

2015 Equity Election Results

Kate Shindle elected President of the union; all other officers reelected and 16 elected to Council

Kate Shindle led the slate of officers elected to three-year terms in Equity's 2015 national election. In addition, 16 members — 11 from the Eastern Region, 2 from the Central Region and 3 from the Western Region — have been elected to Council.

Ballots were tabulated on May 21, 2015. There were 6,182 total valid ballots cast, of which 3,397 were cast electronically.

Following are the results:

OFFICERS

President

Kate Shindle
Not elected: Nick Wyman, Larry Cahn

Western Regional Vice President

Doug Carfrae
Not elected: Donal Thoms-Cappello

The following candidates were nominated with no opposition and, pursuant to Rule VI(E)6 of the Nominations and Election Policy, they have been deemed elected.

1st Vice President

Paige Price
Rebecca Kim Jordan

2nd Vice President

Ira Mont

3rd Vice President

Sandra Karas

Secretary/Treasurer

Melissa Robinette

Eastern Regional Vice President

Dev Kennedy

Central Regional Vice President

Bill Bateman

CENTRAL REGION

The following candidates were nominated with no opposition and, pursuant to Rule VI(E)6 of the Nominations and Election Policy, they have been deemed elected.

Principal

Dana Ivey

Tonya Pinkins

Maureen Moore

Kate O'Phalen

Judy Rice

Kristine Nevins

Joanne Borts

Sid Solomon

Not elected: Jeff Blumenkrantz, Scott Evans, Christopher Gurr, Scott McGowan, Buzz Roddy, Karen D. Howell, Todd Buonopane, Matt DeAngelis, Joe Zaloom, Craig A. Meyer, Wally Dunn, Tom Helmer, John Christopher Jones, Stas' Kmiec'

Stage Manager

Ruth E. Kramer

Amber White

Not elected:

Paige Price

Zittel, Eric H. Mayer

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Theater Breaking Through Barriers Continues to Provide Work for Performers With Disabilities

Nicholas Viselli is the new Artistic Director

By Helaine Feldman

"The stage is the way to change the world," said Ike Schambelan, founder and artistic director of Theater Breaking Through Barriers (formerly Theater By the Blind) until his death on February 3, 2015. Nicholas Viselli, who joined the company in 1997 and has been named to continue Schambelan's work, agrees with the late artistic director's sentiment. "Ike Schambelan's contributions to our profession, the disabled community and the world-at-large have been profound," he says.

Viselli began his tenure as artistic director with the company's production of *The Unexpected Guest*, an Agatha Christie mystery, with a cast of nine, including two actors who are legally blind, two actors who are amputees, one actor who uses a wheelchair because of multiple sclerosis, one who has a spine injury that has affected his gait and one performer who has cerebral palsy.

"It is our ultimate goal to alter the perceptions of disability, which have been hard-wired into us for centuries," said Viselli. "In our world, one immediately



The cast of Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest*, including (L to R) Pamela Sabaugh, Scott Barton, Melanie Boland, Ann Marie Morelli, Lawrence Merritt and David Rosar Stearns.

associates disability with pity, fear, helplessness and dependence. This perception is incorrect because in the same breath we admire and idolize those in society who are strong, resilient and adaptable, which pretty much describes every disabled person I know. As artists, we are in the best possible position to prove this point because art is all about adapting, bending perceptions and effecting intellectual and, more significantly, emotional change. Art comes from a different place. It transcends physical limitations. In our profession, disability is a characteristic which only matters as much as we want it to matter."

Schambelan was not

disabled, nor is Viselli, although his wife, Ann Marie Morelli, also a company member, is a wheelchair-user. The company is not only a showcase for Performers with Disabilities, it is a professional theater company that includes able-bodied actors as well. "Our performers are professional actors," stressed Viselli. TBTB's mission statement says it is "dedicated to advancing actors and writers with disabilities and changing the image of people with disabilities from dependence to independence."

It accomplishes this goal by hiring and including writers and Equity actors with disabilities to work in Off-

(continued on page 2)

Production Contract Negotiations Begin In July

The Production Contract negotiations will begin in July. The current contract is set to expire September 27, 2015. Final preparations for the negotiations

will take place throughout June.

Covering Broadway, national and tiered tours, the Production Contract is the union's premier contract. In the 2013-2014 season, the contract generated

64,708 workweeks and is the highest earnings generator for Equity members.

Equity's Negotiating team will be co-chaired by First Vice President Paige Price and Third

Vice President Ira Mont and includes members who have worked under the Production Contract. Executive Director Mary McColl will be the chief negotiator.

#EquityWorks: Theater News & Notes

Anaheim, CA - Equity has renewed its **Letter of Agreement with 3D Theatricals** with salary increases.

