



SETC NEWS

July / August 2008

Adaptability, Networking Key to Surviving Today's Economic Climate

In Irving Berlin's famous song, he states: "There's no business like show business." As one of my colleagues is quick to point out, the song specifically mentions "show business and not show 'art.'" While we consider ourselves artists within the world of theatre, we must realize the fact that we really work in "show business."

Just as the rest of our country is feeling the crunch, SETC members are finding that our different divisions of "show business" are being impacted by the current economic

MORE SUCCESS STRATEGIES INSIDE:

Free Night of Theater Grows Audiences, Page 3

Networking Helps Laid-Off Workers Bounce Back from Season Closing, Page 3

Theatres Are in Need of Theatregoers: Do You Have Your Season Ticket?, Page 5

climate. Colleges and universities are facing budget cuts for the next fiscal year. Community and professional theatres are already in discussions about how this climate will af-

fect fundraising, season ticket sales and even the selection of their seasons. Even SETC is dealing with how the stock market is affecting our endowment, and thus having an impact on the amount of our scholarships.

In addition to these economic influences, theatre is facing other challenges as well.

Adaptability and networking are two key terms that can help us deal with these.

Adaptability can help us with a key change we have seen: a shift in the demographics of our audiences. Audiences once felt that if a musical was not over three hours long, they had not "gotten their money's worth." As I explained recently to a theatre I work for, the attitude of today's audience members is that if they are not in their cars and on their way home by 10:15 p.m., their only comment will be that "the show was too long."

So how do you deal with this change? We found that by moving curtain time from 8 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., we could change audiences' perception. Three theatres in our area now have changed curtain times to 7:30 p.m.

In general, we have made little or no change to our art form, and yet society and
(Continued on Page 3)

From the President

Glen Gourley



SETC Fall Meetings, Auditions and Interviews: New Events Include Headshot, Portfolio Workshops

Make plans now to attend SETC's fall events September 5-8 in Charlotte, NC. In addition to the traditional fall meetings and professional auditions, Fall Graduate School Auditions & Design/Tech Interviews return for a second year and two free workshops (one for actors and one for design/tech students) have been scheduled. Of course, there are social and networking opportunities as well. All events will be held at the Omni Hotel or in Spirit Square, both located in uptown Charlotte. Special thanks to the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center for its generous sponsorship.

Here's the line-up of events:

Fall Committee, ExCom and Board Meetings: Friday, Sept. 5 and Saturday, Sept. 6

More info: www.setc.org/auditions/fall2008.php

Fall Graduate School Auditions & Design/Tech Interviews: Saturday, Sept. 6

Application Deadline: Aug. 15

More info: <http://www.setc.org/auditions/graduatefall.asp>

Fall Professional Auditions: Sunday, Sept. 7 and Monday, Sept. 8

Application Deadline: Aug. 15

More info: www.setc.org/auditions/fall.asp

Social Events

Opening Night Reception, Friday, Sept. 5, 8 p.m.-11 p.m., Room 221, Omni Hotel, traditionally sponsored by Metrolina Theatre Association (MTA)

Afternoon Tea, Saturday, Sept. 6, 3:30 p.m., Spirit Square

Free Workshops for Actors and Design-Tech Students

Portfolio Review Workshop

10 a.m.-Noon, Saturday, Sept. 6, BB&T Room, Spirit Square, presented by Doug Brown and designers from North Carolina School of the Arts (NCSA). Have your portfolio evaluated by nationally-recognized design and tech MFA faculty from NCSA. Learn what work should and should not be included in your portfolio, and how to arrange materials to make the most impact on potential graduate schools.

The Perfect Headshot

1-1:30 p.m., Saturday Sept. 6, BB&T Room, Spirit Square, presented by Brad Forth, New York-based photographer associated with Talley Foto Studio (www.talleyfotostudio.com). A headshot is your calling card. In this workshop, you will learn what to look for in a photographer, what to wear and how to prepare for your photo shoot. Headshot package discounts available for those in attendance.

What's Inside

Get Listed in C/U Directory.....	Page 2
2008-09 SETC Calendar.....	Page 2
Division News.....	Pages 4-5
Screening Auditions Schedule.....	Page 6
Theatres Need Safety Checks.....	Page 7
Has Texting Cost You a Job?.....	Page 7
Collaborate Across Generations.....	Page 8

ASK SETC

Q How can I list my institution in *Southern Theatre's* 2009 College/University/Training Program Directory?

