

Annual Membership Meeting is Friday, April 8, 2016

The Eastern, Central and Western Regions will be connected for the April 8, 2016, Annual Membership Meeting so that members in all regions may be able to hear statements of candidates running for election to Council. Following the statements will be a report of the Executive Director and a report of the President.

The statements will begin at 2:30 p.m. (EST), 1:30 p.m. (CST) and 11:30 a.m. (PST).

The meeting in the **Eastern Region** will convene at 2 p.m. EST in the Council Room on the 14th floor of the Equity building at 165 West 46th Street, New York City, NY.

The agenda will also include the following:

- Report of the Eastern Regional Director
- Report of the Eastern Regional Vice President
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the by-laws

The meeting in the **Central Region** will convene at 1 p.m. 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 Director
- Report of the Central Regional Vice President
- Membership Discussion Period in accordance with the by-laws

The meeting in the **Western Region** will convene at 11 a.m. PST at I.A.T.S.E. Local 80 Meeting Hall, 2520 West Olive Avenue, in Burbank, 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

For members with disabilities who would like to request an accommodation to participate in the Membership Meeting, please contact National Director of Governance Allison F. Bodwell at 212-869-8530, ext. 318, two weeks prior to the meeting. Please check the Member Portal for any updates.



A panel of Equity members spoke freely about their careers and other facts of life facing performers of color during *African American Artists on Broadway: Life, Work and Inspiration*. The event was the second annual panel discussion sponsored by the National Equal Employment Opportunity Committee in honor of Black History Month, which took place on February 1, 2016. To read the full story, please visit actorsequity.org.

Photo by Scott Watanabe

Equity News Looks Ahead

After several facelifts, many columns come and gone and 100 incredible years, *Equity News* shall be rejuvenated once more. Next month — with a hint of modernity and a stylish allure — the new magazine-styled *Equity News* will come to members' homes. About to morph into a quarterly publication, this magazine will tell the stories of our members, this industry and our union in a contemporary, original fashion. And, supplementing the longstanding nine-month frequency of *Equity News* is the Equity News Center, the digital news site housed within the Member Portal that will deliver timely — and more — news and information.

Though we're certain this isn't the last incarnation of Equity's oldest and most cherished publication of record, this revived publication is the perfect nod to your union and the next 100 years.

What's Up With the Audits? And How Can I Cope With Them?

By Sandra Karas, Director, VITA Program

Our industry and a few others in which taxpayers claim business expenses have been

inundated with more than our share of requests for "further information," "substantiation," "explanation of expenses" and many other phrases that mean, "We're auditing your tax return."

So, let's review what you need to do to prepare yourself if and when you receive a notice that your tax return has been selected for examination. While you might be asked to prove items such as mortgage interest, property taxes, charitable contributions and medical expenses, the vast majority of examinations of performers' tax returns ask for proof of your ordinary and necessary business expenses. Let's go through each expense and what is required to prove you incurred it.

KEY: C = Canceled Check, CR = Credit Card Receipt, I = Invoice, R = Paid Receipt describing the expense.

NOTE: Credit Card Statements are not proof of payment of a business expense.

NOTE: If you pay more than \$599 during the year to any individual who is not

Changing the Rules

Two Equity Councillors attend 2016 AFL-CIO Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference

On January 15-18, 2016, Councillors Marjorie Horne (Co-Chair of the National Public Policy Committee) and Christine Toy Johnson (Chair of the National Equal Employment Opportunity Committee) attended the annual AFL-CIO Civil and Human Rights Conference in Washington, D.C. With 1,000 labor leaders and union members from across the nation in the audience, the theme "Change the Rules, Be the Power" resonated with a crowd all fighting for the same thing: a better tomorrow.

"Like many of our most beloved civil rights leaders, Dr.

King was a rule breaker," said the AFL-CIO's website. "No longer will we stand for attacks on workers, people of color, women, immigrants and the LGBTQ community. It's time for us to rewrite the rules, and push for a better tomorrow."

The proactive, inspirational conference — utilizing workshops, guest speakers and special events — acknowledged and dialogued the relevant issues that unions are facing; i.e. the recent Supreme Court decision on *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, the 2016 Presidential Election and voting rights and the ongoing conversations centered

on race, immigration and implicit biases.

Johnson sat in on two workshops that focused on discussing race: discovering pathways to speak to each other in a manner that resonates and how to reclaim the narrative through effective messaging. The Councillor discovered that some of the tools used in challenging how we talk about race are steeped in thorough communication: the power of sustained dialogue, using conflict to understand each other, rather than divide, linking problems to solutions.

"We should not wish for a nation without colors, but one that understands there are colors and celebrates, respects and protects them," said Tefere Gebre, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President.

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incorporated, you will have to send her/him a 1099 by January 31 of the following year. Have that person complete a W-9 form before you make payments for services.

Advertising and Publicity: You need the invoice and some form of paid receipt (I, C, CR, R).

Accompanist and Audition: You need the paid

receipt for audition space or your accompanist (I, C, CR, R).

Agents' Commissions/Managers Fees: A copy of your contract (if you're signed with an agency or management firm) is helpful as it spells out the percentage you're paying on your gross income. Also, your check stub received from the agent/manager, showing how your net income was paid. If

you can get a letter on their stationery that totals all commissions paid in the

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EQUITY NEWS
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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:

810 Albany
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

Tax News

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calendar year, even better (R).

Automobile Expense: Keep a contemporaneous log in a calendar of all of the miles you drive for business, commuting and personal use. Log the January 1 and December 31 odometer readings; keep repair, tune-up, inspection and other receipts to indicate mileage use throughout the year. If the actual expenses are greater than the standard rate (this is rare in our industry), then you have a lot to track. Add business parking and tolls (CR, I) to your expenses.

Coaching/Classes/

Lessons: Get a paid receipt for each session from any professional with whom you take lessons or classes (C, CR, I, R).

Entertainment for

Business: The who, what, where, when and how much should be listed for anyone you entertain who can further your income production (CR). This means that the expenditure must be able to lead to gainful employment.

Equipment and Software

Expense: Complete invoice and/or receipt accompanied by the proof of payment (C, CR, I, R).

Gifts for Business: This is limited to \$25 per recipient per year, but get the receipt for the gift (C, CR, I, R).

