS asks you to answer in making a determination. The parenthetical questions are mine:

• **Does the time and effort put into the activity indicate an intention to make a profit?** (Are you actively pursuing this in a professional manner?)

• **Do you depend on income from the activity?** (Are you earning your living – at least in

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Mary McColl, New Executive Director, Hits the Ground Running at Equity

Mary McColl joined Actors' Equity Association on Tuesday, January 18, 2011. Her first day was a Council meeting where she had the opportunity to observe Equity's democratic process at work. In her first official interview as the new Executive Director, Mary sat with Equity News to share some of her views. Here is the interview:

1) You began your career as a dancer. How does that experience influence your new role as Executive Director? Being a dancer, I always envisioned I would come to New York and work on Broadway. Here I am! Not exactly dancing in a big musical, but that experience – that desire – has informed all of the work I have done in my career. It certainly informs my position as the Executive Director. My love of performing is what has led me to work in arts administration because I understand what it's like to train, to be driven. That kind of training - that mindset - has been what has inspired me to work to ensure the best possible environment for performers.

2) You have a strong background in arts administration. Tell us a little about that and how it translates to being the Executive Director of a national performing arts



Mary McColl.

union. After I realized dance would not be my career, I worked in a variety of positions that actually taught me what it takes for a performing arts organization to be successful. I learned from the ground up. Those learning experiences allowed me to know every aspect of a production. So as I come on board as the Executive Director, I still consider myself

an arts administrator. I don't see the work I'll take on in leading this Union as all that different from what I have done in the past. The reality is I know there are business challenges for Equity similar to challenges faced by other performing arts businesses. There are artistic and work related challenges for both the membership and the staff. My background gives me a unique perspective on how to work to meet those challenges and make it better for our membership. We're in show business and I believe that the "show" part should always be joyful.

3) You joined the staff in January and have really "hit the ground running." In these few short weeks, what challenges do you see facing Equity? The change in the economy and how it impacts us - the Association, the life and work of the membership, our bargaining partners in their ability to employ us – is a very big challenge. We are looking at job opportunities, funding challenges for our bargaining partners and how that impacts our members. The Production and LORT contracts – two very important job generators – are going to be negotiated in the next twelve to fourteen months. Smaller contracts will be

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Council Approves Changes to Small Professional Theatre Contract

Members Surveyed to Determine Concerns

At its meeting of January 18, 2011, Council approved the joint recommendation of the Eastern, Central and Western Developing Theatre Committees for changes to the Small Professional Theatre Agreement (SPT) that will run through June 7, 2015. Highlights of the contract include a 3% increase in salaries in each year of the agreement; improvements in housing, including high speed internet access and more required information about the contents of the housing; a 1/6 tech week salary bump for Stage Managers; a minimum number of Chorus contracts in musicals; updates to the overtime rates; and a minimum guarantee of rehearsal for replacement Actors. Additionally, provisions relating to rehearsals, performances, consecutive productions, and the de-

termination of a theatre's category were added, reorganized or clarified to make the Rulebook a more accessible document. There are some expanded parameters in the area of media, too, including an increase in website footage from three minutes to five minutes and the allowance of footage on Equity-approved non-embeddable third-party hosting sites. Health payments increase slightly in the first two years of the agreement, with payments in the following three years to be determined.

The Small Professional Theatre Agreement is a promulgated contract that is utilized by theatres seating 349 or fewer that are not in office cities. Each Producer on an SPT negotiates individually with a Business Representative to

establish terms based on the Rulebook.

A survey was conducted in December 2009 in order to determine the needs of the membership working on this contract. More than 4,700 members were emailed, and 1,202 responded. "The large number of responses to the

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SPT Agreement

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survey was gratifying," said Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey. "From the results we now have a better picture of our members' current concerns and the areas in which they wish to see improvements."

The largest number of responses to the survey indicated that salary increases were important, but respondents also recognized the recent economic downturn and didn't want to see the theatres "hurt." The second highest number of requests were for more rehearsal time, which was addressed in the new agreement with the addition of a provision that permits a Producer to buy additional rehearsal hours under certain conditions.

For the period January 2007 through December 2009, 12,075 Equity contracts were issued by some 250 SPT theatres. Research by staff indicated that SPT has the third highest number of Equity workweeks (behind LORT and Production), the largest number of open companies per week (161) and the fourth highest earnings (behind Production, LORT and Disney World). SPT theatres' seating ranges from 49 to 349 with 172 as the median; average ticket prices range from free to \$50 with \$22.50 as the median.

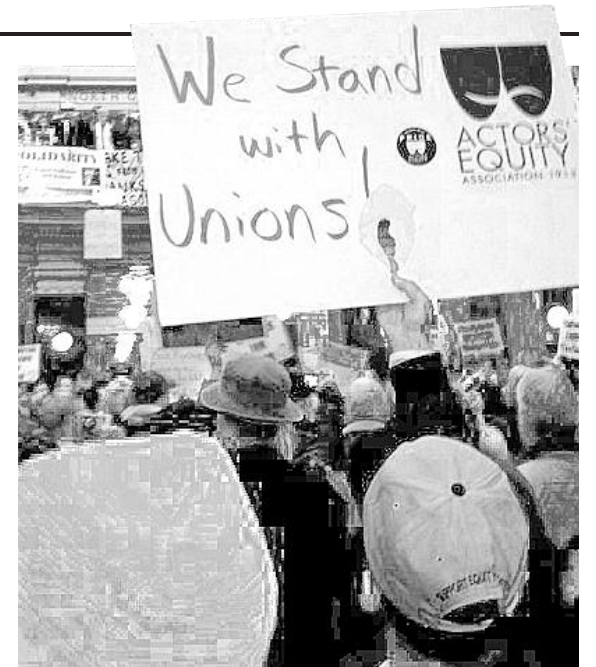
More than 60 Committee members from across the country were involved in the process of drafting these changes, along with more than 20 staff members, led by Chair Jeff Williams and Central Regional Director Kathryn Lamkey.

AEA Members Rally for Workers' Rights

In Madison, Wisconsin (photo, right) and New York City (left), AEA members demonstrate their support for the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers in Wisconsin and their legal right to be represented by a Union in that bargaining. See more photos at actorsequity.org.



(Photo: Stephanie Masucci)



(Photo: David Girolmo)

New MSUA Contract Features Salary Increases, Media Package

A new four-year Musical Stock/Unit Attraction (MSUA) Agreement featuring salary increases and a media package, has been approved by Council. The contract is used by Kansas City Starlight Theatre, the St. Louis Muny, Theatre of the Stars in Atlanta and Dallas Summer Musicals.

Equity's Chief Negotiator was Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey, assisted by Senior Business Representatives Christine Provost, Russell Lehrer and Business Reps Ann Gordon and Jeffrey Bateman.

The Negotiating Team was led by Vice Chair Wally Dunn and included Bill Bateman, David Girolmo, Greg Hirsch, Rebecca Kim Jordan, Mark David Kaplan and Sarah Marshall. Also assisting were Jeanne Lehman and Chair E. Faye Butler.

Salary increases of 1%, 2%, 2% and 3% over the next four years were achieved, as were increases in per diem, the non-touring Dance Captain increment, health, overtime, and all increments that are a percentage of minimum, since those amounts increase with the increase in minimum

salaries. Members will also see that the new agreement contains the addition of one day of unpaid bereavement leave, a direct deposit option for all employment, a 1/6 tech week bump for Stage Managers on Unit Tours, improved notification of cast changes when a Swing goes on, another day of preproduction for the 1st Assistant Stage Manager, stricter guidelines for costume fittings, and high speed internet access in Actor housing. "I am very pleased with the work of our team and the passion and spirit they brought to the discussion of all of the issues," said Ms. Lamkey.

The MSUA Agreement will now contain a media package, allowing for greater capture of footage to publicize and promote theatres' productions. For this package, Actors will receive, in addition to their salaries, no less than 2% of the prevailing Actor minimum each week, which may not be folded into overscale.

The MSUA Contract generated nearly 1,000 workweeks in the 2009-2010 season, with more than \$900,000 in earnings that year.

2011 Annual Election Calendar

Wednesday, March 9, 2011	Deadline for Candidates' Statements for Equity News, Equity Website and Ballot Brochure (Due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Time). Lottery for Ballot Placement (National Office).
Thursday, March 24, 2011	Deadline for registration to vote electronically. You must be paid up in dues through March 24 in order to receive a ballot.
Friday, April 8, 2011	Annual National Membership Meeting (All Regions via teleconference). Candidate Speeches.
Monday, April 11, 2011	Distribution of ballots (from balloting company).
Friday, May 20, 2011	Deadline for receipt of ballots.
Saturday, May 21, 2011	Tabulation Day.

Council Establishes New Committee

Council has recently voted to establish a Credentials Committee to address conflict of interest issues. The standing Committee is made up of three Councillors Emeritus appointed by the President and one representative elected annually from each Regional Board. The Committee, which will work in cooperation with Equity's legal counsel, is currently being chaired by Councillor Marjorie Horne and has met once to discuss its duties and procedures.

President Nick Wyman states, "Handling conflict of interest issues with good sense and discretion is the sign of a healthy organization. Our Constitution and By-Laws define what we mean by conflict of interest, and this Committee will be able to help implement the rules."

In addition to addressing questions of conflict, the Committee is authorized to develop new explanatory materials to help members understand their responsibilities.



ACTORS'
EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913

EQUITYNEWS

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Mary McColl

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negotiated in the near future and those are equally important. Another challenge is to make Equity a truly national Union. My goal is to reach out to all regions to create a viable relationship with each of our offices so that we can put into practice the best thinking to help our members. I also want to identify opportunities to help our future employers get on their feet in ways that Equity hasn't before - without decreasing our contracted terms and wages. I am moved to do what we can for our members and to add value

to their lives and their employment.

4) **What best practices will you seek to implement that will address these challenges?** By the time this interview goes to print, we will be in the Plenary. Over several days I will hear from Equity's elected leaders what they think is important. I intend to take that information and help devise a strategy and a set of best practices that will do three things: strengthen the Union, create the best possible working environment for our members, and give the staff the support they need to continue to do the incredible work they do on behalf of the membership.

Throughout all of it, one of the guiding factors will be respect for what this Union, its membership and staff stand for.

5) **How do you characterize your approach?** I think of myself as an honest straightforward communicator. First, because it's important to establish trust-filled relationships with the Officers and Council, and with the staff that reports to me. Likewise, it's important to have a solid relationship with our bargaining partners in our negotiations and in our day-to-day exchanges with them. I believe that this direct approach is the best way to achieve the best outcome for our members and for the

industry. I intend to work hard for our members and to do what I and the staff can to ensure a stable industry. That will translate into better careers and lives for our members and for a strong, viable Union.

I also want to mention the Centennial. I can't think of a more exciting time to join Actors' Equity Association than at its 100th Anniversary. This Union started because a few actors wanted to make changes to better the lives of every actor. We continue to do that every day. It's what this Union is all about. For me, as a performer at heart, I am excited to be part of Equity!