A The deadline is soon, so don't miss your chance to be included in SETC's comprehensive list of leading theatre training programs in the Southeast and elsewhere across the United States. The fourth annual SETC College/University/Training Program Directory will be published in the winter issue of *Southern Theatre*.

All your school must do to be included is: 1) join SETC as an organizational member (\$70 cost if not already a member), and 2) provide information for your listing. Was your school included last year? You can check your listing by visiting www.setc.org. Under the "Publications" tab, click on *Southern Theatre*. Then click on "2008 College/University/Training Program Directory" to view last year's listing.

This same area of the website also has information on how you can make changes to an existing listing or create a new listing. If you need more information, please contact Hardy Koenig via phone (336-272-3645) or e-mail (hardy@setc.org).

Want to showcase your program? A limited number of ads are available for purchase in the directory. Contact Hardy for more information. Deadline for submitting listings and reserving ad space is August 15, so don't delay!

Theatre Symposium Event Examines Outdoor Drama

More than 25 scholars and practitioners convened in mid-April at SETC's Theatre Symposium event for papers and discussions covering traditional (and some not so traditional) subjects of interest to those studying outdoor drama. The event was held in Chapel Hill, NC, in close proximity to the University of North Carolina's Institute of Outdoor Drama.

Keynote speakers were the current and two former directors of the Institute of Outdoor Drama: Rob Fox, Scott Parker and Mark Sumner, respectively. Not all of the papers and presentations dealt with the classics of outdoor historical drama. Several papers widened the topic to include political outdoor festivals in post-Revolutionary France, a storefront/street performance space in Austin, TX, and a new type of site-specific urban performance called "parkour." Serendipity brought this last topic to life for participants when, during a tour of the outdoor Forest Theatre on the UNC campus, several practitioners of parkour scurried through the space for the unintended edification of the group. Minutes later, an afternoon shower reminded all of the risks involved in producing theatre outdoors.

Another delightful tie-in to the theme came on the Friday night excursion to dinner and a tour of the nearby Snow Camp Theatre, where participants shared a meal and an up-close look at a working outdoor theatre (albeit off-season). Saturday night, many of the group attended Playmakers' production of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* (indoors, but still quite enjoyable).

The collected papers and roundtables from this event will be published next summer as *Theatre Symposium 17*.

- Jay Malarcher, *Theatre Symposium Editor*

2008-2009 SETC Calendar

- Aug. 15, 2008 **Deadline:** Program proposals for 2009 Convention
Deadline: Online submission, professional actor applications for Fall Professional Auditions
Deadline: Online submission, student applications for Fall Graduate School Auditions & Interviews
Postmark Deadline: Applications by companies for Fall Professional Auditions and by schools for Fall Graduate School Auditions & Interviews
- Sept. 5-6, 2008 Fall Board/Advisory Council Meeting, Charlotte, NC
- Sept. 6, 2008 Fall Graduate School Auditions
- Sept. 7-8, 2008 Fall Professional Auditions, Charlotte, NC
- State Audition Dates (vary by state) See Page 4 of this newsletter for dates of State Audition Screenings for Spring Regional Auditions. Or check for preliminary audition dates and deadlines with your state coordinator, college or university theatre department or at www.setc.org
- Dec. 1, 2008 **Deadline:** High School New Play Contest entries
- Dec. 19, 2008 **Deadline:**
 ◆Early bird convention registration
 ◆Convention program advertising
 ◆Applications by college and university institutions and representatives for:
 ◆Graduate Auditions
 ◆Undergraduate Auditions/College Interviews
 Note: College/university representatives should include ALL registrations with institutional activity forms.
- Jan. 15, 2009 **Deadline:**
 ◆Professional auditionee applications
 ◆Polly Holliday Award applications (Secondary School Students)
 ◆William E. Wilson Scholarship applications (Secondary School Teachers)
 ◆Marian A. Smith Award applications (Costume Design)
 ◆Leighton M. Ballew Award applications (Graduate Study in Directing)
 ◆Robert Porterfield Award applications (Graduate Study)
 ◆SETC Secondary School Scholarship (Secondary School Students)
 ◆Keynote Emerging Artist of Promise (KEAP) Award (Secondary School Students)
- Jan. 17, 2009 **Deadline:** Convention program to printer; no changes after this date.
- Jan. 22, 2009 **Deadline:** Employer registration for Spring Auditions and Job Contact Service
- Jan. 28, 2009 **Final Deadline:**
 ◆Convention Commercial Exhibit space reservations
 ◆"Education Expo" space reservations (Non-Commercial Exhibits)
- Jan. 28, 2009 **Deadline:**
 ◆Applications from auditionees for Graduate Auditions and Undergraduate Auditions/College Interviews
 ◆Entries in Graduate and Undergraduate Design Competition (Scene, Costume, Lighting, Crafts/Technology)
 ◆Convention advance registration (Individuals, students and seniors not participating in Professional Auditions)
NO REFUNDS AFTER THIS DATE!
FULL FEES WILL BE CHARGED to all applications postmarked after this date and on-site.
- Feb. 12, 2009 **Deadline:** Convention hotel reservations
- March 4-8, 2009 **60th Annual SETC Convention Birmingham, AL**