Makeup and Hair Care:

This expense is allowed only when you have a gig – not for maintenance of your look – and should be substantiated with proof of payment (C, CR, I, R).

Office Supplies: If you need postage, mailers, etc., get the receipts (C, CR, I, R).

Repairs/Equipment

Maintenance: Repairing and maintaining instruments and equipment, warranty contracts and agreements require an invoice or contract and proof of payment (C, CR, I, R).

Rental of Equipment,

Studio Space, Internet, Cable: Most rentals have contracts or agreements to sign and some are monthly invoices; hang onto those and the proof of your payment (C, CR, I, R).

Research Supplies: From retail purchases of music, books and scripts to music downloads and apps, be prepared to produce the paper receipt (C, CR, I, R).

Tax Preparation/Legal

Fees: If you pay a professional for services that relate to your business, get a paid receipt or invoice that you can connect

your check or credit card payment to (C, CR, I, R).

Telephone: It's a pain, but you can save your phone bills to your computer or other device or format along with the proof of payment (C, CR, I, R)

Tickets for Research:

Save the playbill, program or postcard of the event you must attend to keep abreast of your work in the industry, along with the ticket stub and paid receipt (C, CR, R).

Tips/Gratuities: If it's the dresser, wardrobe mistress or doorman, save the playbill (with their names in it) and keep a calendar log of what you paid, to whom and when.

Trade Publications: Keep the invoice and the paid receipt (CR, I). If you buy these at newsstands, and can't get a receipt, keep representative copies of each one and note the cash payment in your calendar.

Transportation Seeking Employment: You can always get a receipt for any transit or cab fares (CR, R).

Travel Out of Town:

Booking online affords easy access to invoices and paid receipts. Keep proof of the gig - working or looking for work out of town requiring an overnight stay – such as,

business cards, audition notices, etc. (C, CR, I, R). For tips, see the earlier note.

Union Dues/Initiation

Fees: In addition to the semi-annual dues, don't forget your working dues from any union, guild or organization to which you belong in the industry. You can usually get a letter indicating the total paid for the calendar year, but save your pay stubs and other proof of payment (C, CR, I, R).

Wardrobe and Cleaning:

Costumes and specialized dancewear and shoes are deductible, along with the clothing of any of your own clothing you are required to provide for a role. Save purchase receipts and dry cleaning tickets (C, CR, I, R). Keep receipts in categories, along with other items that show your professional standing in the industry (photos, résumés, IMDb), as well as copies of contracts and itineraries that prove you were where you say you were.

For more information, contact your tax professional or your nearest VITA office. Sandra Karas is Secretary-Treasurer of Equity and a Local Board member of SAG-AFTRA.

Changing the Rules

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Attending a Women's Rights breakout session, Horne, along with other union members, discussed sick days, maternity and paternity leave and equal pay.

"I was very proud of how much our union has taken a stance on gender parity and how far we've come in our contracts to cover these things," Horne said. "But I also realize that we still have more work to do concerning women's equality."

The two Councillors also participated in discussions centered on getting out the vote — expressing the importance of elections both internally and nationally.

"Nurses, painters, bricklayers, teachers, autoworkers, actors and stage managers have a lot more in common than you might think," said Johnson. "We are facing many of the same challenges: member apathy, a disconnect between the leadership and rank and file

members, a problem with disseminating information and members sometimes wanting to compromise the long-term mission for short-term goals."

Many of the solutions, they found, were in ensuring that members understand why it's

important to get their voices heard, making sure that members know how and when to vote and getting proper information to the membership early.

"We both came away with such great union pride," said

Johnson, "and an even deeper appreciation for the way unions across the country are making lives better for working people. The solidarity in those rooms was undeniable and stunningly potent."

A Breakfast to Remember

Councillors Barbara N. Roberts and Kevin McMahon attended the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO's town hall during its annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Breakfast to honor Congressman John Lewis on Jan. 23, 2016.

The theme of the town hall, "Across the Bridge...to the American Dream," symbolized the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama and connecting student organizers with lessons from the Civil Rights Movement. The town hall

brought together LA County officials, union leaders, students and young workers to discuss civil rights issues.

Known as one of the most recognizable advocates for equality and justice, Lewis has dedicated his life and career to protecting human rights and civil liberties. As a Congressman, Lewis continues to fight and advocate for human rights, joking that although he has been arrested 45 times in his lifetime, he could easily be arrested 45 more times before leaving his post in Congress.

Speaking directly to the workers and union members in the audience, he said, "Talk

to your leaders of labor and you will never go wrong. Continue to organize. They say you cannot win, but you will win. Continue to speak out for what is fair and just."

"Surrounded by union leaders and activists from literally all walks of life, Congressman John Lewis reminded us all that 'without organized labor the Civil Rights Movement would have been like a bird without wings,'" said McMahon. "Knowing Equity's historic part in the Civil Rights Movement and its continued commitment to stand against discrimination was inspiring."

Why should Equity members lend their talents and time to Theatre Authority performances?



PETER LAWSON JONES

"If it is a privilege to perform and a privilege to serve, then what could be more emotionally fulfilling than to participate in a theatrical experience that allows you to do both?"



EQUITYNEWS

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2016 Annual Election Calendar

- Friday, March 4, 2016** Deadline for Nominations by Independent Petition (Materials due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. **Eastern Time**.) List of all Nominated Candidates will be available on Equity's website by 5:30 p.m. **Eastern Time**
- Tuesday, March 8, 2016** Deadline to submit eligibility protests
- Wednesday, March 9, 2016** Deadline for Candidates' Statements for *Equity News*, Equity Website, and Ballot Brochure (Due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. **Eastern Time**)
- Friday, March 18, 2016** Deadline for registration to vote electronically
- Friday, April 8, 2016** Annual National Membership Meeting (all regions via teleconference) Candidate Speeches
- Monday, April 11, 2016** Distribution of Ballots (from balloting company)
- Tuesday, May 10, 2016** Deadline to request replacement paper ballot from balloting company
- Wednesday, May 18, 2016** Deadline for Receipt of Ballots
- Thursday, May 19, 2016** Tabulation Day
- Thursday, June 2, 2016** Deadline to submit election protests

Additional information about the elections process, including candidate packets available for download, a complete copy of the election rules and further information about how to run are all available in the Member Portal at members.actorssequity.org.



