



SETC NEWS

May / June 2009

Blog Your Feedback on SETC 2009

We promised MAGIC, and Birmingham delivered! A mere few weeks after we closed the doors on SETC's 60th celebratory bash, the e-mails and blogs are still buzzing with the enthusiasm and energy that you brought to SETC's spring convention, Here's hoping that you were all able to learn, explore, share and enjoy all that you could at the more than 300 workshops, master classes, exhibits and performances. Blog your own feedback to <http://setctheatretalk.blogspot.com> or go to www.setc.org and look for the link at the bottom of the page.

From the President

Beth Harvey



Did you get to the keynote addresses? David Shaul, Mark Redanty, Beth Leavel and Eugene Lee were truly inspiring as they shared their professional and personal experiences on their way up the success ladder. (Be sure to read the next *Southern Theatre* to benefit from the insights they shared.)

How can you keep the energy going all year round? Volunteer to become a part of SETC leadership as a committee member, which keeps you in the convention loop until we get to Lexington. Use your ideas to imagine, create or just

(See *From the President*, Page 2)



Pamela Venz

Tony Award winner Beth Leavel (left), Friday's convention speaker, talks with an audience member after her electrifying keynote address.

Convention Statistics

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Registered	4028	4068	4294	4036	4007
Spring Auditions					
Auditionees	937	940	839	825	907
Companies	88	84	93	80	65
Roles Available	2704	3480	4129	3410	2810
Job Contact Service					
Employers	108	105	120	112	86
Jobs Posted	1307	1609	2299	1522	1432
Employees	899	717	752	719	707
Undergrad School Auditions					
Auditionees	277	306	273	254	240
Schools	66	70	73	79	87
Graduate School Auditions					
Auditionees	90	80	75	81	113
Schools	22	37	22	33	33

SETC News is moving from print to e-mail!

See story, Page 3, for Details

Student Volunteers Move from Backstage to Onstage

What? They're dropping out today?!" Keith Hight, technical director at Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC, heard this lament as he and Campbell theatre students were helping load in on the opening morning of SETC 2009.

One of the shows that had been scheduled to perform in SETC's Fringe Festival had dropped out as the convention began, leaving a hole in the schedule.

What to do? Hight and his Campbell students – who have served as volunteers, manning doors, hanging lights and gofering for the past three conventions – quickly demonstrated the can-do, collaborative spirit that makes SETC work.

"Do you need a new show?" Hight asked.

"Do you have one?" was all he needed to hear.

Campbell had just closed John Olive's *The Voice of the Prairie*. Campbell professor E. Bert Wallace, the show's director, was at the convention, along with all four cast members (Matt Coleman, Jessi Ferguson, Jon Fitts and April Viverette), stage manager Sasha T. Fuller, and techies Jessica Beaver and Nondi Boggs, all student volunteers.

Director, cast, and crew were all game to recreate it as a Fringe show. When they got the go-ahead at 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, (See *Fringe Performance*, Page 2)



Jon Fitts, Jessi Ferguson (foreground), Matt Coleman and April Viverette appear in The Voice of the Prairie at Campbell University.

COMING SOON

Fifth Annual Southern Theatre SETC College/University/Training School Directory

Make sure your school is listed! Contact Hardy Koenig via hardy@setc.org for information!

GET A HEAD START ON FINDING THE RIGHT PROGRAM!

Fall Graduate School Auditions & Interviews
9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, September 12, 2009

Onstage at Spirit Square, Charlotte, NC

Who should attend SETC's third annual Fall Graduate School Auditions & Interviews?

- **Students** planning to enter graduate school in fall 2010 in acting, design or technical theatre, who want multiple schools to see their potential early in the year, but don't have time or money to travel to multiple locations;
- **Individuals** auditioning at the Professional Auditions on September 13 who want to see college reps in the same trip;
- **College/university recruiters** looking for an affordable way to see numerous students at one time, early in the year, performing on a stage.

More info: Application and more information is at www.setc.org/graduatefall.php.

What Will Graduate School Auditions Offer You?



Matt Lewis (left) got the offer of his dreams after participating in the Graduate School Auditions in Birmingham. He received a "full-ride" scholarship to study acting in the master of fine arts (MFA) program at the University of Alabama. Matt is a 2008 graduate of Kennesaw State University.

