



SETC NEWS

March / April 2008

Broadway Comes to SETC Featured Designers Helped Create Current Hits

In what may be a first for SETC, all three of the designers speaking at the SETC Convention and judging the annual Design Competition have shows now running on Broadway.

Kevin Adams, lighting designer for *Spring Awakening*, Jennifer Caprio, costume designer for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and Todd Rosenthal, set designer for *August: Osage County*, are scheduled to speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 6 in a design keynote session that is open to all. The designers also will critique entries in the SETC Design Competition.



Kevin Adams

Adams, who won a Tony Award for Lighting of a Musical for *Spring Awakening*, also has designed off-Broadway plays and for opera, dance and concerts. He won Lucille Lortel awards in 1999 and 2007 as well as an Obie for Sustained Excellence in 2002. As we went to press, two more

plays for which he designed lighting were scheduled to open on Broadway: *The 39 Steps* and *Passing Strange*.

Caprio, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon School of Drama, designed costumes for the first national tour of *Putnam County* as well as the current Broadway production. She has designed more than 100 shows for New York and regional theatres.



Jennifer Caprio

Rosenthal, who is based in Chicago, designed the set for *August: Osage County*, which opened in December on Broadway. He has a wide range of national and regional set design credits, ranging from the Goodman Theatre in Chicago to Atlanta, where he designed the set for *Doubt*, which is opening in March at the Alliance Theatre. He also teaches design at Northwestern University.



Todd Rosenthal

Alliance to Receive Distinguished Career Award

The Saturday keynote address and the Distinguished Career Award will take a new direction at this year's SETC Convention. For the first time in SETC's history, the recipient of this award will be an organization – the Alliance Theatre of Atlanta. Accepting the award and speaking at the Saturday keynote address will be Rosemary Newcott, the Sally G. Tomlinson Artistic Director of Theatre for Youth at the Alliance.

In keeping with this year's convention theme, "Celebrating Diversity," the Alliance is known nationally for its commitment to cultivating diverse voices and creating significant new theatrical works. The groundbreaking theatre won a Regional Theatre Tony Award in 2007. Newcott has worked in Atlanta theatre for 20 years and has won numerous awards, including a 2005 Distinguished Career Award from the Georgia Theatre Conference.



Rosemary Newcott

- Glen Gourley, SETC President-Elect

Setc 2008 CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Keynote Speakers

Kieu Chinh
Actress, Activist

A Journey Home:
Asian American Awareness and Identity

2:30 p.m. Thursday

Daniel Banks
Professor, Choreographer,
Director of Hip Hop Theatre Initiative

Keynote Forum:
Reflections on Belonging, Ownership,
History and Language in Theatre

2:30 p.m. Friday

Rosemary Newcott
Artistic Director, Theatre for Youth
Alliance Theatre – Winner of the
SETC Distinguished Career Award

2:30 p.m. Saturday

Master Classes

Devising New Civic Performance
Through Ensemble

Michael Rohd, *Sojourn Theatre*
10:30 a.m. Thursday

Hip Hop and Hip Hop Theatre
as Pedagogy

Daniel Banks, *Thursday Keynote*
4 p.m. Thursday

We the Griot: An Intergenerational
Exploration in Storytelling and
Performance in the Age of Hip Hop

Daniel Banks, *Thursday Keynote*
Noon Saturday

Workshops, Events

Check your SETC convention program for a wide variety of workshops, performances and other events that celebrate diversity. These events explore a range of international themes and also touch on issues ranging from criminal justice to activism and from nontraditional casting to social change.

Info
in
Chattanooga

Want to register for the convention? Need information on a program?

Convention & Auditionee Registration/Pre-Registration Area is located at Meeting Room 1 in the North Lobby of the Chattanooga Convention Center.

The Information Hub and Message Board also are located in the North Lobby.