Boulder, CO - Equity has renewed its **Letter of Agreement with Colorado Shakespeare Festival** with salary increases.

Carmel, IN - Actors Theatre of Indiana has renewed its **SPT Rider** for

another two years, increasing its **Equity member contracts** and **workweeks** by 24, over the next two seasons.

Fremont, CA - **Made Up Theatre**, specializing in sketch and improvisational comedy in the Bay Area, is producing its first professional, scripted production on an **MBAT Agreement**.
Minneapolis, MN -

TigerLion Arts, a transitional **SPT** producer, has worked with Equity to mount a small regional tour to local arboretums and outdoor venues with its original play, *Nature*. The production will employ five Equity members resulting in nearly 100 workweeks for members.

New York, NY - Founded by David Mamet and William H. Macy, **Atlantic Theater**

Company marks its **30th anniversary season** Off-Broadway this year.

New York, NY - **Signature**

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Area Liaison Hotline system

Call 877-AEA-1913

Equity has a national toll-free hotline system for members who live in area liaison and office cities. The number is 877-AEA-1913 (honoring the year of Equity's founding). Each Area Liaison city has its own extension, where members can access news and information in their region.

(1) Dial 877-AEA-1913

(2) Dial your city extension:

- 811 Atlanta
- 812 Austin/San Antonio
- 813 Boston
- 814 Buffalo/Rochester
- 815 Chicago
- 816 Cincinnati/Louisville
- 817 Cleveland
- 818 Dallas/Fort Worth
- 819 Denver
- 820 Detroit
- 821 Florida – Central
- 822 Florida – South
- 823 Houston
- 824 Kansas City
- 825 Las Vegas
- 826 Los Angeles
- 827 Milwaukee/Madison
- 828 Minneapolis/St Paul
- 829 Nashville
- 830 New Orleans
- 831 New York
- 832 Philadelphia
- 833 Phoenix/Tucson
- 834 Pittsburgh
- 835 San Diego
- 836 San Francisco
- 837 Seattle
- 838 St. Louis
- 839 Washington DC/Baltimore

Barriers

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Broadway productions, presenting plays dealing with disability issues, and producing a Ten-Minute Play Festival while inviting well-known playwrights to participate. Or, in short, by presenting and creating diverse stories and telling them with an authentic voice. Characters who are blind are played by actors who are blind; characters who use wheelchairs are played by performers who use wheelchairs. In 2011, several of the festival's plays traveled to Croatia, thus bringing TBTB's work to an international audience. In 2012, to mark the 22nd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, TBTB was invited to perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

"I've been with TBTB since 1997, back when it was Theater By the Blind," says Equity member Pamela Sabaugh. "Though I am legally blind, I never considered myself a 'blind' actor, but rather an actor, first and foremost. TBTB, I felt, shared in this belief. Though our mission certainly is to advance the work of performers with disabilities — and changing perceptions — it has always been an integrated company of talented and diverse artists who are defined by the artistry they share, rather than whether or not they happen to have a disability. That's not to say we haven't had the chance to incorporate disability into the overall aesthetic of a production, or create work that's been informed and enhanced by the disabled experience. But what has been most positive for me, is having had the chance to work, time and time again, on some extraordinary material, with gifted professionals."

"I am, I think, the only company member who has actually become disabled over my time with TBTB," says Ann Marie Morelli. "I have MS and am now a wheelchair-user. It was in 2008 that we changed the name to Theater Breaking Through Barriers and made it

known that we served performers of all disabilities. We are still an integrated company of performers with and without disabilities, and I believe that this is the only way to bring performers with disabilities to the mainstream. We show that our artists are able to work alongside each other and even make the audience forget that there is any 'disability' being represented because we have a great respect and comfort with each other as performers, not as 'disabled' performers. We are children, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, aunts, uncles, parents, and as a disabled performer, I believe that I can bring a different perspective to theater because of my daily challenges in life. Art does not come from my legs; it doesn't come from someone's eyes or ears or any tangible physical attribute that we consider normal. It is much deeper. It is



Nicholas Viselli

human."

Equity member Anita D. Hollander says that Theater Breaking Through Barriers has given her the great pleasure of doing several shows and touring in Croatia and Japan. Hollander also serves as National Chair of the SAG/AFTRA National PWD Committee, Co-Chair of the NY Local SAG/AFTRA PWD Committee and on the AEA/Broadway League Coalition for more diversity and inclusion in Broadway and regional theaters. "It is in the audition," she said, "where we can truly raise consciousness and give people ideas that will lead to our getting more work."