Changing the World, One Benefit at a Time

It's not difficult to become social agitators, advocates or lobbyists for causes we're passionate about. Once we start down that road, the difficult task is to stop.

My adult life started at age 20, and it started with activism. Over the years, plenty of people — friends, coworkers, even strangers — have asked me why I decided to get involved with the Miss America Organization. Apparently, it's hard for people to reconcile what they know of me with what they expect from a Miss America (for further explanation of this phenomenon, you might want to check out the book *Being Miss America: Behind the Rhinestone Curtain*, a spectacular book written by, ah...me).

The real answer is that my life, as Miss America 1998 and beyond, has always had a significant focus toward doing my part to effect positive change in the world. During that year, about 90% of my time was dedicated to HIV/AIDS

education and prevention. This was both tremendously satisfying and, in my opinion, the most compelling reason to pursue the gig in the first place. At the conclusion of the year, I wasn't offered a fur coat or a screen test; I was offered a job at a top HIV/AIDS lobbying firm in Washington, D.C.

As much as I loved that work, though, I am first and fundamentally an actor. When I moved to New York after college, I was delighted to learn that there were, and still are, abundant opportunities for performing artists to make the world a better place, and many of them involve showing up to sing a song. Or participate in a reading, or a concert staging. Organizations like Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and The Actors Fund (two of my favorites) are constantly raising money and do so in really creative and innovative ways. But many, many other charities, plenty of which are discussed in this issue, are able to mobilize performers as well, thanks to

the Theatre Authority. In these pages, you will find the article "Theatre Authority: Qualifying and Applying" to help you get started.

One of the fundamental concepts of union membership is that one person becomes far more powerful when he or she is part of an organized, functioning whole. For me, a similar phenomenon is at work when it comes to activism. Sorry to sound like — well, Miss America — but even if you have no idea where to start or how to get there, you can make a difference. The Theatre Authority is one guidepost to look for on the road to advocating for social change. As artists, we tend to be hardwired toward empathy...which can feel overwhelming in a demanding and often difficult world. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways in which we can turn those difficulties into opportunities.

Change the world. Start today.

Council Takes Action on Membership Meeting Resolutions

Every year, Actors' Equity Association holds three Regional Membership Meetings — one in January, one in October and one in April. During the October 2015 Membership Meetings held in the Eastern and Western Regions, nine resolutions were passed by the members present. Each resolution was presented to the National Council for consideration and a recorded vote was taken. The following are the Council actions taken on those resolutions:

During the Eastern Regional Membership Meeting held on October 16, 2015, the members present passed a total of six resolutions. The following two resolutions were presented to the National Council at its meeting on December 15, 2015:

1. RESOLVED to approve the following resolution: WHEREAS, an Actor possessing sides well in advance of an audition has a greatly increased chance of

booking the job and; WHEREAS, actors who are given audition appointments by the casting director receive their sides days and even weeks in advance of their auditions thus providing them a non-equitable advantage and; WHEREAS, actors who receive sides only 20 minutes in advance of their audition have a snowballs chance in hell of booking the same job; THEREFORE, be it **RESOLVED** that commencing no later December 1, 2015, the Audition Department will make best efforts to make available audition materials for sides calls as soon as they receive them or a week in advance, whichever is sooner. The hard copies of sides will be available for view either upon request or display in the Audition Center; Be it further **RESOLVED** that Council will commit to making sides available via internet and will appoint a task force to accomplish this end. The methodologies and findings of this task force will be reported

in Equity News no later than the March 2016 issue.

2. RESOLVED that Council shall instruct AEA staff that all AEA Membership meetings as specified in Article I, Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 of the AEA Bylaws, shall be recorded and made available for review by members as specified in Article I of the Bylaws in Section V: Membership Meeting Record, and that any and all meetings with membership called by Council such as informational meetings etc. be recorded.

In the discussion of Resolution #1, the Council discussed a number of factors, including that Equity does not have the legal authorization to publish or disseminate copyrighted materials that it does not own and that Equity has attempted to negotiate, without success, the right to acquire and post sides in this way. Based on the fact that it is not possible for the union to distribute sides in this way, Council was unable to vote up

the resolution.

The Council moved and seconded without objection to divide the Eastern Membership Resolution #1 into two parts. The Council **RESOLVED** to respectfully deny both parts of this motion.

The motion to deny the first part of the Membership Meeting Resolution was voted on and passed by a recorded vote. The following Councillors voted in favor of denying the first part of the resolution:

- Ms. Price, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Mont, Ms. Karas, Ms. Robinette, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brody, Mr. Bundonis, Ms. Cave, Ms. Cody, Mr. Denmark, Ms. Horne, Ms. Ivey, Mr. Jue, Mr. Kilgore, Ms. Kramer, Mr. Liebert, Ms. Moore, Mr. Moye, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Nicole, Ms. O'Phalen, Ms. Pinksins, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sitter, Mr. Smith, Mr. Solomon, Ms. Swiderski, Mr. Topol, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Watanabe, Ms. White, Mr. Williams, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Ewen,

- Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Mr. Bott, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Ms. Huber, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. Loeb, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahon, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Sharpe-Taylor, Ms. Tross

The following Councillors were opposed to denying the first part of the resolution:

- Mr. Brown, Mr. Marlow, Mr. Willet

The motion to deny the second part of Resolution #1 was voted on and passed by a recorded vote. The following Councillors voted in favor of denying the second part of the resolution:

- Ms. Price, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Mont, Ms. Karas, Ms. Robinette, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brody, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Smith, Mr. Solomon, Ms. Swiderski, Mr. Topol, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Watanabe, Ms. White, Mr. Williams, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Ewen, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Ms.

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Why did you decide to participate in a Theatre Authority benefit?



MARIO L. MOSLEY

"I've always wanted to find a way to incorporate my love for theatre, causes I truly believe in and my desire to give back to society. This was an incredible opportunity to finally bring all of them together. It was truly one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

UNDERSTANDING THEATRE AUTHORITY

Theatre for Good

Two members explain the many benefits of using Theatre Authority

In any given year, Equity members have fought hard battles. For theatres, for cures, for conservation, awareness, messaging, people, history and the industry — a cause bigger than themselves. Using their voice, talent and time, Equity actors and stage managers have helped raise millions year after year for specific national and global causes through benefit performances.