States Report on Annual Conventions, Festivals, New Officers

Alabama State Convention

The Alabama Conference of Theatre (ACT) began the festival season October 25 and 26, when nearly 300 students and faculty journeyed to Auburn University Montgomery for the College and University Division Festival and SETC state screening auditions. The University of Alabama at Birmingham swept the awards for the Ten-Minute Play Festival, with Stephen Webb taking Best Playwright honors, Luke Harlan earning Best Director and Ashleigh Butgereit receiving Best Performer. More than 200 actors auditioned in the SETC state screenings, and 46 were passed on to the SETC auditions in Chattanooga.

The second part of ACT's festival season is the Walter F. Trumbauer High School Theatre Festival, held from November 29 to December 1 at Troy University. The Trumbauer Festival brought in over 1,300 high school students, teachers and sponsors. The event included the ACT Scholarship Auditions, where about 80 high school seniors and undergraduate transfer students interviewed for programs and scholarships with colleges and universities from around the state.

Fifteen high schools competed in the one-act festival. Spain Park High School's production of *Property Rites* was selected to represent Alabama at SETC's High School Theatre Festival.

The 2008 officers are: Chris Rich, President; Amy Patel, Secretary; Amy Hockinson, Treasurer; Elizabeth McCurry, Immediate Past President; and Michael Howley, SETC Representative.

Chris Rich, ACT President
rcrich@troy.edu

Mississippi State Convention

More than 650 people attended the 2008 Mississippi Theatre Association Festival, held January 10-13 at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Oak Grove High School's production of *Tales of Trickery* was selected from nine high school entries to represent Mississippi at the SETC Convention.

Tupelo Community Theatre's production of *Doubt* was selected from five community theatre plays as the Best Production in the

Community Theatre Division.

The weekend also included eight plays in our Theatre for Youth festival, and our first-ever one-act playwriting competition. James Pfrehm was named winner and presented a check for \$500. A reader's theatre production featuring the new play, *Letting It Ride*, was cast and presented.

Guest speaker was David Orr, actor, filmmaker and president of Possumtown Productions Inc., who talked to members

about his experience in the business as well as his endeavors to film movies in Mississippi. Workshop topics ranged from adjudicator training to basic fight skills, and from disaster recovery to low-cost fundraisers.

Officers for 2008 are: Tom Booth, President; Stacy Howell, Vice President; Suz Almon, Treasurer; and Chris Wooten, Secretary.

Tom Booth, MTA President
1tct@bellsouth.net

ASK
SETC



Q Why are the members of SETC's Central Office staff holding scissors and smiling?

A They're cutting the ribbon on SETC's new office space at a ceremony held Saturday, January 5, 2008, during the Executive Committee's winter meeting. Central Office staff members (*left to right: Christopher Chandler, Lori Leigh, Nanette Harbuck, Betsey Baun, April J'C Marshall and Mark Snyder*) cut the ribbon, and President David Thompson and President-Elect Glen Gourley offered the congratulatory toast.

The new space, with high ceilings, expansive windows, exposed brick walls and a much larger area for operations, provides a major contrast to SETC's previously cramped headquarters in a nondescript office building. SETC's Central Office moved on December 14 into this space, located in an historic former textile mill (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) which is being renovated into offices.



SETC Professional Services Manager April Marshall (*left, at desk*) is shown in her new office. April, who had a painting of a "window" at the old location, enjoys having an office with a real window – and natural light.

Take a tour of this unusual office environment at www.revolutionmillstudios.com/index.html. SETC's new address is 1175 Revolution Mill Drive, Suite 14, Greensboro, NC 27405. All phone numbers and other contact information stay the same.

Get Social at SETC!

The 2008 SETC Convention is packed with informal and formal social gatherings where you can reunite with old friends and make new contacts. Here are just a few of the opportunities:

Design-Tech Mixer
8-10 p.m. Wednesday
Sponsored by Vari*Lite

Open to all in design and technical fields.

Presenters' Thank You Reception
5:30-7 p.m. Thursday

Open to convention workshop presenters.

SETC State Luncheon
1-2:20 p.m. Friday

Sponsored by the state theatre organizations
Open to all. Enjoy lunch, a chance to win door prizes and a performance by Chattanooga's award-winning Choo Choo Kids. Reservations required. \$16. Purchase through Central Office or buy on-site at Registration Desk until noon Thursday, March 6.

