

Welcome to *Equity News!* To celebrate our 101st birthday, we thought that we would launch our refreshed masthead with the May issue. With the introduction of this slightly new masthead, we have begun our work to bring subtle, yet substantive changes to *Equity News*. You'll notice clean lines, the addition of our social media icons, and a new tagline, "Actors' Equity: Standing Up For Our Members," in this new design. Also, every issue from now on will be in blue, keeping in line with AEA's ongoing branding efforts.

We have brought the position of *Equity News* editor in-house, thereby

creating the new position of "Publication/Website Content Editor." Josh Austin has stepped into the role. Helaine Feldman, the long-time, incredibly devoted former editor of the publication, will still have bylines in future issues. These changes are part of the efforts made by the dedicated Equity News Advisory Committee to improve the ways in which we communicate with the membership - and bringing the editor in-house, in particular, is among the first examples of how the long-range plan created by Council is being implemented.

In solidarity, Christine Toy Johnson Equity News Advisory Committee Chair and Councillor

Executive Director Addresses Members at Annual Meeting

At the April 11th General Membership Meeting, Executive Director Mary McColl addressed the membership, highlighting the implementation of the first stages of the strategy that resulted from the work embarked upon by the Council 18 months ago. She detailed what the membership can expect in the coming months as a result of that work and the work being done by the staff. Below is a transcript of that speech.

Last year we looked back at the remarkable history of Equity and the courageous work that your foremothers and forefathers did to ensure safe and fair working conditions for our members. Not only did the membership work on their own behalf, but they worked as well for social change through every decade of Equity's existence. We are one of only 46 unions that have been recognized by the

Department of Labor for achieving 100 years of service, and we have been able to share with members from across the country congratulations from President Obama for our contributions to the arts and to the nation.

This year is the beginning of the second century of Equity standing up for our members. We have a lot to be proud of, and we have a great foundation to build upon. If you have read my articles in *Equity News* over the past 18 months, you have heard mention of the long-range planning process that your elected leadership has been involved in — that planning is now complete and implementation is at hand. The long-range plan, which focuses on communications and organizing (for both new work and for member mobilization), is full of promise for the future, and Council has approved the funding resources it needs to be

enacted successfully.

Upgrading of infrastructure has been a top priority — and has been going on for the last 18 months — running in tandem with the planning process so we could be prepared for implementation. The first visible outcome of the planning process is the newly reconfigured Member Portal. Now, using responsive web technology, the portal will recognize your smart phone, tablet, laptop or desktop and will provide you with the appropriate experience. Making communication with us easier and allowing us to reach you efficiently is what this plan is all about.

We will continue to work on our infrastructure as we move toward upgrading the full website. Equity's core mission is to negotiate and administer contracts. Our new information system, which is built on a

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Fighting for the Arts

AEA Councillors Travel to Capitol Hill for National Arts Advocacy Day

By Josh Austin

"What's at stake in 2014?" asked Americans for the Arts, the organizer of National Arts Advocacy Day, on its website.

The group's hefty answer: "Between tax reform, budget battles, and education reauthorization, support for arts and arts education is facing many challenges on

Capitol Hill this year."

The annual event, held in Washington, D.C., this year from March 24-25, brought together close to 90 national arts organizations (Actors' Equity Association is a co-sponsor). These groups train and rally — one of this year's messages was "Are you ready to fight for the arts?" — together for the betterment of arts education and culture in America.

"AEA spent time on the Hill reminding Congress that art in America has an economic benefit," said Dev Kennedy, Central Regional Vice President. "Plain and simple, every dollar spent in support of the arts turns in to \$9 generated for a community. The arts are so vital to America."

Part of the two-day event was to allow attendees to "strategize, network and learn" from advocates who have experience with lobbying and speaking to members of Congress.

Accompanying Kennedy to this year's event was Ira Mont, 3rd Vice President and co-chair of the National Public Policy Committee; Marjorie Horne, Councillor and co-chair of the NPPC, Councillor Clarinda Ross and Tom Carpenter, Assistant Executive Director, Eastern Regional Director and general counsel.

"You have a day of training —

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Theodore Bikel Celebrates a Milestone

The Voice and Face of Equity for 60 years is 90

By Helaine Feldman

Having spent more than half of his lifetime involved in the union, it's indisputable that Theodore Bikel, who celebrates his 90th birthday on May 2, has played an important role in Equity's past.

The actor, folksinger, musician, author, raconteur, political activist and union leader, who is a Vienna native, came to the United States in 1954 to appear on Broadway in *Tonight in Samarkand*. He joined Equity that year and hit the ground running — joining committees and lending his voice to significant issues of the day. Aside from being a vocal and effective member of the union's Legislative Committee, Bikel made numerous public appearances during the Equity-League dispute in 1960, which resulted in the establishment of Equity's pension plan. He joined the Council in 1961 as an



interim replacement and subsequently was elected to a five-year term in 1962. In that year, too, he was one of seven incorporators of the Actors Federal Credit Union, who contributed their own money to pay for the charter application.

As First Vice-President from 1964 to 1973, he continued as the face and voice of the union, making numerous trips to Washington, D.C. meeting with government leaders to press for legislative reforms beneficial to the professional actor. As early as 1967, he said, "Equity must redefine itself in terms of unionism in an age of computers."

Clearly, "prophet" could be added to an already impressive résumé.

In 1973, he was elected President, a post he held for nine years. In his farewell address in Los Angeles in 1982, Bikel recalled some successes in the years he headed the

union. He concluded, saying "there might have been many who could have filled my shoes better — but I can imagine no one who would have honored the theatre more, loved this union better or had a more abiding passion for his fellow actors."

"Theo Bikel has had an astonishing career," said Equity President, Nick Wyman. "What is even more astonishing and admirable is the time and energy he has found over the past decades to be a force for good, not only in civil rights, progressive politics and arts advocacy, but also in union leadership. He has served the members of Actors' Equity and actors in general for over 50 years. Happy birthday, Theo — and thank you."

However, Bikel was not just an active union member. He also served as a delegate to the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, was appointed by President Carter to serve a five-year term on the National Council for the Arts and held the

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Area Liaison Hotline system

Call 877-AEA-1913

Equity has a National toll-free hotline system for members who live in Area Liaison and office cities. The number is 877-AEA-1913 (honoring the year of Equity's founding). Each Area Liaison city has its own extension, where members can access news and information in their region.