Attention Theatre Companies

Please join us for the 4th Annual National

Free Night of Theater

Your Theatre

Your Production

on or near the date of October 16, 2008

SETC invites you to participate in TCG's national audience development program designed to attract new audiences to America's theatres and to enhance awareness of theatre in all communities.

Sound interesting? Take a look!
www.freenightoftheater.net

Want to participate or learn more?
Visit www.setc.org or call 336-272-3645

Annual research continues to show that one of every two Free Night program attendees returns to that theatre and purchases tickets.

Free Night of Theater is a national program of Theatre Communications Group



From the President

(Continued from Page 1)

its demographics have greatly changed. The arts have always reflected the society from which it comes; we need to ask ourselves why we might be refusing to change/adapt.

Networking, while often an overused term, is often an underused resource. SETC by definition is a grand network. The set-up of our workshop presentations is a wonderful opportunity for our adult constituents to gather and share ideas and expertise. However, I can state from my experience last year as president-elect and program chair, that this is an underused resource.

Now is a good time to ask ourselves some questions: What issues are my theatre and I dealing with? And how can I develop my resolutions into a workshop to benefit both myself and my colleagues? Once you've settled on a workshop topic, send it to Beth Harvey, program chair, at bharvey@fccj.edu – and help us make SETC 2009 the best networking opportunity yet.

Networking Helps Laid-Off Workers Bounce Back from Season Closing

Have you had a conversation recently that wasn't infiltrated by the words "economy," "budget" or "bottom line"? Money – and the rising cost of almost everything – is at the forefront of everyone's minds, affecting both personal lifestyles and the businesses we run or work in. The arts are not exempt from the current woes. As a matter of fact, theatres and performing arts venues are already scrambling.

Theatres are adjusting schedules, downsizing productions and altering whatever else is necessary to survive. Pick up the May/June issue of *American Theatre*, and you'll read about a 60-year-old theatre in Buffalo, NY, which is filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Talk to the managing director of any theatre, and you'll hear that fiscal responsibility is more important than ever.

I'd like to share a true story with you about one theatre's decision for survival, which initially caused havoc for the newly hired. However, by tapping into their SETC network, these employees were able to find options and new opportunities.

Fiscal stability for Seaside Music Theater in Daytona Beach, FL, included canceling its summer season so it could concentrate its resources on its winter season. Forced to

Need Help Finding a Job?

For more information on SETC's year-round Resume Matching Service, visit the website at www.setc.org.

this bold move by the loss of its corporate sponsor, Seaside management knew it was important for the long-term future of the organization.

However, the business decision created a financial dilemma for the actors, technicians, designers and administrative personnel hired for the summer. Employees now faced the challenge of sustaining their personal finances. How quickly the domino effect begins.

Many of the summer employees had been hired at SETC's spring professional auditions, so these workers turned to the organization's Central Office staff to find other summer employment. Here is where the story starts becoming remarkable.

April J'C Marshall, SETC's manager of Professional Theatre Services, quickly got in contact with Seaside's artistic director, Lester Malizia. Then April sent out an e-mail to all SETC member companies about the available talent pool. SETC member companies responded quickly (five within the first hour). In total, 26 companies responded with lists of their on-stage and off-stage talent needs. Four individuals were confirmed in new positions at new theatres within less

than a week. As this newsletter went to press, others were continuing to connect.