History is Being Made at the Geva Theatre Center: Authentic Casting in a Hit Regional Play

By Pearl Brady, Eastern Equal Employment Opportunity Business Representative

If you see a production of *Othello* or *Pacific Overtures*, it probably doesn't strike you as odd if you see an African American man playing the titular Shakespearean general or an Asian American cast singing the glorious Sondheim score. When it comes to characters who have disabilities, though, rarely are those performing the roles Actors with disabilities.

Not so in the Geva Theatre Center production of *Over the Tavern* in Rochester, NY. Tom Dudzick's autobiographical play about a working-class family in 1950s Buffalo has been a regional hit since its debut in 1994, but only now has one of its characters had his true essence unlocked.

One of the play's characters, Georgie, is based on Dudzick's brother, Michael, who was born with Down Syndrome. Never

he brings to the role of Georgie lifts the experience of all those around him. He's taught all of us so much about the daily life of the Pazinski's: their weariness and their passion. Georgie brings out the best in the family—he is a constant reminder of patience and joy. Andrew brings that to Georgie and, by extension, to all of us."

This will also mark the first time in the Equity collective memory that an Actor with Down Syndrome will be working under an Equity contract in a professional production.

For many decades, Equity has been at the forefront in fighting for diverse and inclusive casting. A particular challenge the Union has faced is in regard to the hiring of Performers with Disabilities, or PWDs. Though multi-racial casting has become an expectation of audiences nationwide, the same has not carried over as quickly for characters who use wheelchairs, have Down Syndrome, or have any number



Andrew Rondeau (l) with Forrest Gertin in *Over the Tavern* at the Geva Theatre Center. (Photo: Ken Huth)

before has the role been played by an Actor with a developmental disability, but when Skip Greer came on board to direct the Geva production, authentic casting was an easy choice. With the help of Assistant Director Susan Ware, a teacher of theatre and dance who has worked with people with developmental disabilities for over 25 years, Greer was able to find his ideal Georgie in 16-year-old singer-actor Andrew Rondeau.

"Andrew is a remarkable young actor," says Greer. "He is a very specific active listener, and brings a truth and heart to the role that has proven invaluable to the company. Andrew's generous spirit helped the acting ensemble forge the Pazinski's family dynamics. He's unforgettable, and the integrity

of disabilities.

Since 2008, AEA has been a leading supporter of the I AM PWD (Inclusion in the Arts and Media of People With Disabilities) campaign, a tri-union effort to see PWDs fully integrated into the American scene depicted on stage and screen.

Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg visited the production during rehearsals. "This is a groundbreaking casting choice," says Berg. "Actors with developmental disabilities have been almost entirely absent from our professional stages, and I'm thrilled to see Geva break this barrier. I think it will inspire other producers to more seriously consider hiring Actors with disabilities."

For more information: www.gevatheatre.org.

By Nick Wyman

In a dazzling scoop that has left the editors of the "National Enquirer" gnashing their teeth, I am prepared to blow the lid off the Skull-and-Bones-like secrecy of Actors' Equity governance: the Swiss bank accounts, the lavish bacchanals, the cult of personality, the marble statues of President Wyman,... sorry, I drifted off for a moment there, where was I? Oh, yes, the governance of AEA.

We have 75 Councillors and eight Officers. Almost all came from the NYC area until 20 years ago when National Representation divvied them up among the three regions according to percentage of membership. The Councillors in each region meet once a month as a Regional Board to discuss local issues and concession requests, and then the whole Council meets (via phone hookup) once a month to discuss national issues and policy.

Below this level of elected leadership meetings are 4,000 committees (well, 93, but it seems like 4,000). These committees (usually chaired by Councillors but most are open

From the
PRESIDENT

Things They Are A-Changin' at Equity

to any member within commuting distance of one of our three office cities) deal with budget, concession requests, develop contract proposals and make recommendations to the Regional Boards and Council.

But why, you ask (in that B-movie cliché way you have), am I telling all this to you, a perfectly indifferent AEA member? Because things are changing—you have a new Executive Director and a new President—and I want your input and your buy-in. Just as I suggested to you in my "Mastering the Business of Acting" column that you should know your strengths and plan for not just the next job, but the next five or ten years, your elected leaders need to assess AEA's strengths and plan our collective future.

We are gathering all the Officers, Councillors, non-Councillor Central Regional Board members and Area Liaisons together in a national conference in New York City this spring to discuss the big issues: how we provide member services, how we communicate with our members, how we handle public policy, and how we

administer contracts. To prepare for this, I have asked all of these folks to think about an AEA Mission Statement (What do we want to do?) and an AEA Vision Statement (Who do we want to be now? In five years? In ten?).

I am asking the same thing of you. If you have a good idea, send it to me (president@actorsequity.org). Regardless of whether you share your ideas, be thinking of your version of Equity's Mission and Vision when you look at the candidate statements in this spring's election, and vote for those candidates who reflect your vision (though take those promises to halve your dues and quadruple your job opportunities with a grain of salt). We are a very democratic Union: you get to vote for a significant portion of your leadership every year. You also get to join committees and place your hands on the wheels and gears of the Union's workings. I would welcome your participation and assistance in the tough job of attempting to make the tough job of our career a little easier.

Working Abroad: A Brief Primer

I've been asked to work in the United Kingdom or Australia. What should I do?

Call Actors' Equity Association directly. While we will need to speak to the Producer as well, don't assume that the Producer will contact us voluntarily. Also, don't assume that everything is fine just because the Producer tells you it is.

What union covers this work?

The union in the United Kingdom is known simply as Equity. In Australia, the appropriate union is the Media and Entertainment Arts Alliance, or MEAA. Occasionally, Actors' Equity may cover overseas work if it originates in this country. For questions about the specifics of work under these contracts, you should contact the appropriate union.

Who will take care of me while I'm overseas?

Your first resource should always be the union covering the work.

My agent is negotiating on my behalf, the Producer is offering a good salary and housing, and I will be on a

union contract – so why should I involve Actors' Equity?

Actors' Equity will make sure that the compensation meets appropriate minimums – more like what you're used to here. Additionally, under some agreements, you may be able to receive Health, Pension or 401(k) contributions. Finally, if there are outstanding issues when you get home, Equity can facilitate the resolution of those issues with the hosting union.

I can get Equity/League pension and health benefits on an Equity contract overseas, right?

Unless there is an agreement in place between the Producer and Actors' Equity Association that covers the engagement, benefits cannot be paid on your behalf.

I'll be working in Canada. Which union should cover the work – Canadian Actors' Equity, or Actors' Equity Association?

It depends on the circumstances – call Actors' Equity to find out. If you are traveling with a show that is already on AEA contract, the

Producer will handle the arrangements. If you are going as an individual to appear in a show on a CAEA contract, you should contact Canadian Actors' Equity, but always feel free to contact us if you still have questions.

Will I have to join another union? Will I have to pay dues to both unions?

For questions about joining, you should contact the union that will be covering the work and your dues will be paid to that union. If you will be out of the country for a significant period of time, you can call Actors' Equity's Membership Department to find out if you are eligible to temporarily freeze your dues obligations.

Where, if at all, will I pay taxes on my overseas income?

In general, you will be liable for taxes in both countries, but you should consult a tax professional before committing to the engagement.

For more information, contact Flora Stamatiades, Equity's National Director, Organizing & Special Projects, (212) 869-8530, ext. 419.

Eastern Region**Small Professional Theatre Reclaims Three-Acre Site in St. Petersburg, FL**

Originally the site of the Second Church of Christ Scientist, the three-acre property is now the home of freeFall Theatre, operating under Equity's Small Professional Theatre Agreement and one of two theatres in St. Petersburg, Florida to produce Equity theatre year-round.

"As soon as we saw the space in November 2009, we knew that our vision—to offer authentic and daring drama unlike anything else in our region—would find a home here," said Kevin Lane, Producing Director and co-founder of the theatre with Eric Davis, who serves as Artistic Director.

The property offers a 150-seat studio theatre, which has been completely renovated by freeFall, as well as a 300-seat traditional sanctuary space and an ample education center (formerly the Christian Science Reading Room). "We've really focused on a rich audience experience," notes Mr. Lane. "We've installed museum windows in our outdoor lobby; we've tripled our women's lavatories; we've ensured

comfortable and easy access to all services; and we have retained 160 parking spaces while beautifying the complete lot."

"The first night we stood on the newly renovated stage of a brand new theatre, raised our hands and sang, 'Gods of the theatre, smile on us,' is a moment none of us will ever forget," says Becca McCoy, an Equity member appearing in freeFall's first production, *The Frogs* (music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, adapted from Aristophanes by Bert Shevelove and more freely adapted by Nathan Lane), and wife of freeFall Theatre's Technical Director, Thaddeus Engle. "As we watch so many of our cherished theatrical institutions close their doors, it is thrilling to see one open theirs, especially with such a focused vision and integrity," she adds.

freeFall opened its door on February 4, 2011. As part of the opening festivities, there was a reception on February 15 with Mayor Bill Foster, featuring welcoming remarks from community leaders.

**Central Region****Stages St. Louis Celebrates 25th Anniversary**

Stages St. Louis opened in 1987 with a staff of eight part-time employees, a season of 24 performances, a budget of \$50,000, an acting company of seven and an audience of 3,000. Today, it boasts of 25 full-time staff members, 124 performances each season, a budget of \$3.7 million, an acting company of more than 50 and

an audience of over 47,000, and in 2010, the theatre provided 320 workweeks for Equity members. In its 25-year history Stages has mounted 82 productions for over 2,600 performances and played to audiences numbering more than 800,000.

Along the way, it has received 20 Kevin Kline Awards, including three awards for Outstanding Production of a Musical.

Ben Nordstrom, an Equity member who works with Stages frequently, says: "It's been an honor and such a pleasure to be a part of Stages' incredible journey. Stages has helped to create a wonderful family here in St. Louis. I know that all of my many brothers and sisters join me in raising a glass to Michael [Hamilton, Artistic Director], Jack [Lane, Executive Producer], Ron [Gibbs, Managing Director] and everyone to say Happy 25th



Ben Nordstrom and Brandi Wooten perform at Stages St. Louis.

Anniversary."

Stages, a not-for-profit company, has outgrown its present home and is in the midst of a capital campaign to build The Stages St. Louis Performing Arts Center and Academy. Plans call for a 730-seat main stage theatre, a 200-seat second stage and expansion room for a future 299-seat theatre. The theatre has a gloried past and a bright future.

Western Region**A Win-Win Situation in Southern California**

The MainStreet Theatre Company, a resident Equity Theatre For Young Audiences Company at the Lewis Family Playhouse in Rancho Cucamonga, California, draws its talent from the Southern California area while introducing children to the wonder of live theatre. It's a win-win situation.

"Many TYA companies tour," says Equity member Michael Faulkner, who played Mr. Salt in MainStreet's recent production of *The Gingerbread Man*. "At the MainStreet Theatre Company, they bring 536 kids to the theatre twice a day, teaching future generations that the theatre is a community event. And for us actors, there is no more rewarding experience than 536 laughing, screaming kids."

