

Vote in AEA's 2011 Council Election

Ballots were distributed on Monday, April 11, 2011. Even if you did not pre-register for E-Voting, you can still vote online. When you receive your paper ballot, click on <http://www.esc-vote.com/ae2011>. Enter your unique internet log-in number and your Member ID.

NOTE: The deadline for receipt of ballots in the 2011 National Election is Friday, May 20, 2011. Ballots must be received by the balloting company by 5 p.m. Eastern Time. Ballots will be tabulated on Saturday, May 21. Election results will be posted on the website on Monday, May 23 and published in the June issue of Equity News.

The Shakespeare Center of LA Receives 2011 LeNoire Award

The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles (SCLA) has received AEA's 2011 Rosetta LeNoire Award. The Award was presented in a special ceremony to SCLA Founder and Artistic Director Ben Donenberg during the Western Membership Meeting in Los Angeles on April 8, 2011.

The Rosetta LeNoire Award,

established in 1988, recognizes outstanding artistic contributions to the universality of the human experience in American Theatre. The Award is given to an individual, theatre or producing organization with an exemplary record in the hiring or promotion of ethnic minorities, female actors and actors with disabilities through multi-racial and/or non-



At the presentation of the Rosetta LeNoire Award in Los Angeles are: (l to r) Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield; Western Business Rep Michael Van Duzer; SCLA Board member Jennifer Hazel; SCLA Director of Communications Regina Cabrera; SCLA Artistic Director Ben Donenberg; Councillor and Western EEO Chair Barbara Roberts and Executive Director Mary McCoil.

traditional casting.

Upon receiving the Award, Mr. Donenberg said: "To fulfill Shakespeare's vision for his plays, it's critical for our productions to hold the mirror up to the history, landscape and people of Los Angeles. For us to fulfill our mission and provide full access to these plays, we must make artistic choices, particularly casting choices, that reflect the essence of our community. It's an amazing honor to receive this recognition from Equity and it's deeply appreciated."

In 1986, The Shakespeare Center, operating as Shakespeare Festival/LA, presented its first professional, union-contracted festival. Throughout its 25-year history, SCLA has created accessible theatre that reflects the people, history and landscape of Los Angeles and follows a casting policy that reflects the rich

(continued on page 2)

A Plenary Panoply

By Nick Wyman

As I had threatened in a previous column, the entire elected leadership of Actors' Equity – Officers, Councillors, non-Councillor Central Regional Board members and Area Liaisons – met for two days in New York City in mid-March. And what did we accomplish? Everything and nothing. Everything was put on the table and nothing was resolved – and this was by design. This Plenary/National Conference was not intended to be a normal Council meeting: I did not chair the meeting; there was not a series of resolutions to be voted up or down. Instead, Councillors, non-Councillor CRB members and Liaisons brought up ideas, suggestions and concerns arranged loosely around several general headings. These ideas and suggestions, as I saw



Twenty-eight Area Liaisons were among those gathered in New York for the Plenary/National Conference.

it (and I took 41 pages of notes) fell into eight categories: Organizing/Developing Theatre; Supporting the non-office-city actor; Communication –with members, with the outside world; Use and Support of Liaisons; Public Policy; Committees; Governance/Relationship between Staff, Council and Membership; Services/Member Education.

Staff was present but limited their participation to listening and taking notes. On the other end of the spectrum, the Liaisons (who don't normally meet face to face) not only brought up many ideas and suggestions in the main body of the meetings, they also had three separate meetings on their

(continued on page 2)

Budget, Jobs Top Arts Advocacy Agenda

National Arts Advocacy Day was held in Washington, DC, Tuesday, April 5, 2011 with a possible government shutdown looming on Friday, April 8. National Arts Advocacy Day is an annual event organized by Americans for the Arts, of which Equity is a sponsoring member. It is actually a two-day event, with the first day consisting of a meeting of the several hundred attendees listening to speakers on the state of the arts and arts funding nationally, and the second day consisting of meetings with Congressional Representatives and their staffs on Capitol Hill. Plus, for the first time this year,

there was a White House briefing for sponsoring organizations of Americans for the Arts.

Attending for Equity were Councillor Marjorie Horne, Co-Chair of the National Public Policy Committee, and Maria Somma, Equity spokesperson, and Rick Berg, Eastern Regional Director, both national public policy staffers for Equity. The Equity representatives split up and joined three different state delegations from Americans for the Arts. Ms. Somma joined the Illinois delegation, meeting with Illinois Congressional Representatives Senator Dick Durban, and Representatives Jan Schakowsky and Danny Davis.

Ms. Horne joined the California delegation, meeting with Senator Barbara Boxer and Representatives Barbara Lee and Lynn Woolsey. Mr. Berg met with New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Representatives Nydia Velazquez, Carolyn Maloney, Nita Lowey and Jerrold Nadler.

During the presentation the delegations addressed the economic impact of the arts on communities large and small in each of the states. Part of the discussions addressed the tax revenues generated by the arts and each delegation provided information about the number of jobs generated by the arts.

(continued on page 2)

Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts to Receive Tony Honor for Excellence

Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts and its Executive Director Sharon Jensen will receive a 2011 Tony Honor for Excellence in Theatre. The award will be presented in New York on June 11, 2011.

"The Board of Directors is grateful to the Tony Awards Administration Committee for this incredible award," said Linda Earle, Alliance President. "The organization was founded in 1986 by artists whose aim was to achieve full inclusion in American arts and entertainment and thus, accurately reflect the society in

which we live. We have stayed true to that mission and continue to work toward that goal with the leadership of Sharon and the guiding wisdom of Joanna Merlin, who helped found the organization and continues to serve on its Board. This acknowledgement represents not only the work of the Board and staff, but the support of theatre professionals across the country and we thank them as well."

"We are deeply honored by this prestigious recognition," adds Ms. Jensen. "By honoring the Alliance, the Tony Awards Administration Committee

distinguishes the work of artists, producers and all theatre professionals committed to the full inclusion of people of color and with disabilities in our industry."

Index

From the President.....	3
Theatre Spotlight.....	4
Yes, you can—book jobs through EPAs, ECCs.....	5
National News.....	6
Final curtain.....	12
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

The Chalk Project and the Triangle Fire Memorial

By Joanne Borts

One hundred years ago, on March 25, 1911, New Yorkers witnessed the worst workplace disaster in its history before 9/11. A fire broke out on the 8th floor of the Triangle Waist Company, one block east of Washington Square. Workers ran to the fire escape, but it collapsed. The critical exit on the 9th floor was locked – a precaution taken by the sweatshop owners to prevent theft. People on the street watched in horror as desperate workers clung to the windows while the flames licked at their backs. When the fire trucks finally arrived, their ladders only reached as far as the 6th floor, so many made the devastating decision to jump. One hundred forty-six garment workers – most of them women, most of them Jewish and Italian immigrants, most of them under the age of 25 – perished.

From the ashes of this great tragedy rose the Labor movement.

“Chalk” is a public art project that was the brainchild of filmmaker Ruth Sergel. Each year on the March 25th anniversary of the Triangle Fire, volunteers fan out across New York City to inscribe – in chalk – the names and ages of the victims in front of their former homes. A flyer is posted near the names, detailing how the fire galvanized organized labor and the fight for social justice. I was introduced to this project in 2004 as a volunteer and advocate for the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, and this year I was given two names to inscribe: Violet/Velye Schochet, 740 East 5th Street – 21 years old and Rose Mehl, 278 East 7th Street – 15 years old.

Several people stopped to

watch. Others asked questions about the project. Most just stood quietly, wondering who these young women had been – and who they might have become. As I headed up to the memorial service, I saw where



people had chalked the names of other victims. All over the streets of the Lower East Side, each name on the pavement told a story of loss, of senseless tragedy, of the sadness that overwhelmed a city. The similarities to the “missing” and “have you seen?” posters that papered New York after 9/11 were unmistakable.

The ceremony, held in front of the former Triangle factory, was preceded by a march through Greenwich Village by thousands of people, some carrying shirtwaists with sashes commemorating the names of women who died in the fire. It was chilling to see these ‘ghosts’ witness the culmination of the service: a fire truck ladder that reached only as high as the 6th floor.

As I stood with my fellow Equity members and our brother and sister unions, I was reminded that we also stand on the shoulders of generations of courageous women and men who risked everything they had for the future of the labor movement: A Better World. We owe them a debt of gratitude that we repay each day with our time and commitment to our Union.

For more information: <http://streetpictures.org/chalk> or <http://rememberthetrianglefire.org/the-names/>.

LeNoire Award

continued from page 1

diversity of Los Angeles. The SCLA demonstrates that such casting is critical to its mission by providing actors of color the opportunity to perform in roles that are diverse and non-traditional while also providing the audience with an opportunity to see themselves reflected in and make meaningful connections to classical texts.

In addition to its stage productions, The Shakespeare Center offers The Will Power series that provides youth enrichment and engagement programs. The Will Power to

Youth is an academic enrichment program that combines hands-on artistic experience with paid job training, specifically created to provide arts education to at-risk youth. The Will Power to Schools program provides middle and high school teachers innovative, proven methods that improve literacy, changes the way they teach classical literature and makes Shakespeare accessible to urban public school students. The Will to Lead provides advanced leadership and job readiness training and The Will to Work places five to ten alumni into internships with SCLA's mainstage/reperatory actors and technicians.

Advocacy Agenda

continued from page 1

The White House briefing included remarks by Actors Alec Baldwin and Hill Harper, both Equity members, and Kalpen Modi, an Actor who has joined the White House staff as Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement. Other speakers included administration staffers Rocco Landesman, the former Broadway producer and theatre owner, now Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts; Lauren Dunn and John Carson from the White House Office of Public Engagement; Peter Cunningham from the Department of Education; Ann Stock from the State Department's Cultural Diplomacy Program; Mark Zuckerman from the Domestic Policy Council; and Sally Ericsson, Associate Director of Office of Management and Budget. Ms. Ericsson received tough questioning over the President's proposal to cut the NEA's budget to \$146 million in his Fiscal Year 2012 budget.

In the deal that was reached on the Fiscal Year 2011 budget to keep the government open through September, the NEA will be funded at \$155 million. This represents a cut of \$12.5

million from the FY 2010 level of \$167.5 million, which is significantly better than the previous House-approved level of \$124.4 million and somewhat better than the President's request of \$146 million for FY 2012. Also included in this budget bill is \$25.5 million in funding for the Arts in Education programs at the U.S. Department of Education, which had been zeroed-out in a previous continuing resolution, and which representatives had told us would indeed be zeroed out.

Americans for the Arts CEO Bob Lynch noted in a press statement: “Americans for the Arts is heartened by the final FY2011 federal budget levels for the nation's cultural agencies, which reflect a more sensible and proportionate funding cut of 7.5 percent to the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. While we firmly believe that the nation would be better served with a more robust investment in nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in communities across the country, we acknowledge the constraints of the current budget. We are also pleased that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Smithsonian Institution did not incur any cuts.”