SETC State Meetings/Reception
5:30-7 p.m. Friday

Reception sponsored by Theatrical Rights Worldwide, Inc.

Open to all. Get your latest state news and join members from around the region for drinks, hors d'oeuvres and conversation.

Writers, Editorial Board Members Sought for *Southern Theatre*

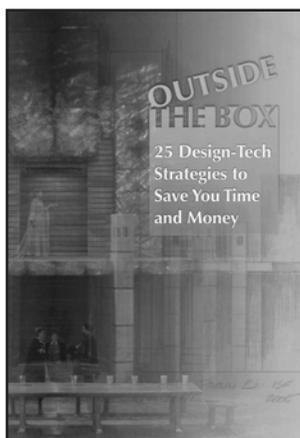
Would you like to write for *Southern Theatre* magazine? Or perhaps you would like to find out what's involved in serving on the Editorial Board? Come to the session, *How to Become a Writer or Editorial Board Member for Southern Theatre*, SETC's *Popular Magazine*, at 10:30 a.m., Friday, March 7. Check your program for the location.

SETC T-Shirts Available!

Let everyone know you belong to the country's largest regional theatre organization! SETC T-shirts and golf shirts will be available for purchase in the Exhibit Hall and the Glass Room in the Convention Center in Chattanooga. The T-shirt you purchase helps to build and support the Endowment, which funds SETC's scholarships!

Is Your Institution Blocking SETC E-mails?

If you are not receiving important correspondence from SETC, please ask your IT department to lift the SPAM filter that may be blocking SETC e-mail. Another alternative: Provide the SETC Central office with another e-mail address to use in contacting you.



Looking for innovative design-tech ideas?
Look no more!

Buy your copy of

OUTSIDE THE BOX: 25 Design-Tech Strategies to Save You Time and Money

at the Design-Tech Mixer
or in the Exhibit Hall and the Glass Room
throughout the 2008 SETC Convention.

Get your copy signed by the authors!

Book Signing:
Friday, March 7, 8:30 p.m.
Design-Tech Awards Reception

"An invaluable tool for all craftspeople in the theatre... It is my hope that this book will become a standard for every theatre student and professional."

- William Ivey Long, Tony Award-Winning Costume Designer

New Design-Tech Book Available at Convention

The *SETC Field Guide Series* makes its debut at the convention with the publication of the series' first book, ***OUTSIDE THE BOX: 25 Design-Tech Strategies to Save You Time and Money***.

The title says it all. The chapters were written by the very same individuals who researched and resolved technical challenges in the field.

I'm excited. This field guide is an example of what SETC does best: We provide hands-on, tangible information or opportunities to help those who practice the art of theatre. This time SETC connects our members' expertise with our commitment to provide knowledge to theatre practitioners.

William Ivey Long, who has written the foreword to the book, called it "an invaluable tool for all craftspeople in the theatre." He also said: "It is my hope that this book will become a standard for every theatre student and professional, and I look forward to future editions of this book."

I hope you will pick up a copy (\$15) at the convention and join us for the official book signing at 8:30 p.m. Friday during the Design Awards Reception. At least five of the authors will be there to sign their chapters.

Copies of the book also will be avail-

able at the Design-Tech Mixer Wednesday night and in the Exhibit Hall and the Glass Room throughout the convention.

The contributing authors are Eric J. Abbott; Stuart Beaman; Sonya Bixler; Ann Cadaret; Rachel Cruz; Carl V. Curnutte III; Thaddeus A. Engle; Melissa-Anne Blizzard Hall; George Hillow; Rick Mayfield; Brent Menchinger; Doug Molash; Mike Murphy; David Pulliam; Tricia L. Thelen; Bob Upton; Bland M. Wade Jr.; Bill Webb; David Wheeler; David R. Whitney; Christopher D. Zink; and Ed Zuckerman. Deanna Thompson is the editor, and Doug Brown acted as project coordinator.

This is the first in a series of books that we will be publishing under the *SETC Field Guide Series* banner. Books in this series are designed to inform, assist and inspire a wide spectrum of workers in the field of theatre, from seasoned professionals to recent graduates. Two books are in the development phase now.