(1) Dial 877-AEA-1913

(2) Dial your city extension:

811 Atlanta
812 Austin/San Antonio
813 Boston
814 Buffalo/Rochester
815 Chicago
816 Cincinnati/Louisville
817 Cleveland
818 Dallas/Fort Worth
819 Denver
820 Detroit
821 Florida – Central
822 Florida – South
823 Houston
824 Kansas City
825 Las Vegas
826 Los Angeles
827 Milwaukee/Madison
828 Minneapolis/St Paul
829 Nashville
830 New Orleans
831 New York
832 Philadelphia
833 Phoenix/Tucson
834 Pittsburgh
835 San Diego
836 San Francisco
837 Seattle
838 St. Louis
839 Washington DC/Baltimore

Executive Director

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Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform, powers the core business of the Association — from contract administration to dues processing — and it is also the engine behind our email marketing and web presence. As the plan is further implemented, you will see a more robust and agile communication ability. Below are some stats that tell you more about the core business conducted on the website:

Member Portal

- More than 38,000 active members are registered for the Member Portal, which is why we have started there.
- Since last April, we have collected 2.7 million dollars in dues and initiation fees through the Member Portal.
- As we launch the spring dues billing, we have already collected over \$100,000 online before a paper bill has even been sent.
- More than 8,000 members have signed up for paperless billing in the past two years. (If you haven't signed up for paperless billing, please do so. It is quick and saves the Association money.)

Bulk Email

- Since last April we have launched over 240 bulk email campaigns sending nearly 500,000 emails. (AEA averages over 42,000 emails a month with the heaviest traffic during spring and fall.)
- We have an average bulk email open rate of 49 percent. A recent Epsilon (a web intelligence service) report cited a national average open rate of 28.5 percent. (This is a good time for me to remind you to "check your settings" to ensure you are receiving emails from Equity so you can stay informed.)

Contract Administration

- We are the only performing arts union that looks at every individual contract and rider under which our members are employed.
- 9,721 actor and stage manager contracts were entered into our system in 2013.
- There were additionally 17,912 individual parts and increments that were entered associated with those contracts in 2013.

These are some examples of building infrastructure to support our core mission and business. Equity works!

As I mentioned earlier, Council has dedicated the resources needed to implement the plan to better communicate with and increase the involvement of our members. Alongside the upgrade and update of our website technology and content, we are working on other communications strategies. We have hired a new in-house

editor to reimagine *Equity News* and create content for the website. Our technology upgrades will allow us to broaden our social media outreach as well.

Some other immediate communications priorities are:

- A Deputy portal built on responsive technology.
- A blog for outgoing communication (for example, a blog from the President, a blog from a committee chair, a blog from the Executive Director).
- A "live chat" opportunity (potentially implement a two-hour live "Chat with a Councillor," with more ideas in the pipeline).
- We are creating an educational library (podcasts/YouTube videos) of important topics: Labor relations, the business of show business, touring etc. (Go to our YouTube page to see our Centennial videos and watch for a video presentation on touring.)

Member Outreach and Mobilization

- We plan to start quarterly town hall meetings and other gatherings to allow for elected and staff leadership to meet and talk with members in all regions.
- We plan to hire a full time diversity and outreach professional to create strategies for outreach to members from all communities and members who feel disenfranchised. Equity stands up for our members; we need to prove that we stand up for all of our members.
- You will see your business representative out in the places that you are: in the theatre, in the rehearsal studios, in the audition studios. We want you to see us where you are, and it is important for us to see you everywhere that you look for work and where you work.
- We will continue/increase our outreach to touring companies.
- We have scheduled another CTI (Commercial Theater Institute) seminar, "The Business of Show Business," which is scheduled for June 23rd. This seminar is about commercial theatre and touring. We are working with CTI to develop a nonprofit version of this seminar.

The long awaited Hart Survey will be coming your way very soon. I have approved the final version and it is now in the last phase of preparation before distribution. Just a reminder that this survey will go to the entire active membership, with general questions to be answered by all members, and sections that will be directed to working members based on the contracts they have worked in the last three years. Help us stand up for you by taking the survey. Become involved and let us hear your ideas and opinions.

As part of Hart's work for us, they will help to begin the process of preparation for the Production Contract

negotiations by holding a series of focus group meetings in New York City. For members outside of New York, we have included questions about touring in the general portion of the survey.

Some examples of Equity standing up for our members:

- There have been 419 separate and distinct negotiations over the past year, across all three regions. This includes:
 - All multi-employer negotiations, plus
 - All stand-alone negotiations with individual employers/productions, plus
 - agreements that were modeled on a template contract, but required significant modifications to the point where they were actual "negotiations."
- This group is mostly developing theatre and some Off-Broadway. This count does not include codes, special appearance and

guest artist agreements. However, these also take significant time and resources.

In this year alone, we have 23 major contracts and codes to negotiate. This count includes only multi-employer groups and stand-alone agreements. We expect our numbers to be at least as high as last year when we add in developing theatre and Off-Broadway, which happens on a one-off basis. Equity works.

We have a busy year ahead. I look forward to next year's annual meeting where I can report what has been accomplished. Look for #EquityWorks and for "Equity Works" stories through all of our communications platforms. Share your stories with us so we can let your brothers and sisters across the country know how Equity is standing up for you. Thank you all.

Fighting For The Arts

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they brief you on the issues, they tell you what to expect when you go into these meetings, they do some practice meetings," Carpenter said.

The end of the first day culminated with the Nancy Hanks lecture. This year, with an introduction from Alec Baldwin, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Maureen Dowd presented the lecture. Dowd, who has a distinguished writing career with *The New York Times* and *Time Magazine*, spoke about the importance of the arts, and how exposure to the arts informs and enhances viewers' lives.

The attendees divided up into various delegations where they work as a team to strategize and practice speaking with legislators on important issues pertaining to their specific group. In addition to speaking on the importance of arts education, funding and the National Endowment for the Arts, Kennedy said that AEA also focused on white space.

"This is a concern we have around the sale of the bandwidth wireless microphones operate in," Kennedy said. "For us, it's a safety issue. The cost of

repurchasing wireless mics is significant for many of our smaller theatres, and if actors and stage managers can't communicate, the safety of the actor could be at stake."

When it comes to funding the NEA, the Obama administration proposed \$146 million for the 2015 fiscal year.

Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, said in a statement, "The Administration's FY 2015 request...for the National Endowment for the Arts is unfortunately insufficient... Investment in the arts is an investment in our nation's culture, education, and economy."

A major portion of Arts Advocacy Day, and something that AEA's representatives worked on, was strategizing ways to lobby Congress to increase NEA funding to \$155 million, which would match the previous two years' funding (\$154 million).

"It's vital that AEA participate in arts advocacy," Kennedy said. "We tell our story better than anyone else...It's our jobs that suffer when Congress cuts funding to the NEA and NEA grants help a theatre secure additional funding from donors. It's the mark of legitimacy."

Vote in AEA's 2014 Election

Ballots for Equity's 2014 Council election were distributed on April 14, 2014. Members who have registered for a paperless ballot received an email from actorsequityhelp@electionservicescorp.com with directions on how to vote online. All other members have been sent a paper ballot (but still have the option to vote online).

After receiving a paper ballot, if members wish to vote online, they should go to www.esc-vote.com/ae2014 and enter their unique log-in number (from the paper ballot) and Member ID number (printed on the front of Equity membership card, minus the leading zeroes) and follow online voting instructions.

Deadline for receipt of ballots is May 21, 2014. All ballots must be received by the balloting company by 5 p.m. EST.



