

Annual Membership Meeting is Friday, April 12, 2013

The Eastern, Central and Western Regions will be connected by telephone hook-up for the April 12, 2013 Annual Meeting so 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 pm (Eastern Time), 1:30 pm (Central Time) and 11:30 am (Pacific Time).

The meeting in the **EASTERN REGION** will convene at 2 pm (EST) 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.)

The meeting in the **CENTRAL REGION** will convene at 1 pm (CST) in the Member Center on the 1st Floor of the Equity Building, 557 West Randolph Street, 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 am (PST) in the Bellamy Board Room on the 5th Floor of the Equity Office, 6755 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA

The agenda will also include the following:

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

Your Income Tax

Are We Having Fun Yet? And Other Tidbits To Help You Navigate Audits

By Sandra Karas
Director, VITA Program

Job Satisfaction

Here is the audit scenario: The IRS examiner completes reviewing copious piles of receipts, bank statements, contracts, itineraries, income verification, per diem payments and the professional union

member's dozens of receipts for business expenses deducted on the subject's return. The auditor issues a recommendation that results in denial of most of the ordinary and necessary expenses incurred by our fellow member in the production of the member's work. Yours truly (Sandra Karas) is on the phone in an effort to appeal the auditor's recommendation. The examiner suggests that 1) The expenses are not required by the employer; 2) The member has not presented sufficient documentation to justify each expense; 3) (And furthermore, the examiner adds a query, to wit) "But she enjoys her job, right? She has fun doing this." This seemed to suggest that if one derives pleasure, enjoyment, even fun from one's vocation, it isn't a real job, or worthy of serious consideration relative to the expenses attached to its pursuit.

Yes, I felt the familiar frustration and impatience rise again, but this was not the first time I have discussed an artistic career with an IRS agent. As we all have, I have encountered this kind of patronizing approach to the arts at many levels over the years. In an audit, however, I endeavor to argue the facts as well as the merits of an artist's

Equity Receives National Charter from AFL-CIO

Charter Presented by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka at American Federation of Labor's Annual Executive Council Meeting

On Tuesday, February 26, 2013, Actors' Equity Association received an historic national charter in its centennial year from the AFL-CIO.

The direct charter, which was given at the morning session of the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting, makes AEA the 57th labor organization to receive the distinguished honor of formal association with the national federation of American unions. Representing Equity were First Vice President Paige Price, Executive Director Mary McColl and Assistant Executive

Director/Eastern Regional Director and General Counsel Tom Carpenter.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka presented the charter to AEA First Vice President Price and Executive Director McColl. Joining President Trumka at the presentation were Vice President Arlene Holt-Baker, Secretary Elizabeth Shuler and members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, representing

unions across industries and the nation.

"For nearly 100 years,

stronger association in the labor community in various industries across the country and strengthens Equity's position among the other entertainment unions. The affiliation means Equity will have a voice in discussions concerning various issues — health, pension,



Shown with Equity's new national charter from the AFL-CIO are: (l to r) AFL-CIO Secretary Elizabeth Shuler, Executive Director Mary McColl, First Vice President Paige Price, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO Vice President Arlene Holt-Baker.

Actors' Equity has stood for excellence in the American theatre, and for dignity, fairness and respect for stage actors and managers," said President Trumka. "Today Equity has affirmed those values as well as its affiliation with all of American labor, and we are happy to be presenting this great union with a new AFL-CIO charter."

The direct charter to the AFL-CIO provides Equity with a

wages, safe working conditions and more. Equity will also be part of AFL-CIO's annual conferences, and executive meetings.

Accepting the charter on behalf of the Union, First Vice President Paige Price thanked President Trumka and members of the Council and said: "For all of us, receiving the direct charter on the threshold of our

(continued on page 2)

claim to deductions allowed under the Code — the lawful reduction of the theatrical artist's income by those expenses that are ordinary and necessary in pursuing and maintaining the career. So, I carefully responded. "I assume you also enjoy your



work and gain great satisfaction from performing your job well." She was silent for a moment and then answered, "Well, yes." I said, "Then, I would suggest that this taxpayer has chosen a career with much the same care as you and derives as much satisfaction from it. However, unlike you, the taxpayer must spend thousands of dollars each tax year in order to maintain job

skills and regularly seek employment, as the lengths of the employment contracts are generally limited."

This is not an isolated incident. I have had dozens of such conversations over the years with IRS agents and have tried to educate them as to the nature of our work. Ultimately, we achieve favorable determinations for members in most cases, but it is never easy. What it teaches us is that, regardless of how seriously you pursue the business, your work is often considered something of a hobby. You go to work when most people finish for the day. You toil for something that they consider recreation. You create their relaxation. Such is the nature of entertainment. Such is the nature of effort, training, discipline and skill that you must use to provide that entertainment product. So, we continue to educate those who would judge us, especially those whose judgments can affect our tax liabilities!

As you prepare your tax returns, also prepare them to be examined by someone who

knows nothing about who you are and what you do. Keep good records, your contracts, itineraries, playbills, photos, trade publications, and a detailed calendar of auditions, interviews, classes, and receipts of everything you wish to deduct on your returns. Remember that there is no basic understanding of how you spend your money, only the requirement that you can prove you spent it! Add to that your preparedness to explain what the heck you do each day, whether working or not, and you will be in good stead if an audit examination notice should arrive in your mailbox.

(continued on page 3)

Index

Equity receives national charter from AFL-CIO.....	1
Your income tax	1
From the President.....	3
Centennial feature:	
Women in Equity	6
National News	8
Letters	12



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

Equity Receives Charter

continued from page 1

100th anniversary renews our commitment to working on behalf of our members and all Americans to create a workplace where there is fairness and dignity for everyone. Theatre is a union-made industry - from the IATSE stagehands, to the musicians of the AFM, to the Operating Engineers and everyone in between, Equity members stand proudly among our brothers and sisters. On this stage, here among all of you today, is perhaps the most important step in Equity's history. This charter represents the next act for our 49,000 members and Equity's future."

History infused the occasion. Equity's first charter was granted on July 18, 1919 through the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (4As). A few weeks later, the fledgling union called a nationwide strike. On August 26, AFL President Samuel Gompers came to an Equity membership meeting and pledged his support: "Whatever influence or power there may be in the great American Federation of Labor to help you, rest assured that power and influence is behind you until the end."

Executive Director Mary McColl read a message from President Nick Wyman who was in rehearsals and unable to attend. The message read: "One wouldn't necessarily think

of stage actors and stage managers as union members but Actors' Equity Association has a long and proud history of being part of the labor movement. It is a cornerstone in Equity's foundation and we are pleased to receive this direct charter in this, our 100th year. To quote our first President Francis Wilson, 'Our trail is out of the wilderness and that trail is affiliation with organized labor.'"

SAG-AFTRA Co-Presidents Roberta Reardon and Ken Howard spoke before the Executive Council and congratulated Equity. Privately, many Executive Council members, including IATSE President Matt Loeb, Veda Shook (Association of Flight

Attendants-CWA), and Randi Weingarten (American Federation of Teachers) spoke with Price and McColl, congratulating them and welcoming Equity to the AFL-CIO as a directly chartered union.

Later in the evening, a reception was held at which the AFL-CIO again celebrated Equity. Paige Price spoke briefly about the Union, reaffirming Equity's commitment and noting that the entertainment field is among the most heavily unionized industries in the nation. Price, McColl and Carpenter were joined at the reception by AEA Orlando staff members Brian Spitzer, Doug Truelsen, Jennie Davis and Jackie Dames.

2013 Annual Election Calendar

Wednesday, March 13, 2013	Deadline for Candidates' Statements for Equity News, Equity Website and Ballot Brochure (Due in all three Regional Offices by 2 pm Eastern Time)
Friday, March 22, 2013	Deadline for registration to vote electronically
Friday, April 12, 2013	Annual National Membership Meeting (all Regions via teleconference) Candidate speeches
Monday, April 15, 2013	Distribution of ballots (from balloting company)
Wednesday, May 22, 2013	Deadline for receipt of ballots is 5 pm Eastern Time
Thursday, May 23, 2013	Tabulation Day

A Look Back@Equity Milestones

100 Years Ago March 1913

- An actor's length of employment is subject to the manager's slightest whim. Companies and individuals might be laid off, their salaries cut, or the play might be closed without notice.
- Strandings are frequent and the actor often is required to pay his own transportation home after an engagement ends.
- Practically all of the actors are required to furnish their own costumes for modern plays and sometimes for period plays as well.
- **There is no Equity.**

75 Years Ago March 1938

- The jurisdiction held by Chorus Equity Association since 1934 of chorus performers in night clubs, and cabarets, is revoked by the Associated Actors and Artistes of America and given to the American Federation of Actors. (The AFA is an early actors' union, disbanded in 1939 and later succeeded by the American Guild of Variety Artists.)
- Council requires payment of \$5 when actors participate in readings to give managers "a clearer picture of a script."