In addition to hiring workers themselves, SETC company members also told other theatre managers who are not members of the Southeastern Theatre Conference about the availability of this talent pool. This not only opened more opportunities for the employees but also introduced new employers to the SETC community.

The story doesn't end here, but it does pause, providing time to reflect on SETC's role in this chain of events. One of the great advantages of SETC is that it is a network – a network that supports our art and our culture at the beginning of its creation. It is there for us when we need it, not just those several times a year when we gather as a group. Sustaining this network will be important to all of us, from employer through to employee, as we enter even more tenuous economic times.

Conference Explores How the Arts and Multiple Intelligences Develop Math Skills

Learn ways to connect the arts and math at the A+ Schools Program's 2008 Best Practices Conference, to be held in Greensboro, NC, August 7 and 8, 2008. The conference is open to K-8 educators, administrators and teaching artists. For registration and conference information, visit <http://aplus-schools.uncg.edu>.

From the
Executive Director

Betsey Baun



Community Theatre Division

How Community Theatre Helps Theatre Community

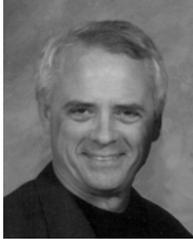
Michael Arve, vice president of the Theatre Association of New York State, wrote a column, "Why Community Theatre is Important to the Whole Theatre Community" that appeared in the March/April 2007 *DramaBiz* magazine.

Reading this was, for me, a quiet epiphany, one of those subtle moments of reaffirmation. I have read the column again and again, especially in moments when I have questioned my choice, many years ago, to make this corner of the theatre world the one in which I chose to operate. Like most other long-term members of SETC who affiliate with our division, I went into community theatre as an active choice, not a last resort.

Permit me to quote Arve directly on some important points that need to be affirmed, and re-affirmed, especially in the context of SETC's role as an agent for promotion of theatre in all its forms. After an introductory paragraph, Arve writes:

"However, too often the phrase 'community theatre' has been used pejoratively – sometimes with cause, but more often not. I want to make a case, perhaps even plead for your assistance, to give community theatre its due.

"Why is it important to ensure good amateur theatre? What effect does it have on professional theatre? In the grand scheme



Tim Bixler

Theatre for Youth Division

Propose a Workshop, Bring a Show to 2009 Birmingham Fest

SETC's Theatre for Youth is alive and strong! The Theatre for Youth Division had a spectacular conference in Chattanooga.

We had a wonderful turnout of both students and conference attendees for our three shows in the Theatre for Youth Invitational Festival. Appalachian Young People's Theatre performed a delightful, fun play, *Cows Don't Fly and Other Known Facts*, based on picture book author Paul Brett Johnson's work. Hip-hop met ballet in the North Carolina Theatre for Young People performance of *Degas' Little Dancer* by Wes Middleton. Virginia Stage Company enchanted the audience with wonderful puppetry in its adaptation of *The Jungle Book*.

of things, why is it vital that amateur, 'little' or community theatre continue to thrive?

"There are two things that community theatres contribute to the world of theatre:

"1. Nurturing talent – talent that all theatre draws upon. It is from the hinterlands and communities across the country where most of the theatre's talent has come....I know that there are many community theatres across the country that can count major stars among their alumni.

"2. Audience Development. Community theatre is most often the first exposure people have to a live theatre experience. But much more importantly, if that experience is a negative one, the professional theatre has lost a ticket sale and a future theatre patron. The professional theatres from New York to Los Angeles, Chicago to Miami, owe their audiences to community theatre....

"So I ask that you do whatever you can to support community theatre. Attend a community theatre production – think of it as a talent scouting mission. Offer to lend costumes and equipment to your local 'little' theatre....Give back educationally by mentoring a struggling amateur theatre.... Whatever the ideas, don't forget that we can all work together to make attending the theatre a habit rather than an afterthought.

"Always remember that not only does community theatre nurture the talent of tomorrow's stars, but it also cultivates tomorrow's theatregoers and benefactors. So it is vital that the quality and availability of community theatres continues to grow."

As SETC continues to nurture community theatre in the Southeast, every other division will ultimately benefit.

Tim Bixler, bixler@tecinfo.com
Chair, Community Theatre Division

The Sara Spencer Award was given to Tonya Hays, program director for WINGS at the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport, MS.