"The SETC graduate school auditions gave me the perfect opportunity to be seen by a lot of great schools all at once, and I really appreciated how helpful and enthusiastic the organizers were," Matt says. "I was really made to feel at ease, like everyone wanted me to succeed and do my best!"

Fringe Performance
(Continued from Page 1)

Wallace and the students had less than 48 hours to cut the full-length show to 50 minutes, conduct rehearsals, procure make-shift props and set pieces and arrange tech, all while the students continued to fulfill their volunteer duties at the convention.

"The students from Campbell were a tremendous help during set-up and strike of the Fringe space and really stepped up when we had a show cancel," says Chad McDonald, festival production manager. "They had no set, props, sound effects or costumes but were able to truly improvise with found objects from the hotel, exhibit hall, convention center and anywhere else they could find them."

The play went up at 7 p.m. Friday, putting the catchphrase, "SETC Connects You to Opportunity" into action. The students, who had exchanged volunteer work for conference attendance, got the unexpected thrill of performing at the Fringe as a result of

that connection. And SETC (which means all of us attending the event) not only got assistance from the students in making the convention a reality, but also got the opportunity to enjoy a surprise, schedule-saving performance.

"The show turned out great, and the audience was very appreciative," says McDonald.

From the President
(Continued from Page 1)

support colleagues, new and old.

I am grateful to have the honor to lead such a talented constituency. Thanks to Immediate Past President Glen Gourley for showing the courage to change as we begin to build a stronger organization. As SETC grows, so grow your own opportunities for connecting with more people, programs, companies and schools – and establishing the South as the crossroads for the nation's best talent.

LAND A ROLE!

Fall Professional Auditions
September 13-14, 2009

Onstage at Spirit Square
Charlotte, NC

Professional actors can apply online to audition for acting, singing and dancing roles for theatres across the nation for upcoming seasons. (Sorry, but students cannot apply.)

Processing Fee: \$25 by July 15; \$35 by August 15 (deadline)

More info: www.setc.org/auditions

2009 Statistics

Participants in
Undergraduate School Auditions
and Interviews

Junior Actors: 151; Senior Actors: 49;
Transfers: 7; Tech/Management: 33

ARTS
opportunities

The **University/Resident Theatre Association** announces a new program of URTA Summer Intensives serving college and university teachers in acting. Visit www.urta.com for details.



The **Teen Shakespeare Conservatory** is offering a three-week summer intensive for students age 15-18 in New York from July 5 to July 25. For more information, visit www.actorsmovementstudio.com/teen.



Visiting New York this summer? You can get inexpensive theatre tickets by joining **Theatre Development Fund** as a "national member" for \$12. Full-time students, educators and performing arts professionals are eligible. Visit www.tdf.org, click on "tdf membership" button, then "national membership" and fill out the online application.

Congratulations to . . .

the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro**, which was invited to perform *The Revenger's Tragedy* by Thomas Middleton, adapted by Jim Wren and Joe Sturgeon, at the 2009 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Washington, DC, on April 15.

SETC
Executive
Committee
Meeting

The SETC Executive Committee meets May 15-16 in Greensboro, NC.
All members are invited to attend.

Tentative agenda calls for May 15 meeting to focus on the 2010 convention and committee reports, and May 16 meeting to include officer reports and action items. Details and times? Contact the Central Office via e-mail at setc@setc.org.

SETC Board of Directors**Executive Committee
and Officers****President:** Beth Harvey**President-Elect:** Alan Litsey**Admin. Vice-President:** Steve Bayless**Secretary:** Tiza Garland**Treasurer:** Chris Rich**Immed. Past President:** Glen Gourley**Divisions' Representative:** Bill Murray**States' Representative:** Leslie Dellinger**Division Chairs****Theatre for Youth:** Jeremy Kisling**Community Theatre:** Lynn Nelson**College & University:** Patrick Gagliano**Professional Theatre:** Dewey Scott-Wiley**Secondary Schools:** Bill Murray**State Representatives****Alabama:** Michael Howley
mhowley@alasu.edu**Florida:** Steve Bayless
baylessS727@aol.com**Georgia:** H. Duke Guthrie
dguthrie@valdosta.edu**Kentucky:** Kathi E.B. Ellis
theatrekate@gmail.com**Mississippi:** Tom Booth
1tb@bellsouth.net**North Carolina:** David Schram
schramd@greensborocollege.edu**South Carolina:** Leslie Dellinger
lgedellinger@aol.com**Tennessee:** Michael Darren
michaeld@apsu.edu**Virginia:** Kimberly Kemp
kempkimberly@yahoo.com**West Virginia:** April Daras
darasa@davisandelkins.edu

SETC News Moves to E-Mail Delivery, Seeks 'Reporters' to Contribute News

SETC News will become an e-mailed newsletter starting with the next issue. Instead of receiving your newsletter by postal mail, you will receive it via e-mail as a PDF attachment. You can read it on screen or print it out to read at your leisure and post at your school or theatre.