Ralph Bellamy.

50 years ago March 1963

- Equity President Ralph Bellamy is appointed by

President Kennedy to serve on the Committee for the Department of Labor Fiftieth Anniversary Year. (The Labor Department was established on March 6, 1913 by Present William Howard Taft.)

• A bill to disqualify children under the age of 14 from collecting unemployment insurance passes the New York State Assembly over Equity's strong objections.

25 Years ago March 1988

• After 15 hours of testimony, the New York City Board of Estimate unanimously approves landmark status for 29 Broadway theatres.

• Council expands the definition of More Remunerative Employment to include contractual employment under the jurisdiction of other theatrical societies and guilds, such as the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

10 Years Ago March 2003

• Equity supports the American Federation of Musicians in a strike over the use of virtual music, which closes Broadway for four days. "Our members have made it clear that they do not wish to perform to virtual orchestras," says Equity President Patrick Quinn.

• Equity expands its guidelines for the use of smoke and haze under the Production Contract to most of its collective bargaining agreements. To ensure compliance, Equity acquires a sophisticated monitoring device that detects exact levels and concentrations of glycol or mineral-oil based airborne particles.

Council Mourns Two

Two past members of Council died in January, 2013: Conrad Bain on January 14 and Paul Ainsley on January 19.

Conrad Bain, who died of

appeared on Broadway, Off-Broadway, in stock and on the road, but may best be remembered for his roles in the TV sitcoms, *Maude* and *Diff'rent Strokes*.

Paul Ainsley, 67, joined Council as a Western Region replacement in 2001 and was elected to a five-year Principal term in 2002, serving until 2007. He was



Conrad Bain.



Paul Ainsley.

natural causes in Livermore, California at the age of 89, served as a Principal Councillor from 1961-1976. His legacy at Equity is that he was one of the original incorporators of the Actors Federal Credit Union in 1962. He also served on numerous other committees, including the Committee to Extend the Professional Theatre, the House Affairs Committee, the Staff Pension Committee and the Agency Committee. Professionally, Mr. Bain

on several committees, including Western Regional Nominating Committees, a WCLO negotiating team and the Casino Committee. Mr. Ainsley created the role of "King Herod" in the original Broadway staging of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, was in the first national company of *Les Misérables*, and in productions of *Peter Pan*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Gypsy*. On TV, he played a recurring role on *Three's Company*, among other credits.



ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION 1913-2013

EQUITY NEWS

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Your Income Tax

continued from page 1

Home Office Deduction Reporting Rules Eased This Year

The red flag still waves in front of the faces of auditors – really in front of computers programmed to pull the returns that include unusual deductions and expenses that can be both personal and business in the same year. The “Office in Home” deduction is one such expense and one that very few of our members claim on their tax returns. Some theatrical artists, however, do qualify for this deduction. They are generally independent contractors, designers, writers, musicians, directors, choreographers, print models, some audio performers, music directors, arrangers, etc. For those who can claim the office in home expense, the basic rules remain the same. The space must be exclusively used for one’s business purposes and be a separate area of the taxpayer’s home. It must also be the primary site of the taxpayer’s work or be used for storage of essential inventory, equipment, vehicles, etc. Notwithstanding the fact that performing artists prepare, organize and often train in their homes, most of them are not required to actually perform their work at home. Actors and Stage Managers work in rehearsal halls and on theatrical and sound stages for the most part. But for those who qualify for this deduction, the calculation has been simplified and can be of great benefit to the taxpayer. Whereas until now the deduction involved a pro rata computation – based on the square footage of the home office as relates to the total home space – of myriad home costs (rent, or mortgage interest, property taxes, utilities, repairs, maintenance, insurance, depreciation, and the like), the new calculation requires only that the square footage of the home office be multiplied by \$5. There’s a short form for this short calculation for those who either don’t want to go to the trouble or whose deduction would not be greater using the old method. Those who benefit from the long calculation may continue to use the long form for the home office deduction.

Per Diem and Accountable Plans

If you’ve ever gone out on tour, you know that your union has negotiated a per diem payment for you to offset the costs of housing, meals and incidental expenses while you’re on the road. The per diem amounts vary depending on which contract you’ve signed (Tiered, SETA, LORT, etc.). We often get asked what kinds of expense receipts members need to save and report on their taxes and the answer is fairly simple. If your per diem covers your travel expenses (you’re not out of pocket in addition to the per

diem), you probably don’t have to keep track of anything but your itinerary and contract to prove you were working out of town. If, however, your expenses exceed the per diem, you must keep track of your hotel and incidentals and report those expenses along with the standard meal allowance your tax advisor will calculate, and subtract the per diem you received. The difference will be a tax deduction on your returns. If you get no per diem, it stands to reason that you keep track of everything as usual and take the full deduction, including a standard meal allowance allowed by law.

These per diem arrangements have been negotiated by your union to be accountable to the employer, which means that they are non-taxable to the member. The three tests to be met are: 1) They are a business expense to the employer; 2) There is an adequate accounting by the member (where you were and what costs you incurred); and 3) Any excess payments will be returned to the employer. Insofar as our members receive per diem under these three conditions, the payments are accountable and not taxable to them.

We recommend that you take note of how much per diem, if any, you receive when you’re out of town and keep your records accordingly. If you have any questions before you leave, stop in and ask. Better to be prepared before the fact than confused afterwards.

Filing Update – Post Script

As most of you already know, the IRS and state agencies got off to a very slow start this year and encountered many problems in processing returns. This was the result of the unusually late tax deal brokered in Congress by our legislators who preferred fiscal crisis to tax preparedness. We want to remind everyone to be patient as some forms and timetables have been affected. For some of you, this has meant later filing; for others, it has meant delayed refunds. At VITA, we are doing everything we can to get everyone in and filed in accordance with the constraints placed on all of us. Thanks for your patience.

If you have questions about these or other tax topics, consult your tax advisor or stop in to your nearest VITA office. The VITA office in New York is located on the 14th Floor of the Equity Building. Hours are: 10:30 am – 4:00 pm, Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (no Tuesdays). Telephone: 212-921-2548. VITA sites are also located in Los Angeles at the Actors Fund and in Orlando at Actors’ Equity.

Sandra Karas is Secretary-Treasurer of Actors’ Equity Association and a member of SAG-AFTRA.



You Have a Dream

By Nick Wyman

It was Martin Luther King Day recently, and while my fellow president was communicating with millions at his inauguration, I was communicating with 30 members at the first membership meeting of the newly-established Albany, NY liaison area.

I was profoundly moved by these Albany actors, who admitted that they would probably be able to do more work if they were non-Equity, but they were still glad and proud to be Equity. I was equally moved while doing a reading last week to hear the tale of two actor friends who are raising a family in New Jersey. Despite their relative success (they have each been on Broadway), they are currently sinking into debt as they struggle to piece together a mosaic that will pay their bills.

Rev. King famously said “I have a dream.” You have a dream, too. I am no oneiromantic (though I am clearly a pedant) but I believe you are living the dream. When

you were young, you dreamed of working in the professional theatre, of becoming a professional actor or stage manager. You have realized that dream. Perhaps your life may not seem so dreamy right now; your theatre work almost certainly doesn’t pay all your bills, and it may be a very small part of the mosaic of your life. But you have achieved the distinction of being one of the tiny percentage of wannabe actors and stage managers to receive an Equity card.

We are the dreamers of dreams. In my acceptance speech for Equity’s Tony Award last June (in which your pedantic president managed to misquote both Shakespeare and Yeats in the space of 30 seconds), I spoke of the centrality of dreams to our artistic lives. I love the quote I read recently of August Wilson, speaking to a young theatre director who was thinking of leaving the business in order to make some money: “Your mom doesn’t need you to buy her a house. She needs you to do the

dreams she planted in you.”

This is a maddeningly tough business, one whose default setting is “No.” In that same famous speech, Rev. King spoke of having been to “the mountaintop.” If there were a mountaintop in the American theatre, it might well be Broadway, and I am lucky enough to have been there many times. Yet despite my unbelievable good fortune, I occasionally find myself in a seeming Slough of Despond, resentful and griping about the roles I didn’t get and the yet-more fortunate actors above me on our industry’s peak.

When that happens, I remind myself of just how far up the mountain I am, and I remember to be grateful. You too, simply by having your Equity card, are on the upper slopes. Heck, just being an educated American gives you a leg up on the vast majority of people on this planet. So look down and say a little prayer of thanks. Then look up and keep climbing. You have a dream.

