Join Us for Food, Fun and Inspiration in Louisville

Barbara Sexton Smith, Nationally-Known Speaker and Arts Fundraiser, Shares Insights at Friday Lunch

“Together through the Arts we create a great American city!”

Barbara Sexton Smith, President and CEO of Fund for the Arts, an umbrella organization for Louisville area arts groups and programs, will discuss Louisville’s support for the arts in a Friday luncheon speech at the 2013 SETC Convention. In 2012, as many similar arts organizations struggled to raise money, Fund for the Arts raised 11 percent more than the previous year.

In addition to blazing new trails as a fundraiser, businesswoman, entrepreneur and advocate for the arts, Sexton Smith is an inspirational speaker. Marilee Hebert Miller, vice president of communications for Children’s Theatre Foundation of America (CTFA), says Sexton Smith mesmerized attendees when she spoke at a CTFA gathering after receiving the group’s Corey Medallion Award.

“Put down your 5-Hour Energy Drink and get a lasting dose of focus and energy from hearing Barbara Sexton Smith’s interesting story about how she and the Fund for the Arts have forged a bond with a community that loves the arts and gives to support that love,” says Hebert Miller. “Her practical enthusiasm helps listeners find their own energy. She is a business person who truly believes in the value of the arts.”

Asked to share her most important message for those involved in theatre, Sexton said: “When we step onto the stage, the most important thing we must remember is to be passionate. People follow passionate people. You will find your passion at the intersection of your heart’s desire and the world’s hunger.”

Tickets for the Friday, March 8 luncheon are $20. The price includes lunch, Sexton Smith’s presentation and a chance to win door prizes from SETC’s 10 state organizations. For details, visit www.setc.org/social-networking-events-convention.

Don’t Miss These Master Class Opportunities in Louisville

ACTING FOR THE CAMERA
Presenter: Anthony Abeson, assisted by Joan See.
$50 (25 participants max). Pre-registration required.
Friday, March 8, 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. or 4:45 - 6:45 p.m.
NYC acting teacher and coach helps you prepare to make the leap from stage to screen. This class is not about tricks, but solid techniques actors and directors use to get the best performance on film.

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE
Presenter: Sarah Barker
Workshop included in convention registration.
For professionals/professors: Wed., March 6, 5:30 - 7 p.m.
For students: Thurs., March 7, 1 - 2:15 p.m.
Nationally recognized leader in movement training leads exploratory exercises based on principles of the Alexander Technique. Bring a prepared monologue to work on if you wish.

AUDITIONING FOR POP-ROCK MUSICALS
Presenter: V.P. Boyle
Workshop included in convention registration.
Thursday, March 7, 10:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Top Broadway audition coach shares insights on casting and vocal challenges for students and educators in training for rock musicals on Broadway. Focus is on tips for this genre, which differs from standard musical theatre.

More info: www.setc.org/master-classes-convention-submenu

What’s Inside

Behind the Scenes at Job Contact .... Page 2
Professional Corner ......................... Page 3
State Convention Reports ............... Page 4
Announcing Mobile for 2014 .......... Page 6
Special Deal: Theatre in Louisville .... Page 6
Join SETC’s Social Media Team ....... Page 7
Casting, Race and First Amendment ... Page 8

ALL ABOARD! 2013 GALA DINNER, AWARDS CEREMONY AND DANCE
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, March 9, 2013
Tickets: $30
Enjoy an evening with your friends at the end-of-convention banquet, awards ceremony and celebration dance!
SETC’s 2012 ‘Ready for Work’ Winners Design Shows

Jeffrey Kmiec and J. Theresa Bush, the 2012 winners of SETC’s Ready for Work Award, are both designing shows that will open this spring.

Kmiec is designing the set for The Red Badge of Courage, opening March 1 at Children’s Theatre of Charlotte. The classic tale has been reinvented as a musical using hip-hop to tell the story.

“We have had a preliminary design meeting, and I am excited about what he has brought to the table,” says Brenda Arko, Children’s Theatre of Charlotte production manager. “His design brings a fresh spin to the new way this classical story is being told.”