Theatre Authority (TA) has allowed countless foundations, organizations and theatres to rely on the skill of union members to help raise funds and awareness for a good cause.

“As a group, those in the performing arts have a unique view of life, and with it, an understanding of the need to care for, and about, the world around them,” said Equity member Nikki Harmon. “Organizations, whose raison d’être is to help others, recognize



Nikki Harmon

this and gravitate to those in the field. It is a symbiotic relationship.”

Theatre Authority is a nonprofit organization that Equity manages, which administers and regulates the free appearances of performers and stage managers, while providing assistance to members of the community. Created in 1934, Theatre Authority has indeed been given the “authority” to approve benefits on behalf of Equity, AGMA, AGVA and SAG-AFTRA (or the 4A’s). Through its partnership with The Actors Fund, TA provides financial assistance to members of the theatrical community in need of help.

Administratively, TA investigates whether charities are legitimate; protects artists from unfair demands of time and talent; sets standards, which provide some assurance that a reasonable net profit for the beneficiary can be achieved.

Theatre Authority has also established rules and regulations to ensure the performers’ comfort, convenience and safety, as well as to protect artists from having their appearances be recorded or reproduced. Additionally, it provides a small amount of accident insurance that insures against accidents on the way to, during and on the way home from an event.

Harmon has been utilizing TA for The Jane Goodall Institute, the well-known wildlife conservation organization. When organizing, or in this case, producing, on behalf of a cause she deeply believes in, Harmon of course turned to Equity, believing that union members give any event gravitas.

“In our case, where the importance of feeling empathy toward the endangered species as they are both acted out, and spoken about, by the characters in the plays, it is imperative in getting the message through to the audience,” she said.

To date, through the efforts of the Institute, over 149,000 acres of habitat have been protected, more than 5,000 chimpanzees and gorillas have been protected, 130 communities around the world remain supported and close to 5,000 projects have been engaged by younger generations through the Institute’s programming.



Eric McMillian-McCall

Member Eric McMillian-McCall has been using TA for Project1VOICE (P1V), a nonprofit performing arts service organization based in New York City. Now in its sixth year, the company’s mission is to promote and support African American theatre and playwrights. According to McCall, the organization’s core activity is the coordination of an international same-day, staged reading that “revives and reintroduces neglected — forgotten and/or underappreciated — seminal works written by Black playwrights for the American theatre.”

With over 45 participating organizations, P1V has coordinated over 200 events, expanded its reach globally and has seen an increase in audience participants. And, the actor believes that by being able to work with multiple unions, P1V raises the creative bar for both organizations and audiences.

“All the components from onstage, backstage, front of house and producing teams are all working independently of each other, but come together unveiling pristinely fine-tuned creativity,” he said. “This seamlessly only occurs when you work with people with the same level of professionalism and dedication to excellence.”

Both performers believe that art, specifically theatre, is a change agent — a tool that can inspire, teach and generate positive growth and transformation.

“Art is the leader of change,” said Harmon. “Society is moved, sometimes kicking and screaming, to change, and it’s the theatre, movies, music, art, novels, etc., that make audiences aware and empathetic to that change.”

Theatre Authority is just the start.

Theatre Authority: Qualifying and Applying

Theatre Authority benefits can take several theatrical forms: readings, concerts, full productions, cabarets, dance performances. Any organization is welcome to use Theatre Authority so long as there are no more than two benefit performances and no more than 25 hours of rehearsal. The benefit must be a stand-alone event — meaning it’s not just an additional performance of a contracted production or a part of a season of one-night offerings — and it has to be clearly advertised as a benefit.

One hundred percent of the monies being raised (after expenses) need to be collected for, and donated to, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. If the company itself isn’t a 501(c)(3), you can get sponsorship from another organization that is, or work with Fractured Atlas, a nonprofit, service-driven organization that provides support services to and for the arts community. Additionally, you can raise money for another organization such as Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (which, of course, is tax exempt).

Applying is simple and can be done by a producer or a member who wants to participate. The application form can be found on Equity’s website (actorsequity.org/Benefits/theatreauthority.asp). The one-page form asks for the specifics of the event; you don’t even need to know yet who will be performing or how many union members will be participating. The application must be accompanied with proof of your organization’s IRS tax exempt status or a letter from the organization for which you’re raising money.

If the event qualifies, the producer will be sent a letter to sign, agreeing to the terms of Theatre Authority, which allows union members to donate their time and services to your event. Union members will need to sign a “Benefit Performers List” once rehearsals begin in order to qualify for the Workers’ Comp-like insurance Theatre Authority maintains to protect the performers.

Based on how much money you expect to raise, not only will the funds go toward the insurance policy for members, but a small donation to The Actors Fund may be required.

You will be asked to acknowledge Theatre Authority in your program.

Theatre Authority’s Reach Across the Nation

Because of the talent, skill and dedication of Equity members, organizations continue to fight for cures, students get to experience live performance for the first time, theatres continue to enrich their programming and people in need get an extra night of shelter. Theatre Authority allows for organizations, theatres, activist groups and more, to utilize the abilities of Equity members to raise awareness and funds for a specific cause.

In 2015 alone, there were 422 theatrical benefit performances sanctioned by Theatre Authority, benefitting almost 300 organizations and raising over \$19 million! Below is a representative list of just some of the organizations that used and benefited from Theatre Authority in 2015.

- Alzheimer’s Association (CA)
- Boom Arts – 350PDX (OR)
- Brain and Behavior Research Foundation (NY)
- Cancer Association of Anderson (SC)
- Central Florida Community Arts (FL)
- Dove House Advocacy Services (WA)
- Fight Colorectal Cancer (IL)
- It Gets Better Project and GMCLA Alive Music Program (CA)
- Middletown Public Library (WI)
- Milford NJ Food Pantries (NJ)
- North Star Self-Directed Learning for Teens (MA)
- Season of Concern (IL)
- Survivors Helping Other Women Survive (OH)
- The Georgia Innocence Project (GA)
- The Hope & Justice Project (ME)
- Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance (MN)
- Unlocking Futures: Youth at Risk (NY)
- USVAA and The Soldier’s Project (CA)
- UVM Medical Center (VT)
- Zara Aina (NY)

For more information about any of these organizations, please visit their websites. For more information about Theatre Authority, please contact Senior Business Representative Russell Lehrer at rlehrer@actorsequity.org.