A Plenary Panoply

continued from page 1

own. One of these was a breakfast that I hosted for them, myself and Central Regional Director Kathryn Lamkey, who is the staff for the Liaisons. This was part of an effort to ensure that the Council and those Staff members present understood the life of the actor who lives outside the New York, Chicago or Los Angeles areas.

Having cast a wide net, we gathered in a dazzling panoply of ideas. The elected leadership,

in consultation with the staff, will take the next year or so to sift through these ideas in strategic planning sessions. We will examine all these suggestions, and we are committed to fashion the best, most supportive, most efficient, most effective organization possible. Over the next twelve to fourteen months, we will be announcing a number of initiatives and new directions – all with the aim of becoming a better, more effective advocate and support for you. We are excited, and I hope you will be also.

New I AM PWD Video Launched

Equity, ACTRA, AFTRA and SAG have launched their new “Inclusion in the Arts & Media of People with Disabilities” (I AM PWD) disability rights video: www.youtube.com/user/ACTRANational.

“There are a multitude of stories yet to be told from our industry's rich and diverse backgrounds,” said AEA President Nick Wyman. “People with Disabilities are the largest minority in the United States and Canada, and they have an enormous contribution to make to our lives and to our understanding of the human condition. Through the I AM PWD campaign, we are working to lower the barriers to those contributions.”

I AM PWD, a global civil rights

campaign, was founded in 2008 by AEA, AFTRA and SAG. ACTRA (the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) joined at the June 2010 Executive Meeting of the International Federation of Actors (FIA) in Copenhagen, Denmark. FIA also approved the following resolution: “Unions affiliated with FIA are urged to bargain to ensure that performers with disabilities can request reasonable accommodations without the fear of losing their jobs; to free people with disabilities from real and virtual discrimination; and to allow people with disabilities to compete equally for job opportunities without facing bias or exclusionary practices.”



ACTORS'
EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913

EQUITYNEWS

Editor: **DICK MOORE**

Associate Editor: **HELAIN FELDMAN**

Equity News Advisory Committee

Christine Toy Johnson, Chair (Eastern)

Nancy Daly (Western)

Diane Dorsey (Central)

Nicole Flender (Eastern)

Bruce Alan Johnson (Eastern)

Kevin McMahon (Western)

Liz Pazik (Central)

Barbara Roberts (Western)

Melissa Robinette (Eastern)

Buzz Roddy (Eastern)

EQUITY NEWS (ISSN: 00924520) is published monthly except for combined issues in Jan./Feb., July/Aug., Oct./Nov., by Actors' Equity Association, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036. Telephone: (212) 869-8530. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Copyright 2003, Actors' Equity Association. Subscription price for non-members of Actors' Equity Association: \$25 per year. Postmaster: Send address changes to Equity News, 165 West 46th St., New York, NY 10036.

Two EMCs Receive Sturtevant Awards

By Stephanie Masucci
Communications Associate

Dayna Dantzler and Edward Miskie are the 2011 recipients of the seventh annual Roger Sturtevant Musical Theatre Awards, given to Equity Membership Candidates (EMCs) who have demonstrated outstanding abilities in the field of musical theatre. The award, named for the beloved casting director who died in 2003, consists of a certificate accompanied by a \$1,000 check.

Dayna Dantzler has been interested in theatre since she was a child watching musical theatre on videos, but it was a

"I was the Mayor of Munchkin Land which is funny for two reasons: I was taller than Dorothy (who was a junior in HS) and I am now 6'4."

Edward is eager to play classic roles. However, his favorite role so far is from a new production. "Last spring I was cast as Ian Wallace in the first regional premier of *Rooms: A Rock Musical*. The original production was being rewritten and restaged and we were able to work with the writers and Broadway producers on the material and staging. The show itself is a truly amazing piece of theatre and hands down the most fulfilling role I've ever been



Edward Miskie (l) accepts a check from President Nick Wyman.

theatre production class in school that sparked her interest to pursue it as a career.

Dayna's first "professional theatre audition" was during her sophomore year of college at Western Michigan University for Theatre Performance. "I auditioned for three summer stock theatres and received offers from two of them. Funny enough, the theatre I did not get an offer from, I felt was my best audition."

"Receiving this award means that I am on the right track," she says. "I am right where I am supposed to be in this journey called life. It also means that my work is appreciated and I am one step closer to opportunities that are still to come. I am so grateful to Jane and Cliff Johnson who founded this award, and the panel at Actors' Equity for giving a voice to those of us trying to get our foot through the door!"

Dayna can currently be seen as *Celie* in the touring company of *The Color Purple*. She has been performing with the touring company since February, 2010 and the show will run through June of this year.

Musical theatre has also been a part of Edward Miskie's life since a very young age. At the age of 9, he was cast in a production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

given the chance to live in."

When Edward received the news that he was the 2011 recipient of the Roger Sturtevant Award, he automatically "thought I was in trouble for some reason and braced myself."



Dayna Dantzler shows off her Roger Sturtevant Award certificate.

He is "beyond honored" to be receiving this award. "To me this award reassures me and validates that this is definitely the path that I am to be on and will hopefully bring new and exciting opportunities my way."

Edward has a message for everyone who did not go to college for musical theatre: "Don't feel limited by not having gone to college and don't let anyone who tells you otherwise stop you from going after your goals. Work hard, stay tough and play the game."

From the
PRESIDENT

Love and Boundaries

By Nick Wyman

A couple of well-known stage managers passed away in the last few weeks: Beverley Randolph and George Martin. They were fairly ordinary stage managers, which is to say they were extraordinary human beings. I never worked with Beverley, who worked some 22 Broadway shows before succumbing to a fast-moving cancer while she was Production Stage Manager for *The Addams Family*, but George put me into the show when I replaced Kevin Kline in *On the Twentieth Century*.

These two came to stage managing via different routes: Beverley was a stage manager from the get-go and George, who was one of the last connections to the glory days of Jack Cole, did a dozen Broadway shows as a dancer, dance captain and assistant choreographer before becoming a stage manager six times for Hal Prince. His last show as Hal's Production Stage Manager was *Evita*, which was Beverley's second Broadway job; and she went on to be Hal's PSM on his next seven shows. What they shared, in addition to Mr. Prince and in common with most stage managers, was a commitment

to the flawless execution of the show and the well-being of its company.

As a father, my philosophy is that kids need two things: love and boundaries. A good stage manager is like a parental presence on a show: firm, even stern when necessary, and yet radiating a goodwill and bonhomie that create a pleasant workplace. In Equity's Rulebooks, we don't stipulate or even enumerate a stage manager's duties, preferring to leave it to a stage manager's discretion as to which jobs and duties are necessary and which are inappropriate; but here, for those of you who are not stage managers (and those of you who are will know how far from complete this list is), is a partial list of some of the things stage managers do.

They arrive an hour early for rehearsals and performances. They set up the rehearsal room. They tape out the set. They organize and set out the props. They make out the daily schedule. They make coffee. They copy and distribute changes in the script. They annotate the blocking. They enter the lighting cues (the fly cues, the set cues, the automation cues, etc.) into the script. They run dry tech

rehearsals (tech rehearsals without the actors). They call the show, helping pace the show by precisely calling lighting cues and set moves. They help oversee the installation of a show into the theatre. They maintain the director's vision of the show, viewing the show regularly and giving the cast notes on their performances. They direct the understudies in up to 12 hours of understudy rehearsal a week. They train and put in cast replacements. They write up a report about each performance.

Clearly stage managers do far more work and work far longer hours than actors do. We acknowledge this in our contracts by negotiating a higher minimum salary for them (though this financial gain is undercut somewhat by a stage manager being less likely than an actor to negotiate above minimum).

They deserve even more acknowledgement for the care they take of the rest of us. We can no longer tell Beverley or George how much we appreciate them; but this Mother's Day and Father's Day, e-mail or text or Facebook your favorite stage manager and thank her or him for the love and the boundaries.

Equity's Bonding Policy And How it Works

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

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

If you are working under any Equity agreement, you *must* file a signed copy of your contract with Equity no later than first rehearsal. This helps the Union to enforce your contract, assuring that your production is properly bonded. Filing

contracts in a timely manner takes on even greater significance since Equity has introduced electronic employment contracts, which may be released to producers via email after a bond is secured.

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

Single Unit Productions

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

Seasonal Theatres

Seasonal theatres post a bond for the largest number of active contracts in a two-week

period. Seasonal theatres include all Stock, LORT, Dinner Theatres, Letters of Agreement and Small Professional Theatres.

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

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

Eastern Region**New London Barn Playhouse: An "Old" Theatre New to AEA**

New London Barn Playhouse in New London, New Hampshire has been around since 1933. Yes, 1933. It is the oldest, continuously operating summer stock theatre in New Hampshire and is listed in the state's Register of Historic Places. For its first production, three one-act plays, tickets were 50 cents; pillows a nickel. Actors came from Mount Holyoke College and the community.

The theatre has survived several changes of ownership; changes of format from "old chestnuts" to musical comedy; changes in the theatre building itself; fluctuations in the economy; and World War II, when scores of summer stock theatres closed, many never to reopen. Yet, NLBP goes on.

Over the years the Playhouse has used Equity Guest Artist Agreements, and in 2010 Equity members garnered four of the nine NH Theatre Awards the theatre received for its production of *The Pirates of Penzance*: Best Supporting Actor in a Musical, Tom Ford; Best Supporting Actress in a Musical, Debra Buckley; Best Musical Director, Joel Mercier; and Best Director of a Musical, Carol Dunne.

The Equity actors work with participants in the company's Intern Program, primarily college students majoring in theatre, who are selected after a careful

casting process to take part in what is known as Broadway Boot Camp. Many "Barnies" who have gone on to success in the entertainment industry got early training at the



New London Barn Playhouse Artistic Director Carol Dunne.

Playhouse, including Steven Schwartz (composer of *Wicked*, among others) and Casey Nicholaw (currently represented on Broadway as Co-Director and Choreographer of *The Book of Mormon*).

For 2011, after much negotiation, the theatre has signed a four year Transitional Small Professional Theatre (SPT) Agreement with Equity. Artistic Director Carol Dunne is largely responsible for this. "The New London Barn Playhouse has long been known for its



commitment to emerging artists," says Ms. Dunne. "By becoming an Equity theatre, we are making a stronger commitment to the professionalism of our company and actively training our non-Equity actors and stage managers to become fully professional. We are so grateful to Equity for working with us to help this 79-year old landmark move into the future in such an important way."