Jeremy Kisling

The success of our division lies with you. Please get involved. Bring a show to the festival, offer a workshop about an exciting after-school program or join the discussion of how to provide quality arts experiences to our youth. We look forward to seeing you in Birmingham!

Jeremy Kisling, jkisling@lctonstage.org
Chair, Theatre for Youth Division

High School Theatre Division

Would a Link with Community Theatre Fest Make Sense?

Congratulations to all our High School Theatre Division winners in Chattanooga. All who participated in the festival, either onstage or backstage, were true winners. I'd like to thank Leslie Dellinger and David Giambone, who stepped up to leadership roles with SETC and helped organize and run our festival. A special thank you is due our three adjudicators, who gave of their time and expertise: Jeffrey Ingman, Gina Moore and Josie Helming.

I hope that you are making plans now to attend the SETC Convention in Birmingham. The site is great, and plans are well underway to make Birmingham the place to be in March 2009. We encourage all theatre teachers to start off their convention with the K-12 Institute on Wednesday, March 4.

A proposal has been placed before us to consider combining the High School Theatre Festival and the Community Theatre Festival into one festival. There are several advantages to combining our festivals in one location. Financially this would be beneficial to our organization as we could cut production costs associated with two venues. It also would increase support for both divisions by allowing state high school and community theatre groups to perform back to back. States would be able to better support each division.



Bill Murray

Challenges must be overcome if this is to become reality. There will be problems in scheduling performances and allocating time for load-in, rehearsals and other needs. Finding venues with ample backstage areas for the 10x10 boxes for both divisions may present an obstacle. The difference in material presented by each group would need to be examined. For example, subject matter that might not be appropriate for high school students may be presented in a community theatre production.

These are just a few of the challenges and advantages we have uncovered over the past few weeks as we have looked into this proposal. I am sure that many of you can give us more insight into this possibility of change for our organization. If you have thoughts, questions or concerns please e-mail those to me.

Bill Murray, Dramacator@gmail.com
Chair, High School Theatre Division

Professional Theatre Division

Theatres Are in Need of Theatregoers: Do You Have Your Season Ticket?

In a time when theatres all over the country are feeling the crunch of shrinking subscriber audiences and economical pressures, it is important that we reach out to theatregoers of all types. One type that is extremely under-represented in theatre houses everywhere is...ourselves.

Let's consider just our theatre students for a moment. If in Florida alone, 60 high school theatre students from each of the 67 counties, along with 30 college students each from only 20 colleges and universities (a total of 4,620 students) saw five shows at \$20 per ticket, that would bring in an additional \$462,000 to the theatre market.

If each of these individuals made a commitment to see one show per month at any given theatre, it would amount to a \$1.1 million boost to the theatre market. Multiply that by each of the 10 SETC states, and \$11

Division NEWS

million is pumped into the southern market.

That may seem small, but it is a significant start. One can guess that we have more than an average of 4,600 high school/college theatre students in each state. And one can guess that these same students have made a commitment to see at least one movie every month. At current prices, it is now possible to see a live show for nearly the same cost as buying a movie ticket, popcorn, and a drink. And most theatres have lower-price student tickets and group discounts available that reduce the cost further.

Aside from the financial implications, there are other benefits to us all seeing more theatre outside of our inner circles. Students have much to learn by watching more theatre. And they need to see as much as possible, whether at community theatres, professional theatres or other educational theatres. Not only will they learn performance skills, but they also will learn audience skills. So many programs put an emphasis on special New York trips to see Broadway shows, not realizing that they could enjoy an entire season at their neighborhood regional theatre for less cost – while seeing some of the same talent and skill.

Every year I ask students interviewing for jobs how much theatre they see outside of their colleges. And every year I am amazed at the answer: practically none.

So how do we fix this? The answer lies

with theatre instructors and managing directors. Theatre instructors generally have a great influence on their students. They need to emphasize to students the importance of seeing live theatre. Managing directors need to help themselves by reaching out to these students. If your theatre doesn't already have incentives for students to attend, consider adding them this year.

Now, those of us who are busy everyday producing and teaching theatre are not off the hook either. The most common tale told, including my own, is that theatre professionals are so busy that they don't have the time or energy to go see other people's work.

College/University Theatre Division

Educators and Professionals Join Together to Help Students

As incoming College and University Division chair, I am proud to be working with a group of professionals who are interested in a continuing dialogue with colleagues to provide what is arguably one of SETC's most valuable services: collaboration to help solve challenges. I look forward to working with new Vice-Chair Lesley Preston and all our division members on this and many other activities.