Kmiec, who works as an assistant and a designer in the Chicago area, says, “The staff at the Children’s Theatre of Charlotte are, by far, some of the most professional, supportive, and creative theatre practitioners with whom I have had the pleasure of working. Together, I think we are creating a very exciting production that will tell a classic story in a new and exciting way. I am grateful for the opportunity SETC has given me to work with this fantastic group of people.”

Bush will begin work on designing costumes for Romeo and Juliet at The Warehouse Theatre in Greenville, SC, soon.

Meet Connie Smith, Volunteer JCS Assistant at Convention

If you are an offstage employee looking for a position or a company representative hiring workers through Job Contact Service at the SETC Convention in Louisville, KY, Connie Smith is a name you should know.

As one of the unsung heroes who volunteer at the SETC Convention, Smith will be toiling from dawn to dark to help workers and employers connect. She has assisted every year since 2002 with Job Contact Service (JCS), SETC’s job fair linking job seekers with employers offering offstage positions.

“I arrive on Monday of convention week and work straight through until after banquet on Saturday night,” Smith says. “A typical day is easily 14 hours if everything has gone smoothly – and we love those days!”

She begins by assisting with the physical set-up of JCS and then helps train and schedule other volunteers. Once JCS opens, Smith turns her attention to managing this area of the convention with the help of the Job Squad, a team of experienced JCS volunteers – all working under the direction of April J’C Marshall, SETC’s Professional Theatre Services Manager.

“We do everything we can to help people seeking theatre jobs be as successful as they can be at convention,” Smith says. “We also work very hard to help ensure the companies come away feeling like this is the best place to find great talent.”

Smith went through JCS herself while a student at Auburn University. She developed an appreciation for the services SETC provides through her professor, Lynn Lockrow.

“He was a firm believer in SETC, and there was just no way to be his student and not incorporate SETC into your being,” she says.

Now the director of technical theatre at Chipola College Center for the Arts in Marianna, FL, Smith follows in Lockrow’s footsteps, bringing students from her school to the convention to learn about SETC and assist with JCS.

Workshop: Learn How to Get the Most out of Job Contact Service

Connie Smith presents an annual workshop on navigating Job Contact Service at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the SETC Convention. In addition to providing general info, it also gives participants an opportunity to have their resumes reviewed by representatives of professional theatre companies hiring at the convention. “What better feedback can you get on your resume than from the actual people that may or may not want to hire you?” says Smith. For details, look in your program for the workshop, “Job Contact/Production Resume Review.”

How Can You Win a 2013 Ready for Work Award?

First, you must be a graduate design student. Second, you must enter the SETC Design Competition. Finally, you must wow the companies offering the work experience! Two designers participating in the Graduate Design Competition will be selected for SETC’s 2013 Ready for Work Award. Each will receive a monetary award and a work opportunity at Triad Stage in Greensboro, NC, or a second theatre to be announced. There are no special application forms or fees. Winners will be chosen from all graduate entrants.

Don’t Miss SETC’s Stage Management Olympics in Louisville

The first annual SETC Stage Management Olympics will be held from 9:30 to 11 p.m. Thursday, March 7, 2013, at the SETC Convention in Louisville, KY. Student stage managers are invited to compete in a round-robin of timed events that include writing cues, recording blocking, taking line notes, tapping a plan and checking presets. The top three competitors will advance to a final round. The winner receives a one-year subscription to VirtualCallboard. Look for details soon at www.setc.org/design-competition-convention.

Behind the Scenes at the SETC Convention

Connie Smith (second from left) poses with April J’C Marshall (second from right), SETC’s professional theatre services manager, and two members of the 2012 Job Squad, Kenan Burchett (left) and Andrew Turner (right).

Year after year, Smith keeps coming back to JCS as a volunteer because she enjoys making a difference for the job seekers and company representatives.

“I love working for Job Contact Service because it’s dedicated to making the best possible connections between theatre companies and theatre artisans,” she says. “I truly believe what we do is important work for the theatre. Hopefully we are contributing in our own small way to sustaining this art we all love so much.”
‘Don’t Be Afraid to Be Yourself’

Michael Stiggers was recently chosen as one of three worldwide finalists for “Male Performer of the Year” in the Brass Ring Awards presented by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA). You can see Michael’s submission video here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t-pXGtXR58&feature=youtu.be.