MUSICAL QUIZ

With George and Ira Gershwin’s *Nice Work if You Can Get It* enjoying a run on Broadway, and *Porgy and Bess* the recipient of the 2012 Tony Award for Best Musical Revival, this month’s Musical Quiz highlights the musical brothers. Questions come from *The Musical Quiz Book* by Laura Frankos, published by Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, and reprinted with permission.

1. George and Ira’s first big hit was 1924’s *Lady, Be Good!*, with book by Guy Bolton and Fred Thompson and starring Fred and Adele Astaire. *Lady, Be Good!*, with its jazz-influenced score, would run for over 300 performances, and is today seen as a landmark show for the era. Which song used a piece George had previously written that he called “Syncoated City”?

- A. “Oh, Lady, Be Good”
- B. “The Half of It, Dearie, Blues”
- C. “Hang On to Me”
- D. “Fascinating Rhythm”
- E. “Little Jazz Bird”

2. *Tip-Toes* (1926) reunited the creative team from *Lady, Be Good!* with the same producers, Alex Aarons and Vinton Freedley—the second of the seven Gershwin shows they would produce. This was a zippy, often satirical piece about a flapper and her uncles, and Ira

gave full rein to his love of the vernacular in lyrics. Whose comic style did he hope to emulate in some of his lyrics for *Tip-Toes*?

- A. Alexander Woolcott
- B. Lorenz Hart
- C. Irving Berlin
- D. W.S. Gilbert
- E. P.G. Wodehouse

3. The brothers followed up *Tip-Toes* with another success in *Oh, Kay!* (1926), starring Gertrude Lawrence and Victor Moore. Howard Dietz helped with some lyrics when Ira had an emergency appendectomy. The plot (book by Guy Bolton and P.G. Wodehouse) was classic ‘20s fluff about rumrunners during Prohibition, but the score was studded with hits: “Clap Yo’ Hands,” “Do, Do, Do,” “Maybe,” and “Someone to Watch Over Me.” What prop was Gertie Lawrence holding when she introduced “Someone to Watch Over Me”?

- A. a teddy bear
- B. a stuffed lamb
- C. a feather duster, since she was in disguise as a maid
- D. a long, long scarf
- E. a rag doll

4. *Rosalie* (1928) ended up a success because of its star, Marilyn Miller, not the score. George and Ira were working on two other shows at the time, but when producer Flo Ziegfeld talked, people listened. The brothers contributed about half the songs, using a lot of trunk material, as did the

songwriter(s) responsible for the other half (working on *three* other shows at the time). Who was/were the other songwriter(s)?

- A. Rudolf Friml
- B. DeSylva, Brown and Henderson
- C. Sigmund Romberg
- D. Rodgers and Hart
- E. Jerome Kern

5. *Girl Crazy* (1930) shows up on the radar of many Broadway buffs because it marked the sensational debut of Ethel Merman (though Ginger Rogers was the lead). The goofy story had a New York playboy heading to Arizona, leading to fun with cowpokes and chorines. The phenomenal score includes hits like “But Not for Me,” “I Got Rhythm,” “Sam and Delilah,” “Could You Use Me?” and “Embraceable You.” This jazzy songfest had a ton of heavy hitters playing in the pit. Who was *not* in the orchestra for *Girl Crazy*?

- A. Gene Krupa
- B. Jimmy Dorsey
- C. Benny Goodman
- D. Glenn Miller
- E. Bunny Berigan

6. *Of Thee I Sing* (1931) ran for 441 performances and became the first musical to win the Pulitzer Prize, which was awarded to Ira for his lyrics and to Kaufman and Ryskind for their libretto, but not to George. (The Pulitzer committee has since then added George’s

(continued on page 4)

THEATRICAL SPOTLIGHT

Central Region

Theatre Makes a Difference in Small Michigan Community

The Williamston Theatre in Williamston, Michigan (just outside of Lansing), began as the Williamston Theatre Project in the Spring of 2004 when four Michigan-based theatre professionals—Equity members John Lepard and Emily Sutton-Smith, along with director Tony Caselli and arts administrator Christine Purchis—chose this location to found a small, not-for-profit, professional theatre company.

Why start an Equity theatre in a town in Michigan with less than 4,000 people? Artistic Director Tony Caselli says it's "because entertaining people, helping people laugh and cry, is something to be cherished, and the value of that should not be overlooked. Can theatre as an industry make a difference in the world, save the planet? I don't know. Maybe not the world (not in one big sweeping move, anyway), but if we can help a couple of people per night see their world in a different way, empathize with someone else, remember that life is about the people in their lives, ask a

they should've released before... If we can do that for one or two people a night, maybe that'll help change our little part of the world for the better."

Absolutely. Plus we create over 50 jobs for Michigan artists every year. The tie between the arts and the economy is clear. We're living proof."

The theatre also has many



A production of *Dead Man's Shoes* features Paul Hopper, Aral Gribble, Drew Parker and Maggie Meyer.

The theatre has already changed the local community in several ways. "When we started the Williamston Theatre, we wanted to produce good theatre. That's why we chose to be an Equity Theatre," says

Development Director Emily Sutton-Smith. "What has been great to watch are the tangible changes that our work has brought to this small town. During a time of incredible economic duress, Williamston has gone from one fine dining restaurant downtown, to five. The building across the street that was empty in 2006 when we opened is now filled to capacity with artists and unique vendors. There are ribbon

cuttings for new businesses all the time. Is this all because of us? No. But are we an anchoring element of this economic revitalization?

programs to involve the community and build audiences for the future: apprenticeship opportunities for recent college graduates, classes for teens, student discounts at the box office and school day matinees for local area high school students. In addition, the Williamston Theatre has a terrific partnership with the Michigan State University Department of Theatre, offering opportunities for students to work backstage and occasionally appear onstage, where many first begin earning their Equity Membership Candidate points. The two institutions collaborate frequently in a variety of ways.

The black box theatre with 104 seats opened in June 2006. Since that first summer, the Williamston Theatre has produced nine world premieres of new works by Michigan playwrights; mounted regional and state premieres of countless other works; has received many local awards, including being named by the

Chamber of Commerce as the Chamber Member of the Year (2008) for their contribution to the vitality and economic health of the downtown area; and brought the theatre and its four founders the Robert Busby Award for extraordinary contribution to theatre in the Greater Lansing Area.

"Our audiences continually praise us on the excellent quality of our productions," adds Managing Director Christine Purchis. "I have heard from many first time patrons how surprised they are that our actors come from right here in Michigan. One of the many reasons we chose to be an Equity theatre was so that we'd be able to help keep these talented people here in our state."

"After living and working in New York City and then Los Angeles, my husband, daughter, and I decided to move to my



Wayne David Parker and Kate Peckham in *Talley's Folly*.

home state to be near my aging parents and extended family," says Equity member Julia Glander. "We knew this was a good personal choice, but we really did not know what to expect as far as work in the theatre. I am happy to report

that professional Equity theatre is alive and well in the state of Michigan. The Williamston Theatre is an intimate gem. I am excited to be working with such a great group of people who inspire, support and keep this theatre alive and lively. The Williamston Theatre is small, but mighty. It is young in years, but wise in its creative pursuits, artistic integrity, management and professionalism."

Equity Member Nan Luchini says that her "joy of stage management is always quadrupled" when she works at Williamston Theatre. "Everyone is truly dedicated to hard work and producing a phenomenal show. Tony and John are able to foresee problems and help solve them early on. Having a design team that is able to get the set constructed so we can work on a functional set during our entire rehearsal process always helps create a much smoother tech process. Working at Williamston Theatre is always a pleasure and I look forward to my shows there. Minimal stress environment, positive hardworking production team and the applause and laughter from the appreciative audience is always my favorite part."

Founder and Executive Director John Lepard comes back to the original question: Why start an Equity theatre in a small town in Michigan. "I have been a member of Equity for 21 years and have had many great experiences in theatres all around the country," he says, "but starting my own union theatre with three of my best friends (all of us based in Michigan) and making it work for seven seasons and counting, is something I never expected to accomplish. This is the most exciting time in my career. Helping plays come to life from the initial idea for a script, to the first model of a set, to the world premiere in front of an audience gives me such a tremendous feeling of accomplishment—words cannot explain. I am thankful every day that this dream could become a reality, and I am also thankful for everyone who had made Williamston Theatre a success."



Teri Clark, John Lepard, Anne Miranda and Hugh Maguire in *Leaving Iowa*.

question they never thought to ask, laugh at themselves in a way they haven't ever done, weep and release something

Musical Quiz

continued from page 3

name, but he didn't get any of the money.) This satire of politics introduced John Wintergreen, running for president on a ticket of love. He gets into trouble, however, when he prefers Mary Turner and her homemade muffins over the girl who won the contest, Diane Devereaux, to be his sweetheart. This turns into an international fracas when Diane's French ancestry is revealed and the French ambassador files a protest. The honor guard accompanying the

ambassador has a lovely bit of French nonsense penned by Ira to some trunk music George had left over from *Girl Crazy*. What typically "French" item listed below is *not* mentioned in Ira's lyrics?