Both the High School Theatre Division and the Professional Theatre Division raised concerns at meetings in Chattanooga that relate to our division. From discussions among the divisions there, we have developed courses of action that College and University Division members might follow to help solve those concerns. In doing so, we would also be helping our students become more marketable as both future educators and professional theatre practitioners.

CONCERN 1: South Carolina State Representative/secondary school teacher Leslie Dellinger expressed concerns about the combined effect of two policies. One, theatre is not being listed as an "official" art form in many southern states. Two, the federal No Child Left Behind Act essentially absolves many states from having to hire "highly qualified" instructors.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: C/U Division will collect information on institutions with theatre education programs in each state. Former C/U Chair Chet Longley agreed to spearhead the compilation of this material.

But we could help this equation ourselves if we simply visited our fellow theatres more often.

I encourage everyone to consider the impact of this mathematical equation. At the very least, our encouragement of young people will help train young audiences to make theatre a more regular ritual. After all, habits are formed by repetition.

Jon Moses, jmoses@riversidetheatre.com
Chair, Professional Theatre Division



Jon Moses

The division solicited volunteers to collect this information at state meetings this fall; these volunteers will send information to Longley at chetl@usca.edu. Longley will share the results with high school teachers who may need it to help prove that each state is training students to be "highly qualified" instructors in theatre, and, therefore, all states have the ability to hire "highly qualified" instructors in theatre. The hope is this information would help add theatre to the list of "official" art forms in states that currently do not list it, thus increasing the quality of instruction in theatre across the region.

CONCERN 2: In the Division Representatives meeting, Professional Division Chair Jon Moses led a discussion regarding how students are (and are not) prepared to work in professional theatre. While many factors contribute to "preparedness," two issues came to the forefront: the perceived disconnect between C/U and ProDiv regarding the balance of technological training and practical ability, and the work ethic that students bring to the professional world.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: C/U and ProDiv members should engage in more conversations to lessen this gap. In addition, C/U members should share these concerns with students, emphasizing the abilities and work ethic expected of professionals.

As division chair, I will work to facilitate communication not only within the division, but across SETC. If you have any comments on these issues or if you have concerns you would like me to bring to the division chairs, please contact me via e-mail.

Pat Gagliano, patrick.gagliano@newberry.edu
Chair, College/University Theatre Division



Pat Gagliano

Fall SETC Screening Auditions: Don't Miss Upcoming Deadlines

STATE	AUDITION DATE	APPLICATION DEADLINE	AUDITION LOCATION	STATE AUDITIONS COORDINATOR
Alabama	10/25/2008	10/08/2008	Univ. of Ala.-Tuscaloosa Tuscaloosa, AL	Lee Van Dyke lvandyke@usouthal.edu
Florida	11/7-8/2008	10/06/2008	Lakeland Center Lakeland, FL	Des Gallant desgallant@fau.edu
Georgia	10/17-18/2008	10/01/2008	Darton College Albany, GA	Kimberly Garcia garcia_kimberly@colstate.edu
Kentucky	11/8-9/2008	10/22/2008	University of Kentucky Lexington, KY	Tim Davis woundedeagle8@yahoo.com
Mississippi	12/6-7/2008	11/19/2008	Hinds Community College Raymond, MS	Allison Stafford aestafford@hindscc.edu
N. Carolina	11/21/2008	11/05/2008	Greensboro College Greensboro, NC	David Schram schramd@gborocollege.edu
S. Carolina	11/15/2008	10/23/2008	Newberry College Newberry, SC	Dale Savidge dsavidge@ngu.edu
Tennessee	10/25-26/2008	10/08/2008	Renaissance Center Dickson, TN	Meleia Lewis mlewis@dsc.edu
Virginia	10/31-11/1/2008	10/15/2008	Reston Hyatt Reston, VA	Wesley Young wyoung@radford.edu
W. Virginia	11/1/2008	10/14/2008	Glenville State College Glenville, WV	April Daras darasa@davisandelkins.edu

Celebrating Diversity: Nontraditional Auditionee Scores a Role in Chattanooga

While much of SETC's focus is on helping traditional students and young professionals, how many members can relate to this statement? "Theatre is a once and future career for me."