Dedicated to Children

We asked the staff at the StageOne Family Theatre to tell us about the company; this is what they had to say:

As Louisville, Kentucky's only Equity theatre company for young audiences, StageOne Family Theatre has served as the gateway to the performing arts for more than three million children throughout its 69-year history. With high-quality, professional productions, in-school education programs and community-based classes and camps, StageOne provides access to the arts that is relevant, age-appropriate, inspirational and critical to childhood development. This commitment helps children learn both academically and emotionally, all while developing the next generation of thinkers, doers and leaders.

"I'm currently in the middle of my fourth season as stage manager for StageOne, and it has turned out to be my favorite job," said Equity member Tracy

Schwab. "Hearing the laughter of 600 plus elementary school students in the morning is one of the most delightful sounds I've heard — and it never gets old. I love when the children 'ooh' and 'aaah' over scene changes and technical effects. It's awesome to see every audience member suspend their disbelief and travel along with us wherever the story goes."

On stage, the company produces a four-production season that is tied to school curriculum for grades PreK-12. From titles such as *The BFG*, to the mixed media oral history *And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*, the company works directly with the public, private and parochial school community to engage, inspire and energize every child.

Since its inception in 2010, "Play it Forward," a ticket underwriting program, has allowed over 210,000 students to attend performances at a zero-ticket cost. "We knew it was vital to adjust our business model and help our schools continue to make live theatre an important part of their educational experience," said Producing Artistic Director Peter Holloway. "In that first year we saw our attendance increase by nearly 30,000 and knew that we were on to something."



Narrator Alphaeus Green, Jr., Matthew Brennan (center) as Harold and Ben Sollee on the right in *Harold and the Purple Crayon*.

The company also has a heavy focus on new works. In 2012, StageOne partnered with playwright Suzan Zeder to revamp her stage production *Wiley and the Hairy Man* into a musical, with a full score from jazz pianist Harry Pickens. Two years ago, the theatre commissioned another nationally known playwright, Idris Goodwin, for a boyhood story of Louisville legend Muhammad Ali in *And In This Corner...Cassius Clay*, following dual storylines of Clay's rise to Olympic fame and the civil rights movement in 1950s segregated Louisville.

This March, StageOne presents a world premiere adaptation of *Harold and the Purple Crayon* in partnership with the Speed Art Museum. Composed and performed live by world-renowned cellist Ben Sollee, this groundbreaking piece combines storytelling, dance, music and visual art in an interactive way. Inspiring the audience to critically think about their own worlds, each student will be handed a tablet computer as they enter the theatre, and using an app created by Humana's IT Department, over 15,000 kids will draw along with Harold at

strategic moments. After each show, students can download their version to take home.

"We're instructed to 'turn off or silence all technology' before a live performance and keep technology at bay, but for this production we're inviting technology to live and breathe around the production," said Marketing Director Hannah Wemitt. "What an exciting experience for a child. We're asking students to think critically and problem solve using their own imaginations. There's no right answer, and in a lot of ways it becomes an empowering moment for them."

Equity Revises Members' Project Code

The Committee on Area Liaison Affairs, or CALA, has been diligently working on a revision of the Members' Project Code that would allow members to use the code for local Fringe Festivals.

Historically, each Fringe Festival would have its own

code — or none at all — and member-produced work could be difficult to arrange. This revision, which Council approved during its Jan. 19, 2016, meeting makes it easier for members to keep Equity informed, while allowing those members outside of the three

office cities to self-produce.

A sub-committee with liaisons Karole Spangler, Kari Lynn Ely, Byron Nilsson, Mark Richard Taylor, Tom Helmer, Roger Curtis and Dennis Yslas formed to suggest revisions.

Filing a Members' Project Code/Fringe Festival Code is

now done with a one-sheet document. In addition to the basic facts (i.e. name of show, venue, performance dates, anticipated budget/ticket prices and contact person), the form needs the signatures of every Equity member involved. The completed form must be

submitted to the appropriate Liaison Committee one month prior to the first rehearsal or reading of any MPC/FCC production.

The form, as well as any questions, can be directed to the Liaison Committee in the region in which you live.

A LOOK BACK

75 Years Ago March 1941

President Bert Lytell sends a letter to Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, to implore him to negotiate a plan with Equity. Equity has been raising money to help build professional

theatres in the camps and bases overseas. He writes, "I have hesitated to intrude upon the time of a man as busy as yourself, but I can get neither information nor satisfaction, apparently, from anyone else, and I think the subject important enough to warrant this."

50 Years Ago March 1966

The New York City office headquarters finds its new, permanent home at 165 West 46th Street. *Equity News* notes that the office is "bright, modern and arranged for maximum efficiency."

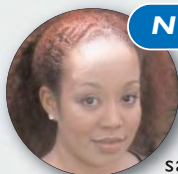
25 Years Ago March 1991

A Dinner Theatre strike looms for Equity members as producers seek to eliminate the health and pension plans as well as remove stage managers from the bargaining unit. Equity has made strong concessions to assist dinner theatre producers, but refused to allow the elimination of health and pension plans or the removal of Equity stage managers from contract. (The strike is avoided after further meetings in May.)

10 Years Ago March 2006

With the upcoming May billing period, Equity launches a completely redesigned Member Portal, where members are able to manage their contact, financial and security information. What's more, union members will now be able to pay dues and initiation fees online with a credit card or check.

Why did you decide to participate in a Theatre Authority benefit?



NINA DOMINGUE

"Project I Voice is a festival that happens once a year — all over the country. Black theatres and culture centers produce a professional staged reading of the same play, on the same night at the same time. So, you get to participate in this play, knowing that all of these artists that you know of and admire are breathing life into the same words you are and that you are all celebrating one of the greats. It's phenomenal."