- escargot
- crêpes-suzette
- Chevrolet coupé
- Lafayette
- Maurice Chevalier

7. The brothers followed this smash with two flops in 1933, *Pardon My English* and the ill-advised sequel to *Of Thee I Sing*, *Let 'Em Eat Cake*. Their next effort was the classic *Porgy and Bess*, written in

collaboration with DuBose Heyward, who had written the novel (and with his wife, Dorothy, the later play) *Porgy*, about a poor black community on the South Carolina coast. *Porgy and Bess* debuted in 1935 and was met with mixed reactions. It did not run long, and George and Ira, like many of their Broadway brethren, headed to Hollywood. They wrote several film scores, including two (*Shall We Dance* and *A Damsel in Distress*) for their old pal Fred Astaire. But then George died in 1937 of a brain tumor, never seeing the success of the 1942 revival of

Porgy and Bess. What a treasure the musical world lost. Thankfully, Ira would live for many more years, and write more brilliant, idiosyncratic lyrics for Jerome Kern, Kurt Weill and Harold Arlen, among others.

Which of the following is *not* true about *Porgy and Bess*?

- The score was valued at a mere \$250 when George's estate was totaled in 1937
- The Danish so admired it they staged it despite Nazi opposition and used "It Ain't Necessarily So" to block German broadcasts
- Oscar Hammerstein II and

Jerome Kern considered doing a musical *Porgy* based on Heyward's play with Al Jonson playing the lead in blackface

D. The New York Times was so confused about whether it was an opera or a musical that they sent both their music critic and their theatre critic to the premiere

E. *Porgy and Bess* arose out of George's one-act black opera, *Blue Monday Blues*, which played for one night during the *George White's Scandals of 1922* before being cut.

Answer on page 5

An Actor Behind the Table – Part I: The Monitor and The Reader

By Scott Guthrie

Once saw a TV special about country music star Garth Brooks in which he talked about something he did before every concert. He would walk out into the house (or stadium or arena in most cases) and go up to a far away section to look back at the stage. He enjoyed the perspective it gave him on his own show. I remember that affecting me at an early phase of my career. I always try to find that perspective in whatever house I am working at, be it from the fly rail or back of the balcony.

But what about when I audition?

I craved this perspective after years of auditioning with little to no results. So I began to offer my services as a monitor or reader for auditions. Most times this put me outside the door, dealing with actors in that precious pre-audition prep phase. I would gather headshots, resumes, appointment times, messages to the people behind the table, and sometimes I would collect attitudes. Most were good, but some were unfortunate.

My perspective was changing already. How you are as a person is on display just as much as your talent. A simple interaction with someone whose job is to facilitate people in and out of the room became a telling transaction. Most smiled, introduced themselves, and were pleasant and punctual. Some were frazzled, hurried, and brisk, but nonetheless easy to get along with. And sometimes, there was that all too familiar sense of entitlement that seemed to place them higher than you.

This being said, most times, this person who is the gatekeeper to the audition is the low man on the totem pole—an intern, apprentice, or even a volunteer, such as I was at the time. But through the years, I have seen many a producer, choreographer, director, or alumni of the program be this person. You *never* know who it is for whom you are making that first impression.

If I wasn't manning the door, I was behind the table as a reader or an assistant. This is where my perspective began to shift again. I had taken endless classes on auditioning that started to say the same thing, but it wasn't until I got to see these things from the other side that they started to make sense.

Being a reader affords you a unique opportunity: to observe and be anonymous. You are the extra face behind the table that is rarely mentioned. You don't get a handshake or a hello, often

times just a smile or eye contact for recognition of being there. Your participation in the audition only comes if they need to see a certain side.

You would think the reader has no stock in your auditions. *Wrong.* We sit behind the table the same amount of time as the creative team. We *want* you to be good. When we get the opportunity to read with you, we *want* to be a good scene partner and give you options. As an actor, it drives me nuts when your reader just says the line giving you no inflection or energy to infuse your scene. As a reader, I try to bring as much to the scene as possible to help you make the most of your read, which is often as good as a callback in the room.

The most valuable thing I learned from being behind the table as a reader is that I can watch you not only display your acting and singing talents, but I watch you as a human being. I watch how you walk into a room, how you acknowledge a table of (usually) strangers. I watch how you interact with your accompanist (your audition partner), and everything else that leads up to the moment you open your mouth to begin your audition. These moments are just as telling to me as your audition itself. It answers questions like "Do I want to be in a room for two weeks straight, eight hours a day, working with this person?" Not only do we hire you for your talent, we hire you because of the person you are. We know we do not get one without the other.

Most regional and stock theatres do all their casting in-house. If this is the case with a theatre you have *any* connection with, offer yourself up as a volunteer reader. You lose a day that you might have temped, catered, or auditioned, but you *gain* a gift of knowledge and experience that you would be hard up to find anywhere else. And who knows what it could lead to?

Recently, I was a reader for a regional theatre for their summer season. I had auditioned for them the week prior and had a *horrible* audition. I mastered the courage to show my face again and volunteer as a reader for a production that I would not normally go in for. Over the course of the morning, the table saw me do several different takes on different characters, and ultimately read *me* for a role in another show in their season—which I booked.

(Editor's note: Part II—*The Director*—will appear in a future issue of *Equity News*.)



The Actors' Equity Card... "Don't Leave Home Without It!"

By Staś Kmieć

You may remember the "Don't Leave Home Without It!" ad campaign from American Express—made famous by Karl Malden. Could that same tagline work with your Equity card? Have you thought about what your union card can offer beyond entry to EPAs or Chorus calls, basic wages, working conditions and numerous provisions in more than 30 agreements?

Equity provides a wide range of benefits that enhance both the professional and personal lives of its members. There are Contract Benefits and Membership Benefits: Equity-only auditions, discounts, seminars, events, and tax assistance are among some of the rewards....and what about free lu shots?

The Actors Fund, Career Transition for Dancers, Actors Federal Credit Union and AFL-CIO offer resources, emergency grants, career counseling, employment and training services, health, social service and support programs, low cost financial services, loans and discounts.

Free Tax Preparation

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), an IRS-sponsored tax assistance program, provides free tax preparation to paid-up members of Equity and other performing arts unions in New York, Los Angeles, and Orlando.

Free Shoes!

In 1945, actor Conrad Cantzen bequeathed his estate to The Actors Fund with the stipulation that it should help actors not to appear "down at the heels" when auditioning. This fund reimburses unemployed union professionals up to \$40 towards a pair of shoes. The Actors' Fund also

provides services and facilities at: Al Hirschfeld Free Health Clinic, Lillian Booth Actors Home, Dorothy Ross Friedman Residence, Palm View Residence, AIDS Initiative, and Phyllis Newman Women's Health Initiative.

A Different Kind of Finance

Actors Federal Credit Union provides the same amenities you get from traditional banks, but when you utilize the services, you benefit other AEA members. Services include: free checking, VISA cards with no annual fees, an overdraft protection program, low rate auto loans, home equity loans, mortgages, and fee-free ATMs in NYC and certain locales.

Discounts!

Your Equity card is the key to savings on a wide range of merchandise and entertainment offering discounted theatre tickets, as well as discounts on rehearsal spaces, subscriptions, restaurants/hotels, gyms/spas/ yoga classes, and theatre-related merchandise.

An Actors' Library

In Chicago a valuable resource to members for over 25 years is the Ray Lonergan

Memorial Library. With more than 4,000 scripts and books, it also contains sheet music, CDs, DVDs, video and audiocassettes, as well as rare volumes.

A Support System

One of the most important benefits of membership is the experience and knowledge of the Equity staff. Business Representatives enforce each member's individual contract provisions and riders, monitor safety conditions, administer Equity's agreement with franchised agents and assist members with work-related issues like Unemployment and Workers' Compensation claims.

Equity makes you a part of the most distinguished body of professional Actors and Stage Managers in America. The support system and network that Equity provides allows theatre artists the opportunity to enjoy a successful and self-sustaining career. Make sure to keep your Equity card closely guarded, and take advantage of all the opportunities available to members.

For more information check the AEA website: www.actorsequity.org.

Answers to Musical Quiz

1. D. "Fascinating Rhythm" developed out of the earlier "Syncopated City."
2. E. Ira used P.G. Wodehouse as his inspiration for the lyrics to *Tip-Toes*.
3. E. Gertie was holding a rag doll that George bought for her in a Philadelphia toy store while *Oh, Kay!* was on tryout.
4. C. Sigmund Romberg wrote the other half of *Rosalie's* score, with most of the lyrics to his melodies by P.G. Wodehouse. There were two Gershwin songs and one

Romberg number on which Ira and Wodehouse collaborated.