ACTORS'
EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913

EQUITY NEWS

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Equity's Bonding Policy And How it Works

The Equity bond is one of the Union's cornerstone provisions to protect its members. It has been in place in Equity's contracts for decades, and has been used on numerous occasions to rescue members from defaulting producers or theatres.

Almost all producers are required to post a bond with Equity. (There are a few exceptions, where producers "pre-pay" salaries and benefits, e.g. under the Guest Artist Agreement.) This bond ensures that if an employer defaults in his/her obligations to Equity, you will receive the minimum salary, pension and health credits guaranteed by the agreement (generally two weeks contractual salary and benefits). However, your guarantee is contingent upon the proper filing of your contract.

If you are working under any Equity agreement, you *must* file a signed copy of your contract with Equity no later than first rehearsal. This helps the union to enforce your contract, assuring that your production is properly bonded. Filing contracts in a timely manner takes on even greater significance since Equity has introduced electronic employment contracts, which may be released to producers via email after a bond is secured.

Here's how it works: The amount of bond is determined by whether or not you are employed by a "single unit" producer or a seasonal theatre.

Single Unit Productions
Only single unit productions are fully protected by a bond — to the extent

contracts have been filed with Equity. A single unit production is one that is individually produced (whether by one or more producers) that is not part of a regular season of plays presented by a specific theatre. Production Contract, Cabaret, HAT, BAT and Mini-Contract shows are examples of single unit productions.

Seasonal Theatres

Seasonal theatres post a bond for the largest number of active contracts in a two-week period. Seasonal theatres include all Stock, LORT, Dinner Theatres, Letters of Agreement and Small Professional Theatres.

When Equity receives more contracts than are protected by the bond, the Union demands that additional bond monies be immediately posted (except in summer stock, where the season is too limited and the run of the shows too short for this to be administratively possible). Should the producer fail to increase the bond, the member will have the option of canceling the contract without any further obligation to the employer. Therefore, filing your contract may make the difference in Equity's ability to obtain a bond increase that will protect your contractual guarantees.

If you are employed at a seasonal theatre that defaults, you may receive only the portion of the contract guarantee that is available in the bond. Equity can't make up any difference, but will pursue the defaulting employer legally in an effort to secure the full obligation due to the members.

By Nick Wyman

I am a "New York actor," as opposed to an "L.A. actor" (or a "Seattle actor" or a "Chicago actor" or...). While this places me squarely in the mainstream of Actors' Equity work and Equity member residences, such status has always been secondary to the primacy of the "L.A. actor" in film and television world. This secondary status and the concomitant sense of being patronized by those in L.A., who made their living in feature films and episodic TV, always used to stick in the craw of my fellow NYC commercial actors, particularly those active in our sister unions' governance. Consequently, as your national president, I strive to give focus and attention to the actor who lives outside the NYC area, and particularly the actor who lives outside any of our office city areas.

There are many reasons for one's choice of domicile and the amount of acting work available locally is but one factor. Quality of life, the need to care for aging parents, connections to other family members, a teaching job, the weather, natural beauty, where you grew up, where you went to school, a spouse's job transfer, survival job opportunities: Any one, or a combination of these, can prompt a stage manager or actor to settle down in a city with limited Equity opportunities. I

From the PRESIDENT

One for All, All for One All Over

well understand. Thirty years ago I twice — first while working at the Arena Stage and then while working at the Guthrie — tried to convince my wife to leave NYC and move to D.C. or Minneapolis.

While D.C. and the Twin Cities have relatively robust theatre scenes, many of our other liaison cities have far fewer Equity opportunities. As I traveled the country last year for our Centennial, I encountered many liaison city members who were very hard put to find much Equity work for the "Mosaic" of their life. As I have written before ("Keeping the Faith"), I was moved by their tenacious commitment to acting and to AEA in particular.

That commitment from members to AEA is matched by AEA's commitment to the members. Your staff and your elected leaders are determined to do all they can to increase and improve your work opportunities. The success of the staff, though, is absolutely dependent upon the commitment of the members, particularly outside the office cities.

I experienced two disparate instances of this in the last month. In one instance, an actress was offered good money by a longtime non-Equity employer to do a role. She told the employer she couldn't work without a union contract; and, in an historic first, the employer came to Equity and the union

negotiated an agreement. (Equity Works!) In another instance, a former member posted on his Facebook page that, having "neglected to pay dues for a long time" and therefore faced with a significant cost to restore his union status, he had chosen to go non-Equity and even stay non-Equity when hired as part of the AEA ratio in a show.

One of these members is working for you, and one is working against you. Union strength depends on solidarity. When someone covertly works off the card or drops their Equity membership to work non-Equity, that just makes it that much harder for the union to bring that employer to the table. If the non-Equity employer is offering decent money, we can probably work out an agreement of some sort. And if the employer is not offering decent money, why are you turning your back on your fellow members?

I see, I hear and I experience firsthand how tough a business this is in which to try to get some work, let alone enough to pay the bills. It is an even tougher business in our liaison city communities. Whatever the overall reason for your being in Denver, Dallas, Detroit or wherever, know that Equity stands up for you in this tough business. The All is for the One. And if you are tempted to work non-Equity, don't do it. Don't choose One over All — because We are One. All Over.

Mamma Mia! Heads West Again

Making a second debut in Las Vegas, Mamma Mia! means an increased Equity presence

By Josh Austin

Of the millions of people who travel to Las Vegas to have fun, Jeff Norman is there to work.

Just coming off of an eight-month stint as the Production Stage Manager for the national tour of *Chicago*, Norman is excited to be working on his home turf yet again — taking on a position that he held once before as the PSM for *Mamma Mia!*

The ABBA hit, which had its first run in Vegas from 2003 until 2009 at the Mandalay Bay Hotel & Casino, will make its second Sin City debut at the newly renovated Tropicana under a three-year Special Agreement based on the

Casino Contract this May.

The contract, which governs salary, benefits and works rules, as well as jobs for three stage managers, is based on a seven-show week. Additionally, a relocation allowance has been offered to members of the production, with other options provided.

Las Vegas has been a challenge for Equity theatre on the strip. As the union learns more, Equity continues to improve contracts for Vegas.

"We have a show that's been around for quite a while and it's been successful for our members, and it's going to continue to be successful for our members," said Flora Stamatziades, National Director of Organizing & Special Projects.

For Norman, *Mamma Mia!*'s return to Vegas means Equity standards are making more of an impact in Vegas entertainment.

"The whole market out here used to have very transient employment opportunities," Norman said. "I'm really glad that this show is Equity given the nature of entertainment and non-union positions here. It's really nice to have the Equity presence for the working conditions, things that are covered from pension to health care benefits that, unless you work as a hotel employee, you don't really get."

And, with a continual, strong growth of AEA presence in Vegas, Norman noted that it has been great to meet and work with numerous other Equity members as productions in the



Stage Managers Chris Childs (left), Melanie Katz and Jeff Norman will return to their hometown for the all new production of *Mamma Mia!*, which is set to open this May at the Tropicana Las Vegas on the strip.

area take on AEA contracts — as well as provide employment opportunities for Equity actors and stage managers living in the area.