School children come from a 40 mile+ radius to morning performances during the week, and family audiences fill out the



In MainStreet's production of *Treasure Island* are (l to r) Larry Reinhardt-Meyer, Jeremy Lelliott, Andrew Ross Wynn, Mark McCracken, Michael Manuel and Matthew Henerson.

nine show a week schedule on the weekends at the City-owned and-operated venue. They've produced 14 shows to date, mostly based on children's literature.

The company's first show was *Miss Nelson is Missing!* by Jeffrey Hatcher, directed by Mark Rucker. Other productions have included the U.S. premiere of *Dreams of Anne Frank* by British author Bernard Kops, and the Los Angeles area premiere of *The Gingerbread Man* by David Wood. The 2010/2011 season will end with *Anne of Green Gables*, with music by Nancy Ford and book and lyrics by Gretchen Cryer. "TYA contracts sometimes have a stigma about them as being less than other contracts," says

Equity member Gary Lamb. "But I was in awe of the production values of the shows that I'd seen here and made it my mission to get cast. It's been one of the best overall experiences in my 30 years of live theatre."

"We're pretty

proud of the fact that we continually produce top-notch productions using a union contract and have done so since the day we opened our doors five years ago," says producer (and Equity member) Mireya (Murry) Hepner. "We are giving thousands of kids their first taste of live, professional theatre, and as a producer I take that responsibility extremely seriously. As a former stage manager, I also understand first hand the value we get by using union members in our productions, and I know that our performers are a huge part of helping us nurture our audiences, who are the artists—and perhaps the artists—of the future."



Participating in the ribbon cutting for the new freeFall Theatre are (beginning fourth from l in front) Artistic Director Eric Davis, Producing Director Kevin Lane, Mayor Bill Foster and Executive Director Emilie Kuperman. (Photo: Barry Dingman)

A Look Back@Equity Milestones**75 Years Ago
March 1936**

- Faced with a growing number of "amateur theatres" using professional actors without paying for their services, Council on March 3 rules that "when an amateur theatre wishes to engage Equity members as actors, it must report to the nearest Equity office and satisfy that office that it is a non-profit... Such theatres will be placed in a special permitted classification by the Equity office. Equity members who work at theatres in this classification are to be paid at least the Equity minimum." According to an Editorial in the Equity publication of March 1936: "There was nothing in the Council resolution, or in its mind, to prohibit the actor from obtaining more than the minimum salaries, but it is not willing that they should work

for less" and "all theatres other than those in this permitted classification must remain either entirely amateur or be completely professional."

- On March 31, Council adopts the first contract covering summer stock. Salaries, room and board rates, regulation of a summer stock season and classification of theatres are covered in the agreement.

**50 Years Ago
March 1961**

- The Equity Library Theatre Children's Theatre, a paid employment project of Equity's showcase theatre group, has three shows available for bookings, employing 30 Equity members.

- Equity lists nearly 150 summer theatres—dramatic and musical—that have posted bonds for the upcoming season.

**25 Years Ago
March 1986**

- The landmarking of Broadway theatres is a hot issue. Gerald Schoenfeld, Chairman of The Shubert organization is against it; Jack Goldstein, then director of Save The Theatres, Inc. (an outgrowth of Equity) and currently Equity's Director of Governance Policy and Support, presents the argument in favor. (The Neil

Simon, Ambassador and Virginia (now the August Wilson) theatres are landmarked in December of that year. All but three of the remaining Broadway theatres follow suit.)

- Equity joins with AFTRA and SAG in a rally organized by the AFL-CIO to protest South Africa's policy of apartheid.

- The Trustees of the Equity-League Pension and Welfare Fund approve a change in name from "Welfare" to "Health" Fund.

**10 Years Ago
March 2001**

- Equity executives and staff meet with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to discuss the alien advisory process—specifically, poor communication, inconsistent rulings and enforcements problems. The current regulations, Equity contends, can lead to a loss of employment for American actors.

Women are Unsinkable

(A Women's History Month Feature)

By Deborah Jean Templin

A production is like a building, you have to prepare the plans, lay down the base and from there you can build it up. But first you have to have a great subject and strong motivation. Here's how I became the architect of my own production.

While covering seven roles in the national tour of Stone/Yeston's Tony Award winning musical *Titanic* from 1998 to 2000, I experienced being in the shoes of survivors. I knew the lines, lyrics, blocking and choreography, but beyond the script I was performing, there was more I needed to discover about the women I was portraying. My research took me to the Astor Cottage in Newport, the Widener Library at Harvard and Molly Brown's home in Denver, as well as to the nation's public libraries. I looked, I felt, I read, I took notes, I absorbed.

The next stage was the writing, or the beginning of it. Each morning I would do three

pages, about a character or set of characters. Eventually these notes led to monologues with a particular point of view. Gradually it became clear—there would be nine different women in nine scenes. My show, *Unsinkable Women*, was beginning to take shape.

The mentors in my work included the late Walter Lord. There are *Titanic* and movie

buffs who consider *A Night to Remember* (based on Walter's bestselling book of the same name) as the most accurate of all of the many film versions, including the Clifton Webb-Barbara Stanwyck *Titanic* and James Cameron's blockbuster of 1997. I was having trouble finding information on third class passengers who survived. Walter said, "Use your imagination," and I came up with the idea of the character of "Nora." She would be a performer, and a friend of Wallace Hartley, Bandmaster of the *Titanic* Orchestra—just a

woman of a certain age looking for gainful employment traveling in steerage. I took all the facts I had gathered and did precisely what Walter suggested. Suddenly Nora, a cockney vaudevillian, was born. Of the nine characters in the play, seven are real people including Margaret Tobin Brown (the Unsinkable Molly herself), the heiress Madeleine Astor and Ship Stewardess Violet Jessop. My journey started at the York Theatre Company in New York in 2000 when Jim Morgan invited me to be part of their developmental musical series.

The production, *Unsinkable Women: Stories and Songs from the Titanic*, has since been performed in conjunction with women's health fairs and as a fund raising tool for libraries and local charities, such as domestic abuse shelters, throughout the country. At the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, the production, directed by Nancy

contract and I listened and took note. At that time I had ten weeks' work performing in summer stock and needed two more to qualify for health insurance. Putting my program under the Memorandum of Understanding enabled me to get the two weeks of employment I needed which, added to the ten weeks I had, gave me the requisite 12 weeks and six months of health insurance.

The important thing was to get the work itself and the task was not easy in this economy. I had to have a realistic business plan and know my own limits—both physically and mentally. As a self-produced artist I wear many hats. I have taken computer training classes at The Actors Fund and its Actors Work Program, as well as seeking the counsel of retired business people through SCORE (an organization providing free business counseling, mentoring, and training for small businesses), attended Arts Presenter Conferences throughout the country and learned the basics of email marketing.

As a performer, your objective is to tell the story. As a business person you have to make sure all the elements are in place to tell that story well. The professionals on the staff of Actors' Equity have helped me to understand the need for a paymaster and liability insurance.

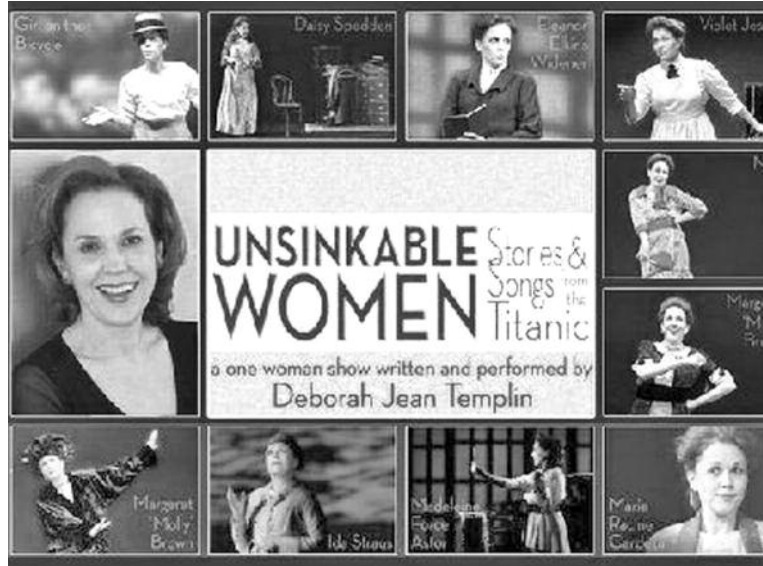
I look forward to bringing *Unsinkable Women* to new audiences this season and for the 100th anniversary of the *Titanic* in 2012. My advice: if you're thinking about creating your own show, choose a subject you love, have a good story to tell, and know that your union is there to help you.

(Deborah Jean Templin has



Deborah Jean Templin as "Nora" in *Unsinkable Women*.

been a member of Equity, AFTRA and SAG since 1977. She has been in five National Tours (*Annie*, *Baby*, *The Passion of Dracula*, *Titanic* and *Mamma Mia!*) and has performed in regional theatre and stock. She is a recipient of Philadelphia's Barrymore Award for Best Actress in a Musical and the Richard Burton Award in Acting from the Los Angeles Arts Council.)



Deborah Jean Templin and her cast of characters.

New Members in New Works

By Sean Grady

"Script is the kind of word that sounds edible," my mother has said, "like you can bite right into it." Growing up in a performing family, my mother an actress and my father a ballet dancer, I have always been surrounded by constructive, artistic situations. Eventually, new works were something I was drawn to like a raccoon to the shiny objects in the rubble.

New works are indeed shiny: new, fresh and untouched by another actor's stamp. This is the kind of script that is most biteable—not some revival of *The King and I* with Yul Brynner expectations. No, we are performing a show that has not been interpreted by actors before. It is an artistically appetizing opportunity for any actor.

However, it is important to keep your business hat on as you splash around in your new character's colors. Know your rights and demand your rights. As Equity members, it is imperative that we have a contract or agreement signed and read thoroughly before we begin rehearsals. It is perfectly fine to sit at a friend's house and read the second draft of their script over coffee without doing this, but if you are in a rented studio with an invited audience, you should probably know better.

"Why is this important?" you might ask. One reason—artistic integrity. You yourself have helped shape this show. In the two original musicals I was part of, I was the first actor to speak some lines and sing some songs, giving the writers a clearer idea of who

these characters are in the flesh, not abstract. The first was on a BAT (Bay Area Theatre) contract, and the show was performed in San Francisco and in Sacramento. A "right of first refusal," or the option for the actor to join the company for a subsequent production before the show's owners option a third party, is typical in this situation.

But, when the show moved to



Sean Grady.

New York for a reading, I found this was not the case. The producer only retained one original cast member; according to the contract at that time, he had no legal binding to offer the rest of us our original roles. (At the time of this writing, due to my and my other cast mates' feedback on the BAT contract survey, the BAT contract has been re-negotiated. As a result of that important feedback that loophole has been closed.)

Frustrated, especially since the show's writer found one of my West-Texan line readings so funny that he had asked me to recite it at parties, I still let it go. However, having vested interest as a dance captain and keeper of the show's bible, I learned my lesson. At the very least the producers should have offered me the op-

portunity to audition, which didn't happen for me or my original cast mates.