From the
Executive Director
Betsey Baun



Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about SETC 2008...

is online! View the schedule of workshops, keynote presentations, meetings and social events on the SETC website at www.setc.org. On the home page, click on "more" under "59th Annual Convention" to go to the convention web page. Click on "program" to view events scheduled during each day of the SETC Convention in Chattanooga.

acting/directing

Multitude of opportunities

SETC 2008 will offer a wide variety of programming for those interested in acting and directing. Workshop topics include auditions, film acting, improv, musical improv, monologue magic, and teaching acting, Meisner, Stanislavski and Cohen.

Whether you are a student or faculty member, you will find many opportunities to learn, participate and network during the convention. And to help our committee function more efficiently, please feel free to offer feedback and suggest future programming at any time before, during, or after the convention.

I look forward to meeting you in Chattanooga. When you see me, please introduce yourself. Please also feel free to offer feedback to any of our committee vice-chairs: Paul Crook (Louisiana Tech University), Lissa Graham-Schneider (Murray State University), Ursula Robinson (South Carolina State University) or David Patton (VCU Theatre).

I hope you come to SETC 2008 ready to learn, have some fun while you learn and share your ideas. It's going to be a great conference. See you there.

*Patrick Gagliano, Chair
Acting/Directing Committee
pgagliano@newberry.edu*



Patrick Gagliano

design/tech

Design-Tech Mixer, book signing

The SETC Design and Technology Committee has a full schedule planned for SETC 2008.

Events kick off at 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 5 with an organizational meeting of the Design/Tech Committee.

Later Wednesday, join us for the first-ever Design-Tech Mixer! This social event, from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday, is an opportunity to network before the frenzied pace of the convention begins.

On Thursday, March 6, entrants should drop off Design Competition



Troy Snyder

entries between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. The Design Competition opens at 6 p.m. At 7 p.m., this year's guest designers will speak. (See Page 1 for our awesome lineup!)

Friday brings Design Competition adjudication from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., followed by the Design-Tech Reception and Awards Ceremony, sponsored by Vari*Lite, at 8:30 p.m. Highlights include a signing event for SETC's new book, *Outside the Box: 25 Design-Tech Strategies to Save You Time and Money*.

On Saturday, the Design/Tech Committee will hold a business meeting at 10:30 a.m.

*Troy Snyder, Chair
Design/Tech Committee
Troy.Snyder@fairmontstate.edu*

diversity

Enjoy numerous diverse offerings

This is the year for a celebration of diversity! As usual, SETC offers exciting workshops and speakers. In addition, this year's theme specifically focuses on the diversity we all bring to theatre.

Some highlights:

The convention will feature awesome speakers with diverse messages. Actress and humanitarian Kieu Chinh will share her inspiring life as Thursday's speaker, and Daniel Banks of New York University will lead a forum-styled discussion on Friday. Banks will also present two dynamic master classes, one featuring Hip Hop, and the other featuring storytelling. These classes are extremely popular and fill up quickly!

Take note of the international spotlight workshop on Thursday, featuring the theatre company Nhi-Mu and presented by Pato Masera.

Workshop topics for 2008 include women's theatre companies, dialect work, faith-based theatre and Chinese art.

If you are new to SETC, be sure to attend a special workshop at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5: *SETC Orientation: Navigate Next Three Days*.

All are welcome to attend the Cultural Diversity Committee meeting on Thursday, March 6 at 5:30 p.m. Share your thoughts on this year's convention.

*MJ Etua, Chair
Cultural Diversity Committee
mjmetua@yahoo.com*



MJ Etua

film/tv

Film on theatre to be shown

At last year's convention, most of the sessions sponsored by the Film and Television Committee attracted standing-room-only crowds. Topics covered ranged from how to audition for the camera to the business of the business.

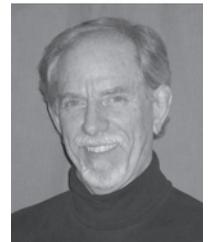
This year the sessions promise to be just as topical and popular. Workshop topics include acting in industrials, auditioning for commercials and creating film projects for class.