"I'm getting ready to go back to the Barn for my third summer," says Equity member Tom Ford. "Carol Dunne in a very short period of time has evolved the theatre from a charming summer stock theatre into a truly thriving professional company. Each summer she brings together an amazing group of young people from top theatre training programs and blends them together with us 'professionals.' Theoretically, the 'youngsters' are supposed to be learning from the 'seasoned pros.' But I've found myself challenged and invigorated by having to keep up with some truly wonderful young actors. This summer I'll be doing *Pseudolous* in *Forum*, *The Man in the Chair* in *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *Sheridan Whiteside* in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Do I need to add that Carol Dunne certainly knows how to woo a guy?"

Central Region**The Music Theatre Company—Where Musicals Make a Difference**

"Musicals are popular.

They're a great way to state important ideas. Ideas that could make a difference," says the character Franklin Shepard in Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's musical, *Merrily We Roll Along*, presented recently by The Music Theatre Company in Highland Park, Illinois.

The Music Theatre Company is now in its third season on a CAT (Chicago Area Theatre) Developmental Theatre, Tier N2 agreement. "I deliberately chose to make The Music Theatre Company an Equity company when I founded it because I believe in the tenets of the Union," says Founding Artistic Director Jessica Redish. "I believe that the structure of rehearsals and breaks required by the Union breeds productivity. My colleagues are Equity and the community of Highland Park, where we are located, recognizes and values the stellar skill set of our artists who are in the Union."

Ms. Redish founded the theatre because she loves musical theatre. "It offers a unique synthesis of text, music and dramatic moment—and the result is nothing short of thrilling," she says. Her theatre's mission reflects that love: "Through the presentation of fully-staged productions, commissions of new works, musical experiments and an interactive dialogue between artist and community, the company calls upon the talents of nationally-based professional musical theatre artists to create work in Highland Park. The Music Theatre Company explores the musical in the interest of expanding the canon of musical theatre."

Alan Schmuckler, an Equity member in the group's

production of *Merrily We Roll Along*, says, "An Equity contract is a commitment to respect. It means the theatre respects its Actors' and Stage Managers' time, efforts and talent. It manifests itself in the rehearsal room—the company implicitly recognizes that 'we're all here to work,' to enjoy the work and give ourselves to it full-heartedly."

David A. Loranca, Equity Production Stage Manager of *Merrily We Roll Along*, agrees, and adds, "Working with The Music Theatre Company on an Equity contract demonstrates that even young companies in Chicago can work with AEA to bring their productions under contract and begin working with Union actors and stage managers."

The company also includes a collective of Northwestern University graduates, Ms.



(Left to r) AEA members Jarrod Zimmerman, Dara Cameron and Alan Schmuckler in *Merrily We Roll Along* at The Music Theatre Company.
(Photo: Ivar Pix)

Redish's alma mater. She moved to New York after graduation and then returned to the Chicago area to found The Music Theatre Company. Highland Park is the site of the theatre because Ms. Redish grew up there, attended youth theatre programs there and, "it's a city that prioritizes the arts and is an extremely supportive community."

Western Region**Third Rail in Third Season Under Equity SPT-3 Contract**

Demonstrating ambitious and rapid growth over a three-year period, and producing nine plays employing 28 Equity members under the Western Region's Umbrella Agreement, Third Rail Repertory Theatre in Portland, Oregon converted to operation under SPT-3 in its 2008-2009 season. Three years later, TRR is producing its 18th production and will have employed an additional 37 Actors and nine Stage Managers by the end of May, 2011. The group has moved from its original 99-seat house to a 220-seat venue and is moving to a 300-seat space in the fall. The subscriber base has kept pace—growing from 150 in the first season to over 1,000. Clearly, Third Rail Rep remains on track.

It was founded in 2003, during economically challenging times, by a group of actors and a director who had all either gone to school, toured or performed with each other individually and had moved to Portland between

2001 and 2002. "We were in our mid to late 30s and a little old to be starting a company, but we decided to give it a shot," says Producing Artistic Director Scott Yarbrough. "Since three of the four actors in the founding group were Equity members, we knew that we'd have to approach our production model and budgeting with Equity salaries in mind, so



Valerie Stevens (l) and Maureen Porter in TRR's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*.

we've been working as an Equity company from our inception."

Why Third Rail? Mr. Yarbrough answers: "Because we'd all moved to Portland from New York (even though most of the founders grew up in Portland), and we had an East Coast, urban sensibility that we wanted to bring to our work. The name Third Rail came from the electrified rail that provides the power to run New York subway cars. We liked the imagery of electricity, power, propulsion and danger that the name invoked

and believe, at its best, the name describes our work very well."

The group currently has 11 Equity actors and, says Mr. Yarbrough, "we take great pride in being an Equity company. We started from very little in terms of financing, but the quality of our performers mixed with the investment they have in the success of the company, has allowed us to show smaller companies

that it is possible to regularly provide work for Equity actors and grow the company as well."

Equity member Philip Cuomo says, "Working under an Equity contract guarantees we are working with the most professional and experienced actors meeting our long term goal of producing a local theatre at a consistently high level. Working with a company of artists is amazing. We get to know each other's tendencies, passions and foibles and are all better artists for it. And as is the case with Third Rail and its Equity members, we share a

long term commitment to professionalism, translating into first rate productions for our community."

Jacklyn Maddux adds, "As a long time Equity member in New York moving to Portland, I was delighted to find an Equity ensemble company doing the highest professional work. Our community has come to trust us to present work that will challenge them and ourselves. We are an Equity company and that means professional actors striving to do work of a consistently fine quality."

Yes, You Can— Book Jobs Through EPAs and ECCs

By Melissa Robinette

There is a dirty rumor on the street and I'm here to tell you that rumor is not one bit true! I have heard it, not only in New York, but all over the United States! The dirty rumor: "People never book work from an EPA (Equity Principal Audition) or ECC (Equity Chorus Call)." I don't know where this rumor came from or even how it got started, but I do know I do not have to look far to prove it wrong.

I'm an Eastern Regional Chorus Councillor who, like many of our members, does not have an agent. The only way for me to book a job is through an EPA or ECC. I'm currently working at the Riverside Theatre (Vero Beach, FL) in *Buddy, The Musical* that I booked from an ECC. I even booked the Off Broadway hit *The Marvelous Wonderettes* through an EPA and get called back for Broadway often.

According to Keith Howard, Director of Auditions, in 2010 New York City alone held 613 EPA sessions and 306 ECCs. Equity members not only book jobs, but high end jobs through the system!

Equity member Paul

Schaefer went to an EPA for the Broadway company of *Phantom of the Opera*. Six months later he got a call from the casting office with a callback. Before he knew it he was making his Broadway debut with *The Phantom of the Opera*. Currently Paul's official titles are "Marksman" and "Raoul/Phantom understudy."

Erin Wegner attended the EPA for the *Young Frankenstein* tour last summer. Four callbacks for three different characters later, she landed "ensemble" and the cover of "Elizabeth" and "Frau Blucher." In fact, Erin states that 12 of the cast members from *Young Frankenstein* got their jobs from EPA/ECCs.

Jamil Chokachi and Justin Holcomb recently booked the new Off Broadway, two-person play, *Channeling Kevin Spacey* from the EPA. This was the first time Jamil has booked a job from an EPA. He says, "I went to this EPA because the character breakdown was very thorough, seemed exciting, and it was right up my alley. I had one callback and the process was simple and comfortable."

Heather Parcels of *Wonderland* on Broadway booked her first two Broadway

Shows (*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *A Chorus Line*) through ECCs and the national tour of *Some Like It Hot* starring Tony Curtis from an ECC.

Jana Cardia recently appeared in *Sweeney Todd* at the Fulton Opera House thanks to an ECC. She has lived in NYC for ten years and has always had an agent, but has only ever booked work through an EPA/ECC. She stresses that it isn't that her agent doesn't get her appointments or open doors for her, she just has better luck through the EPA/ECCs. Jana says, "I am grateful to have the ability to create my own opportunities through the good old fashioned process of pounding the pavement!"

After all; if you don't show up for the audition, you won't book the job!

(This article kicks off a new series in Equity News on EPA Success Stories. Next month, we'll report on EPAs in the Central Region. Members have been submitting their stories and we hope to publish them in future issues. If an EPA/ECC has helped you get a job, send your story to Helaine Feldman at helpel22@aol.com.)



How I Got My Equity Card

Julie Halston



By Julie Halston

When I came to New York City from college in the late 1970s, I was fortunate enough to book a few commercials right away for soap products. I admit it did help that an aunt of mine was in the advertising business so she was able to steer me toward the right casting agents and advertisers. That helped me get an AFTRA card and it was my first experience with being part of a union and I was very proud.

However, I knew that the card I wanted the most was my Equity card because I knew I wanted to be on the stage. I did do a few Equity-approved showcases and I built up some points toward getting my card. But by 1983, nothing was really happening for me and I was getting rather discouraged. I took a "real" job on Wall Street and was seriously thinking that I might just go for an MBA (which is hilarious really!) when, lo and behold, who entered my life but Charles Busch and Ken Elliott. Along with a number of people, we started Theatre-in-Limbo and started performing down on the Lower East Side on Thursday nights and weekends. Charles' play, *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, became a smash cult hit and we were moved all the way uptown to the Provincetown Playhouse in Greenwich Village. We opened there in June of 1985 and I am happy to say that because of this show, I was able to get my full Equity membership.

I still worked on Wall Street for another two years (yes, I worked as a research manager by day and a Vampire Lesbian at night) but by 1987 the market had crashed, I got an agent and I was able to join SAG. I have been a proud union member for all these years and I have never regretted leaving the financial world for the more erratic life of professional theatre. And although the corporate world gets on very well without me, I am still in contact with many of my friends from "The Street" and some were even investors in our theatre company. But my real thanks goes to Equity for making our working lives so much better.

Julie Halston, a native New Yorker, is a Founding Member of Charles Busch's theatre company and has performed in several plays by Mr. Busch: *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* (1984), *The Lady in Question* (1989), *Red Scare on Sunset* (1991) and *The Divine Sister* (2010 and currently still running). Also on Broadway, she's appeared in *Hairspray*, *Gypsy*, *The Women*, *Twentieth Century* and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*; Off-Broadway in *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*; *Chasing Mamet*; and *White Chocolate*, among others. Films include *Addams Family Values*, *The Juror*, *Small Time Crooks* and *A Very Serious Person*, and on TV she has been on *Sex and the City*, and a regular on *The Class*. She has received four MAC awards for her solo comedy performances in Manhattan cabarets and clubs.

BRIEF NOTES

• Equity member **Cori Thomas** is obviously multi-talented, having just received the American Theatre Critics Association 2011 M. Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award for an emerging playwright. The

to attend school. She studied theatre at Marymount Manhattan College. She has been a finalist for a Juilliard Fellowship and the National Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill Festival, and was nominated

for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. She recently received a commission from South Coast Repertory Theatre and The Sloan Foundation.

• **Chanhassen Dinner Theatres** wrapped up its "Feed My People" food drive to benefit Minnesota FoodShare with nearly \$18,000 raised from audience members, employees and the community. This

translated into more than 70,000 pounds of food items and was a 42% increase over the theatre's goal.