In 2012, Michael performed as a featured vocalist and singer/dancer in two productions with Matt Davenport Productions (MDP): A Rockin’ Music Box Christmas and Rock the Jukebox. He was also show captain for Jukebox. According to Michael, “The show is very high-energy and high-spirited, and we’re having fun. It gives us a chance to bring our own artistry.”

Michael’s advice to auditionees: “Don’t be afraid to be yourself. Go in with confidence and know that everybody is on your side and wants you to do well. Talk to people, network and be open. Dive in headfirst. You never know what opportunities it can lead to and what doors can open for you.”

Michael says SETC auditions are “a good opportunity to be seen by a lot of companies and people at one time. My first time auditioning at SETC, I received 22 callbacks. I met the folks from MDP and established a relationship. Nothing beats that experience.”

Hiring through SETC: Matt Davenport Productions

“SETC tops the list as a premium resource for talent.” - Matt Davenport, Founder and President

SETC had an opportunity this past fall to catch up with Matt Davenport Productions. Below are excerpts of the interview.

Matt Davenport Productions (MDP) is a Southeastern success story. Company founder Matt Davenport is a native of North Carolina and a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University. Matt began his career as a singer at the legendary Opryland USA and eventually was hired as a staff writer/director for the famed live entertainment theme park.

Tell us about your company.

Founded in 1992, Matt Davenport Productions has created and produced hundreds of shows. It now has reached the top echelon of live entertainment production companies, offering complete turn-key entertainment services. MDP’s slogan is “Serious. Fun!” which encapsulates the conviction that work is play and cast is family. We encourage excellence and healthy relationships on the stage and in the board room. The focus is on creating entertainment that connects with audiences – accessible subject matter, delivered in unexpected ways. Alumni of MDP shows can currently be seen on Broadway and in national tours, including Rock of Ages, Catch Me If You Can, The Rockettes, Godspell and The Book of Mormon.

What opportunities does MDP offer performers and technicians?

We take particular pride in providing “the first job” for hundreds of professional performers and educators, many of them first discovered at SETC auditions, which MDP attends every year. In 2013, MDP will be casting for Hersheypark, Holiday World and Sea World, as well as national tours, Halloween shows and Christmas productions. MDP hires nearly 200 performers and technicians each year for summer and seasonal work.

What type of facility does MDP have?

MDP is housed in a state-of-the-art office and production facility just north of Nashville, TN. The permanent in-house staff includes writers, directors, designers, choreographers and producers. The 15,000-square-foot facility features two rehearsal spaces and a 4,000-square-foot scenic studio.

What type of shows do you produce?

MDP productions are family-friendly shows with high production values. Productions range from 25-minute, high-energy theme park productions to two-hour book shows.

For more information: www.mattdavenportproductions.com
States Report on Annual Conventions;

ALABAMA
Conference of Theatre

Number attending: 212 (College and University Festival); 205 (Community Theatre Festival); 2,200 (students in Walter Trumbauer Secondary Theatre Festival).

Winners of Community Theatre Festival: Living Together, Theatre Downtown, Birmingham, AL; Sylvia, South City Theatre, Birmingham, AL.

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: The Servant of Two Masters, Spain Park High School, Hoover, AL; The Perfect Ending, Bob Jones High School, Madison, AL.

Idea to Share: Add Respondents to Give Immediate Feedback. This year we incorporated two respondents for College University Festival/SETC screening auditions who gave immediate feedback, allowing judges to focus on numbers rather than written commentary. We finished in record time, and the response from auditioning actors was very appreciative and positive. Thanks to Jeff Ingman, West Virginia state rep, for the great idea!

Neil David Seibel
State Representative

GEORGIA
Theatre Association

Number attending: 1,100.

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: Exits and Entrances, Sumter Players, Americus, GA.

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: Pippin, Milton High School, Milton, GA; The Laramie Project, Savannah Country Day School, Savannah, GA.