5. E. Bunny Berigan wasn't in the pit for *Girl Crazy*.

6. A. Ira does not mention escargot among the Frenchified mishmash he created for the French honor guard.

7. E. *Blue Monday Blues* predates DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* (1925) by three years. George wanted to do a musical version of the novel as soon as he read it during a bout of insomnia in 1926, even before Heyward had adapted it into a straight play.



Mrs. Thomas Whiffen.

In the beginning — May, 1913—when Equity was founded, there were no women involved. “Membership in the early days of the Association had been restricted to men,” according to Alfred Harding’s book, *The Revolt of the Actors*, which chronicles the Association’s history from 1913 to 1929. But, in mid-July, the membership requirements were modified to read: “Any person, irrespective of nationality, who can establish a record of three years as an actor is eligible to membership in the Association.” Under that ruling, Mrs. Thomas Whiffen became the first actress to be elected to membership. Today, women comprise nearly half of the membership. Mrs. Whiffen was also the first to serve on Council, having been appointed to fill a vacancy. But it wasn’t until 1918 that the first women were elected to Council: Katherine Emmet, Florence Reed and Helen Ware.

Not willing to sit on the sidelines of their new union, women quickly began to play a prominent role in Equity and in its legendary strike for recognition in 1919. Ethel Barrymore offered early and invaluable support, sending the following message to Strike Headquarters: “While my entire theatrical career has been associated with but one management from which I have received only fairness and consideration, I feel that the traditions of my family and my personal predilections ally me logically and irremediably with the members of my profession in the Actors’ Equity Association.” Ms. Barrymore later served as Equity’s First Vice President for ten years.

Members of the Chorus, especially women, had their own battles with unscrupulous managers and onerous working conditions and were happy to join the strike effort. At one meeting at Strike Headquarters a *Follies* girl climbed up on her seat, shouting “Who wants to be arrested tonight? Let’s go picketing.” And they did. They even formed their own “sister” organization: Chorus Equity Association. Marie Dressler, who had started her career as a chorus actor earning \$8 a week, was elected President. At one of the early meetings of Chorus Equity, a speaker proclaimed: “If actors and actresses can rehearse 12 weeks without pay, what is to prevent their remaining on strike 12 weeks without pay?” (During the almost 36 years of its

existence—it merged with Actors’ Equity in 1955—Chorus Equity had only four Executive Secretaries: Dorothy Bryant, 1919-1937; Ruth Richmond, 1938-1951; Edith Christensen for a brief term of seven months and then Ben Irving, who held the post from 1951 until the merger. Bryant and Ruth Richmond were each eventually voted Chorus Executive Secretary Emeritus, along with Rebecca Brownstein, long time counsel, who became Chorus Counsel Emeritus.) When, a few months after the strike ended, Marie Dressler resigned the presidency due to employment commitments, she was succeeded by another woman—Blanche Ring.

From the beginning, Equity’s guiding principle was “All for One and One for All.” For women, this meant they had all the rights and privileges of membership that the men had. In fact, Equity women could vote for the President of the Union long before American women could vote for the President of the United States.

Women continued playing an active and important role at Equity throughout the years. They were active in the war effort—raising money and morale. They participated in the Stage Women’s War Relief during World War I and in the USO and Stage Door Canteen during World War II, entertaining—and serving coffee.

The end of the war brought other challenges—these on the home front. Performers were concerned that the nation’s capitol in Washington, DC had a strict segregation policy. A Committee re Jim Crow was formed, chaired by Frances Heflin. A production of *Joan of Lorraine* starring Ingrid Bergman was playing at the Lisner Auditorium of George Washington University. The theatre refused to sell tickets to blacks and was picketed by Equity. Ms. Bergman supported Equity’s efforts, but was unable to change the policy. However, she said she would never again play in a segregated theatre—anywhere. Equity’s actions eventually led to the closing of the National Theatre in Washington for five years until its policy changed.

Equity was increasingly concerned with discrimination against actors in the theatre, as well. At

the start, the focus was on increasing employment for ethnic minorities. But by 1982, Equity conceived the concept of Non-Traditional Casting, a broader definition to support the casting of not only ethnic minorities, but females, seniors and disabled actors in roles where race, ethnicity, gender, age and/or the presence or absence of a disability is not essential to the development of the play or character.

Throughout the ‘80s, Equity gathered and maintained statistics on the hiring of women (called “appalling”); scheduled meetings with playwrights and agents to discuss sexual harassment and other issues, and, recalling the 1919 strike characterized as “The Revolt of the Actors,” suggested that perhaps it was time for a “Revolt of the Actresses.”

Equity is a union of stage actors and stage managers. And there are many, many women who have joined Equity as stage managers. These women are found on Broadway and Off and in theatres large and small across the country. Stage managers combine a keen understanding of acting, psychology and a passion for the development of an idea on paper to a full production on stage. They are the calm presence that keeps every aspect of a show in motion without chaos. “It took a little longer for women to become Production



Chorus Actors join the strike: Center is Marie Dressler holding the banner while Ethel Barrymore points to the message.

Stage Managers on Broadway than in other arenas,” said Marjorie Horne, a Stage Manager and Councillor. “But now you regularly see women stage managers listed on the title page and in the credits. Women stage managers are also well-represented on the National Council of Equity as well.”

When the Best Man for the Part Can Be a Woman was the subject of a symposium sponsored by the



Women Play Major R

RATE

ACTORS' EQUITY FOUNDATION 2013

Roles in Equity History



Ethel Barrymore.

Western Region EEOC. *Could the Best Man for the Part be a Woman?* was a similar event sponsored by the Eastern Region Women's Committee. Why not, indeed?

One highly-publicized and critically successful example of Non-Traditional Casting was a 1990 production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at the Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger in Washington in which Ms. Pat Carroll played the role of Sir John Falstaff. New York Times drama critic Frank Rich wrote: "Her performance is a triumph from start to finish, and, I think, a particularly brave and moving one, with implications that go beyond this production. Ms. Carroll and Mr. Kahn (Michael Kahn, the Artistic Director) help revivify the argument that the right actresses can perform some of the great classic roles



Outgoing President Ellen Burstyn (l) hands off the gavel to new President Colleen Dewhurst.

traditionally denied to women and make them their own. It's not a new argument, to be sure; female Hamlets stretch back into history. But what separates Ms. Carroll's Falstaff from some other similar casting experiments of late is that her performance exists to investigate a character rather than merely as ideological window dressing for a gimmicky production."

Over the years, Equity women have been involved on many fronts. Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, Equity members, led by Second Vice President Jeanna Belkin and Councillor Barbara Colton, joined the Memphis Sanitation Department in their march to protest the deplorable treatment of black employees of the Department and to further the work toward equal rights to which Dr. King had devoted his life.

After the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, *New York Loves America: The Broadway Tour* with a five member company including Councillor Paige Price and Sandy Duncan, went on the road, visiting 14 cities, to thank America for its support and to show the resilience and indomitable spirit of the American people.

Before Off-Broadway, there was Equity Library Theatre—formed by Equity to showcase members' talents. Not surprisingly, a woman—Terese Hayden—was one of the founders. ELT, as it was known, staged plays in public libraries to which producers, agents and casting directors were invited. ELT in New York was eventually disbanded, although it remains active in Chicago.

As a member of Chorus Equity, Jeanna Belkin was concerned when another chorus member fell ill and had no place in the theatre to lie down. Enter the Equity cot—which is now mandated in every Equity theatre.

Councillor Nancy R. Pollock chaired Equity's Committee to Extend the Professional Theatre. It was her dream to extend and promote theatre throughout the United States. The Committee then became a department in Equity, which led to the creation of FEDAPT, the Foundation to Extend the Professional Theatre, with Ms. Pollock as President. FEDAPT

eventually morphed into the Commercial Theatre Institute, which still exists.

Councillor Joan Lowell had her own dream: to advise older actors on making the transition from performing to alternative employment and also to explore casting opportunities for mature performers. She urged Council to form the Actors Work Program Committee. This Committee, too, became a separate department before being taken over by The Actors Fund.

When the AIDS epidemic began, Equity rallied 'round with a fundraiser, *The Best of the Best: A Show of Concern*, produced by three women (Jane Neufeld, Judy Rice, and Jane Robertson), along with two men (Arne Gundersen and Patrick Quinn). This 1985 benefit raised more than \$1 million and led to the formation of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

When Broadway theatres were earmarked for demolition to make way for a hotel, Equity women once again stepped up, formed the Save the Theatres Committee, led by Sandy Lundwall and Lenore Loveman, and some women even were arrested following a sit-in as the bulldozers arrived.