When cast in my next new work, produced under a New York Showcase Code, I did my homework due to my previous lesson learned. I confirmed that there was a clause of first rights refusal. A regional theatre in Northern California subsequently produced the show. When hearing this, I contacted the show's writers, expressing my interest. I was told that they were "going ethnic" with my role. I was confused. I had played the role; there was nothing in the script to specify him to be of any particular ethnic origin. When I responded with this, I did not receive a message back. Ultimately, because I had signed the Code, Equity was able to pursue a claim against the theatre and made sure that I got the appropriate buy-out.

In the end, it seemed that the show's creators had already offered the role to another actor. However, due to my staying business-minded, I ended up with several weeks of pay for the production that I was completely entitled to. It was payment for helping create; my character, only referred to as "Man 1" with little back story, was now much more defined and specific, and would not have been had I not been part of the New York premiere.

It's nice to leave your stamp on a role; the bite you took out of that crisp script tastes twice as good.

Sean Grady joined Equity in 2005 and currently lives in New York City. You can follow him on twitter @ActorSeanGrady.

The Memorandum of Understanding works for Stage Managers, too. Councillor Marjorie Horne writes: "A few years ago I found myself working as a Stage Manager exclusively in business theatre: galas, business conferences, awards presentations, etc. I also found myself working without any AEA contracts and, thus, not receiving any health coverage, contributions towards my pension or establishing a basis for unemployment claims. I started using the Memorandum of Understanding when it first became available. I have a few jobs that are yearly contracts and am able to work with the producers to sign the Memorandum and make my checks out to my Paymaster. I have been using the Memorandum for about four years now and I am able to have six months of health care each year, apply for unemployment and I am also building up my pension."

Robillard with musical direction by C. Colby Sachs, ran for a month to sold out houses. At Open Stage of Harrisburg, the show was used as a tribute for a local supporter of the arts. Audiences as diverse as Senior Citizen residences to elementary school children have enjoyed not only the performance, but the Q&A following. With the input of teachers in schools from Ketchikan, Alaska to Louise, Virginia, study guides have been created.

While serving on the Nominating Committee for Actors' Equity I became aware of the use of the Memorandum of Understanding, a component of the Business Theatre and Events Contract. Several members of the Committee had used the new

Your Income Tax

Continued from page 1

part – from this business or profession?)

• **Have you changed methods of operation to improve profitability?** (Have you assessed what works and what doesn't, focusing on the former and reducing or eliminating the latter?)

• **Do you have the knowledge needed to carry on the activity as a successful business?** (Are you maintaining and improving your skills to keep up with changing trends in the industry?)

• **Have you made a profit in similar activities in the past?** (What are your experiences and income patterns in the entertainment industry?)

• **Does the activity make a profit in some years?** (Here's that two out of five rule of profit-making. Are you spending more on your show biz expenses than you're actually earning in the business and do these losses persist?)

• **Do you expect to make a profit in the future from the appreciation of assets used in the activity?** (Huh? This one doesn't apply to performing artists, obviously, but it's one of the IRS's FAQs. This applies to businesses that own assets such as real property, business vehicles, business equipment, office furnishings, etc. essential in the production of their income.)

The following represent questions I have gathered from IRS audit examinations, from colleagues, and our members' experiences in audit situations.

• **Do you maintain a separate bank account for your business income and expenses?** (This isn't a requirement, but it always helps to keep personal and professional records separate and it impresses the auditors.)

• **Do you advertise? Do you hold yourself out to the public as a professional?** (Duh! Of course, you do! You're not buying those headshots for your parents, are you?)

• **Do you maintain careful records, including financial data, industry contacts, instructors, agents, managers, etc?** (Again, hello? Of course, you have your life organized accordingly or you would have to pay a whole lot more in taxes!)

• **Do you see yourself as an artist and conduct your business in that manner? Do you see your work in the industry as your primary work or as a side line or part-time endeavor?** (This trap has been successfully set by many examiners who view theatrical employment as an enjoyable sideline, but not really a long-term career choice.)

• **Do you rely on someone else to support you while you pursue this profession?** (If

Musical Quiz

Here is another in our new series of excerpts from *The Broadway Musical Quiz Book* by Laura Frankos, published by Applause Theatre & Cinema Books and reprinted with permission. This one's about composer/lyricist Equity member Jerry Herman (*Hello, Dolly!*, *Mame*, *La Cage aux Folles*), a Kennedy Center honoree in 2010.

1. Jerry Herman's songs first attracted attention in two revues, *Nightcap* (a late show in a supper club) and *Parade* (1960, Off-Broadway). Who sang in both shows and remained a lifelong friend of Herman's?

- A. Kenneth Nelson
- B. Dody Goodman
- C. Estelle Parsons
- D. Charles Nelson Reilly
- E. Phyllis Newman

2. 1964's *Hello, Dolly!* ran for 1,844 performances and won a record ten Tony Awards. Do you know which song was cut after the New York opening?

- A. The overture
- B. "Love, Look in My Window"
- C. "World, Take Me Back"
- D. "You're a Damned Exasperating Woman"
- E. "Come and Be My Butterfly"

3. While *Hello, Dolly!* and *Mame* ran for years, 1969's *Dear World* (based on Jean Giraudoux's *The Madwoman of Chail-*

lot) managed just a couple of months. What is the Countess Aurelia, the Madwoman, looking for?

- A. A nine-foot-long feather boa
- B. An imaginary dog called Dickie
- C. Radioactive water
- D. A stone gargoyle that opens a trap door
- E. Pearls

4. *The Grand Hotel* (1979) was a tale of a Jewish refugee and an aristocratic, anti-Semitic Polish Officer making their way through Nazi-occupied France to England. Who came in and doctored the show in San Francisco?

- A. Gower Champion
- B. Gene Saks
- C. George Abbott
- D. Peter Stone
- E. Tommy Tune

5. Working with director Arthur Laurents and librettist Harvey Fierstein, Herman helped create the first musical with gay leads. *La Cage aux Folles* opened in 1983 and ran for 1,761 performances. When did Albin (George Hearn) and Georges (Gene Barry) take their memorable walk on that sandy beach?

- A. September
- B. October
- C. June
- D. May
- E. August

Answer on page 12

your earnings do not exceed your show biz income and your parents, your squeeze or last year's lotto winnings are underwriting your activities in the entertainment industry year-in and year-out, you might be subject to a denial of some or all of your business expense deductions.)

So, what happens if you're examined and the Hobby Loss Rule is trotted out? The questions noted here are not all inclusive, nor are they the only determining factors, but they go a long way toward arguing that your occasional business losses are incurred by a true show business professional. So, go through them and ask yourself. Have you met the burden? Could you satisfactorily argue your position? Would you likely be spared the hobbyist moniker? Let's hope that, in spite of the vagaries of our work lives, we have taken all steps necessary to qualify ourselves and be treated as the professionals we are.

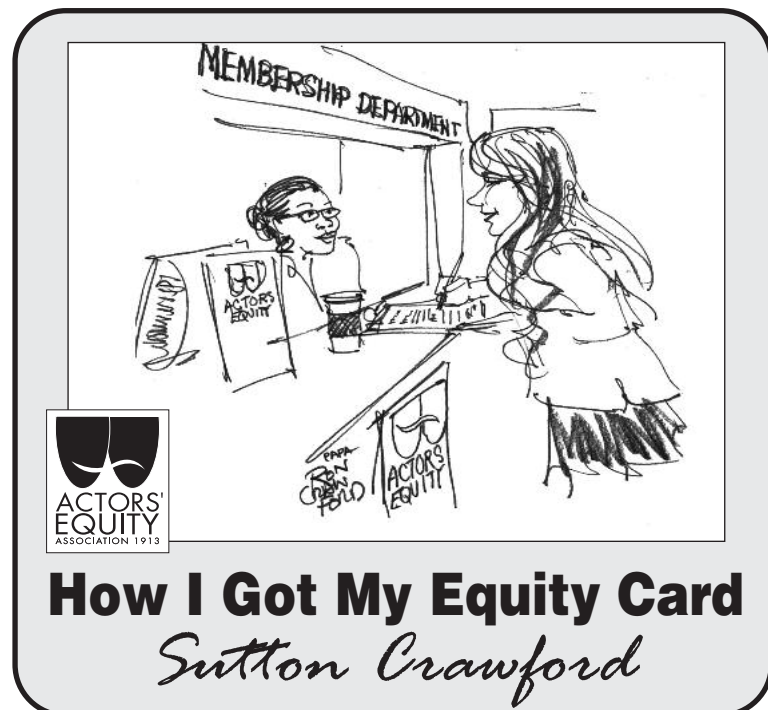
If you show the requisite profit motive and earn more than you spend, you're in good stead. If not, you may wonder what happens to those expenses you incurred in your losing activity? If you report losses in more than two years out of five, your business may be deemed a "hobby" and the expenses will have to be limited to the income you earn in that business or profession. In other words, if you earn \$30,000 in the theatre and spend \$35,000

three years in a row, you may deduct the expenses in full in the first two years, but you may only deduct up to your earnings in the third and subsequent years.

Q: How long do I have to save this? A: it depends...

The question arises every tax season by individuals who are desperate to clean out their apartments and garages, or those who simply want to shred every piece of paper they can in order to rid themselves of the additional clutter. The answer, however, can be involved and a little bit annoying, because it requires you to do some careful sorting of your documents. Here are the key timetables:

Q: How long must I save my tax returns: A: Forever! Yes, you should retain copies of your returns until you have absolutely no possible reason to have to prove that you worked and paid income tax on your earnings. Before you say that you're totally over your tax returns as soon as you file them, let me suggest that the Social Security Administration might have a few odd numbers on file for you, or some missing numbers altogether. We have seen many taxpayers who start the application process for Social Security only to find the SSA has incorrect or non-existent earnings in a few or many years. The only way to fix this problem is to bring copies of tax returns and wage statements to the Social Security office and have them enter the correct



By Sutton Crawford

I joined Actors' Equity on September 16, 2010 after being cast as "Constanze" by Brooke Wetziel in Northern Stages' production of Amadeus. Since the very beginning, life has been a family affair. So, of course, I had my New York grandparents in tow when signing my membership papers. My grandpa, actor and artist, Ron Crawford, a proud Equity member himself, along with my many family members and friends have been my greatest inspirations, and are always helping me on this

path of following my crazy dreams. I am here because of my family: my family of friends and the family of actors I have around me from my first high school theatre days, to now. So it is only appropriate now to say how thrilled and proud I am to join the oldest and most influential family of performing artists that is and ever was.

(Proud grandpa Ron Crawford sketched Sutton as she signed her application to join Equity. Contract Associate Karlene Laemmie accepted the application.)

information which will result in receiving the federal annuity that reflects your actual earnings history. There are other applications these records can affect such as retirement planning, death benefits, and skilled nursing care, among others.

Q: How long must the expense records be kept? A: Expenses associated with your federal and state tax returns generally must be retained for three years from the date you file your returns, with a few, but important, exceptions.

Long-term Assets such as your house, other real property, stocks, mutual funds and similar investments: retain all purchase records for as long as you own the house, building, investment asset, etc., up to and including three years from the date you file the return that reports the sale or other disposal of the asset. In other words, don't throw out the paperwork of anything that you still own that might have an impact on your taxes down the road. (This rule is similar to the "don't throw out your tax returns" rule because you may need to prove something many years from now, in this case, the value or purchase price when you originally acquired the asset.)