The first e-mailed issue, the July/August 2008 SETC News, will arrive in your inbox in late June or early July.

From the
Executive Director

Betsey Baun



the SurveyMonkey tool. We had responses from 374 individuals. Of those:

- 47.3% preferred an electronic newsletter e-mailed to them;
- 14.2% preferred a notice sending them to SETC's website for the latest issue;
- 38.5% wished to continue mail delivery.

Our newest (1- or 2-year) members and youngest (21-30 years old) constituency represented the majority of respondents. Some indicated they read the officer columns (19.8%), but *Theatre Bytes* was the column with highest readership (36.6%).

The survey yielded important information on the content you want in the newsletter.

The decision to move from print to e-mail was made after we surveyed the membership to determine who reads the newsletter, what readers want to know and how they want to receive their news.

To reach members, we placed a notice in the last newsletter and also sent an e-mail with a link to a survey using

In the past, the major goal of SETC News was to focus on the membership and inform readers about the organization.

While the survey showed continued interest in opportunities within SETC, it also showed a significant shift of interest toward news about people and organizations.

The top areas that respondents were interested in reading about, starting with the highest percentage, were news about:

- theatres in the region (66%);
- upcoming SETC events (65.5%);
- opportunities for people in theatre (64.4%);
- Job Contact Service and SETC Auditions (60.4%);
- people in the region (47.3%).

We can shift our method of distribution to e-mail relatively easily. However, it will take a bit longer to build a new framework for gathering more news about opportunities, people and theatres. We need your help to do this!

If you are interested in becoming a reporter for your region, please send an e-mail to Editor Deanna Thompson at deanna@setc.org.

Although I am going to personally miss my hard copy (I'll be printing mine out so I can curl up on the sofa with a cup of tea), there are three clear advantages to publishing via e-mail. 1) The news will be more current as we won't be working with deadlines 6-8 weeks prior to mailing. 2) We will reduce production and mailing costs. 3) You can access the news via e-mail (or online on the website) anywhere you are.

My column? Survey says ... only 25.9% of you are reading this! If you want to view the entire survey results, go to www.setc.org/surveys/ and click on "SETC News Survey (January 2009)." Be sure to click on "View" in Questions 7 and 8 for the open-ended response sections.

ASK
SETC
ANSWERS

Q How can I win free registration to SETC 2010?

A Send us feedback about the 2009 SETC Convention via the online survey at www.setc.org, and you will be entered in a drawing to win free registration to next year's convention in Lexington, KY! If you attended the SETC Convention, you should have already received an e-mail link to the survey. (If you have already completed the survey, please refrain from doing so again.)

Whether you wish to share a critique or a compliment, the leadership of the Southeastern Theatre Conference welcomes feedback. Tell us what works, so we can build on it. Tell us about your challenges, so we can solve problems and improve. If you have an idea to share or a suggestion on how to make something work better, we'd like to hear it.

PEOPLE
on the move

Jon Moses has been promoted to managing director of Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach, FL.

□□□

Glen Gourley, a Francis Marion University theatre professor and SETC immediate past president, recently received the 2009 John W. Baker Distinguished Service Award from the Florence (SC) Regional Arts Alliance.

2009 Award Winners Announced at Banquet in Birmingham



Distinguished Career Award

Eugene Lee (left), Tony Award-winning designer, Saturday's keynote speaker and Distinguished Career Award winner, with SETC's incoming President Beth Harvey.



Suzanne M. Davis Award

Donna White, St. Petersburg, FL, longtime high school teacher and former chair, SETC Undergraduate Auditions.



Sara Spencer Child Drama Award

Gay Hammond (left), of WonderQuest, Gainesville Theatre Alliance's Theatre for Young Audiences program, with committee chair Jeremy Kissing.