Council Takes Action

(continued from page 3)

Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Mr. Bott, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Ms. Huber, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. Cave, Ms. Cody, Mr. Denmark, Ms. Horne, Ms. Ivey, Mr. Jue, Mr. Kilgore, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Moore, Mr. Moye, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Nicole, Ms. O'Phalen, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Ms. Loeb, Mr. Marlow, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Sharpe-Taylor, Ms. Tross, Mr. Willet

When discussing Resolution #2, Council noted that all official Membership Meetings are already recorded in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws. Councillors also discussed that the resolution was overly broad and would prevent the union from having confidential and strategic conversations with its membership. Councillors also expressed the opinion that members should feel free to speak openly to their union without fear that their comments would be distributed to others. The Eastern Membership Resolution (#2) was then taken up by Council. The Council **RESOLVED** to deny this motion.

The following Councillors voted in favor of the motion to approve the Membership Meeting Resolution:

Mr. Solomon and Mr. Marlow

The following Councillors were opposed to the motion to approve the Membership Meeting Resolution:

Ms. Price, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Mont, Ms. Robinette, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brody, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bundonis, Ms. Cave, Ms. Cody, Mr. Denmark, Ms. Horne, Ms. Ivey, Mr. Jue, Mr. Kilgore, Ms. Nevins, Ms. Nicole, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Mr. Smith, Ms. Swiderski, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Williams, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Ms. Pinkins, Mr. Bolender, Mr. Bott, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Ms. Huber, Ms. Loeb, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Ms. H. Lee, Mr. North, Mr. Pawley, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Sharpe-Taylor, Ms. Tross, Mr. Willet

The following Councillor abstained:

Ms. Ground

The following four Eastern Membership Resolutions were presented to the National Council at an emergency meeting on January 7, 2016:

3. RESOLVED that, WHEREAS committee members have as great a stake in the work by these committees as the chair, be it **RESOLVED** that if 5 members of a specific committee want to meet they be allowed to call a meeting.

4. RESOLVED that any developmental contracts, including but not limited to the workshop and lab, and any other readings or developmental stuff be made available online, that is practical to do so.

5. RESOLVED for Council to refer to the media committee to research ways in which members could have access to B roll for the purpose of creating their own publicity.

6. RESOLVED that we expand the current *Ask If It's Equity* campaign to all other regions so that audiences are made aware that shows that might say 'direct from Broadway' may be non-union.

In response to the Eastern Membership Meeting Resolution #3, Council **RESOLVED** that WHEREAS committee members have as great a stake in the work by these committees as the chair, Council reaffirms that if one member of a specific committee wants to meet, they be allowed to request a committee meeting through the Governance Department, appropriate staff, and/or chair(s).

A roll call vote to approve this amended resolution was taken and passed with the following voting in favor:

Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Daly, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Ms. Slusser, Ms. Simpson, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Rice, Ms. Nevins, Mr. Kilgore, Mr. Jue, Ms. Horne, Mr. Denmark, Mr. Borts, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Liebert, Ms. Arnett, Ms. Swiderski, Mr. Brown

The following Councillors were opposed to the motion:

Mr. Bott, Mr. Dotson, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. Willet, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Sittler,

Ms. O'Phalen, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Brody, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Loeb, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Green, Mr. Mont, Ms. Nicole, Mr. Marlow

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve this amended Eastern Membership Meeting Resolution (#4).

RESOLVED that any developmental contracts, including but not limited to the workshop and lab, and any other readings or developmental contracts, agreements, and codes be made available online, where it is practical to do so.

The following Councillors voted in favor of the motion:

Mr. Brody, Mr. Bundonis, Ms. Nevins, Ms. O'Phalen, Mr. Sittler, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Carfrae, Mr. Bott, Ms. Daly, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Green, Ms. Swiderski, Ms. Nicole, Mr. Marlow, Mr. Brown

The following Councillors were opposed to the Motion:

Ms. Jordan, Ms. Borts, Ms. Horne, Mr. Jue, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Ewen, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Dotson, Mr. Willet, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Loeb

The Council unanimously passed this amended Eastern Membership Meeting Resolution (#5) that read:

RESOLVED for Council to refer to the media committee to continue researching ways in which members could have access to B roll for the purpose of creating their own publicity.

The following Councillors voted in favor:

Ms. Jordan, Ms. Karas, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brody, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Denmark, Ms. Horne, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Jue, Mr. Kilgore, Ms. Nevins, Ms. O'Phalen, Ms. Pinkins, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Ms. Slusser, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Mr. Bott, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. North, Mr. Willet, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Mr. Liebert, Ms. Loeb, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Green, Ms. Swiderski, Mr. Mont, Mr. Moye, Ms. Nicole, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Marlow, Mr. Pawley, Mr. Brown, Ms. Huber

In response to the Eastern Membership Meeting Resolution #6, Council

RESOLVED that we expand the current *Ask If It's Equity* campaign to all other regions in accordance with the strategic plan so that audiences are made aware that shows that might say 'direct from Broadway' may be non-union and to beef up the presence of the SET Negotiations in June.

This motion to approve the resolution as amended was voted on and passed by a recorded vote.

The following Councillors voted in favor:

Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Ms. Huber, Ms. H. Lee, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Liebert, Ms. Loeb, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Green, Ms. Swiderski, Ms. Williams, Mr. Moye, Ms. Nicole, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Marlow, Mr. Pawley, Mr. Brown, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brody, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Denmark, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Jue, Mr. Kilgore, Ms. Lehman, Mr. Ludwig, Ms. Nevins, Ms. O'Phalen, Ms. Pinkins, Ms. Rice, Ms. Robinson, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Sittler, Ms. Slusser, Mr. Solomon, Ms. Karas, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Ewen, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Kaplan, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Mr. Bott, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. North, Mr. Willet

The following Councillor abstained:

Ms. Horne

During the Western Regional Membership Meeting held on October 19, 2015, the members present passed the following three resolutions, which were presented to the National Council at its meeting on December 15, 2015:

1. RESOLVED that the following "revised" statement be entered into the record and printed in the Equity Newsletter:

"The majority of Los Angeles Equity Members are deeply concerned for the survival of our artistic homes and in many ways our artistic souls. No artist would simply let these things disappear particularly not for theoretical gains we see as more than offset by very real losses. But we stand proudly with this union's history of achieving vital gains for its Members. We stand with its passionate advocacy for civil rights of all kinds and above all we stand with our sisters and brothers across the

country and our collective aspirations for fair compensation, workplace protections and increased opportunities for us all. There is no contradiction here. We are Pro-99 and we are Equity."