After several years of effort, we have people who want to exhibit their films at the convention. One made application before the deadline. *For the Love of Theater* will be shown Thursday, March 6 at noon. It is a 28-minute film about the Landmark Theatre in Sutton, a small community deep in the mountains of West Virginia, and how this community theatre is changing young people's lives.

I am currently in discussion with three producers who may be interested in presenting works next year at a Film Showcase. If all goes well, we can expand this into a juried festival similar to the Community Theatre Festival.

Please join us for the Film/TV Committee meeting at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 8.

*Richard Cowan, Chair
Film/Television Committee
Rcowan@clemsion.edu*



Richard Cowan

SETC
what's happening in

history

All invited to panels, meeting

The History/Theory/Criticism/Literature Committee looks forward to some wonderful panels at the 2008 convention, including *The Play is the Dabburn Thing; Marginalized Rural American Playscripts; The Role of Music in Shakespeare's Plays, and the Composition of New Scores for Them; and Dramaturg: What in the Word Is It?*

Our interest area is committed to the scholarly exploration of the issues that revolve around theatre presentations,

and we focus on traditional studies in history, theory, criticism and literature. However, we are also interested in more contemporary subjects, including who teaches history, how we teach history, pedagogy, praxis vs. theory, censorship and telling/selling history.



Dawn Larsen

We invite you to attend our committee meeting at noon Saturday, March 8.

2008
your interest area

We will discuss, among other things, our plan for a scholar's award to be given to two

finalists in 2009, pending board budget approval. We are also working on strategic planning to better define our committee. We would love to hear your thoughts.

Dawn Larsen, Chair
History/Theory/Crit/Lit Committee
llarsen@fmarion.edu.

movement

Explore workshops, network

Convention 2008 is packed with exciting programs on topics of interest to movement specialists, from ballroom dancing to Suzuki and from Viewpoints to mask work.

For a number of years, theatre movement specialists and practitioners have examined how movement and voice work directly influence one another. Workshop presenters this year will offer many opportunities to explore actor physicalization, character development, rehearsal techniques and movement methodologies.

This is the fourth year that SETC has hosted a pre-convention workshop, "Explorations in Movement,"

which will be held Wednesday, March 5 from 7 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. This workshop is a forum where movement professionals/educators can explore and experience various approaches to teaching movement while also



Bess Park Reynolds

having an opportunity to network.

Join us at noon on Thursday for the Movement Committee meeting. This is a place

for movement professionals and educators to meet, network and discuss the future of movement training! And don't forget to start your day with an energetic lift at the voice/movement warm-ups each day at 8 a.m.!

Bess Park Reynolds, Chair
Movement Committee
besspark@aol.com

playwriting

Getchell winner, readings announced

This year's convention features many inspiring workshops and events for those of us who are passionate about new plays and playwriting.

The staged reading of *Nobody*, winner of the 2008 SETC Charles M. Getchell New Play Project (NPP), will be presented at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 7, followed by a discussion of the play. *Nobody* was written by Richard Aellen of Tampa, FL. The staged reading will be directed by Stephen Burch.

Other finalists in the Getchell competition included: *Django Salvatore's Awe-Inspiring Death-Defying Big Top Spectacuganza ...*



Alan Litsey

by Justin Cioppa; *Al-ligators* by Sylvia Reed; *Hollerwood* by Elizabeth Orndorff; *A Marine Caught in Leotards* by Neville Mur; and *Waiting on the Moon* by Chris Dwyer.

Also, make plans to attend the reading of the winning play in this year's High School New Play Contest. Students of The Walker School and Shades Valley High School will read the winning play at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, March 8, directed by contest chair Katie Arjona. A discussion of the play will follow the reading. Check the SETC website for the announcement of this year's winning play and honorable mention winners.

A special thanks to Mark Charney (chair of the Charles M. Getchell Award) and Katie Arjona (chair of the High School Play Contest) and all of the play readers for their outstanding work.

Please join us for the Playwriting Interest Committee gathering at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 7. We get together to discuss issues, ideas and programming for the upcoming year. Just as importantly, it's a great chance for us to touch base and meet new friends.