• **Paul Libin**, executive vice president of Jujamcyn Theatres, has received the Bernard B. Jacobs Excellence in Theater Award presented by the UJA-Federation's Entertainment, Media and

Communications Division. The award recognizes an exceptional professional who is committed to the theatre community and to improving the lives of others in New York, Israel and around the world.

• **Bad news:** Baltimore Shakespeare Festival has closed its doors after 17 years. And in Seattle, the financially embattled Intiman Theater has canceled the four remaining productions of its 2011 season.



Craig Daniel (l) and Mark King aid in the food drive at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres.

award was presented at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville. The winning play, *When January Feels Like Summer*, premiered at City Theatre in Pittsburgh. Cori was born in New York to a Liberian diplomat and a Brazilian mother, and lived in seven countries before returning to the United States

BC/EFA Donates to Japanese Red Cross

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS has wired \$100,000 to the Japanese Red Cross Society in Japan in the name of the theatre community. "We have witnessed with horror and sadness the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami on March 11th that struck the island of Honshu, centering at Sendai in the north-east area of Japan," wrote BC/EFA Executive Director Tom Viola to the President of the organization. "We have closely monitored the well-intended rapid-response fundraising undertaken by many organizations here in the United States to support relief efforts thousands of miles away in Japan. We have been very impressed with the

carefully reasoned and cautious response that the Japanese Red Cross has offered to those in the U.S.

eager to be a part of reaching out to the hundreds of thousands of Japanese most affected by this tragedy. With that in mind and

certain that the Japanese Red Cross Society has proven to understand the needs of your own people and the best way that their immediate needs can most efficiently be addressed, BC/EFA is happy to contribute this \$100,000 to mobilize resources in this emergency



phase of recovery."

BC/EFA had received a number of communications following the earthquake in Japan, including one from Brian Kim, an Equity member based in Minnesota, who had recently returned from Japan, where he was in a touring production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and had experienced the earthquake firsthand. "Despite the uncertainty of what was to come, the

Japanese people always put our safety first and were very special hosts to us," he wrote. As a result, the Twin Cities Artists had a benefit on April 25 at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul, with all proceeds going to the American Red Cross.



NATIONAL NEWS



Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey flanked by EEOC Co-Chairs Cheryl Lynn Bruce and E. Faye Butler.

Central Region

Diversity in the Central Region... All Year Long

**By Luther Goins
Central Region Business Representative and National EEO Coordinator**

The Central Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (EEOC) presented the sixth annual *Spirit, a Celebration of Diversity* on Monday, March 21, 2011 at Chicago's Smart Museum and at the Court Theatre.

Spirit, a Celebration of Diversity, honors Central Region members of color, minority-based and focused theatres, and theatres that make non-traditional casting a priority all season long.

EEOC Co-Chairs Cheryl Lynn Bruce and E. Faye Butler presented the 2011 Spirit Recognition Award to Court Theatre's Cree Rankin for his educational outreach work and his ongoing commitment to minority-based theatre, and to Joyce Foundation Senior Program Officer Michelle T. Boone, for her minority-based theatre mentorship, and her campaign for minority-based theatre leadership training.

Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey received a special Spirit Recognition Award. Ms. Lamkey, for over 24 years, has placed a high priority on racial understanding, support, and the creation of opportunities (nationally) for Producers and members of color.

When it comes to opportunities for members of color to audition and work, the Central Region boasts an embarrassment of riches. The Chicago theatre community includes many theatres that highlight the diversity of our cul-

ture such as About Face, Black Ensemble, Chicago Dramatists, Chicago Shakespeare, Collaboration, Court, Congo Square, Goodman, Illinois Theatre Center, Pegasus Players, Remy Bumppo, Silk Road Theatre Project, 16th Street Theatre, Steppenwolf, Teatro Vista, Teatro Luna, Urban Theatre Company, Victory Gardens, and Writer's Theatre.

In the Central Region, but outside of the office city, diversity is seen at theatres such as Detroit Repertory, Cincinnati's Ensemble Theatre Company, Milwaukee's Hansberry-Sands and the newly-formed Uprooted Theatre Company, Human Race in Dayton, Ohio, Mixed Blood and Penumbra in Minneapolis, St. Louis Black Repertory, and the Unicorn Theatre in Kansas City.

The *EEO: One Voice* brand, which was adopted by the Western, Central, and Eastern EEO Committees in 2009, was highlighted and celebrated by the performance of *One Voice*, a terrific song by Butch Stewart. *One Voice* was performed by the Central Region AFTRA/SAG Singers (Greta Pope, Paul Zimmerman, Joe Wright, Barbara Ann Martin and Kevin Smith).

With the recent sad, and shocking, happenings in Madison, WI, we felt that having the AFTRA/SAG Singers open this very special Equity event would be a fitting tribute to unions and to union work. It was!

A report of the Eastern Region Equal Opportunity Committee's celebration of Black History Month will appear in the next issue of Equity News.

Western Region

Members "Mix it Up" for Black History Month

**By Barbara N. Roberts
Chair, Western Region EEO Committee**

The AEA Western Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee presented *Mixin' It Up: Shining Your Light On Black History Month*, an Open Mic and Mixer event at Catalina's Jazz Club on Monday, February 28, 2011. The evening, hosted by Glynn Turman (from the original *Raisin in the Sun*), invited AEA members and a guest to step up to the mic and let it rip. A highlight of the evening was the one-on-one interview with featured theatrical treasure Ken Page, who

spoke candidly about the "craft" of theatre and how it distinguishes you as an artist. The interview was thought-provoking, fused with wisdom, humor, heart and advice.

A warm and enthusiastic crowd turned out. Stand up com-

New York

Networking Event for Stage Managers is Set for June 10

The 5th Annual Off-Broadway Stage Managers Networking Event is scheduled for Friday, June 10, 2011 in the Council Room on the 14th Floor at the Equity office, 165 West 46th Street. Equity Stage Managers will have the opportunity to meet-and-greet Off-Broadway League Producers and General Managers from commercial ventures and institutional not-for-profit theatre companies. The

informal, speed-dating format will allow Stage Managers to learn about upcoming seasons, schedules and hiring practices and present their resumes for future consideration. Last year's event resulted in many subsequent interviews and a number of job offers.

General registration for all participants opens on Monday, May 23. To register, call Joanna at (212) 869-8530 x 377



"Mixing it up" in LA are (l to r) Barbara Roberts, Levy Lee Simon, Ivy Bethune and Sharon Ferguson.

ic/actor Garret Morris thrilled the audience with gut-busting jokes about "getting old." Blues stirred up the house as Lynette Dupree sang some down home blues and guest artist Eloise Laws belted out "St. Louis Blues." Michole Briana White talked about "being somewhere and don't know how I got here. But I'm glad I came." Levy Lee Simon's "I Am a Black Man" was a history lesson of sorts, while Karole Foreman did jazz duty with "My Funny Valentine" and Obba Babatundé ener-

gized the audience with a little tag team MCing at the mic with Glynn Turman.

Many long time and some new AEA members took their turn at the microphone to shine their light on Black History with poetry, comedy, slices of one person shows, stories and imitations. We had a great time Mixin' It Up. Special thanks to Committee members Deborah Sharpe Taylor, Kelsey Scott, Harrison White, Pat Loeb, Ivy Bethune, Mark Winn, Kim Estes and John Freeland Jr.

New York/Los Angeles

The Actors Fund Provides Free Medical Services for AEA Members

Did you know that uninsured Equity members have access to a full-time free health clinic located in midtown Manhattan? And that in Los Angeles The Performing Artists' Medical Clinic, staffed by doctors of the Venice Family Clinic, offers free medical services to low-income musicians, dancers, actors and other performing artists?

Since 2003, The Actors Fund's Al Hirschfeld Free Health Clinic has been providing free health care to Equity members between the ages of 28 and 64 in the New York metro area. The Clinic offers primary care and referrals to specialists, as well as no-cost or low-cost referrals to a wide range of medical services.

Along with free medical care,

the Clinic also offers a variety of free services throughout the year, including individual health insurance counseling, wellness seminars and seasonal flu shots. The Clinic works closely with diverse organizations to provide free or low-cost screenings, including the Project Renewal Scan Van that offers free mammograms to uninsured women. In addition, in collaboration with BWAY (Better Wellness And You), an entertainment industry consortium, the Clinic hosts an annual Health Fair.

The Al Hirschfeld Free Health Clinic is located at The Dorothy Ross Friedman Residence (formerly The Aurora), 475 West 57th Street (corner of 10th Avenue). Visits are by appointment only. If you are

uninsured or have insurance with a high deductible, and can document your work in any area of performing arts or entertainment, call (212) 489-1939—and add the number to your cell phone so you can have it when you need it.

Hours are Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information and eligibility requirements, visit www.actorsfund.org.

The Performing Artists' Medical Clinic in Los Angeles also provides prescription medicines and referrals to psychiatric services at no cost. This service is offered twice monthly. Call The Actors Fund Los Angeles office for eligibility criteria and appointments: (323) 933-9244, ext. 32 or email dkitowski@actorsfund.org.

Dallas-Fort Worth

Column Awards Honor Equity Members

Equity members in Dallas-Fort Worth were joined on March 14, 2011 by three special guests from Broadway for the 2011 Column Awards. The 12th annual awards ceremony—the only celebration of live theatre in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area and the only awards organization in the United States to each year donate proceeds to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS—packed a record number of attendees into the Carpenter Hall Theater. This year's event raised \$12,000 for BC/EFA.

The evening's hosts—*Les Misérables* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* veteran Max von Essen and *Altar Boyz* favorite and *The Little Mermaid's* evil eel Flotsam, Tyler Maynard—were joined by Tony Award-winner Donna McKechnie, who performed her legendary number, "Music and the Mirror," to a standing ovation.

More than 20 awards were presented to Equity members, including Best Actor and Actress in a Musical, Bob Hess for *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and Morgana Shaw for *Closer to Heaven*, both presented at the Uptown Players; Best Actor and Actress in a Play, R. Bruce Elliot in the Theatre Three production of *33 Variations* and Morgana Shaw (again!) for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at the Dallas Children's Theatre. Awards for Best Stage Manager of a Play and Musical were presented to Cathy O'Neal for the Uptown Players' *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and Heidi Shen for the Water Tower Theatre's production of *Our Town*.

The Column Awards were conceived and produced by Dallas-area Equity actor John Garcia.

"Donna was outstanding," said Mr. Garcia. "Everyone was mesmerized by her. Add Max and Tyler's chemistry, ad-libs and stage presence and we had a truly magical evening. We are proud to be a part of BC/EFA's good work across Texas, including five social service agencies here in Dallas-Fort Worth."

Phoenix/Tucson

Meeting is May 23

Save the date: The Phoenix/Tucson Membership meeting is May 23, 2011 at The Invisible Theatre, 1400 North 1st Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85719-4003. There will be a Member/Producer/EMC reception from 6-7 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7 p.m.