2. RESOLVED that on behalf of the Los Angeles Membership of Equity present at this meeting that the Production Contract Negotiating Team be formally congratulated on the completion of their work and thanked for their time and extraordinary effort on our behalf.

3. RESOLVED to recommend that the AEA National Council meet immediately with the plaintiffs of the lawsuit and their lawyers in an attempt to resolve the issue and avoid protracted and costly litigation.

The Council **RESOLVED** to postpone taking any action or making any comments on the Western Membership meeting Resolution #1.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Western Membership Meeting Resolution #2 unanimously with the following Councillors voting in favor of the motion:

Ms. Price, Mr. Brody, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Jue, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Nevins, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Solomon, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Williams, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. Loeb, Mr. Marlow, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. North, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Tross, Mr. Willet, Ms. Ground, Ms. Moreland, Mr. Bogardus

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Western Membership Meeting Resolution #3 with a roll call vote, which passed unanimously with the following voting in favor:

Ms. Price, Mr. Brody, Mr. Bundonis, Mr. Jue, Ms. Kramer, Ms. Nevins, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Rice, Ms. Simpson, Mr. Solomon, Ms. Tucker, Mr. Williams, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bolender, Ms. Daly, Mr. Dotson, Ms. H. Lee, Ms. Loeb, Mr. Marlow, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahan, Mr. North, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Tross, Mr. Willet, Ms. Ground, Ms. Moreland, Mr. Bogardus

Why should Equity members lend their talents and time to Theatre Authority performances?



KELLY GROUND

"Because our philanthropic endeavors can not only serve nonprofits, our theatres, our audiences, but we can serve our members. It can educate our audience about Equity and let them know we are out there. We as members of the arts community are valuable to the arts. Our beneficiaries support our talent and appreciate our endeavors to fiscally support their programs and our local communities."

NATIONAL NEWS



Austin, Texas

Austin Playhouse Receives Equity Plaque

Equity bestowed the Austin Playhouse with a plaque in honor of the theatre's rather impressive comeback. After losing its theatre to two floods, the company's artistic team got creative and built its new home in an abandoned shopping mall. (In fact, for those in the area, the theatre has occupied a former Foot Locker.) Pictured above: Western Regional Director Gail Gabler, Western Regional Vice President Doug Carrae, Artistic Director Lara Toner as well as Equity member and Austin Liaison Chair Laura Walberg.

New York City

Rent-Stabilized Luxury Apartment in NYC Available

Living in New York can be a stretch. But now low and middle-income residents might be eligible for rent-stabilized apartments; these housing opportunities are only available through lottery programs.

One of the latest opportunities is Gotham Organization's 250 Ashland Place, a full-service, 52-story rental tower in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. *The online housing lottery is now open.* The building will offer 282 affordable apartments for a variety of household sizes and income levels from \$28,835 to \$200,400, all permanently rent-stabilized (household and income restrictions apply). The lottery closes on April 11, 2016.

The newest building in Brooklyn's Cultural District, 250

Ashland Place, features a 24-hour attended lobby, fitness center, playroom, resident lounge, concierge, bike storage and laundry in the building (additional fees may apply).

How Do I Find Out More?

1. Visit ashlandlottery.com for more information on the application process and necessary documentation.

2. Click on 'apply now.' You will be redirected to nyc.gov/housingconnect. Create an account (or sign in if you already have one).

3. Scroll down to 'Ashland Lottery-250 Ashland Place' and select 'apply.'

For more help and information, visit the "Applicant Income Guide" found www1.nyc.gov.



Bethesda, Maryland

Celebrating a Milestone

The 15th Annual Greater Washington D.C./Baltimore Area Liaison auditions were held at Round House Theatre in Bethesda, MD, on February 8, 2016. Over 100 Equity actors along with EMCs were provided three minutes to showcase their talents to 27 area producers.

"It's incredible how much our community has grown over the past 15 years, and the Liaison Committee is proud to have provided the opportunity for so many of our talented actors and stage managers to be seen by area producers," said Roy A. Gross,

chair of the Liaison Committee. "We hope the auditors were reminded of the great talent living in the D.C./Baltimore area and introduced to some of the fresh faces who've joined our community."

About 35 union members and EMCs volunteered and joined the Liaison Committee to help facilitate a successful day, which also served as a collection event for the annual Dignity Drive. Members donated four bins worth of new socks, diapers and undergarments for local shelters.



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Hosts its Annual Membership Meeting

On February 1, 2016, about 30 Equity members as well as staff attended the annual Philadelphia Membership Meeting. Guests included Eastern Regional Vice President Melissa Robinette, Eastern Regional Director Tom Carpenter and Business Representative Buckley Stephens. The meeting was held in the newly renovated Drake Ballroom, which now contains 120 seats and a 75-seat theatre with modern amenities. It was created through the efforts of the Equity

SPT contract, InterAct Theatre Company's \$2 million and fundraising efforts over the past year and constructed by union labor.

Some of the meeting highlights included staff sharing numerous examples of successful claims for additional payments owed to members and Liaison Chair Tom Helmer's announcement that Equity Council recently approved the combining of the Members' Project Code and various Fringe Festival Codes into one easy-to-use set of guidelines.

New York City

VITA Opens its Doors for its 40th Year

Forty never looked so good. And member Pascale Armand showed up at midnight on Feb. 1, 2016, to start celebrating — well that, and to sign up for VITA's free tax return services.

Keeping with what feels like an age-old tradition, members began showing up at the NYC Equity office during the early morning hours to choose a coveted appointment slot with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance). At 6:35 a.m., close to 180 members filled the Council Room, with dozens more trickling in.

Armand, who will portray Bessie in the Broadway premiere of *Eclipsed*, usually is a walk-in at VITA. But, with a slight schedule change this year, she felt it was important to come and sign up.

"There is something comforting knowing who is doing your taxes," she said, "people who know an actor's life, who know how do these taxes. If you go to other services, they don't give it a second thought. VITA is thorough and they go through everything with you. At Equity and VITA, they care and they want to help."

Headed by VITA Director and Equity Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Karas, VITA is the only IRS-sponsored tax assistance program in the country specializing in performers' tax returns. The program prepares thousands of complex federal, state and local tax returns for members. A number of volunteers (many of whom are members) come and assist throughout tax season.