From a Baby Bundles Committee (for sharing baby

clothing and equipment, chaired by Jean Stapleton of *All in the Family* fame) in the '60s, to a Parents Committee started by President Nick Wyman in the '90s, Equity has been committed to finding affordable child care options so that actors can combine a career with raising a family. Equity members have supported passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, participated in fundraising walks around the country to raise money and awareness for breast cancer and Alzheimers, and supported the Phyllis Newman Women's Health Initiative of The Actors Fund, among other activities. Equity members are active members of the League of Professional Theatre Women and the union is a charter member of the WAM Coalition (Women in the Arts & Media) in New York, which provides networking opportunities, information sharing and mentoring.

Today, as Equity celebrates its Centennial, it boasts a roster of legendary theatre women who have served on Council, including Katharine Cornell, Mildred Dunning, Ruth Gordon, Helen Hayes, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Jessica Tandy, Laurette Taylor, Peggy Wood and Blanche Yurka. They served not merely as figureheads, but participated in many activities, including testifying before Congressional committees on issues important to Equity and the arts and raising the profile of professional actors. Ellen Burstyn was elected the Association's first female President in 1982 and was succeeded by Colleen Dewhurst, who served until 1991. (Once again, Equity was ahead of the curve; the United States has yet to elect a woman president.)

Currently, the First and Second Vice Presidents and Secretary-Treasurer of the union, plus the Central and Western Regional Directors and Eastern Regional Vice President are women; women serve as chairs of Area Liaison Committees and there are more than 30 women on Council. Women hold key positions on the national staff and have been lead negotiators for Equity contracts. Carol Waaser took on the post of Acting Executive Director in 2009, serving until 2011 when Mary McColl was named Executive Director.

"Since Equity's inception, women have been a strong influence in shaping the Union," said Ms. McColl. "Their leadership has left an indelible mark, creating a legacy of which we can all be proud. And the women of this generation will build upon the foundation for a strong and bright future."

Stay tuned! Women may have come a long way in society—and in Equity—but there's still a lot of work to do and a long way to go.



NATIONAL NEWS

VITA NY Opens Doors For 37th Tax Season

IRS-Sponsored Tax Assistance Program Also Offered in Los Angeles, Orlando

On Monday, February 4, 2013, the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program opened its doors for its 37th annual season on the 14th Floor of the Equity Building in New York. As always, a long line formed well before dawn with AEA and SAG-AFTRA members who braved the extremely brisk winter temperatures to seek out coveted appointments for free tax return preparation by VITA's hard-working and dedicated

From the moment I walked in the door, VITA has provided an immeasurable service for our industry."

Member Amy Fortgang (Connor) first learned about VITA in 1984 from an article in *Backstage*, using the published tips before she joined Equity. Connor muses, "As soon as I joined Equity, I became a VITA client. This is my 26th year. I've been with VITA longer than I've been with my husband!" Connor

also volunteers. Be grateful. Be prepared. Don't waste their time; fill out those worksheets in advance! And, don't expect them to "fudge" like some private preparers—it isn't going to happen! No matter what your friends tell you *their* accountant does - VITA does it right."

VITA's opening day was coordinated by long-time program volunteer, Linda Carol Young, who not only arrived at 5 am, but devoted many hours to the advance prep for worksheets and forms, staffing, and management of the appointment sign-ups. Thanks to Linda's dedicated efforts, everything ran smoothly and the team processed 49 tax returns.

Also special thanks to all of the tireless members of VITA's volunteer staff: Toby Blackwell, Sandra M. Bloom, Bernadette Cancelliere, Kathleen Conry, J. Francis Curley, Kylie Delre, Betsy DiLellio, Magie Dominic, Carol Emshoff, Margaret A. Flanagan, Elizabeth Flax, Leonard Garbin, Brian Hargrove, Yvette Heyliger, Betty Hudson, Mark Irish, Marcia Kaufman, John LaGioia, Darrie Lawrence, Mike Lesser, Laurel Lockhart, Patricia Masters, Elliott Mayer, Joseph P. McDonnell, Michael McKenzie, Michael Mulheren, Jody Myers, Pat Nesbit, Nneoma Nkuku, Marchand Odette, Tony Paccione, Jody Prusan, Shelley Rosner, Stacey Scott, Carolyn Seiff, Michelle Seipel, Roger Seyer, Susan Sigrist, Jackie Slusser, Nancy Slusser, Gordon Stanley, Catherine Thorpe, John Tillotson, Carla Torgrimson, John Weigand, William White, and Joe Zaloom.

On opening day, VITA volunteers who assisted were: Stephanie Card, Kathy Conry, J. Francis Curley, Margaret A. Flanagan, Stephanie Gattton, Paul Kochman, Pat Nesbit, Joan Shangold, David Sittler, Cayte Thorpe, John Robert Tillotson, Linda Carol Young and Joe Zaloom. Equity staffer Chris Williams was also on hand to oversee the smooth running of opening day.

continued, "The volunteers understand performers' taxes in a way that no other tax preparer does. They have seen me through tax years with up to eight W-2s, foreign tour income, Broadway show income, an audit, unemployment, the purchase of two homes, a marriage, a divorce, another marriage, the addition of three dependents, child actor income, several career shifts (from performer to director to choreographer to costume designer and back again), and even a \$60,000 game show win."

Member Kim Rideout has "paid it forward" and heralded the VITA program to many young actors and new arrivals to Manhattan. Rideout says, "Being on your own and trying to figure out your taxes and all that goes along with being an actor is tough! It's nice to have someone guide you." Rideout added, "The staff is knowledgeable. They are



Among volunteers who assisted on VITA's opening day were (l to r): Joan Shangold, Margaret Flanagan and John Tillotson. (Photo: Stephanie Masucci)

volunteers.

Headed by Director Sandra Karas, Equity's Secretary-Treasurer, VITA is the only IRS-sponsored tax assistance program in the country specializing in performers' tax returns. Each year, the VITA NY team prepares thousands of complex federal, state and local tax returns for more than 2,000 union members. For the second year in a row, the VITA program is also being offered to AEA and SAG-AFTRA members in Los Angeles (courtesy of The Actors Fund), and in Orlando at Equity's Central Florida office.

Member Stan Krajewski arrived at 3:40 am from the Upper East Side of Manhattan for VITA's opening day and was the sixth person in line for tax return processing. "In every possible way, VITA took all my W-2s, 1099s and just made sense of something that would otherwise have left me clueless.

East Haddam, CT

Something's Afoot for BC/EFA at Goodspeed Opera House

Ten strangers come together and disappear one by one in a musical murder mystery. Luckily the company of *Something's Afoot* at the Goodspeed Opera House all returned in time to make an appeal to their local audiences and raise \$12,134 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights

point out the seven local charities funded by BC/EFA, including the Alliance for Living and AIDS Project New Haven in the appeal. "We researched who receives funding locally from BC/EFA and could see the nods of recognition in the audience as we let them know that every



AIDS. Equity member Audrie Neenan led the company in its efforts, using every tactic available—from selling autographed posters to chasing down the last few patrons in the theatre. "I was not above going into the ladies' room and saying 'Did I miss anyone in here?' Anything that put a smile on their faces and encouraged them to contribute as much as they could—which they happily did." The cast made sure to

dollar of their support allowed BC/EFA to reach out to their friends and neighbors," said Audrie. The cast would often pit matinee audiences against the evening shows, creating a friendly competition and encouraged the student audiences to give as well. "The students were especially generous considering their resources. It was wonderful to see them want to be a part of it all."

New York

Actors Fund Sets Seminars

The Actors Fund is sponsoring a seminar on *How to be Successful in Teaching, Training and Coaching* on Thursday, March 21, 2013 from 5:30 pm – 7 pm at AFM Local 802, 322 West 48th Street. For information:

pschwadron@actorsfund.org.

The Fund has also set a series of housing seminars to review long term options to

obtaining affordable rental housing: 80/20 housing, tenants' rights, information and more. The seminar will be held several times during the year on the 10th Floor at The Fund office, 729 Seventh Avenue. The dates are all Mondays, from 5:30 pm - 7 pm on April 1, May 20, July 15, September 9, October 28 and December 16. For information: kborg@actorsfund.org.

Philadelphia

FringeArts Festival Coming Up

The application process for the newly named "FringeArts Festival," formerly the "Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe" is underway. For information, visit www.livearts-fringe.com/festival/fringe-artists.cfm

If theatres or producing organizations are interested in hiring Equity members for their productions in the FringeArts Festival, they must sign you to an appropriate AEA agreement (LOA, SPT, Guest Artist, Special Appearance, etc.).