Equipment and Business Assets such as your computers, audio/visual, office-related equipment: retain these receipts for five years (or longer if your accountant tells you the business asset is being

depreciated over a longer period of time). In the case of business real property (such as commercial or residential rentals), see the long-term asset rule and consult with your accountant before tossing those receipts.

Other Documents such as your Last Will and Testament, Divorce Decree, Power of Attorney, Health Care Proxy, Life Insurance and other insurance policies that are still in effect should be retained until you either replace them with new ones or they are no longer in effect. If it still applies to your life or circumstances, hang on to it.

For most of you, the three-year receipt rule will apply, but attach extra importance to those long-term documents and assets. While you may not need them to prove income or survive an audit, they might be crucial in determining something equally as vital many years from now. So, before you oil the teeth of your shredder, organize what can go and what should be kept in a safe place.

The VITA office is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (no Tuesdays) from 10:30 to 4 on the 14th floor of the New York Equity building. Telephone 212-921-2548. Sandra Karas is Site Coordinator of VITA, Secretary-Treasurer of Equity, a member of SAG and AFTRA and someone who saves copious amounts of receipts.

Actors and Critics: Perfect Together At least at the ATCA luncheon...

By Philip Dorian

Despite severe weather conditions, about 100 members of the American Theatre Critics Association (ATCA) from around the country assembled in NYC for a weekend in February, highlighted by the annual "Luncheon with the Stars" at Sardi's.

Nine actors from six shows each addressed a question posed by one of the host critics. Their comments included career insights, comments on their craft, and more than a dash of humor.

André De Shields (*The Witch of Edmonton*) began by

area's particular sensibilities," he said.

Linda Lavin's *Other Desert Cities* character sleeps on stage for ten minutes. Besides fighting really falling asleep ("I'd be sooo embarrassed"), she said she learned how to pretend-sleep in third grade when the nuns enforced a nap in exchange for extra play time. (One never knows what one might use, do one?)

Lily Rabe (*The Merchant of Venice*) always dreamed of playing Portia. She said she sees the character and Shylock as equal intellects, with Shylock brought down by the nature of

Emmy Awards, slews of recurring TV roles and acclaimed stage performances as Dr. Vivian Bearing (*Wit*) and Marie Lombardi (opposite Mr. Lauria), the universe has been very good to Ms. Light.

Dana Ivey (*Earnest*), an Equity Councillor, was asked what brought her into theatre as a vocation. "The language," she said, "and tiaras." The former passion she said she inherited from her speech-pathologist mother. (As for the tiaras: just consider how regal she looks wearing one.)

Jeffrey Wright was asked if there was a common thread that



(L to r from top): André De Shields, Paxton Whitehead, Stacy Keach, Linda Lavin, Lily Rabe, Dan Luria, Judith Light, Dana Ivey, Jeffrey Wright. (Photos: Edward Rubin)

expressing pride in his volunteer work on behalf of "my union," AEA, and its 48,000 members. (He's a former long-time Council member.) Asked about his own career, he told how playing Willy Loman in Buffalo had expanded his song-and-dance man image. "Shed your skin as often as you can," he said. "Re-invent yourself."

Paxton Whitehead (*The Importance of Being Earnest*) told the group that he always reads reviews, a habit he formed while Artistic Director of the Shaw Festival in Ontario. "Anyone's opinion *could* be valuable" drew laughter, as did his self-deprecating suggestion that he gives "exactly the same performance in different roles."

Stacy Keach (*Other Desert Cities*) also reads reviews, especially from the Regionals. "Those critics best reflect their

the times. She also noted that the production's month-long layoff and re-opening allowed for refreshed rehearsals, a "real luxury."

Dan Lauria (*Lombardi*) is a champion of new playwrights. "I only do new plays," he said. Asked about the difference between playing fictional and real-life characters, he said the real isn't more difficult, but it's a different discipline. When tempted to change a particular reaction in his play, for example, he realized he couldn't. "That's how Coach Lombardi did it." (It was the day before the Super Bowl. "Coach will be looking down on a Packers win," Lauria assured us. Righto.)

Judith Light (also *Lombardi*) was asked how she chose her roles. "I don't ask 'what's next,'" she offered. "I let the universe decide." Based on back-to-back

attracted him to a play. "The roles all tell something about me," he said, noting the significance of his recent *A Free Man of Color*. He shared some key advice from George C. Wolfe, who directed him as the gay nurse who's forced to care for the homophobic Roy Cohn in the original *Angels in America* (for which Wright and Wolfe received Tony Awards). "We don't want to watch and think 'what a great actor he is,'" Wolfe told him, "but what a bastard Roy Cohn was."

If this critic were to generalize about our ATCA guests, it would not be to state the obvious, what great actors they are; but instead, what terrific luncheon guests they were. Thank you to them all.

(Philip Dorian is a former Equity member, now a syndicated theatre critic.)

E-Voting Sign-Ups Nearly Double; Registration Deadline is March 24

What's green, fast and cheap? E-Voting in AEA's upcoming 2011 Elections. Equity's E-Voting campaign has nearly doubled the number of E-Voters, but we still have a long way to go. If you are not registered, log-on to the Members Only section of AEA's website

(www.actorsequity.org) and click on the green E-Voting icon before March 24, 2011. You must be paid up in dues through March 24 in order to receive a ballot.

Go Green!
Pre-Register NOW for E-Voting

2011 AEA VOTE



Midsize Agreement Extended

On February 15, 2011, Council voted to accept the recommendation of the three regional Midsize Contract Committees and to extend the Agreement for one year with a 2% increase to the minimum salaries

and all associated financial terms. The current four-year contract expires on April 29, 2011.

The Midsize Theatre Agreement is designed for theatres seating up to 699 outside of office cities.



"Were I to die and go to heaven and find it populated by actors, I would not be unhappy."

—Playwright Ben Hecht

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|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Darwin R. Apel | Gene Fanning | Maurice Andrew |
| Barbara Billingsley | Jan Gillory | Ottinger |
| Tom Bosley | Charles E. Goff, Jr. | Deirdre Owens |
| Blake Brown | Randal | Jane Pesci- |
| Jean Bruno | Goldsborough | Townsend |
| Marcia Lewis Bryan | Joseph M. Hamer | Addison Powell |
| Richard Buck | Martha Hawley | Moira Rankin |
| Frederick Charles | Norman Heidinger | Mary Lou Reiner |
| Canada | Providence | GB Riche |
| P.L. Carling | Hollander | Doug Robinson |
| Beatrice Carroll | Susan Hufford | Marilyn Rodgers |
| Dominic Castino | Kay Kellogg | Sachi Shimizu |
| Genevieve Bierman | John William | Jean Simmons |
| Chase | Kingsbury | Robert L. Snook |
| Chao-Li Chi | James MacArthur | Theodore Sorel |
| Jill Clayburgh | James Maloney | Pat St. James |
| James J. Cordes | Joe Mantell | Richard Stadelmann |
| Geraldine Court | Art Martinson | Sharlie Stuart |
| John Crawford | Evie McElroy | Steven Sutherland |
| Robert Crest | Bob Mesrobian | Shannon Tavarez |
| Tony Curtis | George D. Mozer | Tom Thornton |
| Camille D'Ambrose | Lou Nardi | Andrea Tobey |
| Sylvia Davis | Ralph Newman | James Wall |
| Joan Decker | Michelle Nicastro | Carroll C Wayham |
| Vincent F. Dowling | Darrell Notara | Diana Webster |
| Ron Doyle | Betty O'Neil | Jennie Welch |
| Robert Ellenstein | William Arnold | Elvin Whitesides |
| Gloria Evans | Ostroff | Dolores Wilson |



NATIONAL NEWS

South Florida

Members Updated on AEA Activities; Hear from Actors Fund on Healthcare



South Florida members with (seated center) Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg and Business Representative Matthew Summersgill.

By Irene Adjan South Florida Equity Liaison

South Florida held its General Membership Meeting on January 24, 2011 at the Crest Theatre in Delray Beach. Before the meeting, the Liaison Committee hosted a Healthcare Seminar presented by Renata Marinaro of The Actors Fund.

"I learned more about the new healthcare reform in one hour than I had in all the articles I had seen in publications," said Wayne LeGette. John Felix added, "I thought the seminar very worthwhile. . . It was well presented, informative and clear, and Renata had a nice light touch, leavened with humor, that kept a potentially dull bullet point presentation from being tedious." "I cherish having her as a contact when things get crazy or hard to understand. I now know I can call Renata and she can explain it to me," said Margot Moreland. Renata's experience in social work and her passion for this subject make her an invaluable resource for information regarding healthcare and particularly how it pertains to artists. If you can get her to speak in your area, I highly recommend it.

After the Seminar, we had a meet-and-greet for members and our guests, Assistant Executive Director/Eastern Regional Director, Rick Berg, and

Business Representative, Matthew Summersgill. Local issues were discussed, not the least being the elimination of the Southeast Traveling Representative position and the reassignment of Doug Truelsen. It is a matter that has affected the Southeast tremendously. Mr. Berg addressed our concerns and explained the decision, and the reasoning behind it, in much detail. He then spoke about the upcoming Plenary, the negotiation of the COST contract, the deputy call-in meetings, the upcoming Production Contract negotiations, the Centennial, the progress of the PWD (Persons With Disabilities) campaign, and the arrival of our new Executive Director, Mary McColl.

Matthew Summersgill told members that with the elimination of the Southeast Traveling Rep position, he would be coming to Florida to visit our theatres with more regularity. In addition to attending our meeting, he stayed the week and met with members of our Liaison Committee, as well as visiting five of our theatres – GableStage, Caldwell Theatre Company, Palm Beach Dramaworks, Mosaic Theatre, and Actors' Playhouse.

A Q&A session followed and there was discussion of "new media" and the challenges and questions it raises. Some examples of where this has

caused some confusion were brought up. Since the rules regarding archival and B-roll taping are ever-changing, it was suggested that a sheet be placed in the Deputy packets for SPT/LOA companies, clearly spelling out what was allowed under that specific agreement.

Thanks to guests, Rick Berg and Matthew Summersgill, and my fellow members of the South Florida Liaison Committee for their hard work and input throughout the year. They are: Barbara Bradshaw, Oscar Cheda, Dave Corey, John Felix (Secretary and Hotline Coordinator), Terry Hardcastle, Wayne LeGette, Amy London, Margery Lowe, Margot Moreland (Councillor), Marjorie O'Neill-Butler, Barbara Sloan, Laura Turnbull, and Tom Wahl.

Philadelphia

Live Arts Festival, Philly Fringe Get Underway

The call for artists has begun for the 2011 Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe. Visit the website www.pafringe.com/how-to-participate.cfm for details.

The AEA Philly Fringe Code is available for AEA members' use in the "Philly Fringe" portion of the Festival.