Alan Litsey, Chair
Playwriting Committee
alitsy@bsc.edu

religion

Attend committee meeting

All are invited to the Religion and Theatre Committee meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 6, at the SETC Convention in Chattanooga.

voice/speech

Explore dialect, connect

We have some exciting events planned for the SETC Convention in Chattanooga. Join us for a Voice and Speech "Meet and Greet" at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 5 to see old friends and make some new ones.

One highlight of this year's convention will be workshops featuring different methods for learning American Standard Dialect. In one of these, we will hold a panel discussion on the sometimes controversial issues surrounding "losing my accent."

At a Saturday morning session, we will explore and exchange methods of teaching, clarify principles of pedagogy and training, and look at challenges we face as voice and speech professionals. Bring your own "burning issues as a trainer" to this session at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, and be prepared to share strategies that have worked for you.

Workshops offered this year in the voice and speech area include: *The Liberated Voice: Hear the Actor, Not the Voice; Speak the Word, I Pray You; The Dancer Speaks: Voice and Breath Work; International Phonetic Alphabet with Phonetic Pillows; Directors and Vocal Coaches Collaboration; Five Sexual Rhythms of Shakespeare: A Verse Dance Party; How to Drop Your Dialect for Another; Vocal Shaping: Touching the Speech; and Deregionalizing a Person's Dialect.*

We will again be collaborating with the Movement Committee in offering early-morning actor warm-ups on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. To get involved and generate ideas for next year's convention, join us for the Voice and Speech Committee business meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 6.



Marlene Johnson

Marlene Johnson, Chair
Voice and Speech Committee
mrsplumm@yahoo.com

Find Opportunities to Help Yourself, SETC in Chattanooga

If you have ever received a letter from the SETC Central Office, you may have noticed a phrase at the bottom of the page: "SETC Connects You to Opportunity."

I am hoping that you found multiple "opportunities" in your convention newspaper, which describes offerings at the 59th annual SETC Convention in Chattanooga. There are 390-plus events occurring at the convention in a very short amount of time. From aerial theatre to finding your inner harlequin, from Tennessee Williams to Caryl Churchill, from water puppets to gobos, there are many opportunities to explore the diversity of theatre.

As I near the time when I will take over the mantle of President, I would like to ask you to explore another "opportunity" – the opportunity of involvement in this organization. Look through the convention newspaper or at the interest area columns on Pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter, and find the committees that appeal to you. Attend the meetings and explore how you can contribute, helping to strengthen those areas and thus the organization. SETC is a vital organization because of individuals who have seized the opportunity to get involved.

I also would like to point out some changes in this year's scheduling of events:

Convention Critique: The convention critique will take place at noon Saturday. This is a time for positive and negative feedback about the convention. Improvements in future conferences grow out of active discussions dealing with current and past events.

Advisory Council Meeting: The Advisory Council meeting previously held on Sunday mornings has been moved to 5:30 p.m. Saturday. This new time slot gives committee chairs a time to contribute to the organization and not have to worry about Sunday morning departure issues.

New Board Training: The new Board orientation has moved to 9:30 a.m. Sunday.

Board of Directors Meeting: The full Board meeting will take place from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Sunday. In the convention schedule, this meeting has a new title, "Budget and Business Meeting," for all board members.

Executive Committee Meeting with Central Office Staff: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday.

From the
President-Elect

Glen
Gourley



All Invited to Advisory Council, ExCom, Board of Directors Meetings

Wednesday, March 5

10:30 a.m.-noon, Advisory Council Meeting

12:30-4 p.m., Executive Committee Meeting, followed by Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday, March 9

5:30-6:50 p.m., Advisory Council Meeting

Sunday, March 9

9:30-10 a.m., New Board Training

10-11 a.m., Board of Directors Budget and Business Meeting

11a.m.-1 p.m., Executive Committee Meeting with Central Office Staff

All Board of Directors and Advisory Council members should attend, and all SETC members are invited to attend. Tennessee River Room, Marriott Hotel

Trash or Treasure?