Idea to Share: Require Adjudicator Training. The Georgia Theatre Conference has partnered with the Georgia High School Association in a new initiative to require training for all one-act play judges in GHSA competitions. This four-year project stems from adjudicator training workshops offered at GTC conventions since 2007. The program is based on training led by longtime SETC participant James Dodding in the 1990s. Dodding was a regular guest artist at Wake Forest University at the time and served as trainer and adjudicator at SETC Conventions. Beginning this year, all judges at the state level were required to complete the training process. By 2015, all judges at region, sub-region and state competitions will be required to go through the process. Annual conventions of GTC and Georgia Thespians will include training opportunities. Organizers see this training program as a first step toward improving the competition process for students and directors across the state.

Dean Slusser
State Representative

FLORIDA
Theatre Association

Number attending: 1,500.

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: Golda’s Balcony, Theatre Winter Haven, Winter Haven, FL.

Winners of High School Theatre Festivals: Kosher Lutherans, Ft. Walton Beach High School, Ft. Walton Beach, FL; Dancing at Lughnasa, Dr. Phillips High School, Orlando, FL.

Idea to Share: Create More Performing Opportunities for Attendees. The “Florida Has Talent” competition continues to prove invaluable as another performance opportunity for all divisions.

Donna White
State Representative

KENTUCKY
Theatre Association

Number attending: 638.

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: The Laramie Project, Hardin County Playhouse, Elizabethtown, KY; Greater Tun, Artists Collaborative Theatre, Elkhorn City, KY.

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: Macbeth: The Essential Action, Youth Performing Arts School, Louisville, KY; Among Friends and Clutter, Owensboro High School, Owensboro, KY.

Angie Hays
State Representative

NORTH CAROLINA
Theatre Conference

Number attending: 1,500 (attending three events: NCTC high school play festival, College Discovery Day and SETC screening auditions).

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: NCTC does not host a community theatre festival.

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: Down Came the Rain, Kings Mountain High School, Kings Mountain, NC; Leaving Iowa, Weaver Academy, Greensboro, NC.

Idea to Share: Encourage Student Festival Interest and Principal Awareness through Innovative Programs. NCTC produced nine regional play festivals in 2012, with a total of 116 plays. The top two plays from each regional site advanced to the state festival. This year, we introduced new awards for Student Design and Production (teacher-nominated and sponsored by Barbizon Lighting), adjusted our festival schedules to give schools a better opportunity to see the performances before and after theirs, presented College Discovery Day scholarships to the winners of the Outstanding Acting and Design and Edith Piaf’s Golden Braid.
Share Festival Winners, Innovative Ideas

Production Awards, and introduced “Cast Your Vote.” In “Cast Your Vote,” schools that attended their entire two-day festival were permitted to cast a group vote for one of the Distinguished Plays (they could not vote for their own shows). This exciting new process encouraged students to watch all of the plays and take an active role in evaluation. After the festival, congratulatory e-mails were sent to principals of participating schools, highlighting their theatre departments’ awards and making the connections between the NCTC Festival and the North Carolina Essential Standards for Theatre Arts Education.

Angie Hays
Executive Director

SOUTH CAROLINA Theatre Association

Number attending: 665.

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: Stitches, Greenwood Community Theatre, Greenwood, SC.

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: The Comedy of Errors, Woodmont High School, Piedmont, SC; Talley’s Folly, Richland North East High School, Columbia, SC.

Idea to Share: Add Events Geared to High School Students. This year’s efforts were focused on enhancing the convention experience for our high school attendees. We added a flash mob competition in which schools came prepared with 60- to 90-second cuts of music. They performed them throughout the convention weekend and awards were given. The convention also added social events such as a cookie social and a dance mixer. We also held an open mic night, which was presented before a panel of casting agents and audition experts.

Harry Culpepper Jr.
State Representative

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: 1st: Place: The Elephant Man, Montgomery Bell Academy, Nashville, TN. Runner-up: The Yellow Boat, White Station High School, Memphis, TN.