Charles M. Getchell New Play Award

Tommy Trull Greensboro, NC, honored for *Honeyboy*.



High School Theatre Festival

Winner: (left photo) Director Mike Chappell (left) accepts the award for *Forbidden Broadway*, presented by Huntsville (AL) High School. **Runner-up:** (left photo) Leslie Dellinger (right) accepts the runner-up award for *Scooter Thomas Makes It to the Top of the World*, presented by Lexington (SC) High School. **Best Actress/Actor, sponsored by William E. Wilson Endowment:** (right photo) Justine Vadini (left), honored for her role in *As You Like It*, Charlotte (NC) Christian School; William Vaughan (right), honored for his role in *Scooter Thomas Makes It to the Top of the World*, Lexington (SC) High School.

Community Theatre Festival

Best Actress: (above left) Leslie Johnson, *The Trip to Bountiful*, Theatre 98, Fairhope, AL. **Best Actor:** (left) Adam Kampouris, *Equus*, Haywood Arts Regional Theatre, Waynesville, NC. **Runner-Up:** *The School for Wives*, presented by Venice (FL) Theatre; **Winners:** *Nine*, presented by Theatre A La Carte, Tallahassee, FL, and *Catfish Moon*, presented by Starkville Community Theatre, Starkville, MS. **Pictured above:** (left to right) Craig Pospisil, who presented a cash award to the winners on behalf of Dramatists Play Service, Inc.; runner-up director Murray Chase (Venice Little Theatre); winning directors Eric Hurst (Theatre A La Carte) and Kris Lee (Starkville Community Theatre); and Lynn Nelson, chair, SETC Community Theatre Division.



High School New Play Award

Jonathan Van Gils (right), honored for *Gavrillo*, with committee chair Todd Ristau.



Scholarship Award Winners: (clockwise from left) **Secondary School Scholarship:** Rachael Westmoreland (right), Savannah (GA) Arts Academy with committee chair Jesse Bates; **William E. Wilson Award:** Trish Grunz (right), St. Petersburg, FL, with committee chair David Giambone; **Leighton M. Ballew Directing Award:** Katie McHugh (right), Pensacola, FL, with committee chair Marc Powers; **Polly Holliday Award:** Laura Campbell, Georgetown, KY; **Robert Porterfield Scholarship Award:** Louisa Hill, Agnes Scott College, Atlanta, GA; **Marian Smith Award:** Amy A. Page, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (not pictured).

Design Competition Winners Recognized



Costume Design Awards, Sponsored in memory of Irene Smart Rains

Left photo-Undergraduate Winners: (left to right) **HM:** Jacqueline Martinez, *Electricidad*, Florida International University (FIU); **HM:** Rachel Filbeck, *The Scams of Scapin*, Harding University; **HM:** Pamela Wilcox, *An Enemy of the People*, Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU); **3rd:** Cailin Anderson, *Macbeth*, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU); **2nd:** Giovanni Velaquez, *Hamlet*, FIU; **1st:** Lauren Gaston, *All My Sons*, Wake Forest University. **Right photo-Graduate Winners:** (left to right) **HM:** Jill Wetzel, *She Stoops to Conquer*, Florida State University (FSU); **HM:** Kenann Quander, *Chicago*, VCU; **HM:** Kyra Beanland, *Flyin' West*, University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UT-Knoxville); **3rd:** Takashi Morimoto, *Macbeth*, University of Florida (UF); **2nd:** Elizabeth Aaron, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, UT-Knoxville; **1st:** Eric Abele, *The Triumph of Love*, UT-Knoxville. **Winner of Ready for Work Award, Sponsored by Hangar Theatre and SETC:** Eric Abele.



KEAP winners, shown at the SETC Awards Banquet with committee chair Chris Rich (second from right) are: (left to right) Kentrell Brazeal, Laura Hoffman, Faith Bynum and William Vaughan.

KEAP Winners Make Connections in Birmingham

"Being a KEAP kid was amazing.... The whole SETC experience made me truly happy I went." - Kentrell Brazeal

"I never thought I would see so many brilliant people that shared the same love as I do all in one place. It was an experience I will never get over." - Laura Hoffman

Since 2006, the Keynote Emerging Artist of Promise (KEAP) Award has brought deserving high school students to their first SETC Convention. These students are nominated by faculty based on academic progress, commitment to theatre and financial need.