How to Set a Value for Your Theatre Memorabilia Donation

Picture this: You're about to retire after 30 years of teaching theatre studies at XYZ University. You're selling your house and have decided to sail around the world on a 35-foot sailboat for the next five years. Everything must go! You have about 500 theatre books, a collection of playbills from half the Broadway shows of the past 40 years, an almost complete set of *American Theatre* magazine and the original, first draft of *The Glass Menagerie* with handwritten edits by Tennessee Williams ... and many other interesting theatre ephemera!

You'd like to donate the entire collection to the local community theatre. All those things have some value, but are those playbills, for instance, worth 25 cents each? Or \$2.50 each? Or are there a few gems among them worth hundreds of dollars (especially those playbills that you waited at the stage door to get signed by cast members)?

How do you establish a value for those to-be-donated items? Better said, how do you establish a value that the IRS will accept? The answer is to determine the **fair market value** of the item. That is the amount that you will be allowed to deduct from your taxes. It is the **donor's responsibility** to place a value on the gifts.

So how do you determine that? Price guides exist for all kinds of collections. Reports of recent sales of similar items from websites such as eBay are also evidence of value. The more substantiation you have for the value, the more likely the IRS will accept that value, should the agency question it.

If you are claiming a deduction of more than \$5,000, however, you will need an appraisal by a qualified appraiser. (In that instance, you will also need to file Form 8283.) IRS Publication 561 contains detailed information on donating collections of various types. It points out how difficult it can be to establish the value of property – and how important condition is. A first edition in brand-new condition is worth more than a well-worn book. If you overstate the value of donated property, you can be subject to a penalty of either 20% or 40% of your tax underpayment.

So, while you are entitled to deduct the value of your donated property, you do have to be realistic in setting that value. Keep in mind: "Pigs get fat; hogs get slaughtered."

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.



Theatre and the Law
by Dan Ellison

Parting Words: A SWOT Analysis of SETC

My final presidential column reflects on the state of SETC using a favorite organizational tool, the SWOT analysis, in which one places issues into the four categories of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Since a full analysis can be lengthy, I will limit myself to a single entry in each category.

Strength. By far our greatest strength lies with the people associated with SETC. Our members, staffers, exhibitors and spon-

EXCOM NEWS

by President David S. Thompson

According to SETC rules, "The President shall include a report on the proceedings of the Executive Committee [ExCom] meetings to the general membership in the SETC Newsletter." ExCom is composed of elected officers, a division representative and a state representative. The Board of Directors, composed of elected officers plus all division chairs and all state representatives, reviews ExCom actions and has authority to establish or revise rules.

ExCom met on January 5. Actions include:

- **Self-Study Report Accepted.** A year-long study of financial practices by a select committee appointed by then-President Dennis Wemm has yielded a report containing a list of recommendations. Most recommendations affirmed or clarified budgeting and investment practices. Each recommendation was considered, with most accepted in whole and others edited prior to acceptance. A summary of forthcoming actions, including revisions to bylaws and rules, will be presented to the Board in advance of its March meeting.

- **Contract Procedures Clarified.** Past and future approaches to drafting contracts for the Executive Director were clarified and revisions suggested to avoid potential confusion.

- **Ribbon cut for new SETC Home.** ExCom members and SETC employees participated in a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the new home of the Central Office. The new location offers more space for our growing organization and significantly improves amenities.

- **Next Meeting Scheduled.** ExCom's next meeting will be held during the annual convention on Wednesday, March 5 at 12:30 p.m. in the Tennessee River Room of the Marriott Hotel. The Board meeting will follow.

sors are collaborators in promoting theatre within our region. In the words of our Articles of Incorporation, they accept the responsibility for "stimulating and organizing for the people of the southeastern United States theatre experiences of the highest possible standards and encouraging appreciation and understanding of the same."

The people we attract to our organization work tirelessly and expertly to achieve our goals and to serve others who share the vision.

Weakness. Sharing the vision, while central to our work, may actually be our greatest weakness. Many of us can argue passionately that theatre is important, but far fewer can articulate why. Similarly, we do not share our ideas and discoveries about organizational and communication practices as well as we might. We are not failing, but we can always improve.