Idea to Share: Use One Audition for State Scholarship Competition and College Entrance/Scholarships. TTA has always awarded scholarship money to one or two high school seniors who are attending a Tennessee college or university and majoring in theatre. They go through an audition/interview process. In front of a board of adjudicators, performance students perform a monologue and design students share their portfolios. We generally select one winner in each category. In 2010, however, we began combining this audition/interview process with college auditions. Now theatre professors sit in on the same auditions, and students are simultaneously auditioning not only for TTA scholarship money, but also for entrance into theatre programs and for possible scholarship money from individual colleges – all of this for one small fee and in one process.

Anna Filippo
Executive Director

WEST VIRGINIA Theatre Conference

Number attending: Several organizations (West Virginia Community Theatre Festival); 75 (West Virginia High School Theatre Festival); 144 (Screening Auditions).

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: 1st Place: Tuesdays with Morrie, Actors Guild of Parkersburg, Parkersburg, WV. Runner-up: Godspell, Lewis County Theatrical Group, Weston, WV.

Idea to Share: Consider New Ways to Attract Participants. The WVTC team is taking a proactive step toward recruiting high schools and community theatres to increase participation at next year’s event. Each event went very well (individually) but our numbers were way down for the screening auditions this year. As the Auditions Coordinator, I am taking aim at the schools who have participated and continue to participate to get an even better idea of how the professional screening auditions, West Virginia Theater Conference and SETC can provide the best experience for their schools and the individual students who represent them. Weather problems were an issue this year for us. Therefore, one of our discussion points will be the possibility of using audition tapes or skype auditions at screening auditions.

Jeffrey Ingman
State Representative/Auditions Coordinator

VIRGINIA Theatre Association

Number Attending: 1,600 (annual conference); 300 (Young People’s Theatre Festival); 30 (Community Theatre Festival).

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: A Trilogy: The Lilac Ticket, Assisted Living, The Reaper, Stage Door Productions, Fredericksburg, VA.

Winners of High School Theatre Festival: 1st Place: The Hothouse, Westfield High School, Chantilly, VA. Runner-up: Tough, York County School of the Arts, Williamsburg, VA.

Idea to Share: Offer an Original Play Competition and a Tech Olympics. We began our first original play competition this year. It was well-received, and we had several outstanding offerings. We will continue this in the future. We maintain a Technical Olympics at the festival that has grown in size. We now have a waiting list for spots on the teams.

Mike Hudson
State Representative

TENNESSEE Theatre Association

Number attending: Approximately 400.

Winner of Community Theatre Festival: The 39 Steps, Chattanooga Theatre Center, Chattanooga, TN.

Idea to Share: Offer a Tech Olympics. The Tech Olympics are a must for this festival. The students take part very seriously, and they enjoy the competition.

Mike Hudson
State Representative

Look for Mississippi’s state report in the March/April issue of SETC News.
lease take a few minutes to review SETC's proposed slate of officers for 2013-14. The officers pictured above and the Nominations Committee members pictured at left will be presented for a vote by SETC's membership at the annual SETC Business Meeting at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9, 2013, immediately preceding the Distinguished Career Award winner's keynote address in Grand Ballroom H in The Galt House. For more details on these individuals, visit www.setc.org/news-convention.

Ark your calendar for the 65th annual SETC Convention In Mobile, AL, March 5 - 9, 2014. Come a little early and celebrate Mardi Gras with the city! Fat Tuesday is March 4. Or plan to arrive early in the day on Wednesday to enjoy the revitalized downtown and some great regional cooking, as well as SETC's opening night events.

Program locations and hotels are within a seven-block area in a very walkable cityscape. Most events will take place at the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center on the riverfront and the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel, connected via a skywalk. The High School Theatre Festival will be at the Mobile Civic Center, a 15-minute walk from the convention center and just a couple minutes' walk from several of the hotels. Resolved hotels are all within walking distance of the convention center. However, if you prefer to drive, the convention center offers parking for $5 a day. Look for more information to follow.