Producers who are interested in using AEA members in the "Theatre"

Malvern, PA

Panto in PA Helps BC/EFA



People's Light & Theatre Company's production of *The Three Musketeers (The Later Years): A Musical Panto* in Malvern, Pennsylvania raised \$23,186 in 65 performances at their 365-seat house. Cast members appealed to audiences not only from the stage, but often in character one-on-one in the lobby—hard work that resulted in this incredible total. Chris Faith, who played the role of Athos, kept the appeal lighthearted despite the seriousness of the cause. "I would include a joke or two so that, even though the audience knew we were going to ask for their help, it would be an

easy transition from the comedy of the show to the sincerity of the appeal," Chris said. "I would say 'King Huey has decided to make you *all* Musketeers. In the spirit of friendship and brotherhood, please give as valiantly and as honorably as you can so we can vanquish this villain together.' The 'all for one and one for all' mentality especially influenced the children in the audience who often asked their parents for cash so they could interact with the cast," he added. "The audience reception was great and it gave us a chance to keep it fun and downplay the gravity of what we were trying to do."

San Francisco

Busy Times Ahead in the Bay Area

Spring is a busy time in the San Francisco Bay Area and this year is no exception. Members of the Bay Area Advisory Committee (BAAC) are organizing several events open not only to local AEA members, but to those who may be in residence at any of the five local LORT theatres, on tour or just passing through the area.

If you are new to the area or have just decided it's time to join in, contact BAAC Chair Kelly Ground, kground@gmail.com, or First Vice Chair Steven Pawley, Swpaws@mac.com. "AEA maintains a member's privacy at all times and does not release your contact info to local chairs. So it's up to you to let us know you are here. We'd love to get you onboard," says Ms. Ground.

Save the Dates

The **Bay Area General Membership Meeting:** April 25, 2011, 6 p.m. at the Ashby

Theatre, 1901 Ashby Avenue, at Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, in Berkeley. Free parking available. The agenda will include elections for the BAAC. There are seven seats available: four three-year terms, one two-year term and two one-year terms for Alternates. For more information, contact Kelly Ground or Steven Pawley.

Stage Manager/Production Manager Speed Dating: Monday, March 28, 2011, 4-8 p.m. at ACT's Geary Theatre, 415 Geary Street, San Francisco. (See separate story, page 11)

Bay To Breakers: Centipede Walkers Needed. The historic 100th Anniversary of the Bay to Breakers 12K footrace is Sunday, May 15, 2011 from 7 a.m. to 12 Noon. All finishers receive commemorative medals representing the anniversary. For information, contact BAAC member Brian Herndon, bherndon@earthlink.net.

San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle: The 35th Annual Award Ceremony, sponsored by Actors' Equity, celebrating excellence in theatre for 2010 will be held Monday, April 4, 2011. Doors open at 6 p.m., ceremony begins at 7:30 at Palace of Fine Arts Theatre Lobby, 3302 Lyon Street, San Francisco. Tickets are \$20. Parking is free. This is the third year that Equity is a proud sponsor of the Awards.

For more information on any of these events, contact Kelly Ground or Steven Pawley or visit the Equity website, www.actorsequity.org.

New York

Credit Union Fleet of Fee-Free ATMs is Ranked Fifth Nationwide

Continuing to lead just about every bank in New York City, ActorsFCU's ATM fleet of more than 230 machines is now ranked fifth among credit unions nationwide in ATM deployment (ranking by Callahan and Associates, 2011).

"With more than 230 ATM locations throughout the five boroughs, Yonkers and New Jersey, our members have more free access to ATMs in the New York City metro area than the customers of just about every other bank in the city. That includes Bank of America, TD Bank, HSBC and CitiBank," says Credit Union President Jeff Rodman. "We've ranked consistently in the top 50 for the past nine years with Callahan and Associates, and this is our sixth year in the top ten. Our ranking speaks for itself: ActorsFCU members enjoy the benefits of an ATM fleet rivaled by few."

CO-OP Network, the nation's largest credit union ATM network, provides credit union members with access to more than 28,000 fee-free ATMs throughout the United States and Canada. This includes 6,000 ATMs at participating 7-Eleven stores across the country. "The Credit Union has always aimed to meet the special needs of our members,

many of whom are bi-coastal or tour the country, to have withdrawal and depository access that matches their mobility. We've tried to service their needs so they're not burdened by the often onerous surcharge fees imposed by banks," continued Mr. Rodman. "The 28,000 fee-free ATMs available through CO-OP Network save our members the excessive fees incurred by bank customers." Members can locate one of the 28,000 CO-OP ATMs by calling 1-888-SITE-CO-OP or by visiting the ATM locator on the website, actorsfcu.com. There is also a CO-OP Locator App available for iPhones.

Complementing the ATM fleet, ActorsFCU also offers members access to more than 160 deposit-taking NYC Check Cashiers that are part of the PayNet Deposit Network. Members make more than \$1.3 million in deposits monthly at these participating check casher locations. This program gives members deposit capabilities seven days a week, including early morning and late evenings throughout the five boroughs. "PayNet locations provide our members with deposit access that not only competes with what banks are offering, but provides even great access," says Mr. Rodman.

Ann Arbor, MI

Audiences Happy to Assist at "The Drowsy Chaperone"



Co-founded by the Michigan Equity Theatre Alliance, The Performance Network of Ann Arbor raised \$1,586 over five performances during the closing week of their sold out run of *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Equity member Naz Edwards, who played the title character, said, "This piece is so wonderful, it left audiences very happy and feeling very generous." Company members took turns making the nightly speech and were astounded to bring in so much in such a short time. "Ann Arbor is a

savvy theatre town and audiences also understood the good work we could do together with these appeals. They loved the show and wanted to help," Naz said. Since many of the company's performers come from the local University of Michigan, Naz said that she and other company members make sure the younger performers are constantly made aware of the importance and responsibilities of Equity membership and affiliate organizations like BC/EFA."

New York

BC/EFA Fills the Longacre With Love and Laughter

Laughter, longing and liberation combined with songs of love filled the Longacre Theatre on February 7, 2011 for the 6th edition of *Broadway Backwards*, a star-packed benefit raising \$281,243 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center of New York.

The only Broadway event custom-made for the gay and lesbian community, friends and families, *Broadway Backwards 6* featured an all-star cast reinterpreting songs of musical theatre with

women singing songs originally written for men and men singing songs written for women.

(1) Bebe Neuwirth returned to her *Chicago* roots, this time taking on the role of scheming lawyer Billy Flynn in "All I Care About is Love;" (2) Tony Yazbek performed a recreation of the complete "Music and the Mirror" song from *A Chorus Line*; (3)



Alan Cumming plunged into a military-themed version of "Don't Tell Mama" from *Cabaret*, the show that garnered him a Tony, and (4) Lillias White shared a rousing arrangement of "Some Enchanted Evening."

The evening also included Tony Award winners Hinton Battle, Len Cariou, Debra Monk, Denis O'Hare and Karen Oliva;

Academy Award winner, F. Murray Abraham, in addition to *American Idol* runner-up Clay Aiken, Farah Alvin, Brooks Ashmanskas, Ward Billeissen, Tituss Burgess, Dan Butler, Robin De Jesús, Colman Domingo, Mandy Gonzalez, Jose Llana, Jan Maxwell, Brian Charles Rooney, Bobby Steggert, Jason Tam and Kirsten Wyatt.

Washington / Baltimore

Equity Auditions Celebrate Tenth Anniversary

By Gregory Gorton

Our Nation's Capitol is frequently defined by its inconsistencies. The weather. The Redskins. And, of course, Congress.

But there is one constant. It is found in our theatre community and that is the Washington/Baltimore Equity Liaison Auditions. This year was the tenth anniversary of our auditions, which have continued to grow in popularity.

The idea grew from a yearly membership meeting featuring some of the area's casting and artistic directors as guest speakers. After lively discussion, it was agreed that more employment opportunities would become available if the casting people saw more of the many talented Equity members in the pool of Washington actors at a professional audition setting.

This was in November of 2000. The then members of the Equity Liaison Committee set the target goal of January, 2001. With an enormous amount of work by the Committee, many dedicated volunteers, the supportive and generous people at the Olney Theatre (and a little bit of luck), the auditions became a reality in the first week of January, 2001.

Chair Emeritus Ilona Dulaski was truly a driving force behind these auditions. They became her passion, and her dedication and determination helped inspire the rest of us, as well as piquing the interest of the auditors who

would be attending. She remembers, "We all decided to do an outreach to our auditors and to all of the theatres we were inviting." Ilona divided the theatres into groups and shepherded the rest of us in contacting and arranging their availability. "We reached out to theatres in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware and all of the region's theatres. We even contacted The Pittsburgh Playhouse."

Looking back, many of the people involved remembered well how the pieces came together. Liaison Chairman Carl Randolph recalls, "I first worked on the auditions as a volunteer. Now, as Chair, I have had the honor to host the 10th annual DC/Baltimore Equity Auditions. Well, by host, I mean, to let my predecessors who created them continue to do the fabulous work they do."

Lynn McCune, who now lives in New York, says, "It was important that we provide an opportunity for our local Equity actors without detracting from the well established League of Washington Theatres Auditions. Hence, the January time frame. We used those auditions as a template for ours."

Laura Gianarelli, continuing a decade of providing culinary delicacies, reprised her role as the Contessa of the kitchen. She recalls that first year, "We set up in the Green Room of Olney's Gudelsky Theatre. At every break

the auditors would load their plates like seniors at an early bird buffet."

Since our move in 2007, the Equity Auditions have been held at The Round House Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland. Thirty theatres, as well as casting directors and associates, were in attendance this year. Over 200 AEA and EMC members had the opportunity to audition.

Unfortunately, due to a rehearsal commitment, our musical accompanist of the past nine years, Chris Youstra, was unable to join us. We were very lucky, however, to have Doug Lawler this year.

Many thanks to the Committee members who help bring these auditions to life: Bill Largesse, Ilona Dulaski, Lynn McCune, Jim Brady, Gregory Gorton, Barbara Pinolini, Terri Price, Laura Gianarelli, Peter Gil, Maureen Kerrigan and the many other members and volunteers.

"The tenth year was a huge success," says Chair Carl Randolph. "More AEA members and EMC members were seen. The auditions continue to be a staple for our regional community. The current committee and I humbly thank those who started these auditions and those who help to keep them going."

So raise your glass to a tradition well met, and to the next ten years that await us yet.

(Gregory Gorton is a regular contributor to Equity News from the Washington/Baltimore area.)

Chicago**ActorsFCU Opens Office in Chicago Equity Building**

Actors Federal Credit Union's newest branch—in Chicago—is open for business and serving Midwest members. The office, open from 9-5 weekdays, is located on the first floor of AEA's new home at 557 West Randolph Street.

The Grand Opening celebration on January 13, 2011 kicked off with 21 new accounts. "AEA Central Region's Credit Union Committee promised us eager support for a branch in the Chicago area," said ActorsFCU President Jeff Rodman, "and their instincts were right on the money. I'm happy to say we played to a packed house."

Members of the Committee received engraved pens ("One Team – One Family") as thanks for their efforts to bring the Credit Union to Chicago. "Our strength lies in the loyalty and support of our members and their spreading the word. We couldn't be more grateful to our Chicago members," added Mr. Rodman.