This current production of the popular show features, not only alumni from previous versions, but AEA members from Vegas and L.A. as well as across the nation.

"It is encouraging that casinos

have faith in sit-down productions like *Mamma Mia!*" Norman said. "A lot of very talented Equity members have decided to make Vegas home. It's so much nicer to be able to work and be working on an Equity contract that's here in Vegas."

After all, as Norman pointed out, "It's nice to be able to sit down at home."

Council Takes Action on Membership Meeting Resolutions

The following three resolutions were among ten passed by the members present in the Eastern Region during the Membership Meeting of January 10, 2014 and the Special Town Hall Membership Meeting of January 27, 2014. These resolutions were then presented to the National Council for consideration at its meeting on February 18, 2014.

Herein are the results of the vote on the first three resolutions from the January 10 and January 27, 2014 meetings.

1) RESOLVED that members of the age 70 or older can request a dues waiver because of low income or indigence and the SUBSTITUTE MOTION that a Member who meets the following criteria may apply for and receive a waiver in yearly dues:

- Has attained the age of 70
- Has been a Member of Actors' Equity for at least 50 years
- Has had no interruption in dues during the 50-year period
- Meets the definition of indigence

Resolution #1 was referred to the Dues Committee for report back at a subsequent Council meeting.

2) RESOLVED that no concession or change be made to any and all active Equity contracts while an Actor is under contract, without majority approval by all Actors currently in the company of said contract.

A roll call vote to deny resolution #2 from the January 10, 2014 Eastern Regional Membership Meeting was taken. These are the results:

In Favor to deny:

Mr. Mont, Ms. Karas, Ms. Robinette, Mr. Applegate, Mr. Bateman, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bundonis, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Cody, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Evans, Ms. Horne, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Knapp, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Moore, Ms. Moreland, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Nicole, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Ms. Slusser, Mr. Smith, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Zaloom, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Girolmo, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bott, Mr. Cahn, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Mr. Ford, Mr. Gammell, Mr. Herzog, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. M. Lee, Ms. Marty, Mr. McDermott, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley, Ms. Ross, Ms. Sharpe-Taylor, Ms. Tross

Opposed:

Mr. Ludwig

Abstentions:

Mr. McMahon

3) RESOLVED that Equity create an easily accessible National Council email directory with headshots and actorsequity.org emails for Council Members on actorsequity.org's Member

Portal.

A roll call vote to approve resolution #3 from the January 10, 2014 Eastern Regional Membership Meeting was taken. These are the results:

In Favor:

Mr. Applegate, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Evans, Ms. Horne, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Ludwig, Ms. Moore, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Nicole, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Ms. Slusser, Mr. Smith, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Zaloom, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Cahn, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Ms. Ford, Mr. Gammell, Mr. Herzog, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. Marty, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahon, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley, Ms. Tross

Opposed:

Mr. Knapp, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Girolmo, Mr. Kaplan

Present but not voting:

Ms. Price, Ms. Karas, Mr. Bateman, Ms. Moreland, Ms. Sharpe-Taylor

The following seven resolutions were passed by members present in the Eastern Region during the Membership Meeting on January 10, 2014 and the Special Town Hall Membership Meeting of January 27, 2014. These resolutions were then presented to the National Council for consideration at its meeting on March 18, 2014.

Herein are the results of the vote of the final seven resolutions.

4) RESOLVED that the agreements and rules set forth in any and all contracts negotiated between Actors' Equity and Theatrical Employers be followed explicitly and without interruption, and in such a case that exceptions are made, an explanation be provided in writing to the involved parties stating the reasoning behind the exception and what steps have or will be taken to ensure the exception is not needed in the future.

Which was amended by the Council to read:

RESOLVED that in such a case where exceptions are made to the agreements and rules set forth in any and all contracts negotiated between Actors' Equity and Theatrical Employers, an explanation shall be provided to the Members under contract stating the reasoning behind the exception.

A roll call vote to approve the amended resolution #4 from the January 10, 2014 Eastern Regional Membership Meeting was taken. These are the results:

In Favor:

Mr. Wyman, Ms. Price, Mr. Mont, Ms. Karas, Ms. Robinette, Mr. Applegate, Mr. Bateman, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bundonis, Ms. Cameron, Mr. Cooper, Mr.

Denmark, Ms. Flender, Ms. Horne, Ms. Ivey, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Jue, Mr. Knapp, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Lehman, Mr. Ludwig, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Moore, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Nicole, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Mr. Smith, Ms. Smith, Mr. Topol, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Williams, Ms. Williams, Mr. Zaloom, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bott, Mr. Cahn, Ms. Daly, Ms. Ford, Mr. Gammell, Ms. Marty, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahon, Mr. Willet

Opposed:

Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Bolender, Mr. Dotson, Mr. Herzog, Ms. Loeb, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley

Abstentions:

Mr. Bogardus, Ms. Cody, Mr. Evans, Mr. Shavzin, Ms. H. Lee

5) RESOLVED to require any new Member to take an Equity educational program detailing union structure, member meetings, how to contact the Union with any concerns, what it means to be an Equity Deputy, how to vote, information on 401(k)s, and pensions.

Resolution #5 was referred to the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the three regional Membership Education Committees and the Entry to Equity Committee.

6) RESOLVED that the following be addressed in the upcoming 2015 Production and 2016 SETA negotiations: that phrases contractually underwritten as assurance of good faith effort like "best

efforts," "reasonable efforts," "not be withheld unreasonably," be omitted from or revised for all future contractual language to prevent the producers from abusing such language.

7) RESOLVED that the following be addressed for the upcoming 2015 Production and 2016 SETA negotiations: on all tours with an overage model, there should be specific caps stipulating which producer expenses are allowed as line items that directly affect overage allotment.

8) RESOLVED that the following be addressed in the 2015 Production and 2016 SETA negotiations: AEA Members should be prohibited from working in creative capacities on any analogous non-union title until a specific timeframe following the closing date of its prevailing analogous Broadway and/or touring AEA production. Said Equity Members would be required to relinquish their Equity status to do so with a specific waiting period before re-admittance beginning post-opening of the aforementioned non-union tour.

10) RESOLVED that Council send the issue of touring physical therapy to the appropriate existing committees for an in-depth discussion.

Resolutions #6, 7, 8 and 10 were referred to the Production Contract Committee and SETA Committee to be considered for negotiations.

9) RESOLVED that any

touring production booked for a run of at least 20 weeks have the opportunity to participate in a Membership Meeting via a secure video conference in a way that Equity has figured out can remain secure. The satellite meeting location should be contained, with paid up current Members that have been released from rehearsal like our brothers and sisters across the country.