This year KEAP recognized four students: Laura Hoffman, a senior at Vance High School in North Carolina, Kentrell Brazeal, a senior at Gulfport High School and Wings Performing Arts in Mississippi, William Vaughan, a senior at Lexington High School in South Carolina, and Faith Bynum, a sophomore at Corner High School in Alabama.

Their routine at the convention included workshops, productions, auditions and interviewing with colleges and universities. KEAP recipients got front-row seats for each keynote session and met personally with keynote speaker Beth Leavel.

It is always an honor to experience the talent of KEAP students. Exemplifying that, William Vaughan won Best Actor in the High School Festival for his work in *Scooter Thomas Makes It to the Top of the World*. For all of the KEAP recipients, the convention was a success in learning, networking and exploring directions to pursue.

A special thank you goes out to the faculty who nominated the students: Tonya Hays of Wings Performing Arts, Wendy Cheek of Vance High School, Mike Putnam of Corner High School, and Leslie Dellinger of Lexington High School.

More information:

www.setc.org/scholarship/index.php#keap

- Chris Rich, Chair, KEAP Committee



Lighting Design Awards, Sponsored by Electronic Theatre Controls

Left photo-Undergraduate Winners: (left to right) **HM:** Adam Groeninger, *An Enemy of the People*, IWU; **HM:** Corey Hastings, *The Glass Menagerie*, VCU; **2nd:** Greg Contreras, *Electricidad*, FIU; **1st:** Colin Scott, *The Shape of Things*, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). (Not pictured) **3rd:** Heather Mork, *Largo Desolato*, Towson University. **Right photo-Graduate Winners:** (left to right) **3rd:** Leigh Brown, *Street Scene*, UT-Knoxville; **2nd:** Jenn Trippie, *The Secret Rapture*, UT-Knoxville; **1st:** Catherine Girardi, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, UT-Knoxville. **Winner of Ready for Work Award, Sponsored by Vari*Lite and SETC:** Catherine Girardi.



Scene Design Awards, Sponsored by Sculptural Arts Coating

Left photo-Undergraduate Winners: (left to right) **HM:** Andrea Healey, *An Enemy of the People*, IWU; **3rd:** Christopher Parrish, *Holy Ghosts*, Florida School of the Arts (FloArts); **2nd:** Yamaris Salomon, *Electricidad*, FIU; **1st:** Sarah Muxlow, *The Shape of Things*, SCAD. **Right photo-Graduate Winners:** (left to right) **HM:** Jerome Wills, *Rocky Horror*, UF; **3rd:** Nathaniel Sinnott, *The Triumph of Love*, UT-Knoxville; **2nd:** Jenn Scheller, *The Cherry Orchard*, UF; **1st:** Mary Pingree, *The Secret Rapture*, UT-Knoxville. **Winner of Ready for Work Award, Sponsored by Hangar Theatre and SETC:** Jenn Scheller.



Technical/Crafts Awards, Sponsored by PatternMaker Software

Left photo: (left to right) **HM:** Christopher Parrish, *Loch Ness Monster*, FloArts; **3rd:** Cynthia Wontrop, *Magic Ball of Fun*, VCU; **1st:** Cailin Anderson, *Norfolk Corset*, VCU; **2nd:** Eric Abele, *T-Rex Puppet*, UT-Knoxville.

SETC Professional Companies Discuss Tough Economy, Offer Tips

by Rob Taylor

How has the crisis on Wall Street affected those of us on 42nd Street?

At this year's convention in Birmingham and afterward via e-mail, SETC surveyed a cross-section of professional member companies on how the economy has affected them and their future plans. We found that, although there is plenty of worry about the continuing downturn, most member companies have weathered the initial storm fairly well and are planning effectively for the long haul. Some also have found innovative ways to cut costs, which they share on these pages.

Ticket Sales/Subscriptions

Sixteen of the companies surveyed reported that they have seen a drop in single-ticket sales. Most of those whose seasons have yet to begin are planning for similar declines.

However, some say subscriptions seem to be holding strong, with Arundel Barn Playhouse in Maine expecting that subscriptions will "probably hold steady" and Utah Shakespearean Festival seeing numbers "in line with projections."

At Cortland Repertory Theatre, a summer theatre in New York, Producing Artistic Director Kerby Thompson says subscriptions have been healthy so far. "In fact Early Bird Subscriptions are way up (which may be a reason – people buying the season at the cheaper price before we announce the shows)," he says.