**Take a sneak peak at our host city for 2014!**

Start with an overview of Mobile at [www.mobile.org](http://www.mobile.org)
Then zero in on some of our venues:
- Convention Center: [www.mobileconventions.com](http://www.mobileconventions.com)

**Cast Your Vote for New Officers at the SETC Convention in Louisville**

**2013-14 Slate of Officers**

- **President**
  - Jack Benjamin
- **Programming VP**
  - Tiza Garland
- **Administrative VP**
  - Steve Bayless
- **Secretary**
  - Lynn Nelson
- **Treasurer**
  - H. Duke Guthrie
- **Past President**
  - Chip Egan

**2013-14 Nominating Committee**

- **President**
  - Jack Benjamin
- **VP**
  - Tony Haigh
- **Secretary**
  - Lynn Nelson
- **Treasurer**
  - H. Duke Guthrie
- **Past President**
  - Chip Egan

Bylaws Change Proposed, Vote at SETC Convention

The following bylaws change will be presented for members’ approval at the annual SETC Business Meeting at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, March 9, 2013, at the SETC Convention in Louisville, KY. The motion to the membership is “to amend Bylaws Article V Section 5 (2) by replacing the word ‘maintain’ with the phrase ‘verify the maintenance of’ in describing the duties of the Treasurer.” Consistent with SETC’s Bylaws, this revision has been reviewed by the Bylaws Committee, approved by the Executive Committee, approved by the Board of Directors and now requires approval by the general membership at the annual business meeting for passage.

To see the rationale behind the proposed new language, visit [www.setc.org/images/Board_of_Directors/Bylaws_Amendment_March_2013.pdf](http://www.setc.org/images/Board_of_Directors/Bylaws_Amendment_March_2013.pdf). Questions? Contact David Thompson, Bylaws Committee chair, at dthompson@agnesscott.edu.

**Endowment Contributions**

Thanks to the following for contributions to the SETC Endowment: Donald Loeffler and Walter Shipley.
Enjoy Special Deals on Plays in Louisville

Would you like to sample some of Louisville’s thriving arts and culture scene during the SETC Convention in 2013? Two theatres are offering special discounts to SETC members.

**Derby Dinner Playhouse**

One of the oldest and largest continually operating professional dinner theatres in the country, will be presenting **Little Shop of Horrors during the SETC Convention.**

**Special offer for SETC members:** $30 ticket for dinner and **Little Shop of Horrors**, March 6 – 10. The Derby Dinner Playhouse is located just minutes from downtown Louisville. Mention SETC13 to receive discount. For reservations: 812-288-8281 or www.derbydinner.com.

**Actors Theatre of Louisville** will be hosting the **Humana Festival of New American Plays**, the premier theatrical event of its kind, during the SETC Convention.

**Special offer for SETC members:** $10 ticket to any Humana Festival production. To get your ticket, stop by the box office the day of the production and simply show your SETC name badge. A $1 historic landmark fee also will be added to each ticket’s cost. Limit 2 tickets per production, based on availability. More information: www.actorstheatre.org.


**Around the Region**

The 2013 **Region IV Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF)** will be held February 5 - 9, 2013 at Darton College in Albany, GA. More information: http://kcactf4.org.

Join the Conversation! Be Part of Social Media Team at 2013 SETC Convention

Judi Rossabi, SETC’s communications and marketing manager, is also SETC’s social media maven. She is planning social media activities at SETC’s 2013 annual convention in Louisville, KY, March 6-10, and she would like your help! She invites all of you Twitter aficionados to share this great event with others who love theatre as much as YOU. Do you tweet? Join the conversation online at #setcTweet.

Judi writes: “We are seeking volunteers for the 2013 Social Media Team in Louisville. If you are interested, please send an email to me at judi@setc.org.” If you tweet and want to be a part of the team, you will be listed in the Convention program.

Through social media, SETC seeks to provide a collage image of the events, activities and the people that make this convention our annual signature event. Now you can help generate excitement for all activities during Convention 2013 by joining the conversation on Twitter.

Have you “liked” SETC on Facebook? If not, Judi invites you to “like” us the next time you’re online. Look for the Southeastern Theatre Conference’s Facebook page and click “like.” You’ll receive regular updates before, during and after convention. Facebook posts will be generated throughout each day of the convention on a wide variety of events and offerings. Tweets also will be posted throughout each day, giving a “real-time” effect to the communication.