A roll call vote to deny resolution #9 from the January 27, 2014 Eastern Regional Membership Meeting was taken. These are the results:

In Favor to Deny:

Mr. Wyman, Ms. Price, Mr. Mont, Ms. Karas, Ms. Robinette, Mr. Applegate, Mr. Bateman, Mr. Bogardus, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bundonis, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Cody, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Denmark, Mr. Evans, Ms. Horne, Ms. Ivey, Mr. Jue, Mr. Knapp, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Nevins, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Ms. Smith, Mr. Smith, Mr. Topol, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Williams, Ms. Williams, Mr. Zaloom, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Shavzin, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Mr. Bott, Mr. Cahn, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Mr. Gammell, Mr. Herzog, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. Loeb, Ms. Marty, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahon, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley, Mr. Willet

Opposed:

Ms. Borts, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Ludwig, Ms. Moore, Ms. Nicole, Ms. Ford

A LOOK BACK

75 Years Ago May 1939

Equity magazine reminds members that as the opening of the New York World's Fair gets closer, and it appears that Equity members will be approached for regular work in television, that "jurisdiction over the field of television rests with the Actors' Equity Association, as it has for more than nine years."

50 Years Ago May 1964

Equity reports that "General Motors has agreed to discuss with the Seven Arts Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the hiring of Negroes in its Industrial Shows." Equity had urged the company to meet with the chapter as the union's contract with producers of Industrial Shows specifically prohibits discrimination and segregation.

Approximately 440 members are showcased through Equity Library Theatre (the Equity-

sponsored showcase group) during the 1964 season, which is ELT's 20th season. The ELT office reports that 70 percent of the actors who appeared during the season received calls for work as a direct result of their ELT appearance.

(Equity Library Theatre was established to give Equity members a place to showcase their talents. The productions were first staged in public libraries of New York. As Off-Broadway developed, audience attendance declined because of the strong competition and proliferation of showcase productions in Manhattan, signaling the end of ELT's importance. New York City's ELT closed early in the 1989-1990 season; ELT was established in Chicago in 1952 and continues to thrive.)

Frederick O'Neal is elected president of Equity for a term of three years; Ralph Bellamy is named President Emeritus.

25 Years Ago May 1989

A special Council meeting is called to consider a proposal for National Representation.

Action on the proposal is to come in September.

10 Years Ago May 2004

Equity celebrates its 90th anniversary with a huge celebration at the Player's Club, where 90 years before the founding members of AEA had met secretly to discuss plans to form a union.

New experimental pre-signup principal audition rules take effect in Los Angeles.

Equity, AFTRA and SAG celebrate diversity at a major event in Los Angeles; eleven "pioneers" are honored, including several Equity members.

The New York City Council, the Central Labor Council and the American Federation of Musicians support Equity in its negotiations for a new Production Contract.

As Production Contract talks continue, Council unanimously votes to issue a Strike Authorization Ballot, allowing the Council to call a strike based on the negotiating team's recommendation if it becomes necessary.

Theodore Bikel

continued from page 1

position of Senior Vice President of the American Jewish Congress. Additionally, Bikel was Vice President of the International Federation of Actors (FIA) and has served as President of the Associated Actors and Artists of America (4As) since 1987. His autobiography, *Theo*, was published in 1995.

His professional career has been equally stellar. On the Great White Way, he appeared in *The Rope Dancers*, *The Lark* and the original Broadway production of *The Sound of Music* (he created the role of Baron von Trapp and received a Tony nomination). He also has played the role of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* more than 2,100 times over a 42-year period. Films include *The Defiant Ones*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination as

Best Supporting Actor; *The African Queen*, *My Fair Lady*; *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming*; and dozens more. In 2005, he was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

He has appeared with opera companies around the country, received an Emmy for his work on TV, has recorded many albums of contemporary and folk songs and has received numerous honors and awards — not to mention that he is fluent in more than half a dozen European and Middle Eastern languages (and sings folk songs in nearly 20 languages often accompanying himself on guitar, mandolin, balalaika and harmonica).

As Equity President Emeritus and President of the Four As — and with a full schedule of concerts and appearances — even at the age of 90, Bikel shows little sign of slowing down.

CRB to Fill Seven Non-Councillor Seats

As per the By-Laws of Actors' Equity Association, the Central Region will be electing seven non-Councillor seats for the 2014 Election. Only members living in the Central Region are eligible to run and to vote for these positions.

The following 2-year seats are available: four Principal Seats, one Chorus Seat and one Stage Manager Seat. A 1-year Chorus Seat is also available.

All Candidates must meet the same eligibility requirements in their category as Councillors in their category. If you wish to be considered for any of the above seats, please submit your candidacy according to the following schedule:

Tuesday, May 27, 2014

Candidate packets available by contacting the Central Regional Office

Wednesday, July 9, 2014
Deadline for nominations by independent petition. Petition and administrative forms due in the Chicago office by 3 p.m. CDT

Monday, July 14, 2014
Deadline for **all** Candidate Statements and headshots to be received in the Chicago office is 3 p.m. CDT

Monday, August 4, 2014
Deadline for mailing of ballots*
Tuesday, September 2, 2014
Deadline for return of ballots to the Chicago office is 2:30 p.m. CDT

Wednesday, September 3, 2014 or Friday, September 5, 2014
Tellers' Committee picks up ballots and tabulates results

Monday, September 8, 2014
Report of Tellers' Committee to

the Central Regional Board and Seating of New Board Members

*In accordance with the Equity By-Laws, should there be no contest among candidates for listed seats, the nominee(s) shall be deemed elected without need for a ballot.

For a CRB non-Councillor candidate packet, contact Jayne Spring at jspring@actorsequity.org or 312.641.0393 ext. 242.

Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed on Monday, May 26, 2014 in observation of Memorial Day. In addition, all offices will close early on Friday, May 23, 2014. (Check with your local office for the early closing time.)



Eastern Region

Actor's Theatre of Charlotte: Local, Professional, Exceptional

“Actor's Theatre of Charlotte is an incredible asset to Charlotte and working there literally changed my life,” said Equity member Charlotte Kate Fox, who starred in the company's production of *Venus in Fur*. “I haven't been the same since working at ATC and look forward to the chance to work with them again.”

If it had not been for Equity, ATC and Fox would never have met.

As ATC nears the end of its 25th season, those affiliated with the company can't help but reminisce. Dan Shoemaker, Executive Director, recalled the founding moment: “On April 17, 1989, four actors and I met in a pizzeria to discuss the future of theatre in Charlotte. We resolved to make a go of it, and we called ourselves the Actor's Theatre of Charlotte.”

Since then, ATC has dodged snake bites with its inaugural production of *Holy Ghosts* by Romulus Linney and commissioned the play *Southern Rapture*, by Eric Coble, about the local political storm that surrounded a production of *Angels in America* in Charlotte, and it has grown into a standard bearer for the local theatre community, despite its modest beginnings.

In 1990, ATC produced shows in a small, second floor acting studio with 68 seats. Four short years later, it moved into a 180-seat theatre in Charlotte's Spirit Square



Venus in Fur at ATC with J.R. Adduci as Thomas and Charlotte Kate Fox as Vanda. Photo: George Hendricks

performing venue. For the next ten years, it thrived in that space by producing provocative works and initiating practices that are now commonplace in the community. ATC was the first theatre company to offer a Pay What You Can night, enabling those who could not commit to a full-price ticket the opportunity to see live theatrical productions. Accessibility and quality have always been cornerstones of ATC's approach to theatre.