Those who hope to make a living in theatre sometimes have to put career goals on hold in order to provide for themselves or their families.

Bruce Shaw of Chattanooga was one of them.

"Sometimes," he notes, "life intervenes." *Bruce Shaw*

He worked as an actor for summer stock and regional theatres until he was 28, when he left the business to work as an information systems professional for many years.

He kept in touch with his theatre roots, maintaining a "gentleman amateur" status, working at community theatres and getting an occasional paid job during his years of raising a family.

Now, Bruce is back pursuing his decades-old dream of being a professional actor. At SETC 2008, he participated in the Spring Professional Auditions as a 50-plus, mid-life career-change actor.

With his son grown and working as a

sound engineer/audio-visual tech whiz – and lead vocalist for a band – in the New York area, Bruce decided it was time to complete his BA degree at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga. He selected music with a vocal concentration as his major and theatre as a minor to balance entry-level skills. He says he's using his time as an undergraduate to build a current body of education and experience to fully qualify him to work toward career goals in theatre.

Bruce decided to participate in the SETC auditions a year ago and oriented his coursework to prepare him for the experience. Obviously, he prepared well. He received four callbacks and landed an acting job with Prather Family of Theatres. He will spend the summer portraying *Oliver's* Brownlow in Mesa, AZ.

"Never thought I'd be a 'poster child' for anything," Bruce says, "but given the diversity theme of the convention, I thought you might be interested to know that I, as a late-life career-shifter, succeeded in landing summer work via SETC to restart my professional resume."

Way to go, Bruce! SETC is happy to have such poster children.

So, to all of you who have had to put dreams and goals on hold, there is opportunity for you at SETC! Check the newsletter for more success stories in the future. And

if you'd like to share yours, please send an e-mail to setc@setc.org.

- April J'C Marshall

Manager, SETC Professional Services

PEOPLE on the move

SETC President **Glen Gourley** recently was named the J. Lorin Mason Distinguished Professor for 2007-08 at Francis Marion University. The award is the highest honor bestowed upon a faculty member at the university, located in Florence, SC. As a result of his selection, Gourley will be the university's nominee for the Governor's Professor of the Year Award competition next fall.

Roy Hudson, theatre director at Shades Valley High School, recently was named Alabama Teacher of the Year. He is the first arts teacher to win the award, presented by the Alabama Department of Education. Hudson will serve as an ambassador for education across the state during the 2008-09 school year.



Roy Hudson



Bruce Shaw

Protect Your Theatre and Your Employees with a Safety Check

In early May, according to news accounts, an actor appearing on Broadway in *The Little Mermaid* fell 20 feet through a trap door and broke his wrists. In April, according to Stage-Directions.com, an experienced rigger in Mississippi fell to his death with a temporarily unsecured harness.

If you haven't done so in a while, now is a good time to conduct an annual safety inventory for your theatre. A theatre can be a very dangerous place – even when you take all the possible safety precautions.

Failure to have adequate safety plans and safety guidelines not only can cause injuries, but also may subject your theatre to liability under OSHA and other government safety regulations and to personal injury lawsuits. (Reckless disregard for safety issues could potentially provide an argument to “pierce the corporate veil” and subject board members to personal liability!)

Your safety inventory should include sections covering safety issues for staff (which includes volunteer staff and crew), actors and visitors/audience members. For staff and actors that do physically demanding or dangerous tasks, answer these questions:

Is the necessary or advisable safety equipment (such as respirators, eye protection, back braces, safety harnesses and ear plugs) provided?

Is adequate training provided?

Are all physical components of the theatre in safe, working order? (You do, of course, periodically check items such as fire extinguishers, safety lighting and smoke detectors.)

Are there tripping hazards?

Are theatre seats broken?

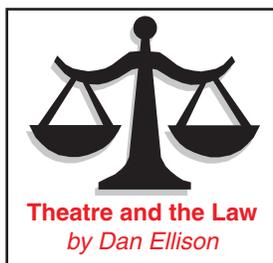
At one of the SETC Convention sessions in Chattanooga, a set designer underscored how painstakingly careful he was to make sure that a part of the set that would hang over the audience was secure and safe.

Prevention is, of course, No. 1. But accidents do happen, as do catastrophes caused by forces beyond our control.