Sponsorships and Donations

Many theatres say individual donations are trending lower. However, fundraising drives are meeting with some success. Jacque Wheeler at Peach State Summer Theatre in Georgia was "pleasantly surprised" at the success of a fall fundraiser that brought in \$9,000.

Even better news comes from Theatre West Virginia, which faced closing if it could not raise a substantial sum.

"So that we could actually have a season, our goal was to raise \$100,000," says Marina Hunley, "and we raised \$138,000."

However, many corporations are significantly cutting or eliminating their support for the arts. Even as this occurs, "others have come in for sponsorship in trade – a local

paint store is a sponsor in trade for \$1,000 in paint, rather than cash, which helps a great deal," says Thompson of Cortland Theatre.

Expected cutbacks in funding from state and county agencies are worrying some theatres, including the Virginia Shakespeare Festival in Williamsburg.

"We are anticipating our funding from county and state arts agencies to be half or less than we've seen before," says Christopher Owens of Virginia Shakespeare Festival.

Competition is up for what few dollars there are.

"There are just more hands reaching for a piece of the funding pie," says Orlando Shakespeare Theater's George Hamrah. "When you apply for a grant, there is simply more competition than there used to be. It sounds harsh, but one of the consequences we will see is a thinning of the herd. If your business is sound, then artistic choices are easier, but there are groups out there getting some of the limited funding that don't spend it well."

Credit availability also is tightening. Reports about the recent closure of Mill Mountain Theatre in Roanoke, VA, suggest that a major factor in their decision to close was an inability to get forgiveness of debts that may have approached \$750,000. Of those creditors, Wachovia alone was apparently owed a quarter of a million dollars in 2006-07 and, in the current financial climate, patience over debts is in short supply.

None of the surveyed member companies seems to be under the same duress that Mill Mountain faced. With effective planning and available cash reserves, many have been able to make their way through the initial economic assault and plan effectively for the future.

"We've been on an upswing in recent years, but now we're planning on moving towards more of a holding pattern," says Nathan Baynard, general manager of New York Stage and Film. "We have to budget for lower box office revenues, and growth has definitely slowed. Plans for our 25th season have had to be scaled back to absorb costs and we're projecting for less growth than we've been seeing, but generally we're doing OK."

Staffing and Layoffs

Only four of the surveyed companies are reporting layoffs, but almost half have some sort of hiring freeze in effect or are hiring fewer people. A popular solution to staffing among several of the surveyed companies is distributing the duties of a departing staff member among the remaining staff.

In what might be one of the brightest pieces of news coming out of the survey, staff retention seems to be up. Lance Heal of Cedar Point Live Entertainment in Ohio reports a retention rate of around 80 percent compared to 35 percent in past years.

Voluntary, rather than forced, pay cuts also seem to be a popular option, with 12 of the interviewed companies reporting some kind of lowering of wages, mostly voluntary. At Cumberland County Playhouse in Tennessee, some of the administrative staff have opted for a four-day week. A few dollars taken out of paychecks seems a small price to pay for retention of jobs and continued survival of the company.

"Nobody wants to take that kind of action," says Matthew Trombetta of Weathervane Playhouse in Newark, OH. "But we love what we do, and it can make a huge difference to the company so most people are willing."

Hiring

Local hires are trending upward, with more than a third of those surveyed saying they are hiring more local performers.

"We have limited our Equity Guest Artist contracts to one instead of two," says Wheeler. "We are developing plans based on how we do this summer, but the first thing would be to cut the Equity positions altogether."

Some companies are looking at their own staff to perform jobs previously hired out.

"We are using more in-house designers and directors, including company members who have stepped up beautifully," says Crabtree of Cumberland County Playhouse.

Money-Saving Ideas

Virginia Shakespeare Festival has instituted an "adopt an actor" program, asking supporters to house an actor for the duration of his or her contract, to eliminate some of the housing costs.

The Williamsburg, VA-based company also provided one of the more innovative cost-saving measures we found during our survey – bringing in a previously produced show to cut costs. Owens had previously directed a show at another regional theatre and opted to bring in the same actors to remount the production.

"We can mount it on one week's rehearsal," explains Owens, "and it saves us about \$20,000."