The Artistic Director, Chip Decker, said “I am always looking for ways to make our product better, to keep our audiences entertained, enlightened and engaged. It's no secret that at the heart of any production is the actor.”

ATC believes this commitment to its actors is furthered by its Equity affiliation. Over the past 25 years, ATC has become a

professional theatre that not only promises audiences “bold, new and innovative productions,” but also promises actors more opportunities to showcase their artistry. Carrie Cranford, Equity member and ATC's Production Manager, joined the crew 15 years after ATC's founding and shares its dedication to this mission.

“When I joined the team, its vision was still going strong,” Cranford said. “As we prepare to enter the 26th season, it's the same. No settling. Just a drive to show audiences what's new and innovative.”

This drive helped ATC begin its Equity partnership in 2011 and it has continued to positively impact the artistic community by providing better paid production opportunities to its actors.

“I've seen ATC offer Charlotte artists something they need and deserve: an

Equity theatre, setting that professional standard in the community,” Cranford added. “It has really raised the bar for everyone.”

The most recent addition to ATC programming has been the development of new works through its nuVoices festival. Four plays are given script-in-hand staged readings; from that, one will be selected for production on the mainstage the following year. This weeklong festival hires more than 60 theatre

professionals, many of whom are local Equity actors.

For AEA member Brandi Feemster, who was reserved in her expectations of professional theatre in the Carolinas, ATC turned her opinions around when she realized that the company produces new works (her first introduction with ATC was *Clybourne Park*). Like Cranford, many of those connected with the theatre believe its partnership with Equity has helped local artists.

Fortunately, ATC has been able to bring opportunities to younger actors as well. It continues its commitment to fostering talent by holding open auditions and even scouting local high school productions.

“I was still a college student when I was cast as Darren Lemming in the production of *Take Me Out* in 2004,” Equity member Jeremy DeCarlos said when reflecting on his own beginnings at ATC. “Actor's

Theatre challenges its audiences with stories that are new, contemporary and sometimes unconventional. ATC isn't just keeping theatre alive, it's keeping theatre relevant.”

That's why ATC lives up to providing a theatrical home for the bold and the new.

By the way, Meet Vera Stark at ATC with Brandi Feemster as Vera Stark and Caroline Bower as Gloria Mitchell. Photo: George Hendricks





NATIONAL NEWS



Sean Taylor, Central Regional Director, Meredith Long, NOLA Liaison Vice Chair, and Christian Hains, Senior Business Rep for Central Region at the Big Easy Awards. Photo Credit: John Bostic

New Orleans

The Central Regional Director, Sean Taylor, and Christian Hains, Chicago's senior business representative for the Central Region, recently made a three-day trip to New Orleans to meet with area members and introduce Taylor to the membership.

On March 23, the two men were joined by the National Director of Organizing &

Special Projects, Flora Stamatiades, as the three then went to dinner with members of the New Orleans Liaison Committee, followed by the NOLA Annual Membership Meeting.

The discussion, which had 27 members in attendance from the Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Northshore areas, included the upcoming NOLA Contract renewal and the

current state of theatre in Southern Louisiana. Tony Award winner Michael Cerveris and "Treme" star, Lance E. Nichols, discussed the business of entertainment and the power of saying "no."

Both Taylor and Hains spent two days meeting with members and getting acquainted with the community in preparation for the upcoming NOLA negotiations. On March 24, the two men attended — along with Liaison chair John Bostic, Vice-Chair and Big Easy winner Meredith Long and AEA member and Big Easy Lifetime Achievement award-winner Carol Sutton — the New Orleans' Big Easy Theater Awards, which was celebrating the 2013 theatre season. During the ceremony, the host, an AEA member and Big Easy winner, Leslie Castay, recognized the AEA guests with a special shout out.

Members Maryann Hillyer, Chaney Tullos, Katherine McClain, Tom Capps, Janet Shea and Richard Arnold helped make the visit and meeting possible.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Pittsburgh's City Theatre Supports BC/EFA's Efforts in Pa.

Equity members from across the country continue to join Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS in its efforts.

Equity stage manager Patti Kelly from the City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, Pa. always makes sure the theatre gets involved.

"Any time I'm working on a show I try to get everyone involved," said Kelly.

Her latest production of *2 Pianos 4 Hands* raised \$4,755 in three weeks of collections, a record for the theatre. Actors Bob Stillman and Christopher Tocco impressed the audiences with their piano talents, and then tugged on



their heartstrings after each show as fundraising became a group effort with this dynamic team of three when both actors would move from the stage to the lobby after the show.

"It's such an important opportunity to help support our colleagues across the

country and many more in the local community," added Kelly. "I look forward to the opportunity whenever it comes up."

In 2013, BC/EFA awarded \$55,000 to five social service agencies in Pittsburgh and another \$200,000 to 16 others.



Back row (L to R) Ron Keaton, Suzanne Petri, Michael Fosberg. Front row (L to R) David Rice, Will Rogers, Sharon Evans

Chicago

Three-Part Solo Series Culminates with Producing Tools

By Diane Dorsey, Chair, Solo Workshop Committee

"Riding the Solo Express" concluded a three-part series of Solo Performance Workshops on March 29, focusing this third installment on various tools for producing a successful one-person show.

Part one, which took place in Feb. 2010, addressed how to get started and stay committed. During part two (Oct. 2011), artists performed pieces-in-development with professional coaches offering further directions to be explored.

Moderator Ron Keaton guided an outstanding panel which included performers Michael Fosberg ("Incognito"), Suzanne Petri (award-winning cabaret artist), director/producers Sharon Evans (Fillet of Solo Festival, Live Bait Theatre), Will Rogers (curator "Fresh Squeezed Series," Victory Gardens) and David Rice, Co-founder/Executive Director, First Folio Theatre. In a lively give-and-take, they offered a wealth of information, elucidating such issues as self-producing pitfalls, pros and cons of co-producing, how to approach established

theatres, building a website, funding sources, creative marketing, accessing booking conventions, Equity contracts/agreements, using a Paymaster, promo packages and finding audiences.

Members who attended the panel had this to say about the evening:

"[It was an] incredible panel...informative, insightful and inspirational," said Dale Calandra.

"Having been on this one-man journey now for almost 12 years, eight under AEA contract, I feel like a road warrior. Always happy to help others...Glad to have been part of something that was super informative," said Fosberg, a panelist on the workshop.

Afterward, 28 artists signed up to receive information on future events, proving Solo interest and energy continues to grow in Chicago.

The following members of the Solo Performance Sub-Committee helped make the evening possible: Will Clinger, Madeleine Fallon, Ronald Keaton, Carrie Lee Patterson, Richard Shavzin and Fredric Stone.



Kyle Anderson speaks to a crowd of stage managers at Second City e.t.c. Photo Credit: Cynthia Hanks

Chicago

The Central Region Stage Managers Committee continued its Stage Management Booth Series with a visit to the Second City e.t.c. theatre and stage manager booth on March 31,

2014. The Booth Series gives members an opportunity to visit local Equity theatres, tour the facilities and meet the staff. The next booth visit will be at the Steppenwolf Theatre at 11 a.m. on April 28, 2014.

