



CAVORT 2014 / Issue 2 / December 2013

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CAVORT 2014 Welcome from Syracuse Stage

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2014 CAVORT Conference. As producing artistic director of Syracuse Stage, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our theatre and our city.

This conference provides great opportunities to exchange ideas, meet new friends, and no doubt, share some “war” stories. I also hope you’ll find the time to enjoy some terrific theatre here at Syracuse Stage and have a chance to experience some of what Syracuse and Central New York have to offer.

Recently, we celebrated our 40th anniversary season. I’m proud to note that our volunteer Guild has been a vital part of each and every season. In fact, the Syracuse Stage Guild that serves us so well today actually has its origins in an organization that pre-dates the founding of our theatre. The tradition of volunteerism here is long and deep. I couldn’t agree more with our founding artistic director Arthur Storch when he said that “Syracuse Stage would not be the same without the Syracuse Stage Guild.” I am sure that is true for the theatres and organizations all of you represent.

Once again, on behalf of the entire Syracuse Stage staff and community, welcome! We hope you enjoy your stay as much as we enjoy having you here.



Timothy Bond
Producing Artistic Director, Syracuse Stage



Bright Ideas — More from CAVORT 2012 Conference

At the CAVORT 2012 Conference, three outstanding Bright Ideas were selected from the many presented. Ideas were evaluated by a committee of staff and volunteers from The Shaw Festival. The top winner was “Doggie Palooza” from Seattle Repertory Theatre in Washington, which was profiled in the previous newsletter. Runners-up, presented here, were the St. Louis Repertory Theatre in Missouri and Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester, Michigan.

Garden Apartments Renovation Project, from Repertory Theatre of St. Louis

Background — The Rep owns an apartment building, the Garden Apartments, within walking distance of the theatre, where actors, directors and designers live during rehearsals and the run of the play. The building was old and drab with a real need for updating. Actors sometimes referred to it as The Bates Motel.

The Rep’s volunteer group, Backers Volunteer Board (BVB) has held small fundraisers for the past few years to provide funds to help spruce up the apartments. The BVB worked closely with the Company Manager to make a small difference in the appearance of the apartments.

Description — A local magazine, At Home St. Louis, sponsors a community project each year. The magazine puts together a team of designers, contractors and donors to make a difference in the physical structures of local non-profit organizations. The BVB met with the magazine’s editor to present the needs of the Garden Apartments as a possible project. A plan to renovate five of the units was accepted as the magazine’s 2010 project.

Since the apartments are used almost year round, the only time to do renovations is in July. The magazine put together five teams to plan and design five units. Although months went into



planning, the actual work had to be done in the one-month period. Donations came from vendors, corporations, and individuals. The BVB gave \$5,000 to help the project. The entire project was directed by the theatre Company Manager and the Editor of the magazine.

Results — The public was invited to view the apartments for a fee of \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Around 200 attended. This small fundraiser helped to raise additional funds for the project.

At Home St. Louis featured a six page article, with photos, about the project in their 2010 November/December issue. With rave reviews from the theatre, visiting casts, and the public, the magazine offered to extend the project to 2011 and complete the renovations of the fourteen remaining apartments. Landscaping, and an updating of the laundry room would also be done. The BVB donated \$1,500 raised from small fundraisers, along with seed money provided by the theatre. Fourteen teams of designers and contractors were put together by the magazine, and donors were found to help with appliances, flooring, paint, furniture and such. Then At Home St. Louis once again did a spread about the renovations in their 2011 November/December issue.

Summary — The improvement in the apartments is amazing. We are sure the word has spread throughout the theatre world that The



Bright Ideas continued...

Rep is a more desirable place to work. In addition, the theatre received positive public exposure through coverage in the magazine, the tours of the apartments, and all the professionals who actually did the work.

Everyone associated with The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis feels pride in the updated and beautifully decorated Garden Apartments. We love to hear the reactions of the visiting cast when they see their "home away from home" for the first time.

Meadow Brook Theatre Cabaret, from Meadow Brook Theatre

Description — The cabaret is your basic variety show with volunteer performers, hosted by Artistic Director Travis Walter. Billy Konsoer, a performer in *BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO*, the spring musical two years ago, suggested a cabaret as a fund-raiser. The performers were the cast and crew. Last year, the cabaret featured performers who worked at Meadow Brook Theatre, past and present.

After the show, the performers mingle with the audience in the theatre and the lobby carrying hats from the costume shop to accept donations.

Keys to Success — The cabaret is scheduled on the third Saturday of the run of the spring musical. That performance begins at 6:00 so the cabaret begins around 8:00. The audience is, of course, invited to stay.



To publicize the show, Travis Walter mentions the cabaret show in his curtain speech before performances for several weeks before the date. It is posted on the Meadow Brook Theatre website and Facebook page. The performers also tell their friends.