AEA members who are interested in self-producing their own projects under an AEA Code should get in touch as soon as possible with the Philadelphia AEA Liaison Committee. The committee encourages members to ask questions early in the process and not to wait until summer or when the project is already in rehearsal. For further information, contact the committee at: philliaisoncommittee@yahoo.com or call 877-232-1913, ext. 832.



Houston

Western Business Reps Attend Texas Meeting

The annual membership meeting for the Houston area was held on February 11, 2013 at Main Street Theatre's Chelsea Market location in Houston. New Liaison chair, Joel Sandel, and fellow committee members Debs Ramser, David Grant, Carolyn Johnson, Susan Shofner and Luisa Amaral-Smith took advantage of the event to informally kick off AEA's 100th anniversary and had a few appropriately themed items on the check-in and refreshment tables. Michael Van Duzer and Albert Geana-Bastare, from the LA office, were special guests. A handful of Equity Membership Candidates attended the reception and it was noted that an event specifically for the EMCs needs to be organized, hopefully, in the fall.

The meeting began with the selection of the Liaison Committee. Robert Nelson volunteered to come aboard and

was unanimously affirmed (the remainder of the committee is unchanged from last year). Several topics were discussed: first and foremost was the new Members Project Code agreement. Ron Jones, a former committee member, announced his intention to be the first person in the area to utilize the MPC in a "member generated" production of Tennessee Williams' *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*. Mr. Geana-Bastare reported a very healthy uptick in the number of contracts issued for Houston during the 2012 calendar year (20 theatres hired union actors!). He also encouraged the membership to urge non-Equity theatres to contact him if they're interested in using an Equity member. He said he would walk the producers through the process and show them how easy it actually is to hire professionals. Mr. Van Duzer then reported on a few national

items and said that Equity will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in May, and each liaison city will be encouraged to mark this milestone in some manner. He also spoke about the "soon to be" new offices for AEA in Los Angeles.

Mr. Sandel thanked Luisa Amaral-Smith, the Liaison chair for whom he took over, for her tireless work on behalf of the Houston area saying she set a standard that will be impossible to match.

At the conclusion of the meeting, there was a drawing for theatre tickets generously donated by Theater Under the Stars, Stark Naked Theatre, Unity Theatre and the University of Houston School of Theater. Afterwards, members returned to the lobby for more socializing and snacking. All in all, "it was a very successful, informative and encouraging event that was enjoyed by all who attended," reports Mr. Sandel.

South Florida

New Members Join Liaison Committee

By Irene Adjan, Equity Liaison

President Nick Wyman was on hand for the South Florida General Membership Meeting on January 14, 2013 at the Plaza Theatre in Manalapan.

and the status of the Equity Building in New York. There were also questions on the effect of the Affordable Care Act on members' health coverage, as well as regional business, such as the IATSE strike at the Kravis Center, the closing of

another term on the Liaison Committee and decided not to return because of other commitments. New member Renata Eastlick volunteered to serve, joined by Patti Gardner. The other members whose terms were expiring remained on the Committee.

Thanks to Dave Corey and Barbara Sloan for their service and to Renata Eastlick and Patti Gardner for stepping up and joining the Liaison Committee.

Thanks, too, to President Wyman for attending; to Alan Jacobson for the use of the theatre; to the members who turned out; and to the members of the Committee for their time and commitment:

Barbara Bradshaw, Oscar Cheda, Beth Dimon, John Felix, Wayne LeGette, Margery Lowe, Margot Moreland, Marj O'Neill-Butler, Laura Turnbull and Tom Wahl.



President Nick Wyman (c, back) with members at the South Florida meeting.

The meeting followed a meet-and-greet in the lobby of the theatre, with light refreshments provided by the Liaison Committee.

Topics discussed included the SETA negotiations, the upcoming LORT negotiations,

several South Florida theatres, and the realities and consequences of Equity actors working non-SAG-AFTRA jobs. Also discussed were plans for the upcoming Equity Centennial.

Both Dave Corey and Barbara Sloan were up for

San Diego

One Event Celebrates Two Occasions

San Diego members celebrated both Black History and Women's History months with a single event on February 17, 2013. *An Afternoon with Lydia Diamond*, a reception sponsored by AEA was followed by a performance of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, adapted by award-winning playwright Lydia Diamond. A talk-back with Diamond followed the performance. Ms. Diamond's appearance was sponsored by the Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, which produced her hit play, *Stick Fly*, in 2011.

Pictured here (l to r) are: Cast member Warner Joseph Miller; former AEA Equal Employment Opportunity Committee Chair Barbara Roberts; Lydia Diamond; MOXIE Theatre Artistic Director and Director of *The Bluest Eye* Delicia Turner Sonnenberg; cast member Cashae M. Overton; Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company Interim General and Producing Manager Jessica Bird; cast member and San Diego AEA Liaison Abner Genece; and cast member Melissa Coleman-Reed.



New York

EEOC Sets Cross-Gender Casting Event for Women's History Month

The Eastern Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee is planning to celebrate Women's History Month with *Opening Up Possibilities for Women Through Cross-Gender Casting* on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at 7 pm at the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street.

The evening will feature scenes demonstrating a variety of ways to create more opportunities for women in Shakespearean productions and beyond by utilizing non-traditional casting via cross-gender and gender-neutral

casting. The scenes will be followed by a discussion with the artists.

Joanne Zipay, Artistic Director of the Judith Shakespeare Company, will lead the event. Additional directors presenting work are Rebecca Patterson, Artistic Director of The Queen's Company, and Emily Davis, Artistic Director of Messenger Theatre Company. The coordinator is Equity member Gael Schaefer.

RSVP to eeo@actorsequity.org.

St. Louis

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Introduces Cyber-Bullying Play

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis (SFSTL) is once again bringing an anti-bullying message to local schools. In addition to the anti-bullying campaign built around the organization's 2013 production of *Twelfth Night*, SFSTL is introducing a cyber-bullying play, *Winning Juliet*, dealing with high school students hacking into a bullied student's account and creating a social media crisis. Both plays are scheduled to be performed by Equity member/teaching artists for approximately 26,000 students throughout the St. Louis metro

area and beyond.

"I've always been intrigued by pairing a social issue with one of Shakespeare's plays," said Rick Dildine, executive director of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis. "We have incorporated the bullying theme into our Education Tour shows the past two years, but in light of the cyber-bullying issues occurring in schools and on social media sites nationwide, we felt this was an appropriate time to focus attention on it. We're using the power of the theatre to build awareness, teach empathy, and support communication."



Milwaukee

Milwaukee Rep's Production of "Blues in the Night" Steps Up

The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre's production of *Blues in the Night* proved that regional companies can compete with the likes of Broadway when it comes to giving from the heart. Lili Thomas, Zonya Love and Halle Morse (pictured) joined Carl Clemons-Hopkins and collected more than \$2,300 over eight performances during BC/EFA Week in the 120-seat Stackner Cabaret. "With only the four of us in the cast we were brainstorming how best to reach

everyone," said Love. "We decided two onstage making the appeal and two in the lobby was the way to go and switched it up each performance. Audiences were wonderful. They not only praised the show, but thanked us over and over for doing something positive for the community. We were all very proud to be involved and glad to help, not only our theatrical community, but also the three agencies in Wisconsin funded by BC/EFA."

Washington, DC

"You For Me" at Woolly Mammoth is also for BC/EFA

The six-person ensemble cast of the world premiere production of Mia Chung's *You For Me For You* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company raised \$3,135 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS over nine performances. Company member and Equity Councilor

16 social service agencies in Washington, DC. "It was a full ensemble effort spearheaded by our fantastic stage manager Marne Anderson," Jue continues. "She really took the reins on this." Anderson says this is something that always brings her joy. "Whenever I bring



Francis Jue said, "It's such a wonderful thing that theatres outside of New York are able to contribute to BC/EFA Week, particularly since so much of the money raised is then awarded by BC/EFA to local organizations." Over \$260,000 was sent in 2012 by BC/EFA to

the idea of collecting for Broadway Cares to the artistic staff here they always give me their full support and cooperation," she says. "It gives me such a great feeling to contribute in any way I can and pulls a company together in a wonderful way."

New York

Broadway and Ballet Combine for Fundraiser

Dancers Responding to AIDS, a program of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, fused Broadway and ballet, contemporary and tap to create the eighth annual edition of *Dance from the Heart* on January 28 and 29, 2013.

Dance from the Heart is a platform for performers from the Broadway and dance communities, including Equity members, to showcase their artistry while raising funds for those battling HIV/AIDS and other critical illnesses.

This year's program featured 78 performers, including (1) Tony Award-winning Debbie Gravitte (*Jerome Robbins' Broadway*), tapper Corey John Snide (*Billy Elliot: The Musical*, 13) and a cast of 14 Broadway

gypsies in (2) *Hello Dolly*, a quirky, crowd-pleasing number created by choreographer Al Blackstone (*Wicked*).