Matthew Trombetta



Jacque Wheeler

Triad Stage in Greensboro, NC, has turned to the public domain to save money.

"We replaced a production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* with a public domain production of Moliere's *Tartuffe*," explains Richard Whittington, managing director. "The overall savings came to approximately \$35,000."

Seasonal changes are another way that companies are saving dollars. Triad Stage has reduced its mainstage season from six plays and a holiday show to five plays and a holiday show.

Some theatres are also choosing more small-cast plays for upcoming seasons.

"Cast size influences me now," says Adrienne Grant, owner of Arundel Barn Playhouse, "whereas before it didn't."

Patrick Mullins at Virginia Stage also has lowered cast size: "Our shows next season do have a lower actor count per show."

Companies also are cutting budgets to save money.

"We have been cost-cutting since early 2008, cutting expenses by \$415,000 that year in which five productions came out of the warehouse," says Crabtree of Cumberland County Playhouse. "We're on our way to cutting another \$200,000-300,000 this year."

In addition, Cumberland is looking for ways to make extra money and be "green" in how it uses items in-house.

"We're aggressively marketing our scenic and costume rentals and adaptively reusing our entire rental stock in order to mount our own in-house season," Crabtree says.

Not every theatre, however, is in the same boat. "We've lowered our administrative budget," says Marion Waggoner at the *Tecumseh!* outdoor drama in Ohio, "but the production budget has actually increased."

Audience-Boosting ideas

Some theatres are turning to more commercial offerings to attract audiences.

"Escapism sells," says Heal of Cedar Point. "Right now might not be the best time to try and make an artistic statement unless it's particularly poignant for our time."

One idea that seems to be gaining momentum is developing stronger community relations, whether with audiences, vendors, advertisers or other local theatres.

"We have concentrated on reminding people what we mean to the community and the economic impact we have from our tourist base," says Hunley.

North Carolina Stage Company in Asheville, NC, has helped develop cross-company cooperation with eight other area organizations.

"We are not in competition as much as you might think," says artistic director Charlie Flynn-Mclver. "In comparing mailing lists with

other local companies, there are around 8,000 names. We found only four hundred duplicates. It shows that there is a market for all of us to tap into."

Highlands Playhouse in North Carolina has worked to cement local relationships by decreasing its advertising prices.

"We've lowered our advertising scale for local advertisers," explains Highlands Playhouse's Jeremy Miller. "It just makes sense to build goodwill with local businesses if we want their support in return."

Special Ticket Deals

NC Stage has achieved success with its "recession-proof ticket sale." For a two-week period, the theatre cut all ticket prices for a production by 30%. Advance ticket sales climbed 435% over previous shows, attracting many new patrons. Financial projections for the show were met by the second week of performances.

NC Stage has also found success with ticket discounts through Facebook.

Fund-Raising Idea

Thompson of Cortland Theatre suggests a raffle: "Our Board of Directors is conducting a 'Winter Getaway Raffle' with a local travel agency (six days in London, \$25 per ticket, and we are only selling 1,000 tickets). Response has been great to this so far (and the summer hasn't even started), and we aim to raise \$20,000 with this."

Hope for an Earlier Time

This spring, as *The Lost Colony* in Manteo faced the possibility of funding cuts, Executive Director Carl V. Curnutte III found hope in the play's own story about colonists' triumph over adversity and in how the outdoor drama came to be in the first place. He notes that it was in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, that "the outdoor drama based on the colony's disappearance was started to spark the local economy."

With tough times upon the country again, he notes, "This is a time to come together, form partnerships, roll up our sleeves and take that step forward with assurance that, if we stumble, our neighbors will pick us up, and if we lose our hope, someone in the community will share theirs."



Charlie Flynn-Mclver



Carl V. Curnutte III

SETC ENDOWMENT NEWS

Recent Endowment Contributors

Jerry Bangham	Elaine Malone
Edward Herman	Ginger Willis
Lang Reynolds	Patrick Davis
Mary Lynn Bates	Jennifer Matthews
Teresa Lee	David Wohl
Chris Rich	Janet Gray
Jesse Bates	Clarence Merriles
Don Loeffler	Duke Guthrie
Dean Slusser	Mike Murphy
Stephen Bayless	Anthony Haigh
Russell Luke	Robert Osei-Wusu
Dennis Wemm	Denise Halbach
Hallie Bradley	Scott Parker
Richard McLeod	Annie-Laurie Wheat
Edith Carnley	

All those that contributed to our Endowment Fund by purchasing T-shirts and lanyards or by participating in the silent auction.