(From l) Liaison Members Dana Gamarra and Megan Buckley, Helen Hicks of the Michigan AIDS Coalition and Liaison Committee member Peggy Thorp with a check for the money raised by the Committee.

Detroit

Michigan Theatres Raise Funds For AIDS Organizations

The Detroit Liaison Committee has presented checks totaling over \$20,000 to Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC) and AIDS Partnership Michigan (APM) as a result of the recent Equity and Friends Fight AIDS (EFFA) annual fundraising campaign. This year's total was especially gratifying because it came despite Michigan's shaky economy.

EFFA, chaired by Leah Smith and Megan Buckley, began its 2010-2011 campaign, as it has every year for the last 20, on December 1, World AIDS Day. Speeches were given after performances by actors in theatres all over southeast Michigan and audience members were invited to contribute.

The mission of Michigan AIDS Coalition is to prevent HIV/AIDS in Michigan by promoting healthy lifestyles, providing and investing in evidence-based, innovative programs and through advocacy and education. AIDS Partnership Michigan's mission is the prevention of AIDS and providing

the best services for those who are infected.

Theatres that participated this year were Detroit Repertory Theatre, Meadowbrook Theatre, Gem and Century Theatres, Ringwald Theatre, Tipping Point Theatre, Williamston Theatre, Jewish Ensemble Theatre, the Bonstelle and Hilberry Theatres and University of Detroit/Mercy's Theatre Department.

Equity and Friends Fight AIDS was begun by Detroit area Equity members in 1991 in honor of World AIDS Day during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. EFFA wanted to ensure that funds raised in Michigan theatres would stay in Michigan. EFFA has expanded over the 20 years since its inception to include university and non-union theatres and now lasts longer than just the holiday weekend. Theatre professionals in Michigan also contributed this season by holding a benefit party for EFFA, hosted by Don Calamia of *Encore Michigan* and local actors, Naz Edwards and Brian Thibault.



(Photo: Doug Truelsen)

Central Florida

Equity Members Hike for Hope

The Central Florida Liaison Committee, local AEA members, friends and family participated in the AIDS Walk Orlando on April 9, 2011. The Walk benefited the Hope & Help Center of Central Florida, Inc. and its mission to save lives by treating and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Equity teams raised nearly \$2,000 in just three weeks, adding to the event's overall total of \$180,000.

Julie Noda, the non-profit agency's event coordinator, was grateful the call for help was answered by the community. "We wouldn't be able to provide all these services without it," she said. AEA participants included Darby Ballard, Hakim Callender, team captain Jennifer Sibley Harris, Rachel Hunter, Jennifer Christa Palmer, Mark Taylor, Doug Truelsen and Joe Wyatt.

South Florida

35th Annual Carbonell Awards Celebrate Local Actors, Theatres

By Marjorie O'Neill-Butler South Florida Area Liaison Committee

South Florida theatre professionals celebrated the 35th Annual Carbonell Awards on April 4, 2011 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. The audience sported everything from gowns and tuxes to jeans and scruffy beards and the atmosphere was joyous and friendly. Special guest Sharon Gless remarked on this as each winner was applauded and congratulated by the audience and other nominees.

The big winner of the evening was the production *Blasted* by Sarah Kane, produced by GableStage in Coral Gables. It received Best Production of a Play; Best Director of a Play, Joe Adler; Best Scenic Design, Tim Connolly; Best Sound Design, Matt Corey and Best Lighting design, Jeff Quinn.

Best Director of a Musical was David Arisco, and Best Musical Direction went to Eric Alford, both for *Miss Saigon* at Actors' Playhouse. Best Choreography was Marcia Milgrom Dodge for *Anything Goes*, and Best Costume Design went to Jose M. Rivera for *La Cage Aux Folles*, both at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre.

Barbara Bradshaw was named Best Actress in a Play for her work in *Collected Stories* at The Mosaic Theatre in Plantation, FL This award was sponsored by Actors' Equity Association and presented by Arne Gunderson, AEA Foundation President and Councillor Emeritus, and Eastern Regional Councillor, Margot Moreland.

Deborah Sherman, a new AEA member, was Best Supporting Actress in a Play for *Goldie, Max and Milk* at Florida Stage. Gregg Weiner continued his winning streak with the Best Actor in a Play Award for his work in *Fifty Words* at GableStage; and Will Connolly was named Best Supporting Actor in a Play for his portrayal of Marchbanks in *Candida* at Palm Beach Dramaworks.

Best Supporting Actress in a Musical went to Lisa Manuli in the premiere production of *Motherhood, the Musical*. Nick Duckart received his first Carbonell Award, Best Supporting Actor in a Musical, for *Dr. Radio* at Florida Stage. Best Actor in a Musical went to Herman Sebeck for *Miss Saigon*



Nick Duckart.

Goes at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre.

Best New Work went to Christopher Demos-Brown for *When the Sun Shone Brighter* at Florida Stage; and Best Ensemble went to *12 Angry Men* at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre.

The evening featured performances from each of the shows nominated for Best Musical, as well as a clever opening parody of the South Florida theatre scene written by Maribeth Graham. There were also presentations of the George Abbott Award to Patrice Bailey, Dean of the New World School of the Arts, and the Ruth Foreman Award to the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.

In addition to celebrating excellence in South Florida Theatre, the Carbonell ceremony is also designed to raise funds for scholarships for students in the tri-county area to study at accredited colleges and universities for careers in the visual and performing arts, and in journalism. Since the first, single \$500 scholarship was given in 1978, dozens of students in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties have received more than \$100,000.

An After Party, sponsored by The Theatre League of South Florida had everyone celebrating another fine year of theatre.

New York

Audition Center Cleaned

In response to member comments at the January 7, 2011 Eastern Region Membership Meeting, the New York office's Audition Center was given a thorough deep-cleaning during the weekends of March 12 and 19. All carpeting, including that on the walls, was shampooed. All hard surfaces were cleaned, including the air vents. All electrical outlets were repaired. This cleaning does not address all the items that need upgrading in the Audition Center, noted Eastern Region Director Rick Berg in his report at the April 8 Membership Meeting, but there are long-range plans for further improvements and regular maintenance.

at the Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre, and Best Actress in a Musical went to Tari Kelly in *Anything*

Denver

Ambassador Program Expands Equity's Presence in Colorado

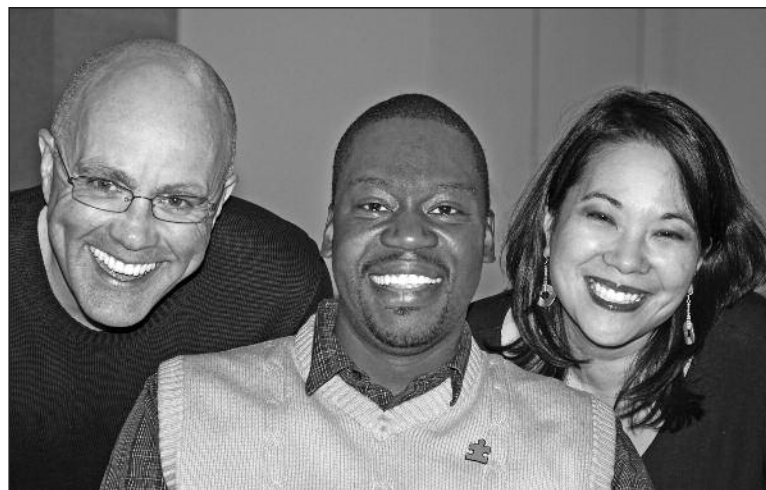
By Shelly Gaza
Chair, Denver Liaison
Committee

Several years ago, the Denver Liaison Committee decided to put more of its energy into promoting the use of Equity contracts with the smaller up-and-coming theatres in our area. Not only do many of our local members rely on smaller contracts to supplement their income, but we also hoped that with the Committee's encouragement and support, these small contracts might grow into larger ones in the future. Early on, we realized that establishing a personal relationship with these "promising" theatres was essential to the success of our mission. This led to the development of our Ambassador Program, which now involves 26 theatres and has not only expanded Equity's presence in the Colorado theatre community, but has also increased the use of Guest Artist and Special Appearance contracts in the Denver area.

The Ambassador Program pairs each Denver Liaison Committee member with a small handful of theatres, the goal being to get to know the theatres and their people on a personal level. And although we interact with a wide range of theatre companies—from those that may have little interest in using AEA contracts to those that already have a long standing relationship with Equity and have used Equity talent for many years—it is the "curious" theatre companies that we get the most excited about. That is, those companies that are interested in using Equity contracts, but may be intimidated by the idea of the Union, or, for whatever reason, have been shy about taking the plunge. In these cases, the Ambassador becomes an encouraging partner throughout the process—from getting the theatre in touch with the proper people at the Equity offices to mentoring them through auditions and the

rehearsal process. The Artistic and Managing Directors of these theatres often find, not surprisingly, that the process is easier than they had imagined it would be, and that the use of Equity talent elevates their productions to that intangible "next level" that they had been striving for.

It is important to point out that the Ambassadors do not negotiate contracts, nor do they speak for the Union. But by simply being a supportive presence in what can often be an anxiety-inducing process for a young theatre, the Denver Ambassadors have been able to foster Equity contracts in our area that might otherwise not have been created. At a time when so many of us find it even harder than usual to make a living as a theatre professional, the Ambassador Program has been a particularly rewarding experience for those of us on the Denver Liaison Committee. It has been a pro-active way for us to respond to these tough economic times and, hopefully, help our members here in the Denver area for years to come.



Daryl "Chill" Mitchell (c) with Robert McQueen and Christine Toy Johnson. (Photo: Bruce Alan Johnson)

New York

EEO Presents "Creative Casting: Spotlight On Actors With Disabilities"

On April 5, 2011, the Eastern Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee presented a staged reading of *Internal Bleeding* by Councillor and EEOC Co-Chair Christine Toy Johnson, featuring film and television star Daryl "Chill" Mitchell and directed by Robert McQueen. This was the culmination of a short workshop exploring casting an actor with a disability (Mr. Mitchell) in a role that is written as both disabled and non-disabled. It was followed by a discussion about the process led by Sharon Jensen, Executive Director of Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts. The cast also featured Ann Harada, Eddie Aldrich, Helen Farmer, Jaygee Macapugay and Ariel Estrada.

Christine Toy Johnson said, "Though it is always assumed that a character who is written as disabled can be played by an actor who is not disabled, I wanted to make a truly good faith effort to see what would come out of considering the opposite. The play is the story of Benjamin Andrews, an Olympic bound gymnast who becomes estranged from his parents after an accident leaves him paralyzed. I decided to make it a sort of 'memory play,' told from Ben's point of view in the present, while also re-imagining the staging opportunities. This rooted the story in his current reality, making it even more profound. Collaborating with Chill's unique perspective impacted us all."