The January 28 performances opened with a special tribute to choreographer Jerome Robbins with American Dance Machine for the 21st Century's restaging of "Mr. Monotony" sung live by Gravitte and featuring a five-piece band and dancers from New York City Ballet.

The closing number highlighted Equity dancers Chip Abbott, Alicia Albright, Ioana Alfonso, Jeremy Davis, Kelly Lafarga, Heather Lang, Jonathan McGill, Joseph Medeiros, Michael Mindlin, Adam Perry, Morgan Rose, and Ronnie Todorowski.



With four performances over two evenings, this year's program was a record-breaking success, drawing more than 600 people to Cedar Lake Theater in Manhattan's West Chelsea

Historic District and raising \$113,140, surpassing last year's record by more than \$45,000.

For more information about Dancers Responding to AIDS, visit dradance.org.



Boston

Casting Coup at Wheelock Family Theatre

Wheelock Family Theatre, which has been recognized both locally and nationally for its commitment to accessible, multi-cultural, and multi-generational productions for families (including receiving Equity's Rosetta LeNoire Award in 2000), has once again made a bold casting move. The role of Fagin in its production of *Oliver!*, which ran from January 24-February 24, 2013, was played by the theatre's co-founder and co-artistic director, Jane Staab. Here, Ms. Staab is center stage, flanked by Isaac Haber and Emma Kelley. (Photo: Gary Ng)



Washington, DC

Recipes Wanted for Theatre Artists Cookbook

DC Equity members Kerry Epstein and Sherri Edelen are looking for recipes for a backstage cookbook, proceeds of which will benefit Taking Care of Our Own, a new initiative of theatreWashington created to assist local theatre professionals and artists in personal emergency situations.

"On any given night at the half hour call, tasty treats appear in Green Rooms across the DC area: baked goods, savory delicacies, maybe a moon pie or two. Between-show

potlucks are eagerly anticipated and recipes are frequently demanded," they write. "To that end, Taking Care of Our Own (TCOOO) would like to invite you to participate in the first Local Theatre Artists Cookbook."

They are looking for the following categories: breakfast/brunch, appetizers, salads, bread, main dishes, side dishes, desserts and beverages.

Send your favorite recipe, along with a one-sentence bio of yourself and one sentence

about your recipe. Also list the theatres where you've worked (or cooked) as they'd like every DC-area theatre to be represented.

Email your recipe to TCOOOcookbook@gmail.com no later than March 15, 2013. The TCOOO cookbook will make its debut at the Summer Hummer 2013 on August 19 and then be available for sale at DC-area theatres.

For more information about Taking Care of Our Own, visit www.theatrewashington.org.

Los Angeles

Actors Fund Tackles Money Matters

The Actors Fund has scheduled two seminars on Money Matters. The first, on Monday, March 18, 2013 from 10 am to 12 noon, examines powers of attorney, health care directives, wills and trusts: how, when and when not to do it yourself. The speaker is Michael Alexander, J.D., Managing Principal, Private Trust Management Group.

The second, on Monday, March 25 from 10 am to noon, discusses four fear factors in

divorce negotiation: spousal support, child support, pensions and the house. The speaker is Judith M. Weigle, a 35-year veteran of the entertainment industry and current President of A Divorce Resource and founder of Extreme Mediation.

Both events will be held at The Actors Fund, 5757 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 400 in Los Angeles. RSVP: rlaborwit@actorsfund.org or call 323-933-9244, ext. 415.

Chicago

SM Networking Event Coming This Spring

A networking event for Stage Managers in the Chicago Area is being planned for April 22, 2013, in time to be of benefit as local theatres gear up for their Fall 2013 seasons. Similar to past successful events, this one will have a speed interview format. Stage Managers will sign up for a "rotation hour," during which they will be



guaranteed to meet for a few minutes with all of the theatres in attendance. Participants should plan to bring at least 12 resumes to exchange. The event will be held at Steppenwolf Garage, 1624 N. Halsted Street. To sign up for a rotation hour

(10 am or 11 am), requests will be taken by the Equity office beginning Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 10 am. Call 312-641-0406 from 10 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 3 pm only. It is expected that 11 Stage Managers will be accommodated per rotation hour, and those slots will be available on a first come, first served basis. Once the hourly slots are filled, a waiting list will be formed. If you cannot keep your appointment, call Elizabeth Gonzalez, 312-641-0393, ext. 240 so that another Stage Manager may participate.

Dallas/Fort Worth

Equity Gets a Column

Equity received an Honorary Column Award in recognition of its upcoming Centennial when the awards, which honor excellence in theatre within the Dallas/Fort Worth Theatre Metroplex, were presented on February 25, 2013. Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield accepted the award, thanking the presenters for the recognition and reminding the DFW theatre community that "we are all a part of the process of making art." DFW Liaison Chair and

The Column Awards Executive Vice President Dennis Yslas stated: "The Column Awards is the largest gathering of theatrical professionals in Texas and we are so happy to honor my union for the 100 years of working for actors."

Three theatres offering Equity contracts—Theatre Three, Uptown Players and Plaza Theatre Company—were recognized with Best Play and Best Musical Awards and 11 Equity members received individual awards: Andy



Showing off Equity's proclamation are (l to r): Sally Soldo, Pam Dougherty, Dennis Yslas, Orfeh, Gregory Lush, Connie Coit-Kitchens, Wendy Welch and Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield. (Photo: Calvin Brockington)

Baldwin, BJ Cleveland, David Coffee, Pam Dougherty, Lee

Jamison, Denise Lee, Liz Mikel, Jeffrey Schmidt, Michael

Serrecchia, Ashton Smalling and Max Swarner.

MISSING LINKS

By Jim Bernhard

NOTE: The clues marked with* are partial titles of two plays or musicals that share omitted word that is the answer to the clue.

ACROSS

- 1 Working hard
- 5 Reacted to a cut
- 9 Tests for HS seniors
- 13 Author of "The Republic"
- 14 Floor covering in Britain
- 15 Skip
- 16 Rice dish
- 17 Spread out on the table sometimes
- 18 "I kid you not" TV figure
- 19 "South Overtures"
- 21 "A Streetcar Named Under the Elms"
- 23 Beatty and Rorem
- 24 Chum
- 25 Siesta
- 26 "Call Me Roberts"
- 29 Boy Scouts founder _____-Powell
- 31 Get older
- 32 First _____ girl; character in "Beauty and the Beast"
- 34 "Girl for You"
- 38 Lands in the Seine
- 40 Sister at the Sorbonne
- 42 Notre Dame's Parseghian and others
- 43 "A little Night in the Air"
- 45 "A Dandy in _____". 1968 film
- 47 "A Chorus Line" song
- 48 Edna Ferber novel
- 50 "Cactus Drum Song"
- 52 Big name in recorded music

- 55 "_____ the season to be jolly"
- 56 Argentinian pop singer born Florencia Caserta
- 57 "The Man Who Came To at Eight"
- 59 "The Family in Vienna"
- 63 Feminine ending
- 64 Machete
- 67 Anakin by another name
- 68 Roger who was artistic director at Williamstown
- 69 Mars to ancient Greeks
- 70 Online biz
- 71 Ilk
- 72 Chap
- 73 Ruby and Sandra

DOWN

- 1 Inter _____
- 2 Baby powder substance
- 3 "_____Necessarily So" (Gershwin song)
- 4 Candies made of butter and sugar
- 5 Voting groups
- 6 Abner or Kim
- 7 Opp. of WSW
- 8 Thingamajig
- 9 Bribes, perhaps
- 10 With full force
- 11 Princess's headwear
- 12 Kind of throat
- 13 Very, very soft in music
- 20 First (and last) king of Libya
- 22 Kind of engr.
- 24 "Fork it over"
- 26 Maul
- 27 Ice house, in Inuit language
- 28 Bishoprics
- 29 Hallowed
- 30 U. S. gun gp.

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- 33 Funds advanced temporarily
- 35 "Pretty maids all in _____"
- 36 Grey of Western fiction
- 37 Belgian-French river
- 39 Ruman in Marx Brothers films
- 41 Winchester, for example
- 44 Name
- 45 Unclear

- 49 It deploys on impact
- 51 Elaborately decorated
- 52 Singer Linda and critic Richard
- 53 Sal of "Rebel Without A Cause"
- 54 Word before sanctum or tube
- 56 Hoary poet?
- 58 Tree house

- 60 Dies _____(day of wrath in a hymn)
- 61 Skinner of the stage
- 62 Assn. on ice
- 65 Treasure in "Treasure of Sierra Madre"
- 66 Cariou who played Sweeney

Answer on page 12