Here are some interesting social media stats, compiled by Cara Pring on The Social Skinny, September 2012: 40% of people spend more time socializing online than they do face-to-face (source: AllTwitter).

- Every minute of the day social media generates: 100,000 tweets; 684,478 pieces of content on Facebook; 48 hours of video uploaded to YouTube; and 3,600 photos on Instagram.

Contributor: Judi Rossabi, Communications and Marketing Manager

Don Wolfe is professor emeritus at Wake Forest University and a former SETC President. He can be reached at wolfe@wfu.edu.

**Q** What's the online **convention registration** deadline?

**A** Online registration for the 2012 SETC Convention, to be held March 6 - 10 in Louisville, KY, closes Jan. 28. Visit www.setc.org/register to sign up.

**Q** Is on-site registration available if I miss that deadline?

**A** Yes, you can complete walk-in registration on-site at the SETC Convention. However, you’ll pay a higher fee.

**Q** How can I reserve a **hotel** room?

**A** Visit www.setc.org/register to book an SETC discounted room at The Galt House, the official hotel and location of the 2013 SETC Convention.

**Q** Where can I get **food** fast at the convention?

**A** There are six restaurants in The Galt House hotel and several others in the downtown area. For a list of nearby restaurants, visit www.setc.org/images/Convention2013/Louisville_Good_Eats.pdf.
Commercial Theatre Is Theatre Symposium Focus

The 22nd annual Theatre Symposium event will focus on the theme “Broadway and Beyond: Commercial Theatre Considered.” The event will be held on the campus of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA, adjacent to Atlanta, during the weekend of April 5-7, 2013.

Stacy Wolf, professor of theatre at Princeton University will serve as keynote speaker. Wolf is the author of A Problem Like Maria and Changed for Good, and is widely recognized for her research concerning Broadway musicals and professional theatre.

“We are very fortunate to include Stacy Wolf, a scholar of considerable stature who applies research strategies to topics within mainstream popular culture,” said David Thompson, a Past President of SETC and editor of this edition of Theatre Symposium.

Proposals are being accepted through January 17 for paper presentations at the event. Papers that are presented are then considered for publication in SETC’s scholarly journal Theatre Symposium.

This year’s topic was chosen because of its relevance to people involved in many types of theatre.

“We wanted to appeal to multiple divisions within our organization and felt that this topic would generate interest from both scholars and artists,” Thompson said.

Information concerning Theatre Symposium may be found at www.setc.org/theatre-symposium. If you have questions, contact David Thompson at dthompson@agnesscott.edu.

Race Discrimination in Casting
Is It Protected Speech under First Amendment?

On Oct. 15, 2012, a U.S. District Court in Tennessee issued what purportedly is the only federal court decision directly addressing the “relationship between anti-discrimination laws and the First Amendment.” The named African-American plaintiffs in this class action suit auditioned for, but were not cast in, episodes of television’s The Bachelor or The Bachelorette. They alleged that throughout all 24 combined seasons, all of the bachelors and bachelorettes have been white and nearly all of the suitors have been white.

The plaintiffs alleged that the producers of the show feared controversy if an interracial romance ensued, were afraid of alienating a majority-white audience and that they have a message perpetuating racial stereotypes. The producers vehemently disagreed that this was their message; for purposes of this court proceeding, however, the court considers the allegations as if true.

The court granted the defendant/producer’s motion to dismiss and found that the First Amendment prevents the producers from being required to employ race-neutral criteria in their casting decisions. If you read the decision, keep in mind that, as a district court, it does not have precedential value (and might, in fact, be overruled on appeal). The decision does, however, give us our only insight to date on how a federal court looks at the issue.

You can read the court decision online at www.loeb.com/files/Publication/b2b59c69-2b72-4dee-bec3-2473404affb8/Presentation/PublicationAttachment/c5425177-89f0-4ea2-8f69-26e73e8932c8/Claybrooks%20v.%20ABC%20PDF.pdf.

Dan Ellison is a Durham, NC-based attorney who has concentrated on arts-related law and nonprofit law for 20 years and teaches a Legal Issues for the Performing Arts course at Duke University. He can be reached at ar-tandumuseumlaw@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 circumstance.