Jaygee Macapugay commented, "Chill never stopped pursuing acting after his accident. He never allowed himself to become a victim. That inspires me to release any excuses, and keep going. I was also shocked with how humble and excited he was to work with theatre actors. He said, 'I don't care what anyone thinks. We are on Broadway right now!' The two days I worked on *Internal Bleeding*

reminded me that Broadway is a state of mind, not just a production contract."

Sharon Jensen said, "Rarely has a character with a disability been written with such honesty and dimension. Furthermore, because they cast a character with a disability with an actor who actually is a wheelchair user—something almost never done—as well as the remaining characters with actors from diverse cultural identifications, *Internal Bleeding* had an authenticity, believability, human dimension, and universality that I have rarely experienced in the theatre."

Ms. Johnson adds, "For years, AEA has been working towards a world where no one is excluded based solely on their race, ethnicity, gender, and/or presence/absence of a disability — towards *universal access*. I believe that being open to re-imagining various elements of our storytelling can lead to all sorts of opportunities for universal access. Working this way gave us all insight into a world that isn't often discussed or explored. And to me, that's the true power of theatre."

Internal Bleeding was made possible in part with public funds from the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and a grant from the Puffin Foundation.

Los Angeles

Equity staff and friends Join "We Are One" Rally

(Left to r) Timothy Smith (staff), Maura Murphy-Barrosse (staff), Nicolas Fournier (supporter and Maura's husband) and Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield at the "We Are One" rally for workers' rights on April 2, 2011.



San Diego

AEA Honors Dr. King at "We Are One" Rally

San Diego Liaison Committee members Abner Genece and Mary Munger joined members of NABET 54 and the San Diego Labor Council for A Day of Solidarity Candlelight Vigil on April 4, 2011 at San Diego's Civic Center Plaza. The event honored the sacrifice made by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968 and the continuing struggle for workers' rights across the nation.



Seattle

AEA Marches in "We Are One" Rally

As part of the AFL-CIO's national pro-union "We Are One" campaign, a rally was held in Seattle on April 4, 2011. Members of IATSE Local 15, which organized the event, were joined by Equity members including David Klein (c) and Liaison Roger Curtis as they marched from the Space Needle to the downtown Labor Temple. The marchers' spirits were high despite a steady drizzle, and many drivers honked and waved in support as the chant, "We are UNION; We are ONE" rang out loud and clear.

Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed on Monday, May 30, 2011 in observation of Memorial Day. In addition, all offices will close early on Friday, May 27. (Check with your local office for the early closing time.)

Central Region

CRB to Fill Seven Non-Councillor Seats

As per Equity's By-Laws, the Central Region will be filling seven non-Councillor seats on the Central Regional Board for the 2011 election. Only members living in the Central Region are eligible to run and to vote for these positions.

The following two-year terms are available: five Principal, one Chorus and one Stage Manager.

All candidates must meet the same eligibility requirements as the Councillors in their category. The Nominating Committee that was seated for the Council election will also serve as the Nominating Committee for these CRB positions. If you wish to be considered for any of the seats, submit your candidacy according to the following schedule:

June 2, 2011	Deadline to reconvene Central Regional Nominating Committee.
June 9, 2011	Deadline for Candidate submission to the Nominating Committee. Letters of intent due in Chicago Office by 3 p.m. (CDT).
June 22, 2011	Deadline for all Candidate Material for the Nominating Committee by 3 p.m. (CDT).
July 11, 2011	Deadline for Nominating Committee report to the Central Regional Board.
July 18, 2011	Deadline for Independent Nomination Petitions and all Candidate Material (including statements and photos) due in Chicago Office by 3 p.m. (CDT).
August 1, 2011	Deadline for mailing of ballots.*
August 19, 2011	Deadline for return of ballots to Chicago Office by 2:30 p.m. (CDT).
August 22, 2011	Tellers' Committee picks up ballots and tabulates results.
September 12, 2011	Report of Tellers' Committee to the Central Regional Board and Seating of New Board Members.

* In accordance with the Equity By-Laws, should there be no independent nominations for these non-Councillor Central Regional Board seats, and therefore no contest, there shall be no balloting. Those uncontested Members chosen by the Nominating Committee will be deemed elected and will be seated at the September 2011 meeting of the Central Regional Board.

New York

Equity Members Help at BC/EFA's "Broadway Bears"

More than a dozen Equity members from current and past Broadway shows joined their teddy bear counterparts to help Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS on March 6 2011 for *The Broadway Bears XIV*, the annual auction of theatrically costumed and celebrity autographed teddy bears, which this year raised \$103,905.



Link Larkin

The 2011 cast of 42 bears, donated by The North American Bear Company, Inc., once again included characters from current and past Broadway shows signed by the performers, writers, directors or designers who made them famous.

Serving as host was Broadway, television and film veteran Bryan Batt, joined by many fellow Equity members,

including Christopher Sieber and Reeve Carney, who helped raise \$5,250 by

spinning a web of high bids. Other presenters were Trevor Braun, Kevin Burrows, Paul Canaan, Harvey Evans, Lexi Fridell, Jeremy Gumbs, David Garrison, Veanne Cox, Annie Golden, Hunter

Ryan Herdlicka, Anthony Hollock and Elizabeth Welch. Crista Moore and George Dvorsky performed the opening number parody, written by Douglas Braverman.

The top winners of the evening were Eliza Doolittle, which sold for \$14,000; the Witch from *Into the Woods* commanded \$6,500 after a friendly bidding battle, and



Eliza Doolittle

the Joshy (*Rock of Ages*) bear brought in \$6,000.

Former "Link Larkin" Richard Blake presented the *Hairspray* "Link" bear signed by Matthew Morrison, the original "Link" on Broadway who's now in the television hit, *Glee*. With Richard at the podium and Matthew's signature on the bear, "Link" sold for \$5,500.

Since 1997, the auction has featured more than 500 bears and raised more than \$1.85 million.

To see all of the 2011 bears, visit www.broadwaycares.org.

Western Region

Actor/Teacher/Coach Lynne Soffer Receives 2011 Lucy Jordan Award

San Francisco's Lynn Soffer, an Actor, teacher, dialect coach, has received the 2011 Lucy Jordan Humanitarian Award, honoring a member of the theatrical community who has gone "above and beyond the call of duty." The award was presented at the April 28, 2011 membership meeting in San Francisco.

Ms. Soffer, who resides in the Bay Area, has made her name as an actress, acting coach and teacher and

nationally recognized dialect coach. She is acknowledged by her peers as an individual who loves acting and is

Equity member goes "above and beyond" the call of duty.

willing to share that enthusiasm, knowledge and experience with both students and young actors entering the industry. In addition to her body of work, Ms. Soffer is also known for her generosity of spirit and her selfless dedication to those in the theatre world who have been ill and in need.

An Equity member since 1981, she most recently appeared in the San Jose Repertory production of *The Dresser*. Other stage credits

include *Enchanted April*, *Heartbreak House*, *Slavs!* and *Rabbit Hole*. As a dialect coach, she has worked on over 190 productions at numerous theatres, including Berkeley Rep, A.C.T., Seattle Rep, San Jose Rep, The Old Globe (San Diego), Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre and PCPA Theaterfest. She was a dialect coach for the world premiere of Moises Kaufman's *The Laramie Project*, and coached the dialects for Jonathan Moscone and Sean Daniels' *Nicholas Nickleby, Parts 1 and 2* at Cal Shakes. As an instructor of acting, text and speech, Ms. Soffer has taught at schools and theatre companies throughout the country.

The Lucy Jordan Humanitarian Award is the only recognition award given by Equity's Western Regional Board. It was established by the Stage Managers' Committee in 1992 to commemorate the unflagging spirit of former Western Region Business Field Rep Lucy Jordan, who died that year.



New England

AEA, NEAT Reach Tentative Agreement

Negotiations in Boston between Equity and the New England Area Theatres (NEAT) for a three-year agreement have been successfully concluded. The agreement goes to the Eastern Regional Board on May 20, 2011 for ratification.

AEA's Chief Negotiator was Senior Business Representative Russell Lehrer. He was assisted by Business Representative Melissa Colgan. The Negotiating Team was chaired by Councillor Julia Breanetta Simpson. Boston

Liaison Committee members on the team included Michael Dell'Orto (Area Liaison), Jim Bodge, Victoria Coady, Kippy Goldfarb, Peter Haydu, John Kooi, Maureen Lane, Celeste McClain, Emily McMullen and Bob Saoud (not pictured).

NEAT encompasses 11 small-to-medium sized theatres within a 100-mile radius of Boston and the contract accounts for over 2,500 workweeks per season for Equity members.

Correction

In the March 2011 issue of Equity News, there was a sketch of a member getting her Equity card from "Contract Associate Karlene Laemmie." Ms. Laemmie is, in fact, a longtime Membership Associate in the New York office.



Participants in the benefit for Lazarus House are: (l to r) playwright Stephen Riviera; Equity member Cathie Choppin; EMC Vatican Lokey; philanthropist Mark Romig; AEA members Susan Parker, Wendy Miklovic, John Bostic and Amy Alvarez and guest Jules Vetter. (Photo: Cheri Arena)

New Orleans

Members, EMCs in Benefit for local AIDS Organization

Members of NOLA AEA participated in the 25th Anniversary Gala for Lazarus House on April 6, 2011 by giving a special staged reading of an original short play written for the event. New Orleans AEA Liaison John Bostic directed the reading, which starred members Amy Alvarez, Cathie Choppin, Susan Parker, Wendy Miklovic, EMC Vatican Lokey and Jules Vetter. Cheri Arena was the

Stage Manager.

Following the reading, Mr. Bostic spoke of the commitment that AEA has traditionally given to raising funds and awareness for AIDS research and treatment programs.

Lazarus House, also known as Project Lazarus, is a residential facility providing assisted living to people with AIDS who are unable to live independently.

St. Louis

The Bard Battles Bullying



The cast and Stage Manager of *Cruel to be Kind*: (standing, l to r) Antonio Rodriguez, Michael B. Perkins, AEA member Anna Blair, Khnemu Menu-ra; (front) AEA member Elana Kepner and Jessica Shoemaker.

Given the prevalence of bullying in schools and on social media sites nationwide, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, an Equity TYA/LOA theatre, has created a 50-minute adaptation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, called *Cruel to be Kind*, that offers the Bard's advice on bullying and reinforces the power of theatre to change lives.

The play is one of two presented this season by Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' educational tour to more than 26,000 students throughout 125 schools in the Metro St. Louis area.

"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. "In light of the national focus today on bullying issues, we felt this was an appropriate issue to introduce this year. We're using the power of the theatre to build awareness, teach empathy and support

communication."