The opening festivities were capped with a drawing for an iPad. The lucky recipient, out of more than 60 entrants, was Equity member Ron Keaton.

For more information on Actors Federal Credit Union, visit the website: actorsfcu.com.



At the opening of the AFCU office in Chicago are: (back row, l to r) Gil Rogers, Dev Kennedy, Lisa Gordon, Liz Pazik, Steven Sobotta; (front) Ron Keaton, Ann Gordon, Jeff Rodman.

Los Angeles**Fund Slates Spring Seminars**

Are you on the fence with life in the industry? If so, The Actors Fund has a group for you. On Wednesdays, April 6-May 25, 2011 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at The Fund office, Suite 400 at 5757 Wilshire Boulevard, a group will be exploring the emotional, spiritual and practical issues of continuing a career in the entertainment industry. This eight week program is free and confidential, but an initial interview is required for participants. For information, contact Tracey Downs at (323)

933-9244, ext. 20 or via email at tdowns@actorsfund.org.

The Fund is also sponsoring a group on managing cash flow for artists. This four week workshop will meet on Thursdays from March 10-May 31, 2011, 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Fund office. For information contact Linda Zimmerman at (323) 933-9244, ext. 30 or at lzimmerman@actorsfund.org.

For a full schedule of Actors Fund workshops, groups and seminars visit the website actorsfund.org.

New York**Fund Sets March Meetings**

The Actors Fund has scheduled several special groups to meet during March. On Wednesday, March 16, 2011 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Equity Council Room on the 14th Floor at 165 West 46th Street, a group of entertainment industry professionals will discuss how to be successful in teaching, training and coaching. The speakers have all developed successful sideline and parallel careers in these areas. For information, contact blevinson@actorsfund.org

On Mondays, March 14 to May 23 from 2:30 – 4 p.m. at The Fund offices, 729 Seventh

Avenue, will be a workshop on managing anger along the road to recovery for professionals in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. For information, call (917) 281-5914 or email rgilbert@actorsfund.org.

A six week support group for entertainment industry professionals over age 62 will meet on Wednesdays, March 23-April 27 from 3-4:30 pm. at the Fund offices. A pre-attendance interview is required. For information, call (917) 281-5990 or email: asurette@actorsfund.org.

For a full schedule of Actors Fund events, visit actorsfund.org.

Los Angeles**Actors Meet Agents – Part II**

This is the second installment of an article about Franchised Agency Seminars that have been held in New York and Los Angeles. The Los Angeles seminar, hosted by the Western Region Member Education Committee (Chair: Jennie Ford), was held in December, 2010.

The participants were Victoria Morris and Jacole Kitchen, both of Kazarian Spencer, Rushkin & Associates; Gerry Koch, The Gage Group; Steven Dry, Schiowitz, Connor, Ankrum and Wolf; and Dave Sector of Daniel Hoff. The moderator was National Director of Membership John Fasulo.

Here are some highlights of the LA Seminar:

What is the best way to get a meeting with you?

"Through referrals from a manager, a casting director or someone who can vouch for your talent: someone who has worked with you or has seen your work."

Are you looking for new talent and is there a best time of year

to get an agent? How would you prefer submissions?

The answer to new talent was a resounding YES, agreeing there is not a time of year that is better. Most said they prefer hard copy submissions and reiterated that a referral is helpful.

Is Los Angeles casting only the land of the young and beautiful? What advice would you give to a youthful looking early 50 year old with significant stage presence?

Experience, credits and seeing the actor in a show are all important. "The selling point is you are an actor in an age range where we don't get a new face very often. You have 30 years' experience over a 20 year old and that makes you special."

Do you feel that LA theatre credits take a backseat to a New York City credit?

A question that is often raised, it was clear that the LA theatre scene is respectable, healthy and thriving. "If someone came with a credit from Reprise or

Cabrillo, I can see they are working regularly and that has a lot more pull." "The bottom line is that there is talent in LA that is just as good as NY."

Should I seek agencies that rep me across the board or concentrate on theatre?

Film and television work play a large role in the lives of actors based in LA. Not every agency represented works solely with stage actors. "If you also have a film and television career, you don't want to be away during pilot season. The ideal career is someone who can do film and TV and go back to the theatre as often as possible."

With LA theatre paying so little, how can an LA actor make money for you?

Agents agreed that theatre is an important part of an actor's resume and encouraged taking stage roles. "We think it's important for our clients to get back to the stage as often as they can." One agent believes "There are great theatres like South Coast with a lengthier contract. As long as you are branching out and climbing the theatre ladder in LA, there is money to be had."

How should a client respectfully inform his/her agent about roles for which they are hoping to be submitted?

Everyone agreed that good communications is key. It doesn't hurt to let the agent know you are interested in a role, but be respectful in how you approach it – never sound like you are questioning their job.

What about working with a personal manager?

Not all agents think there is a need for a personal manager, while others think a personal manager could be helpful or a hindrance. "We are very manager friendly if they are hard-working and team oriented." "It's not about the concept of managers as much as whether they are trying to be an agent without a franchise." One agent

(continued on page 11)

Minneapolis, MN**"Fully Committed" to the Cause**

Equity member Nathan Keepers, performing in the one-man show *Fully Committed* raised over \$3,000 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS

at the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis during the holiday drive. After each of 12 performances, Nathan appealed to audiences to give what they could. "People were very generous," he said, "and I assume by their generosity that they knew that even though



times are hard, it's also a time to give when you can." Nathan and his stage manager John Novak organized the appeal. Members of the crew and theatre management also contributed, making sure that BC/EFA can help as many people as possible.

Chicago**SMs Receive CPR Training**

The Central Stage Managers Committee recently hosted two days of CPR training in the new Equity Building Member Center. Stage Managers from the Central Region came to either the Monday, January 24 or Monday, January 31, 2011 session to get certified in both AED/CPR and First Aid by the Chicago Red Cross. Due to weather conditions, the first Monday was sparsely attended, but a big turn out on the second Monday made up for it. Chicago staff also participated, but theirs was a re-certification from training last year. The Central Stage Managers Committee

thanks the Chicago Red Cross for its help with planning the event, the AEA staff for setting up the rooms and tearing them



Participants in Stage Managers' CPR training. (Photo: Cynthia Hanks)

down two weeks in a row, and all those that participated in the training. This will now become a yearly event, so mark your calendars now for Monday, January 30, 2012 for your re-certification.

Actors Meet Agents

Continued from page 10

said: "We only take 5% for rehearsals, 10% for shows and it hurts me to think the PM is getting 15% without having played a role in the submission or negotiations."

There seem to be a lot of agent/casting director workshops in LA. How do you feel about actors paying to meet casting directors and agents?

The panelists agreed it could be worth participating, but with a caveat. "It helps if you are going to see the casting director or the associate. If you are paying to see the assistant, that is not going to get you anything most of the time."

What are your thoughts on photos? Black and white vs. color?

"It's important that it looks like you, but the body of work on your resume is important." "A

good photographer can get you five looks – five different ways that I can market you." Color is the way to go.

What is the best way to "break up" with an agent to go to another one? How do you feel about freelancing vs. signing?

"If you feel that your agent is not working with you, then you need to figure that out because you may be 50% of that." "You need to break that connection in order to even start a relationship with me." All agreed they don't freelance.

Should a theatrical resume be different from film/TV?

Each agent has a different answer. For one, there is a resume style that has been developed for that office while others prefer to have the theatre credits at the top. But it was agreed that its *how* one writes the resume credits. For theatre it's the role, while for film/TV it's the "lead, co-star or supporting."

San Francisco

Stage Managers Set Networking Event

The BAAC (Bay Area Advisory Committee) Stage Management Subcommittee headed by Chair Heath Belden has set a speed-dating style networking event for Stage Managers and Production Managers/hiring managers to be held on Monday, March 28, 2011 from 4-8 p.m. in Fred's Lower Level Lobby at ACT's Geary Theatre, 415 Geary Street in San Francisco. This is an opportunity for Stage Managers to provide resumes and get a few minutes of face time, thus easing the interview process when future job openings arise.

Stage Managers will sign up for a "rotation hour" during which they can meet for a short interview with each theatre representative in the room. At press time, companies including ACT, Theatreworks, Cal Shakes and Marin Theatre Company were planning to participate. Stage Managers attending should plan on bringing at least 10-15 resumes to exchange.

Contact Heath Belden at BASMnetwork@gmail.com to be added to the participant list. Check the Equity website, www.actorsequity.org for further information.

Boston

NEAT Contract Tops Annual Meeting Agenda

By Michael Dell'Orto
Greater Boston Area
Liaison

The Greater Boston Area held its annual membership meeting at Boston Playwright's Theatre on November 15, 2010 with National staffers Senior Business Representative Russell Lehrer and Business Representative Melissa Colgan in attendance.

The primary focus of the meeting was the upcoming negotiation for the New England Area Theatres (NEAT) contract, which covers 15 small-to-medium size theatres within a 100-mile radius of downtown Boston. Prior to the start of the General Meeting there was a Stage Managers' Caucus to discuss and receive feedback on issues relative to stage management in the NEAT agreement, specifically the separately negotiated

compensation for extra duties. Recommendations coming out of this Caucus, as well as suggestions made during the General Meeting, will be incorporated as proposals in the negotiations scheduled to begin in April in Boston.

The Reps from New York read remarks from Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg; gave information about how to sign up for e-voting for the upcoming election; and reported on the newly-revised SPT Agreement, changes to the Health Plan, the LORT 401(k) plan, the latest on Equity's centennial celebration plans and the arrival of Mary McColl as Equity's new Executive Director.

Selected by acclamation to serve another three years on the Liaison Committee were Michael Dell'Orto (Chair), Ellen Colton, Peter Haydu, Dawn Saglio and Kippy Goldfarb.

New York

VITA Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony Honors Co-Founders and Supporters

VITA (the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its newly-renovated headquarters in New York on Friday, February 4, 2011.

Sandra Karas, Equity's Secretary-Treasurer and VITA site coordinator, welcomed guests and acknowledged VITA's Co-Founders: Michael Enserro, Conard Fowkes and Schorling Schneider.

"In 1976, Michael Enserro, AEA Councillor, active committee person and veteran of many contract negotiations, thought he could find yet another way in which he and his union could serve his fellow members. The Internal Revenue Service had just started a volunteer outreach program to encourage those who had the knowledge or desire to learn to assist those who were unable to avail themselves of professional tax preparation. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program seemed to Michael like a program that was tailor-made for performing artists and he started Equity's VITA site. Along the way, he enlisted the help of two other Councillors and active union members, Schorling Schneider and Conard Fowkes. The three of them learned tax preparation from the IRS and prepared returns for working actors, operating out of a storage

closet at 1501 Broadway. Schorling demonstrated that there was no limit to the kinds of returns VITA would take on and Conard, who was also a member of the AFTRA Board, solicited the help and support of both AFTRA and SAG in supporting the program. Thus was VITA nurtured and expanded to offer free tax assistance to members of the three unions. What began as an effort to help actors and stage managers better navigate the waters of the IRS has grown to a year-round, free service that includes not only the members' federal and home state filings, but all states and localities in which our members have worked. VITA is unique because it provides advocacy along with friendly, helpful and supportive volunteers who understand our members. What these founders created lives on and thrives in their memories."