New York

Broadway Backwards Raises a Record Breaking \$423,182 for BC/EFA and the LGBT Center

The sold-out audience at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre was filled with laughter, tears and cheers during the unforgettable ninth annual edition of Broadway Backwards on March 24, raising a record-breaking \$423,182 to benefit Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City.



1

Broadway Backwards brings together two organizations each with their own rich histories working with and providing support for services to Equity members. Events like this are proof for social service and fundraising organizations everywhere of the power of collaboration and the exponential impact of shared resources.

Highlights of this year's event included *Kinky Boots*' star Billy Porter turning the show upside down with his powerhouse rendition of Kander and Ebb's "But The World Goes 'Round" from *New York, New York* (2); Andrew Keenan-Bolger delivering a fierce rendition of *Kinky Boots*' wildly popular "The History of Wrong Guys," complete with a guest appearance by *Kinky Boots*' other leading man, Andy Kelso (3). Beth Leavel, giddy with excitement at the prospect

of sharing a common interest with a new love, performed in a high-spirited version of "She Likes Basketball" from



2

Promises, Promises (4). Patricia Morison, the original "Kate" in *Kiss Me, Kate* who turned 99 years old just days before the show, basked in the audience's adoration and stole the hearts with her humility before sharing a witty and



3

flawless take on "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" (5). Michael Berresse and Tony Yazbeck stopped the show with a stunning recreation of the classic "Nowadays/Hot Honey Rag" from Kander and Ebb's long-running *Chicago* (6), and Norm

Lewis, who brought the first act to a close, received a rapturous response for his rendition "Home" from *The Wiz* (7).

The evening also included memorable performances by Uzo Aduba, Kyle Dean Massey, Debra Monk, John Tartaglia and Max



4

von Essen, among others. Creator and AEA member Robert Bartley wrote, directed and choreographed the evening with music supervision by Mary-



5



6

Mitchell Campbell and music direction by Tim Rosser. Additional choreography was provided by Amy Jones and Melissa Rae Mahon. Peter Lawrence, who led a team of 14 Equity stage managers, worked expertly in rehearsals and behind the scenes.



7

Photo Credit: Kevin Thomas Garcia



Syracuse, N.Y.

In Upstate New York, Some Holiday Cheer with the Spring Thaw

Since beginning its long commitment to giving back, Syracuse Stage in Syracuse, N.Y. has raised more than \$305,000 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and two other local social service organizations, The De Palmer House and The Pediatric AIDS Center.

Its most recent effort raised another \$25,000 when the Stage's company of *A Christmas Carol* asked audiences to reach into their hearts, providing all three organizations with an \$8,350 gift this spring.


"At first I was nervous to ask the audience for more money after they'd just paid for tickets," said Equity member Steven Hendrickson — who played

Scrooge — "but they surprised me with their generosity and I began to really look forward to it. We sent our young actors into the lobby with buckets," he added. "They really took to it, always bringing in more than the adults."

Originally, the company planned to use a rotating group of actors to do the appeal, but they soon realized that a softened Scrooge was more effective.


"I gave a brief history of BC/EFA and made sure to emphasize that money raised is always shared with local organizations," he said.

Since 2000, BC/EFA has granted \$45,000 to Syracuse social service agencies.



How I Got My Equity Card

Elizabeth Ramos



I was "poofed," according to Michael Legg anyway. I had just graduated from Cal State Fullerton with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and no clue what to do next.

Sure enough, my mentor and good friend John Short came to the rescue and told me to audition for an apprenticeship at Actors Theatre of Louisville in Kentucky. It was during one of

our weekly meetings at ATL that Legg, director of the apprentice program, revealed the options of how to get an Equity card. The first, and least likely, was to somehow gain employment under an Equity contract, in which case I would be "getting poofed."

After completing the apprenticeship and showcase, I made the big move from Los

Angeles to New York. I signed with Wolf Talent Group and went in for an audition at Stephanie Klapper Casting for the Off-Broadway show, *Bikeman* — written by Thomas Flynn, directed by Michael Bush — and booked the part. At this point I had no clue what was happening, much less that I had just booked a role under an Equity contract. It was not until the first day of rehearsal, as I sat at the table still confused, watching the others vote for an Equity Deputy (a term I had never heard in my life), that I thought, "Oh snap, I've been poofed!"

Aside from Bikeman, Elizabeth Ramos' credits include Sleep Rock Thy Brain, Romeo and Juliet, Odilia, and Sonnets for an Old Century.

BRIEF NOTES

- The Blue Star Theatres Program for military families has grown to 108 participating theatres (including many AEA theatres) in 35 states. The program, partnered by Theatre Communications Group and Blue Star Families, sponsors a variety of theatre offerings to military personal and their families across the United States, including unique programming, special

- discounts and more.
- Equity member Ronald Rand recently returned from his third Goodwill Tour across India in his solo play, *Let It Be Art!*, in which Rand plays writer/director/critic and co-founder of the Group Theatre, Harold Clurman. Rand also spent six weeks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, performing, and as a Fulbright Teaching Specialist chosen by the U.S. State Department.
- Joe Dowling, the longest-tenured artistic director in the

- history of the Guthrie Theater, has announced his retirement following the 2014-2015 season. At that time, he will have completed 20 years in the post.
- Life Imitates Art Department: Former Equity President Mark Zimmerman (2006-2009) is in the Broadway musical, *Rocky*, understudying the role of Mickey, Rocky's manager. In the original film version, upon which the play is based, Mickey was played by Burgess Meredith, acting President of Equity (1937-1938).

Famous Activists are Remembered for Women's History Month

By Pearl Brady

On March 24th, Actors' Equity Association's Equal Employment Opportunity Committee sponsored *Celebrate Women's History Month 2014* — an event that featured excerpted performances from one-woman shows about the lives of five female activists.

EEO Committee and Equity member Sharon Hope, who portrayed the late U.S. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, organized the event. The occasion also featured Equity members Richarda Abrams as Mary McLeod Bethune, the American educator and civil rights leader who served as an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Shigeko Sara Suga as Ulrike Meinhof, the radical left-wing militant who started out as a journalist and became one of the founders of the Red Army Faction in 1970s Germany; and Dorothy Leeds, who portrayed both Eleanor Roosevelt, the longest-serving First Lady of the U.S. and first chair of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and Empress Wu Zetian, the only woman in Chinese history to rule as emperor. The evening was directed by Passion, a member of the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, and Rosita Timm served as stage manager.

"For a while I've been wanting to celebrate various women, particularly women of color who very seldom get recognition, for any number of reasons," Hope said. "When the EEO Committee had the meeting accepting proposals for various tributes and celebrations throughout the year, I felt that a proposal to celebrate unrecognized females would be appropriate."



Standing (L to R): Sharon Hope, Passion (director), Shigeko Sara Suga, Rosita Timm. Sitting (L to R): Richarda Abrams, Dorothy Leeds.