Cruel to be Kind retains 98% of Shakespeare's text, bridged with poetic songs to clarify plot, themes and characters. It is a play set in 1599 as Shakespeare is furiously writing *As You Like It*, his new play for the Globe in London. The characters in *As You Like It* actually include several clear examples of bullies. Shakespeare uses these characters

during a rehearsal to enlighten one of the teen apprentices, Ozwaldo, who is a terrible bully. Through Oz's journey and throughout the play, the young audience will see what several types of bullying look and sound like and how they can be diffused. They also learn some of the many reasons why bullying occurs.

A companion workshop to *Cruel to be Kind* offers a springboard for activities, referencing the characters and situations within the play. Students are encouraged to discuss bullying in terms of the characters. Then, in small groups of 30, they participate in the workshop, *Bullies and Boundaries*, also created by Shakespeare Festival St. Louis. Students are provided new ways to act more thoughtfully in their relationships.

In the past ten years, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has inspired more than 185,000 students with the Bard's advice through productions adapted for

New York

Limitless Casting: Could the Best Man for the Part Be a Woman?

Panel discussion examines that question, and more

By Pearl Brady
Business Representative, EEO

In an age when men in drag are commonplace in theatre, the reverse has not been true when it comes to women playing male characters. Experts on the subject met in New York to put this situation under a microscope. The event, in honor of Women's History Month, was sponsored by the Eastern Region Women's Committee and took place on March 29, 2011.

Moderated by Equity Member Gael Schaefer, who has had a long-time fascination with gender-neutral casting and has been cast in male roles in the past, the panel featured: Deborah Wright Houston, former Artistic Director of the Kings County Shakespeare Company; Richard Schechner, co-founder of the NYU/Tisch Department of Performance Studies; Rebecca Patterson, Artistic Director of The Queen's Company; Joanne Zipay, Artistic Director of the Judith Shakespeare Company; Randy Gener, Senior Editor of *American Theatre Magazine*; and Terry Berliner, a director who focuses on new work.

The discussion began with the simple question of "Why?" Randy Gener answered first, commenting that women playing male characters have largely existed on the fringe, and that for women to gain the edge, it must be in the realm of new work. Richard Schechner added that during the Restoration period there were many all-female theatre companies, but that their history had been largely lost. In modern productions, roles that women had been more likely to play, like Hamlet, have usually been

young audiences. These 50-minute text-based adaptations are commissioned from local playwrights and performed by five professional Equity actor/teaching artists at schools and community venues. This season the group also presented *Shrew in a Few*, based on *Taming of the Shrew*.

Both *Shrew in a Few* and *Cruel to be Kind* were adapted by Christopher Limber, education director for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, who worked closely with Eric Neutzel, M.D., of the St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute when creating the materials. "The range of characters and product has not changed since Shakespeare wrote 400 years ago," said Mr. Limber. "It is often more comfortable for students to process bad behavior that takes place in a play than to confront it in real life. The play begins the conversation."

The Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' Education Tour has received two Kevin Kline Awards for Outstanding Production for Young Audiences: *Me And Richard* (2008) and *Quick-Brewed Macbeth* (2009), and has received a nomination every year since 2005.

characters who were androgynous, or whose sexuality was vague. He challenged all in attendance to "blast through these stereotypes" when it came to gender, and allow the art of theatre to reconfigure traditional gender roles.

Joanne Zipay spoke of her company, Judith Shakespeare, whose mission is to give women more work in the classics. All the shows her company produces are at least 50% women, and therefore include many male roles cast with female performers. Her goal is to subvert "the stranglehold that gender has on us," and she works to cast many of her plays completely gender-blind. Rebecca Patterson and Deborah Wright Houston agreed, and Ms. Houston said that she has never had a problem with gender-neutral casting. In fact, in one production of *Romeo and Juliet*, she cast a man as the Nurse because he was the performer who played the character's age most authentically. Ms. Patterson added that she believed critics and audiences are looking first and foremost for the humanity of each character, not their gender. She hoped that creative teams would trust their audiences; in her experience, the conventional argument that audiences wouldn't accept women playing men was quite false.

Terry Berliner regularly collaborates with new writers and challenges perceived notions of

gender in their works. New work is a mystery, and she felt that it was crucial that writers stretch themselves and their preconceptions. She said that on numerous occasions, writers have reexamined characters in ways that they probably wouldn't have otherwise, allowing the true essence of the character to be revealed.

The evening ended with the question of what performers can do to show creative teams how non-traditional casting in regard to gender really works. Ms. Houston brought up how some of the most effective and memorable auditions she'd seen were monologues performed cross-gender. She felt that the performer truly "got it," and that the emotion and spirit of the role came through in a unique way. Mr. Schechner recommended that people look at the work of Anna Deaver Smith, whose one-woman shows have transcended race, gender, age, and nearly any other label for decades.

Though modern society has progressed toward gender parity, the theatre still has a long way to go. Opening up a dialogue is the first step in opening up opportunities for all performers. This includes any sort of -blind casting: color-blind, gender-blind, age-blind, etc. Diverse and inclusive casting isn't a radical concept. After all, the Scottish Play isn't always fully cast with Scots.

New Orleans

Liaison Committee Hosts EMC Event



New Orleans AEA members, EMCs and guests. (Photo: Edward R. Cox)

The New Orleans Liaison Equity Membership Candidate (EMC) sub-committee held its first meeting on March 22, 2011. It was held at The La Nuit Comedy Club and, as with any NOLA meeting, there was food and drink for all.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to begin organizing and educating the New Orleans community about the EMC program and the Union in general. Tom Miller, AEA Director of Education and Outreach, provided pamphlets as well as EMC buttons for the Candidates. Lynne Creighton, from the Membership Department in Chicago, answered pre-submitted questions over the phone about the EMC

points system. Topics of discussion included AEA history, benefits and how to decide to join the Union, EMC points and how they work, upcoming events in the NOLA area, advantages of being an Equity member and

the Committee's goals for the community-at-large.

John Bostic, Area Liaison, ran the meeting with support from Committee members Meredith Long, Edward Cox, Cathie Choppin and members Donna Duplantier, J. Patrick McNamara and Peggy Walton-Walker as well as EMC Vatican Lokey. Also in attendance was local producer Dennis Assaf who has worked with the EMC program for several years and was able to answer questions from a producer's viewpoint. "Battling rehearsals, holidays and post-Mardi Gras activities, the turnout of some 25 people was a good start," said Mr. Bostic.

Denver**The VA + AEA = Good Times**By **Betsey Cassell**

Once again, members of Denver's AEA Liaison Committee volunteered their energy, expertise and goodwill to support, guide and encourage the courageous and talented participants in the 2011 National Veterans Creative Arts Program and Competition.

Friends, family and VA supporters gathered to view the festivities on March 12, 2011 and enjoy the wide range of material presented by many returning entrants as well as newcomers to the competition.

This year's AEA Committee Chair, Betsey Cassell, acted as Mistress of Ceremonies during the taping, keeping the audience amused in-between acts, while AEA Members Lowell Noel and Sue Ann Lee took charge of assisting the performers. Prior to the taping, they were joined by AEA members Chaz Grundy, Michael E. Gold and Laura Jo Trexler in a series of coaching sessions, readying the talent for taping.

This year marks the fourth year that Denver AEA has participated in the coaching program. Last year's 2010 competition saw 14 entrants awarded one of the top three slots in their respective categories and invitation to attend the National Finals held in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The 2011 Finals will be held in October in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Returning participants and 2010 Finalists - Willie Jaeger on dulcimer, Ron Tomocik on accordion; 90 years young Jack Kamin and his delightful crooning; and multi-faceted Orlina Marquez joined newbies William R. Hopper, tinkling the ivories with jazz, blues and gospel tunes; Gary Satchell and his exciting electric guitar renditions; and a young classical flamenco guitarist, in looking forward to possibly representing the Denver Area in this year's Finals. Rounding out the categories in Spoken Word and Drama were Bonne Bryson, Leonard Fanganello, Barry Stevens, Seth Premo, and Gwendolyn Wilson.

Hats off and thanks were given to members of the Patriot Guard Riders, for their offstage assistance and support and to the expert audio and video talents of videographer, Wayne Williams.

VA Chairman, Donna Lonergan was pleased and delighted with AEA's participation and help with another successful program and looks forward to continued collaboration with Denver AEA and the amazing array of VA Talent!

Interested AEA members from other cities should contact their local VA to find out how they can participate in helping VA talent enter the National Competition.



(Left to r) **Jeffery Roberson** (Photo: Benjamin); **Jessie Terrebonne** (Photo: Brain Johnston); **Leslie Castay** (Photo: John Barrios); **Sean Patterson** (Photo John Barrios).

New Orleans**NOLA Theatre Honored**By **Edward R. Cox and John Bostic**,
New Orleans Liaison Committee

On March 28, at a gala event at Harrah's New Orleans Hotel & Casino, the Big Easy Foundation handed out its awards for best performances in New Orleans

theatre in 2010. The evening was hosted by AEA member Bryan Batt.

Among the special awards, AEA member Jeffery Roberson (aka Varla Jean Merman) was presented with the Entertainer of the Year Award. He also was nominated for Best Supporting

Actor for his work in *The Mystery of Irma Vep*.

Three AEA members walked away with performance awards: Jessie Terrebonne, Best Actress in a Comedy, *39 Steps*. *39 Steps* also starred member Shad Willingham whose performance was nominated for Best Actor in a Comedy and featured member Sean Patterson whose performance received a nomination for Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy. In addition to Ms. Terrebonne, members Jessica Podewell and

Francine Segal were also nominated in the Best Actress in a Comedy category for their work in *Matt and Ben* and *The New Century*, respectively.

Member Leslie Castay was named Best Actress in a Musical for her performance in *Grey Gardens*, which also featured member Janet Shea who was nominated for Best Featured Actress in a Musical

and members Kris Shaw and Ron Flagge. Joining Ms. Castay in the Best Actress category were nominations for Liz Argus, *Mame*, and Dianna Duffy, *Hairspray*.

Best Actor in a Musical went to Sean Patterson for his performance in *Hairspray*. Also nominated for Best Actor was member Robert Pavlovich, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*.

Other members nominated for awards were: Peggy Walton-Walker, Best Actress in a Drama, *The Piano Teacher*; John Neisler, Best Supporting Actor in a Drama, *Afterlife*; Edward R. Cox, Best Costume Design, *When Pigs Fly*, and Kris Shaw, Best Direction of a Drama, *Touch*.

A special thank you to Southern Rep, Jefferson Performing Arts Society, Le Petit, Le Chat Noir, Tulane Shakespeare, Tulane Summer Lyric, Ricky Graham and Theater 13, who produced the shows for which the NOLA members were nominated.

Chicago**CRB Ratifies Contract with Second City****Creative Compensation Clause Recognizes Actors' Material**

At its meeting on Monday, April 4, 2011, the Central Regional Board approved a three-year agreement with the Second City Theatre.