Make sure your theatre has an emergency plan. There should be a procedure in place for injuries and medical emergencies, as well

as natural and other disasters. Do you have emergency contact information for staff and actors? If you have child actors, do you have a medical

emergency authorization form? Once you have a plan, make sure that the theatre staff is familiar with it. If your theatre had to



be evacuated in an emergency, would it be orderly or pandemonium?

Dan Ellison is a Durham, NC-based attorney who has concentrated on arts-related law and nonprofit law for 15 years. He is a past president and the current executive director of the North Carolina Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Have a question? E-mail him at: artandmuseumlaw@aol.com.

Note: The contents of this column are intended for general information purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances.

Cell Phone Users: Don't Text Message Yourself Out of a Job

Are you the one who offended one of our major theme park recruiters? SOU (shame on you). “April, please tell your job applicants to put away their cell phones during job interviews,” the recruiter told SETC’s Professional Services Manager April J’C Marshall at the 2008 SETC Convention.

Several other recruiters, including Melinda Gallant of Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach, FL, also complained that job applicants in Chattanooga played with their cell phones, sending text messages during job interviews.

“I was appalled at the audacity of interviewees texting during our interview while we had 200 or more people standing in line to talk with us,” Gallant says. “This behavior was an abuse of our time and rude. I simply asked them to leave the table.”

Students: If you weren’t aware that such behavior was inappropriate, you are now warned. **Professors:** Make sure you are covering this topic!

Rhonda Kosusko, assistant director of Elon University’s Career Center recognizes the problem.

“One of the first things I tell students who are preparing for an interview is to leave the cell phone behind,” Kosusko says. “Don’t take it in the building; leave it in the car. That way, there is no chance of making the fatal mistake of reaching for that phone during the interview. If you can’t leave it, make sure it is turned off and that it never comes out of your briefcase or bag. Most potential employers will automatically rule out a candidate whose phone goes off ... or even worse, a candidate who takes a call or sends a text message during the interview process.”

Betsy Baun, SETC’s executive director, is one of them.

“If someone were to use text messaging while interviewing with me, that would be an immediate dismissal,” she says.

Send a text message while you are talking to Marshall, and she’ll respond like Seinfeld’s Soup Nazi, “NO JOB FOR YOU!”

Bottom line: Students need to assign priorities. Surely impressing a potential employer has a higher priority than texting messages to friends.

Have a text messaging story to share? E-mail Don Wolfe at Wolfe@wfu.edu.



FYI: Here’s the 411 on Text Messaging for Non-Techies

If you use a cell phone just for talking, you may not know much about text messaging. It is a cell phone activity that allows the user to write/send a text message, which is usually loaded with abbreviations, instead of simply talking to the recipient or leaving a voice message. The text abbreviations are primarily acronyms. For example, CUL means “See you later.” DQMOT means “Don’t quote me on this.” A/S/L means “Age, sex, location?” To see a lengthy list of these abbreviations go to http://searchcrm.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid11_gci211776,00.html

Southern Theatre Wins Award

Southern Theatre magazine received a first-place award for the second year in a row in the annual North Carolina Press Club competition this spring. The magazine now advances to the national competition.



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Page 8

Generations Collaborate at SETC Convention

Theatre's business is in the reinvention of itself. "It illuminates what we are, what we have wrought, what we must renounce," said the great American director Harold Clurman.

SETC provides us the opportunity to come together to invest in our art, energize our process and connect with others. We have the opportunity to nurture a mission much larger than ourselves.

Just as theatre is perhaps the most collaborative of all art forms, SETC is a unique model of communion.

As an educator at this time of year, I have the pleasure of hearing so many students' journeys beyond college to their next adventure. Many of those travels are the result of SETC auditions and interviews.

These conversations provide a reminder of the power of our reaching out to all genera-

tions. We have so much to learn from one another. The High School Theatre Festival, Community Theatre Festival and Undergraduate School Auditions & Interviews are examples of the important work we do that brings young and seasoned generations together.

Throughout SETC, creativity is constantly encouraged. Constantine Stanislavsky's brilliant window, the "magic if," is ever present at SETC. We are a volunteer organization. Our meetings and process are open for feedback, new voices, new ideas and more hands. In fact, we depend on them. Just as engagement is so vital to art, it is essential to the life of SETC. Please contact those of us on the board if you have ideas or suggestions. I would love to hear your comments.

From the
 Administrative
 Vice-President
**Alan
 Litsey**



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