New Scholarship Announced

Thank you to Past President Denise Halbach for initiating a new scholarship for performers.

President's Visionary Initiative Raises \$1,000 for Endowment

by Glen Gourley
Immediate Past President

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the President's Visionary Initiative, a fundraiser that encouraged donations to the SETC Endowment by officers and the board. The following individuals made contributions totaling \$1,000 to various funds that are part of the SETC Endowment. Listed with each contributor's name in parentheses is the individual(s) being honored by the contribution:

General Fund: David Thompson (Herman Thompson), Beth Harvey, Duke Guthrie, Anonymous (Vickie Pennington), Jon R. Moses, Michael P. Howley, Kimberley Kemp (Churchill Clark), Lynn Nelson, Dennis Wemm (Emily Wemm), April J. C. Marshall (Betsey Baun), Freddy Clements (Liz Hopper), Matthew Fuller (Randy McMulle), Melissa Shafer (Daryl Frank), Paul B. Crook, Alan Litsey (Eldon Hunt), John Spiegel (Tom Behm), Lesley Preston, Keith Hight (Jessica Ferguson). **Halbach Scholarship:** Dawn Larsen (Kurt Larsen), April Daras (John Degen), Tom Booth, Samuel Sparks (Denise Halbach), Ward Harbauer, Jack Benjamin (Kathy Benjamin), Denise Halbach (students), M. J. Etua, Richard Cuwa (Chip Egan), David Hawkins. **Keynote Emerging Artists of Promise:** Leslie Dellinger, Chris Rich (Josiah Shores), Ginger A. Willis (students), Anthony Haigh. **Wilson Scholarship:** David & Lindsey Giambone (Lee Deal). **Secondary School Scholarship:** Stephen Bayless (Ralph & Helen Bayless), Bill Murray.



Southeastern Theatre Conference
P.O. Box 9868
Greensboro, NC 27429-0868

SETC NEWS

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 GREENSBORO, NC
 AUTO
 PERMIT NO. 744

Look for the Next **SETC News** in Your E-mail Inbox!

Effective with the next issue, *SETC News* will no longer be mailed to you. Instead, it will be sent via e-mail as a PDF attachment that can be read using free Acrobat Reader software. You also can print out the newsletter to read at your leisure or post at your school or theatre. See story, Page 3, for more details.

Page 8

Share Stories and Ideas with Colleagues in Lexington

"Theatre will always be around. There are two kinds of people in the world: those who want to tell stories and those who want to have their stories told."

I heard those words backstage many years ago from a seasoned regional theatre actor, and the words still resonate today. As members of SETC, we are a distinctive community of storytellers! We unite across generations to nurture and share the art form, as well as celebrate our connection at convention.

It's time for us to begin planning our gathering in March 2010! And storytellers, no matter what area of theatre you are in, we are eager to receive your program

proposals.

Please remember:

- Contact all those who will be presenters in your workshop or program before sending in your proposal.
- Access to AV equipment is limited to image-specific workshops, such as theatre history or certain technical theatre presentations. Primarily, we come to SETC to participate in hands-on experiences.
- Send your proposal as early as possible. The fall priority deadline is September 15.
- If you don't get a reply on your proposal, call us. Some colleges and university servers block SETC correspondence.

Do you have other ideas for Lexington? Please e-mail me at alan@setc.org. See you at the 2010 SETC Convention in Lexington, KY. After all, we have many more stories to tell!

From the
President-Elect

Alan
Litsey



SETC 2010

Lexington, KY

March 3-7

Where to Send News

SETC News is published bimonthly for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. Deadline for the next issue is June 1.

Please send news items to:

Deanna Thompson, Editor

E-mail: Deanna@setc.org

Phone: 336-292-6041

or to:

Southeastern Theatre Conference

P.O. Box 9868

Greensboro, NC 27429-0868

Phone: 336-272-3645

Fax: 336-272-8810

E-mail: setc@setc.org

Web site: www.setc.org

How to Propose a Program

Program proposal forms for the 2010 SETC Convention are at www.setc.org. Download a form, and send your proposal as soon as possible to program chair Alan Litsey at alan@setc.org.