"Broadway is still a stubborn nut to crack in the performer department although audience accessibility has improved and more people with disabilities are attending shows," she added. "Regional theaters have done much better. Mixed Blood in Minneapolis; Deaf West in L.A.; Phamaly Theatre Company in Denver; Goodman Theatre in Chicago; Urban Improv in Boston; Surflight and Ocean Professional Theatre in New Jersey; and Barrow Street, Nicu's Spoon and TBTB in New York have all cast PWDs. Over my 30-year career, I have seen the progress that can be made by never giving up. It's an exhausting pursuit, but worth it in the end."

Viselli agrees that the mission to raise awareness for

Congratulations to Equity's 2015 Tony Award-Nominated Members

Best Book of a Musical & Best Original Score

Lisa Kron, *Fun Home*

Best Choreography

Joshua Bergasse, *On the Town*

Best Original Score

Sting, *The Last Ship*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Play

Steven D. Boyer, *Hand to God*
Bradley Cooper, *The Elephant Man*
Ben Miles, *Wolf Hall: Parts One & Two*
Bill Nighy, *Skylight*
Alex Sharp, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Play

Geneva Carr, *Hand to God*
Helen Mirren, *The Audience*
Elisabeth Moss, *The Heidi Chronicles*
Carey Mulligan, *Skylight*
Ruth Wilson, *Constellations*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical

Michael Cerveris, *Fun Home*
Robert Fairchild, *An American in Paris*
Brian D'Arcy James, *Something Rotten!*
Ken Watanabe, *The King and I*
Tony D. Yazbeck, *On the Town*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical

Kristin Chenoweth, *On the Twentieth Century*
Leanne Cope, *An American in Paris*
Beth A. Malone, *Fun Home*
Kelli O'Hara, *The King and I*
Chita Rivera, *The Visit*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Play

Matthew Beard, *Skylight*
K. Todd Freeman, *Airline Highway*
Richard McCabe, *The Audience*
Alessandro Nivola, *The Elephant Man*
Nathaniel Parker, *Wolf Hall: Parts One & Two*
Micah Stock, *It's Only a Play*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Play

Annaleigh Ashford, *You Can't Take It With You*
Patricia D. Clarkson, *The Elephant Man*
Lydia Leonard, *Wolf Hall: Parts One & Two*
Sarah Stiles, *Hand to God*
Julie White, *Airline Highway*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical

Christian Borle, *Something Rotten!*
Andy Karl, *On the Twentieth Century*
Brad Oscar, *Something Rotten!*
Brandon Uranowitz, *An American in Paris*
Max Von Essen, *An American in Paris*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical

Victoria Clark, *Gigi*
Judy Kuhn, *Fun Home*
Sydney Lucas, *Fun Home*
Ruthie Ann Miles, *The King and I*
Emily Skeggs, *Fun Home*

Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre

Tommy Tune

Special Tony Award

John Cameron Mitchell

performers with disabilities is a difficult one, but he believes that we have never been in a better position to effect positive change than we are right now.

"I have watched TBTB grow into a solid, highly respected Off-Broadway company, the only one of its kind, dedicated to advancing the work of artists with disabilities by presenting first-class art. While theater is truly a collaborative art, our need to invent and pioneer

fresh ways to present our artists — to prove our fundamental point that disability does not diminish the quality of the art or the artist — raises the power of collaboration to a much higher level in our arena. We've proven this time and time again with all of our work. It is now time to forge ahead and continue raising the bar. The table has been set and we all gratefully look forward to what lies ahead."

Attention Los Angeles Members:

The small group meetings about the new internal membership rules and agreements originally announced for June are postponed to the fall. The schedule for the Production Contract negotiations has been pushed up and those negotiations will now begin immediately after the July 4th holiday. Because of this change, the final preparations for the negotiations will now be condensed into the month of June.



EQUITY NEWS

Editor: JOSH AUSTIN

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From a Barn to a Playhouse, the Forestburgh Playhouse has Kept Going

We asked the staff at the Forestburgh Playhouse to tell us about the theater; this is what they had to say:

With a rich history and long ties with Actors' Equity, the Forestburgh Playhouse is the oldest, continuously operating professional summer theater in New York State. In the summer of 1947, John Grahame, Alexander Maissel and a group of actors from Greenwich Village's Provincetown Playhouse journeyed to the Catskills and bought a barn. These actors renovated the barn and opened the Forestburgh Summer Theatre for business. In the early days, the company produced Shakespeare, Moliere and other classics, children's theater, and ran an apprenticeship program with the Provincetown Playhouse.

Not only rehearsing during the day, actors collected eggs from the henhouse and milked cows – the company even served as the emergency fire department for the area. The

audiences sat on benches and community members helped with costumes, cooking and whatever else was needed. Although the date is not specified, Equity actors began working at the Forestburgh Theatre in the '60s, marking the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship.