Estimated Hours and Costs — Travis Walter usually spends five to seven hours coordinating the talent, posting the information and making sure the accompanist has all the music. There's a rehearsal on Friday afternoon before the performance; and, of course, the performance. The performers, lighting designer, sound designer, stage manager, accompanist and staff all volunteer the six to eight hours it takes to create and perform this show. Estimated costs are minimal.

Results — We raised \$1000 the first year and \$1200 the second. We should do even better this year because now Meadow Brook Theatre audiences expect the cabaret show.

— *Courtesy of Shaw Guild NOTL*

Have you renewed your CAVORT membership yet? It's easy, just turn to the inside back cover!

*This is your conference. What would you like to see?
Send conference ideas or newsletter suggestions to the editor.*



CAVORT Board of Directors Meets in Syracuse

On October 25 and 26, the CAVORT Board met in Syracuse for its annual meeting. Attending were: Terry Delavan, President; Wendy Ledford, Vice President/Nominating; Suzanne Mercer, Treasurer; Patti Slagle, Secretary; Sue Barley, Past President; Charmian Entine, Past Conference Chair; Carol Reid, Suzanne Hebert and Peter Gill, Past Conference Reps; Lynne Bush, Member-at-Large; Barbara Nichols, CAVORT Historian; Patrick Oliva, By-Laws; and Judi Rabel and Linda Vandivort, Membership. Also attending were Syracuse Conference Reps, Linda Pitonzo, Sara Lowengard and Gretchen Goldstein.

Hosted by the Syracuse Stage Guild and Syracuse Stage, the Board first attended the opening night dinner and performance of *Scorched*, presented by Syracuse Stage. The Friday night play was followed by an after-show party where everyone mingled with the cast. On Saturday, the Board got down to the business of CAVORT. At noon, lunch was sponsored by the Syracuse Stage Guild.

It was an intense weekend of meeting and socializing plus getting a glimpse of what's to come at CAVORT 2014 in Syracuse!

Member Theatres

- Actors Theatre of Louisville
- Atlanta Shakespeare Company
- Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park
- La Jolla Playhouse
- Maltz Jupiter Theatre
- Meadow Brook Theatre
- Old Globe Theatre
- Pasadena Playhouse
- Repertory Theatre of St. Louis
- Seattle Repertory Theatre
- Shakespeare Festival St. Louis
- Shaw Festival Theatre
- Syracuse Stage
- The Theatre @ Boston Court



CAVORT Individual Membership Form

Yes, I would like to join CAVORT! Note that membership is valid until the last day of the next CAVORT Conference.

\$10 per individual, if the affiliated theatre is a member of CAVORT. \$15 per individual, if the affiliated theatre is NOT a member of CAVORT.

Enclosed \$10 or \$15 (see above) for my 2012-2014 membership: _____

Name _____

Street address _____

City _____ State/Province _____

Country _____ Zip/Postal code _____

Email address _____ Phone _____

My theatre is _____

Staff _____ Volunteer _____

Mail, with your check payable to CAVORT Inc., to: Suzanne Mercer, Treasurer, CAVORT INC., 404 Princeton Way, Atlanta GA 30307 USA

About CAVORT Membership — CAVORT membership falls into two categories, theatre and individual. Theatre membership is open to any professional, not-for-profit theatre. Dues are \$50 per year and payable by March 31 of each year. Membership includes a subscription to the CAVORT newsletter. Individual membership runs for two years, from conference to conference. Individual membership is open to any volunteer or staff member of professional, not-for-profit theatres. Membership fees are \$10 per individual, if the affiliated theatre is a member of CAVORT, and \$15 per individual, if the affiliated theatre is NOT a member of CAVORT.

Signing up is easy — simply complete the form above and send with a check, payable to CAVORT Inc.

CAVORT Member Benefits — For 40 years CAVORT has been the only organization in North America dedicated to supporting volunteers, and the staff they work with, at professional, not-for-profit theatres. Regardless of a theatre's volunteer structure (guild, association, individual, or other) CAVORT has something to offer to both the theatre and the individual.



CAVORT



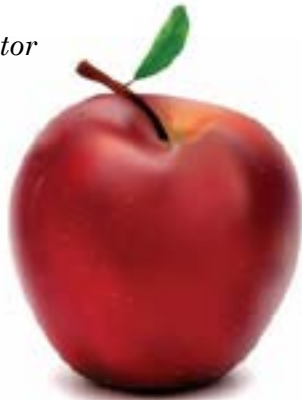
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Apples in Winter...

In the Northeast, the orchard is a place of rest and regeneration. The trees sleep peacefully beneath their blankets of snow, dreaming of blossoms and luscious fruit to come.

As members of CAVORT, we keep this in mind this winter, also looking forward to spring, summer and fall 2014!

— Roxanna Carpenter, Editor
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Through social media:

On Twitter, our handle is @conf_2014

And “like” us on Facebook at
Cavort Conference 2014.

Our host theatre is Syracuse Stage.

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