Operating Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday through the end of tax season, VITA is open from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the NYC Equity office on the 14th floor. Tax worksheets are available for download in the VITA section on the Members Portal, members.actorssequity.org. These worksheets, which comply with IRS law, are required and must be completed before an appointment.

Editor's Note: Tax assistance is also available in Los Angeles at The Actors Fund VITA Program.

What was a touching moment you experienced during/after your Theatre Authority performance?



MARCUS SHANE

"The best part about Theatre Authority is it offers you an opportunity to work with certain artists that you might not usually work with. Making those new and special connections, onstage and off, is the major highlight of the experience for me."



Houston, Texas

Houston/Galveston Annual Liaison Meeting

Houston/Galveston's annual Actors' Equity Membership Meeting was held on January 25, 2016, at Houston's Main Street Theater. Western Regional Vice President Doug Carfrae, Western Regional Director Gail Gabler and Business Representative Christa Jackson were welcomed by Committee Chair Joel C. Sandel, Vice Chair David Grant and the entire committee.

During the meeting, a number of topics were addressed including *Ask If It's Equity*, raising Equity awareness among the general population, encouraging ethnic diversity within the membership —

as well as on the committee — and ensuring that Equity theatres provide audition information to members. Carfrae, Gabler and Jackson visited a number of local theatres, all of which are interested in future development alongside the union. During the exchange of questions, ideas and issues between members and national representatives, the out-of-town guests all remarked on the palpable affection and camaraderie they noticed among the Equity members in Houston. The meeting concluded with the addition of stage manager Rebecca L. Skupin to the liaison committee.



Albany, New York

Albany Hosts Annual Meeting

By Byron Nilsson

Don't hold your annual liaison meeting down the street from a Bruce Springsteen concert. That was the compelling lesson for those seeking parking in downtown Albany on February 8, 2016. But those who weren't otherwise diverted enjoyed a topic-filled two hours. Eastern Regional Director Tom Carpenter reported on recent contract negotiations — of particular interest because of the easier access to health care that resulted. Eastern Regional

Vice President Melissa Robinette discussed ways in which the *Ask If It's Equity* campaign could be applied locally, especially as some of the liaison members spoke of the need to raise audience awareness of the significance of professional theatre.

With so few Albany-area theatres offering Equity contracts, pursuing the campaign more aggressively can help both audience members and presenting houses understand not only the quality of professional

performances but also the importance of the wages and safety regulations union performers receive. Equity member Terry Rabine, who serves as producing director of the Lake Theatre in Lake George, noted that his relationship with Equity's New York office has changed from what seemed adversarial eight years ago to a very collegial relationship.

With the ratification of a revised Members' Project Code/Fringe Festival document, discussion centered on implementation of the code and its use as a pathway to developing more professional productions, and, eventually, professional companies in the greater Albany area. David Girard, a member who has worked in both the Albany and Philadelphia regions, spoke of his desire to produce work that could begin with the MPC, but then continue to grow.

"When a producer comes to us with something creative," said Carpenter, "something out-of-the-box, are we going to say no? No! We can't force producers to produce a certain way."



Lakeway, Texas

Getting back on its feet after a three-year hiatus, TexARTS, located in Lakeway, TX, will be producing with an SPT agreement once again. The company, under the helm of Equity member Jarret Mallon, has plans to grow and expand its programming and offerings to Equity members and young artists. Western Regional Director Gail Gabler (second left) and Business Representative Christa Jackson presented Mallon (center) and producer Sandy Cox (right) with an Equity plaque in honor of their "comeback" on Jan. 22, 2016.

"As a professional theatre company, TexARTS is thrilled to once again provide performance opportunities to Austin-area actors and stage managers," said Mallon. "After a three-year hiatus, our patrons and the local theatre community have welcomed back our professional theatre series with open arms, and they greatly appreciate and respect the level of talent and professionalism on our stage. Additionally, our TexARTS Academy students have benefited from witnessing the Equity process and seeing where their studies may one day lead them."



CELEBRATING "THE CANTEN GIRL!"

On March 29th, Phyllis Jean Creore Westerman, known as "The Canteen Girl" celebrates her 100th Birthday! She came to New York City in the early 1930s to pursue dreams of an acting career and moved into the Rehearsal Club Residence for aspiring actresses. She was "Miss Television" for the New York World's Fair of 1939 and later hosted the NBC radio program honoring WWII servicemen, reading letters on air, as well as singing her original composition, "This is My Wish." Her dramatic readings are in the archives of the Paley Museum, and she was featured in NYHS's Exhibit, "New York City – WWII," in a documentary.

The Rehearsal Club has had the delight and honor of becoming friends of Phyllis' for

the last decade and celebrates her life and accomplishments as an actress, sculptress, painter, poet, wife and mother. Her life in the arts, marriage, motherhood and friendships are the résumé of a life well lived!

The Rehearsal Club –
Kathleen Conry,
Honorary Chair

Broadway, she played Mary Tate in Hugh Leonard's *Da*, and in theatres Off-Broadway and regionally. She was married to Colm Meaney between 1982-1994. They have one daughter, actress Brenda Meaney.

An ardent Actors' Equity member, she was a fierce defender of unions.

Though she appeared in both film and television, her first love was always the theatre. American theatre audiences and all the many actors and directors she worked with are greatly blessed by the endearing, enduring presence of the Irish beauty.

Memorial Donations: The Actors Fund, 729 Seventh Avenue, 10th floor, NYC, NY 10019 or the Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Foundation, 341 W. 38th Street, Suite 501, NYC, NY 10018.

— June Ballinger

IN MEMORIAM

Bairbre P. Dowling (62), died on January 20, 2016. She was born in Ireland on March 27, 1953, to actors Vincent Dowling and Brenda Doyle.

She arrived in America in 1977 after a successful career in Ireland to work at The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival in Cleveland, Ohio. She played in numerous Shakespearean and classical productions including the American Premiere of *Nicholas Nickleby*. On

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.

What was a touching moment you experienced during/after your Theatre Authority performance?



COLLEEN DELANY

"The address given to the audience by a young man who's dealing with the disorder (I participated in an event for Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance) in his own life. He was engaging and poised and won everyone over utterly."