Opportunity. Correcting our greatest weakness represents our greatest opportunity. Broader involvement among our people, greater willingness to accept leadership roles, passionate brainstorming and careful documentation will enhance our collaboration and ensure a vigorous exchange of ideas for the future.

Threat. Like Walt Kelly's classic character Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." I have heard suggestions that our organization would run more efficiently if we adjusted our structure, concentrating greater authority with fewer individuals and operating from the top down. I have also heard complaints expressed in "us vs. them" terms. Both positions ignore that fact that we are SETC, and it becomes what we make of it. Our broad-based, grassroots approach is both well-known and the basis for our successful expansion. You cannot have growth without people (see "Strength" above). Yes, SETC is a corporation, but with virtues of a democracy (or government by the *people*; that "Strength" again). Dealing with many perspectives is cumbersome, but the value of diversity outweighs any difficulty. As Sir Winston Churchill observed, "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

In short, the future of SETC is up to us.

From the President

David S.
Thompson



AROUND the region

The **University of Alabama at Birmingham's** Department of Theatre has created a Support Fund in SETC Past President **Ward Haarbauer's** name. The fund will support students as they pursue off-campus learning opportunities that are vital to their overall professional development. For more information, contact Mary Balfour Van Zandt, director of development, via e-mail at mvanzandt@uab.edu or by phone at 205-975-9644.

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What do Derek Keeling, from TV's reality hit, *Grease: You're the One That I Want*, and Andy Griffith have in common? They both have performed in outdoor drama.

Outdoor dramas from around the country will be seeking performers and technicians to fill more than 300 summer theatre jobs when the **National Outdoor Drama Auditions** are held Saturday, March 15.

These auditions, open to anyone 18 or older who has previous theatre experience, are sponsored by the Institute of Outdoor Drama (IOD) on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Applications are due March 6. For more information and an application form, visit the institute's website at www.unc.edu/depts/outdoor/ or call 919-962-1328.

Those registered for auditions also can sign up to attend "Face to Face," an open forum with auditionees to discuss what makes a great audition, held the night before the auditions.

In addition to actors, singers and dancers, the theatres need stunt or combat professionals, pyrotechnicians, horseback riders, as well as staff skilled in design, installation and maintenance of equipment for sound, electronic vocal reinforcement, special effects and lighting.



2007 auditionee

Are You SETC's Next Winning Playwright?

Entries accepted March 1-June 1
for the

2008-09 Charles M. Getchell Award

Details: www.setc.org/scholarship/newplay.asp



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SETC NEWS

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**Atlanta's ALLIANCE THEATRE will receive
 SETC'S 2008 DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD!**

Saturday's Convention Keynote Address: Theatre for Youth Artistic Director Rosemary Newcott

Celebrate the magic of SETC 2008 on Saturday night!



Caroline Calouche (above) will lead a workshop, Aerial Dance with Fabric, at 4 p.m. Saturday, in addition to performing during the President's Reception. Learn the basic skills and body strength needed for this art form, as well as how choreographers experiment with this apparatus.

Join your SETC friends for a reception, awards banquet and dance on Saturday, March 8, as Convention 2008 winds to a close:

President's Reception, 7 p.m.

Enjoy drinks and socialize as you watch the amazing aerial dance of Caroline Calouche (left) and Tai Dorn (Rigger: Jay Young). They will perform at 7, 7:30 and 7:50 p.m.

Dinner/Awards Banquet, 8 p.m.

Enjoy dinner with friends, witness the presentation of SETC's Distinguished Career Award and discover the best of this year's high school and community theatre productions as the awards are announced. Find the answer to this question: Who will be SETC's 2008 Suzanne Davis Award winner?

Celebration/Dance, 10 p.m.

Dance the night away to the music of Sweet Georgia Sound, a Chattanooga dance band featuring 16 instrumentalists and 2 vocalists.

Purchase reserved tickets for banquet (\$26) from Central Office or at Registration Desk in Chattanooga by Thursday, March 6. Dance admission is free.

SETC 2008

Chattanooga, TN March 5-9

Where to Send News

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