Some of the actors involved in the show have written their own one-woman play out of admiration for their respected character.

"Since I admire Shirley Chisholm, I decided I would like to represent some part of her life," said Hope. "I had already seen a presentation of Mary McLeod Bethune by Richarda Abrams, so I asked her to participate...I sent out an email regarding the event and Richarda responded by referring Dorothy Leeds and Shigeko Sara Suga."

The evening culminated in a Q-and-A and talkback session with the audience.

"The added bonus was the enthusiastic audience response to the work and the talkback," Passion said. "The event was educational, entertaining and diverse — an exciting experience for all. I was honored to be part of it."

Since 2011, the Eastern EEO Committee has used a proposal and voting process for all EEOC-sponsored events.

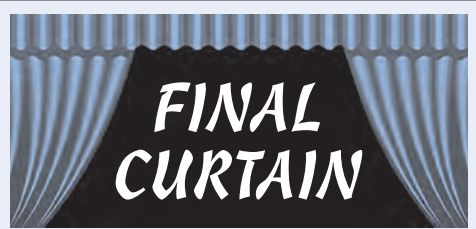
"In an effort to take a proactive approach to organizing and streamlining our EEO initiatives, we now hold annual programming meetings with full

Committee participation," said Christine Toy Johnson, Eastern EEO Committee co-chair.

Each event must be proposed with an overview of the event, a line-item budget, and a description of how it will promote employment opportunities for members of an underrepresented group, and/or educate the membership in a way that supports the employment of Members of an underrepresented group.

"We've found that this approach — including setting guidelines for the intended mission that our events should achieve, as well as parameters for protocol — has given our programming more focus and diversity, and has enabled us to plan efficiently within our budget," Johnson said. "Since we implemented this way of planning, we have had many highly successful initiatives, which have all been met with great attendance and interest from the membership."

"I felt the evening was a success," Hope said of the Women's History Month celebration. "And from the comments I heard after the post-discussion, everyone left with 'food for thought.'"



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

—Playwright Ben Hecht

(Reported between 01-10-2014 and 10-20-2014)

Georgia Allen
Larry G. Bailey
Kristina Baker
Fran Barnes
Jim Beard
Marilyn Beck
James V. Beecher
Patrick Benton
Robert Andrew Bonnard
Richard Bradshaw
Jane Bray
William Joseph Brookes
Vince Bruce
James M. Burns
Sidney Caesar
Fred Carmichael
Robert F. Chew
T. G. Cody
Joe Conley
Charles Cooper
Roy Cooper
Jack Davison
Jacqueline Decosmo
Karren Dille
Hal Douglas
Dennis D. Driskill
Bill Erwin
Roland Evans
Toni Fleming
Geoffrey G. Forward
Horace Foster, Jr.
Ruth Clark-Everitt Froelich
Faith Geer
Frank M. Gero
Buddy Gilbert
Harry Gorsuch
W. H. Graham
Rome F. Harbinson
Noel Harrison
James Michael Hayes
Philip Seymour Hoffman
Robertia Hyland
Joe Israel
Mitchell Jason
Russell D. Johnson
Jane Kean
Robert Kino
Claudia Knowles
Charles Koehn
Carl Kowalkowski

Wilfred La Voie
Ed Lauter
Margaret Leary
John Luce
Sheila Mac Rae
Jo Alessandro Marks
Jessica Marlowe
Virginia Mattis
Curtis Mc Clarin
Charles McGowan
Joanna McHugh
Paul Milkin
Carol R. Mitchell-Leon
Daniel Mooney
Betty Moore
Leo J. Muller
Estella M. Munson
Tony Musante
Laurence H. O'Dwyer
Michael O'Hare
Luis C. Oropeza
Chuck Patterson
Jackie Jay Patterson
Larry Pennell
Raleigh Raganas
Harold Ramis
James R. Rebhorn
Dorothy Roberts
Mickey Rooney
Judy Sabo
Sara Sallitto
Jean Scherfler
Bob Sheppard
Brian G. Smiar
James Smock
Luke Stallings
Teena Starr
J. D. Steel
Guy Strauss
Nancy Taylor
Lila Teigh
Bob Tracey
Peter Umbras
David K. Varnay
Ed Vassallo
George F. Vogel
Ralph H. Waite
Scott Winters
Carmen Zapata

Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid-up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered for publication in *Equity News*, provided that they are no greater than 175 words in length. Letters selected for publication may be edited for space requirements. Actors' Equity Association reserves the right to decline to publish letters at its sole discretion. When multiple letters on the same topic are submitted, the Editor may decide to select a smaller number of representative letters for publication. Letters must be signed and must provide preferred contact information for verification purposes, but names may be withheld from publication in certain limited circumstances, at a member's request. Opinions expressed in *Letters to the Editor* are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.

THANK YOU

Dear Editor:

This is a long overdue "thank you" to Equity League (Health Fund).

In 1977, our son was born prematurely and required a fairly lengthy hospital stay. Fortunately, he caught up, grew up and is now a vital member of the theatre community.

The hospital expenses our son incurred were considerable, and left these two young Equity members facing the reality of paying the bill. The weight of this

commitment made us reconsider our career options. Did we need to sacrifice our theatre lives and face the world of the "real job"? Then, we received a phone call from Thomas Mallon at Equity League. He was calling to tell us that our son's expenses were completely covered under our Equity insurance. We were grateful beyond words. Mallon went out of his way to guide us as we learned to navigate the system. How incredibly lucky we were.

Thank you to everyone at

Equity League, past and present, but especially, Thomas Mallon.

Priscilla and Preston Boyd

IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

"Try it, you'll like it!" My friend Jack Aaron is gone.

Jack was not an easy man to know — Jack was not an easy man to take. There, I got that out of the way.

For all you young'uns, he was the little guy that sat on the first bench as you enter the Equity audition center. He was the guy

you got into a conversation with and would tell you the same story over and over and over.

He was also an extremely talented actor. I saw him do a wonderful job as Dr. Spivey in the Off-Broadway production, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He played "Doc" in several productions of *West Side Story* around the country. Jack appeared in "M*A*S*H" and "Kojak" and hundreds of TV commercials.

Anyone connected with the Off-Broadway scene in the '70s knew Jack. He was the quintessential New Yorker, "Yo." His "Try it, you'll like it," Alka-Seltzer commercial is a classic. The same could be said for Mr. Aaron. Now, please Jack, RIP.

George Hosmer

Dear Editor:

I was greatly saddened to

learn that one of my most gifted actor clients and friend —

Ronald Hunter — had recently died. As his East Coast agent for almost two decades, I was most proud to be his representative. His work was always creative and outstanding. Whenever I would leave New York to catch one of his many out-of-town performances, I just knew I was in line for a treat.

Our ongoing Red Sox/Yankee feud notwithstanding, I will continue to miss his warm friendship, sense of humor, that distinctive smoky voice and his genuine talent to move audiences to tears of joy or pain. Anyone who had the good fortune to know and/or work with him will recall what a very special person he was.

May he rest in peace.

Marvin Starkman