The Second City Theatre, Inc. has led the industry in improv-based sketch comedy for over 50 years. AEA's Second City Theatre Agreement has been in existence since 1993. The Second City Agreement is used for all Second City productions, regardless of where they are produced, and is administered through the

Chicago Equity office. Currently The Second City has the Mainstage as well as the e.t.c. spaces in Chicago; TourCo, which is made up of the three national touring companies; and Theatricals, numerous companies that travel to a city and stay for an engagement of four to six weeks.

The Second City Actors write their own shows. The Second City Theatre Agreement is unique in that there is a Creative Compensation Clause

to compensate the Actors for creating original material for the next revue. The rehearsal process can take as long as 11 weeks with the Actors writing the show through improvisation. The Creative Compensation rule came about in the 2005 Second City negotiations and only applies to the Actors in the Mainstage and e.t.c. companies. In this last negotiation with The Second City Theatre, Inc., Equity was able to achieve a "Writing Usage" clause for the

TourCo Actors.

Other improvements in the new contract include, but are not limited to: an increase in salary of 5% in the first year of the Agreement and a 3% increase in salary for the second and third years of the Agreement; a health increase of up to 10% in the second and third years of the Agreement; and a long-term-run bonus for a show that lasts longer than 11 months from the first paid public performance.

Equity thanks the Second City AEA members who have worked so hard over the years to create wonderful original work at The Second City Theatre. Good job on the last 50 years and here's to another 50!

**St. Louis****Shakespeare's Birthday Celebrated**

(Clockwise) Ron Himes, AEA member and director/founder of the St. Louis Black Repertory Company; Rick Dildine, AEA member and director of Festival St. Louis; Jean-Paul Angieri, a St. Louis University High School student, winner of the English Speaking Union High School Competition; and Steven Woolf, AEA member and artistic director of the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, lay a wreath at the foot of William Shakespeare's statue in Tower Grove Park in honor of the Bard's 447th birthday. All four participants read excerpts from their favorite Shakespeare play.

Northport, NY**Long Islanders Help BC/EFA**

How do you solve a problem like Maria? You ask her and the rest of the cast of the John Engeman Theater's production of *The Sound of Music* to come together with local audiences to raise over \$35,000 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. "Audiences gave joyfully," said cast member Felicia Finley, who played Baroness Schraeder. Rob Gallagher, who portrayed Captain Von Trapp, appealed to audiences after each performance. "I was surprised to see how responsive the audience was," said Rob, giving credit to the entire cast. "It's one thing to get up there and give the speech every night, but there's so much more with everyone going out to the lobby,

greeting the audiences and letting them know just how much their donations are appreciated." Felicia added, "I've witnessed first hand the havoc wreaked by illness in friends and family, and the help that comes from the money we raise. My head is in a better place when I collect. This is one of the reasons it's such a joy to do theatre in New York and across the country." Since 2008, productions at the John Engeman Theatre have raised over \$104,000 for BC/EFA with the company of *The Sound of Music* joining previous audience favorites, *A Wonderful Life* (2008), *Miracle on 34th Street* (2009) and *Oliver* (2010) in making these special appeals.

A Look Back@Equity Milestones

75 Years Ago May 1936

- More than 700 members attend the Annual Meeting on May 25 to cast their ballots for members of Council, vote for a proposal to tighten the qualification requirements for senior membership and recommend that the Council consider establishing one minimum wage for all classes of membership.

- Members of Chorus Equity gather on May 29 at the organization's 16th Annual Meeting and elect members of the Executive Committee and hear a report from Executive Secretary Dorothy Bryant.

50 Years Ago May 1961

- Equity's New York office is located at 226 West 47th Street. Ralph Bellamy is President and Helen Hayes is serving on Council. Equity also has an office in Toronto, Canada.

25 Years Ago May 1986

- Weekly minimum salaries for Actors in the upcoming

Resident Dramatic Stock (CORST) season range from \$355.21 to \$424.10. Minimum salary for Actors under the COST (Non-Resident Stock) contract is \$380.50. Per diem is \$13.50.

- Council establishes a new committee, the Actors Work Program Committee, to address problems faced by Actors in the 55-62 range.

- At a special Meeting, Council votes (28-3) to endorse a plan to implement establishment of a National Theatre of the United States.

10 Years Ago May 2001

- Results of a three-year study on the effects on performers of theatrical smoke and fog are announced. The study concludes that Actors are at risk when exposed to "elevated or peak levels of glycol smoke and mineral oil," and that if exposure levels are kept below the limits established in the study, Actors should "not suffer adverse impacts to their health or their vocal abilities."

Accordingly, limits are set with respect to the use of glycols and mineral oil.



IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

Equity actor and playwright Emanuel "Manny" Fried died on February 25, 2011, less than one week shy of his 98th birthday. Successful as an actor in New York, Manny starred in *The Young Go First*, directed by Elia Kazan, for the Theatre Of Action, but decided to raise his family in Buffalo. In Buffalo he organized many unions, to the point of being called "the most dangerous man in Western New York." After refusing to answer questions before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1954, he was eventually blacklisted. But during this time he penned his acclaimed plays, *The Dodo Bird*, *Drop Hammer* and *Brothers For A' That*, which will forever reflect his fierce dedication to working class rights and his 70-year commitment to Organized Labor.

Don Gervasi

Dear Editor:

Jon Lipsky, who worked extensively throughout New England for the past quarter century, and was Professor of Acting and Playwriting at Boston University's School of Theatre, died this past March 19th. As teacher, writer, director and producer he had a profound effect on area theatre professionals.

Jon's work appeared at the Humana Festival of New Plays, the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, and other regional theatres. He was playwright-in-residence at the Merrimack Repertory Theatre and Associate Artistic Director at the Vineyard Playhouse. In 2007 he won an Eliot Norton Award for Best Direction in a small Boston-based company.

His plays include: *The Survivor: a Cambodian Odyssey*; *Maggie's Riff*, an adaptation of Jack Kerouac's *Maggie Cassidy*; and *Living In Exile - a Retelling of the Iliad* which was revived in 2010 at New York's La Mama, and just last month produced by Boston's Actors' Shakespeare Theatre. He will be missed by all of us.

James Bodge
Greater Boston Liaison
Committee

Dear Editor:

I met George Martin in 1984 in the LA company of *42nd Street*. He was Production Stage Manager; I was Dance Captain. It was the beginning of a friendship that continued until he passed away on April 6, 2011.

On Broadway he was

Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered and published as soon as possible. The Editor reserves the right to limit letters to 175 words and to select one or two representative letters when many similar letters are received. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld on request for those letters which may affect members' employment. Signatures will not be withheld on letters antagonistic or accusatory, either implied or expressed, against other members. Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.

Production Stage Manager for *Evita*, *On the Twentieth Century*, *Company*, *Anna Christie*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Candide* and *A little Night Music*. He was also Stage Manager and Dance Captain of the original *Follies*. As director and choreographer he worked in many European cities.

George also had a wonderful career as a dancer on Broadway and in films. He met his wife Ethel in 1943. They were both members of the Jack Cole Dancers and together performed in many films. On Broadway, George danced in *A Funny Thing...*, *Donnybrook*, *Kismet*, *Happy Hunting*, *Carnival in Flanders*, *Pal Joey*, *Magdalena*, *Lady in The Dark* and others.

George was a great human being with a wonderful sense of humor and passion for life who was loved and adored. What a classy man. We will all miss you.

Jon Engstrom

Dear Editor:

The American theatre lost an artist, a leader and the best of friends with the passing of John Kingsbury on November 5, 2010.

John started his career as a Stage Manager at The Old Globe in the 1970s. Over the years, he served as Production Manager at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company and PCPA Theaterfest. He stage managed over 100 productions at Arizona Theatre Company, ACT Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Virginia Stage Company, PCPA Theaterfest, Alley Theatre, the Manhattan Punchline and The Old Globe, among others. As stage director, he worked with companies across the country (and beyond). In

2008, he chose to retire but kept a hand in the theatre world as a freelance stage manager.

The theatre was much more than a job for John, it was a mission, a creative outlet and a way to enrich and enliven the world. He was loved by his staff and colleagues and will be missed by all who had the privilege to work and create with him.

David Morden, Tucson, AZ

REMEMBERING CRANDALL DIEHL

Dear Editor:

Crandall Diehl, dancer, actor, director, choreographer passed away on April 5, 2011. We met when he was dance captain of *My Fair Lady* on Broadway. We were both hired to recreate the original production in Mexico City—he as choreographer, me in charge of the physical production. We ended up fast friends. Later, we were together in Buenos Aires with a new production of *My Fair Lady*. Crandall was a legend in Mexico and Argentina, where he was always given the title of "Maestro." Although our careers took us to different places, we always remained in touch. He was a proud member of Equity and a steadfast volunteer for the Stephen J. Falat Holiday Basket Project.

Crandall directed many productions of original musicals in Israel; worked alongside Bill Bradley staging the Ringling Brothers Circus, and again recreated *My Fair Lady* choreography on Broadway in productions with Rex Harrison and Ian Richardson.

His life was dedicated to the theatre and he will be missed by his many friends and colleagues.

Greg Kayne



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

—Playwright Ben Hecht

Michael Allinson
Herman O. Arbeit
Edmund C. Balin
Anne Barclay
Gordon Benson
Paula J. Betlem
Joseph Bird
Domini Bythe
Thomas Bohdanetzky
Jerry J. Borg
Mark Brink
Anne Diamond
Brownstone
Willis Burks
Robert Buzzell
Edward Cannan
Kurt Cerny
Mark Chamberlin
Kenn Chertok
Mildred Clinton
Melisande Congdon
Nick Cosco
Georgia Creighton
Jim V. Cyrus
Sammy Del Brocco
Shirin Devrim
David Doty
Sandra S. Ellis-Troy
Karen Errington
Mary Fogarty

Anne L. Francis
Emanuel Fried
Stephen Gardner
Jay Garner
Betty Garrett
Don Gilliland
Farley Granger
Justin Gray
Donald Griffin
Jill Haworth
Joe Hickey
Peter Hobbs
Judd Jones
Aron Kincaid
Beatrice Krebs
Nick Latour
Len Lesser
M. William Lettich
Laverne Light
Marie Lillo
Howard Lindsay II
Frederic Major
Kenneth Mars
Penny P. McGuire
Ariane Orenstein
Evelyn Page
Neva Patterson
Wally Peterson
Neil Phillips
Lawrence Keith Pool
James T. Pritchett

William Pritz
M.J. Quinn
Beverly Randolph
Peggy Rea
Don Ross
Robert Rue
Marc Rush
Jane Russell
Cesare Siepi
Joyce Sloane
Patricia Smith
Van Snowden
Walter Stane
Helen Stenborg
Rodney Stenborg
Margot Stevenson
Haila Stoddard
Ronald B. Stratton
Conrad Taylor
Elizabeth Taylor
William Thunhurst
Michael Tolan
John Toland
John Ulrickson
Margaret Whiting
Samuel J. Wilson
Alan Woodward
Susannah York
Edward Zimmerman