Among those attending the ribbon-cutting were: Actors' Equity Foundation President and AEA VP Emeritus Arne Gundersen; Equity Executive Director Mary McColl; SAG Foundation Board member/SAG NY Division VP Rebecca Damon; AFTRA Board member and New York VP Janette Gautier; and Actors Fund Director of Planned Giving and Secretary of the Edith Meiser Foundation Wallace Munro. Executives, staff and Board members from Equity, Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA and members from the three Foundation Boards also were present.

On Monday, February 7, the new office opened for business and a long line began forming before dawn, as it does every year, with members eager to have their tax returns prepared.



At the VITA ribbon-cutting are (l to r) Rebecca Damon (SAG Foundation); Equity's Sandra Karas, VITA Site Coordinator; Wallace Munro, The Actors Fund; Equity Executive Director Mary McColl; Equity Foundation President Arne Gundersen; Janette Gautier (AFTRA Foundation) and Cly Fowkes, daughter of the late Conard Fowkes. (Photo: David Lotz)

New York

CTFD to Host Conference on Career Development

Career Transition For Dancers presents the 2nd annual "Stepping into Hope and Change: A Free Career Development Conference for Dancers" on Thursday, April 7, 2011 in the Equity Audition Center, 2nd Floor, 165 West 46th Street, and via streaming webcast:

www.ustream.tv/user/ctfd.

The free all-day conference begins at 10 a.m. with a

presentation followed by breakout sessions. Free light breakfast, lunch and wrap-up party will be provided. The afternoon sessions begin at 2 p.m. with a keynote speaker followed by a resource fair and additional breakout sessions, ending at 4:45 p.m.

All dancers—whether still dancing; staying in the dance field; preparing for a transition; already transitioned; or exploring

other industries, next steps and career paths—are invited. RSVP to:

steppingintohopeandchangenyc.eventbrite.com or call Kaylen Ratto at (212) 764-0172, ext. 232. You may stay for the entire program or choose individual sessions. Check the CTFD website: www.careertransition.org for more information.

New York

Workshop, Reading, Panel to Explore Creative Casting of Actors With Disabilities

On Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at 6:30 p.m., the Eastern Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee will present an exploratory reading of *Internal Bleeding* by Christine Toy Johnson, starring Daryl "Chill" Mitchell (television's *Brothers*, *Ed* and *The John Laroquette Show*) directed by Robert McQueen. The reading will be the culmination of a short workshop exploring casting

an actor with a disability (Mr. Mitchell) in a role that is written as both disabled and non-disabled. Afterwards, there will be a panel discussion about the results of the workshop. The event will take place in the second floor Audition Center of AEA, 165 West 46th Street. RSVP to Pearl Brady at (212) 869-8530, ext. 346 or eeo@actorsequity.org.

Internal Bleeding is made possible in part with public funds from the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Additional funding has been made possible by the Puffin Foundation.

New York**AEA Observes Women's History Month With Panel on Gender-Neutral Casting**

The Women's Committee of the Eastern Equal Employment Opportunity Committee is hosting a panel discussion on gender-neutral casting called *Limitless Casting: Could the Best Man for the Part Be a Woman?*, on Tuesday, March 29, 2011 at 6 p.m. in the Council Room on the 14th Floor of the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street. In an age when men in drag are commonplace in theatre, why are women playing male roles so rare? Confirmed

for the panel at press time are: Rebecca Patterson, Artistic Director, The Queen's Company; Joanne Zipay, Artistic Director, Judith Shakespeare Company; Terry Berliner, Director; and Richard Schechner, NYU Department of Performance Studies.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Pearl Brady at pbrady@actorsequity.org or (212) 869-8530, ext. 346.

Chicago**Stage Managers to Host EMC Mentor Night**

The Central Stage Managers Committee is hosting an "EMC Mentor Night" forum and panel, with Alden Vazquez as Moderator, on Monday, March 28, 2011. This event is especially for Membership Candidates who wish to work as Stage Managers. They will be

able to meet working AEA Stage Managers and ASMs, ask questions and, perhaps, request an AEA Mentor to help them transition to the professional Equity workforce. Visit the Equity website: www.actorsequity.org for time and other details.

San Francisco**It's Always Holiday Time at ACT**

The cast and crew of San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre appealed to audiences over seven performances during the run of *A Christmas Carol* in December, raising over \$9,631. Veteran Equity actor Steven Anthony Jones, who portrayed the Ghost of Christmas Present, spoke directly to the audiences, explained the work and all the help that Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS

provides in San Francisco, and asked them to open their hearts to contribute. "I was so honored to make the speech every night," he said. "The audience appeals have become a Holiday tradition at ACT. They bring us back to what is important about that time of year and the ACT audiences are always supportive and generous. They remind us that that time of year is about more than just the commercial benefits."

**Michael Tolan Mourned**

Former Councillor Michael Tolan died on January 31, 2011 at the age of 85.

A member of Equity since 1953, Mr. Tolan's career spanned theatre, film and TV, including appearances on Broadway in *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, *A Hatful of Rain*, *Romanoff and Juliet* and *A Majority of One*. He joined the Council as a replacement in December 1960 after having played a significant role on the

1960 Negotiating Committee, which, after a 13 day strike, resulted in the establishment of Equity's first pension plan. He was elected to a five-year term in 1961, saying in his election statement: "I believe Equity's main task now is to take steps toward expanding the working possibilities of its members." To this end, he was one of the founders, in 1963, of the American Place Theatre.

**ABOUT "SPIDER-MAN"**

Dear Equity News,

I'm writing this letter in response to the concern many members have expressed regarding safety issues at *Spider-Man*. I am one of the deputies on the show and have nothing but praise for our staff and our stage managers who have worked diligently since rehearsals began in July. This production has been sailing in uncharted waters since its inception not only because of the stagecraft involved but because many of the creators are new to Broadway. Our creative team and producers have sought to put on a production the likes of which has never been attempted before. To ensure the safety of the company, staff and stage management have worked tirelessly guiding the creative team and advising them when someone was put in a potentially dangerous position.

We have suffered two injuries in rehearsal (a broken toe and two broken wrists) as well as one extremely serious injury in performance. The Department of Labor and OSHA cancelled performances until they could review our safety protocols which they had previously approved. They instituted additional measures and allowed performances to resume. Equity staff (led by Louise Foisy, Kimberly Rimbold and Keith Sklar) said to our stage managers that Equity would not sign off until stage management felt that they'd had enough time to work the additional safety measures into the show. This resulted in another cancellation and lost revenue of over \$250,000. Our producers were not pleased but recognized that it was for the health and well-being of all.

Anyone who has ever worked on a Broadway musical knows that they are potentially dangerous. The stagecraft employed and the number of people working in very tight spaces often result in accidents and injuries. All of these elements that make up a musical (including budgets) have been magnified greatly at *Spider-Man*.

What has remained a constant in this, my ninth Broadway show, is the high level of commitment and professionalism exhibited by our aforementioned staff and especially our seven (yes, seven!) stage managers. They are Randall White, Kat Purvis, Sandy Franck, Jenny Slattery, Michael Wilhoite, Drew Neal and Theresa Bailey. I go to work eight times a week content in the knowledge that I have a team like this watching my back.

Michael Mulheren

Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered and published as soon as possible. The Editor reserves the right to limit letters to 150 words and to select one or two representative letters when many similar letters are received. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld on request for those letters which may affect members' employment. Signatures will not be withheld on letters antagonistic or accusatory, either implied or expressed, against other members. Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.

AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE

Dear Editor:

I just got back from Madison, WI, where thousands of union members and supporters are marching to support the State's public sector workers and oppose Governor Walker's proposal to strip them of their collective bargaining rights.

This really was an amazing experience, and one I will keep with me for a long time. The feeling of camaraderie and accomplishment, the feeling of belonging to something bigger than just Equity, the show of real emotion and intellectual vigor was a breath, no a hurricane, of fresh air. To use an overused word: AMAZING.

Kudos to Executive Director Mary McColl, our terrific and energetic new leader, who hustled to meet as many of our members as she could while connecting with other labor leaders. I was very proud of her.

Mary and I were joined by Councillors David Girolmo, Dan Mooney and John Atherlay and members of a touring show, as well as AEA members from the Milwaukee area. Led by SEIU, we marched down Wisconsin Avenue towards the Capitol with local IATSE stagehands, firefighters (including bagpipes), cops, nurses, sheet metal workers and the head of the State AFL-CIO.

We chanted on the street and into the building as we crowded into the Rotunda to hear some firebrand speeches. It was protest at its best: spirited but civil, rooted in peace and serious as can be about not letting our rights be stripped away. And fun and inspiring!

Thanks to those who participated. Today, I am one proud Union member, and especially proud of Actors' Equity Association.

Dev Kennedy, Central Regional Vice President

PLEASE HELP

To the Editor:

I recently packed up (almost) all of my theatre books to give to a little village library on Cape Cod—The Marston Mills Public Library. Since I have been a teacher as well as an actress, my collection includes not only scripts, but also books on theatre history, voice, make-up and more.

Maybe you have some books (they don't need to be new) that you could give to this wonderful library, too. If not, feel free to send a donation to help

them put together programs for the community and its schools.

Library director Renee Voorhees says: "We would like to become the Cape Cod resource library for drama and the arts and to invite community theatre groups, drama students, scholars, and patrons of the arts to experience the collection."

If you have some books, please call me at The Drama Book Shop. 212-944-0595 ext. 3. Your contributions are tax deductible. Or contact the library directly: Marstons Mills Public Library, 2160 Main Street, P. O. Box 9, Marstons Mills, MA 02648, 508-428-5175 rvoorhees@clamsnet.org

Nancy Reardon

IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

My mother Anne Diamond Brownstone passed away on January 29, 2011. She starred in hundreds of radio shows opposite every major star including John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart, did screen dubbing for foreign films and wrote and starred on early TV in *Dragnet*, *Burns and Allen*, *The Nurses*, *Tombstone Territory* and others. Well-known in Hollywood as a leading actress at The Pasadena Playhouse, she played opposite James Whitmore, Claire Trevor and Robert Redford; on Broadway; regionally, in stock, and in one season at Arena Stage starred alongside Philip Bosco, Claudette Nevins, Robert Prosky and Alan Oppenheimer as Lady Britomart, *Major Barbara*; Charlotta Ivanovna, *The Cherry Orchard*; Cora, *The Iceman Cometh*; Lady India, *Ring 'Round the Moon*; Gloria, *Three Men on A Horse*. Known to Equity as Assistant to Presidents Theodore Bikel, Ellen Burstyn and Colleen Dewhurst, that role allowed her to raise three children when her husband, stage and company manager Joseph Brownstone, died. She was granted a Lifetime Membership in Equity for her devotion to actors and the Union, but her acting career was equally an achievement.

Diana Brownstone

Musical Quiz

Answers to Musical Quiz (page 6)

1. D
2. E
3. A
4. E
5. A