In 1980, the last of the remaining original owners sold

the Forestburgh Summer Theatre to Gregg Harlan and Craig Sandquist, who transformed it into what is now known as the Forestburgh Playhouse. The Playhouse did not escape the AIDS crisis and, sadly, the Harlan-Sandquist era lasted only 10 years. Those short years, however, represented a time of dynamic change. The

Forestburgh Tavern, right next to the Playhouse, became a cabaret institution within the Catskills. In addition, the apprenticeship program was transformed into what is now known as the EMC "Resident Company."

Norman Duttweiler became the producer in 1992 and opened the 45th Anniversary Season. During his time, the

relationship with Equity was solidified, the production value of shows skyrocketed and Duttweiler singlehandedly took a financially unstable playhouse and transformed it into an efficient and viable business. New producer, Franklin Trapp, a former Resident Company member and a member of Equity, took over in 2014.

"Returning to a place where I have such fond memories is a dream come true," said Trapp, "and I am excited to take the Playhouse to the next level."

Performers that work at the



Esther Murphy and Alexander Maissel in June 1947 working on the Playhouse.

Playhouse are often treated to a unique and special experience. According to Larry Smiglewski, an Equity stage manager who has worked at the Playhouse for over seven seasons, "It would be easy (and foolish) to write it off as 'theatre in a barn,' but I have had the privilege of collaborating with top-notch designers and incredibly talented performers who are all here for the same reason – to create beautiful theater."

Actors are housed in picturesque settings, all meals are provided to the entire staff and company in the tavern and rehearsals are conducted on an open-air rehearsal deck. It isn't uncommon that actors will look out onto the meadow during rehearsals and spot deer, foxes, and occasionally, a bear. Smiglewski added that "rehearsing in an open air environment can be both challenging and exhilarating. When we do the final producer's run-through before moving into the theater, it is amazing to not have the set or costumes because it forces you to focus on the work. Sometimes that run is my favorite part of the whole

journey." According to Elizabeth Earley, a former Resident Company member currently in Broadway's *Something Rotten!*, "Two summers at the Playhouse gave me invaluable perspective as a working professional. It created within me an extremely strong work ethic, reverence for the chance to work and gave me my first 'theater family.' Returning to FBPH to play *Mary Poppins* was a thrilling experience. I saw the heart of the Playhouse very much beating, while nurturing talented new artists on their journeys. I am forever going to be grateful for my time at FBPH."

The Forestburgh Playhouse operates during the summers and offers three different types of performance experiences: musicals and plays on the main stage, a youth theater production and musical cabaret performances presented with dinner in the adjoining Forestburgh Tavern. Dubbed the "Miracle of the Forest," close to 30,000 patrons attend performances every year, and the growth shows no signs of slowing down.

Copyright Jonathan Charles Fox



Equity members Elizabeth Earley and Zak Edwards in the company's 2014 production of *Mary Poppins*.



How I Got My Equity Card

Kate Goehring



Chicago. Oh, Chicago! I'd moved there straight after graduating from Oberlin College with my degree in American Romantic Fiction ("oh yes, this will distract me from acting") and a single goal: don't shake in auditions.

Whatever with landing a role — that was too much pressure. My only goal was to contain my audition excitement by not shaking. That proved an effective strategy, and I was a joyful Equity Membership Candidate soon enough.

Working lots as an EMC was entirely plausible in Chicago's broad vista of creativity, since substantial opportunities for artistic growth abound for actors. I remember being wide-eyed at the first show I ever did with Equity actors — *The Rover* at the Goodman Theatre. THEY GAVE US OUR OWN FOLDERS! As a candidate at the time, this floored me. Light emanated from the scripts.

The card, when it happened, sort of had to happen — Gwendolyn in the now-defunct Body Politic Theatre's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

The commitment felt like a leap, but how could you say no to Oscar Wilde, tea and waging the fight against cake and lumps of sugar? Years of wonderful collaborations, handy health insurance and ample examples of actors playing well with others have ensued.

More recently, playing Bella opposite the dreamy Judy Kaye's Mamma in *Lost in Yonkers* at the Arizona Theatre Company, this dressing room mirror conversation ensued:

Kate: (blotting on concealer) I gotta get more people to register to vote.

Judy: (adding wrinkles) Send them the "Borowitz Report."

Kate: (messing up mascara) Brilliant!

Judy: (heading to 'places') And do "How I Got My Equity Card."

She's Mamma, so you don't say "no." She's also Judy, so what could be more fun than saying "yes"?

Equity is a brilliant and important union in myriad ways. And several decades in, light still comes from the scripts.

#Equity Works

(continued from page 1)

Theatre Company, the first theater company to devote an entire season to the work of a single playwright, will mark its 25th anniversary season Off-Broadway with the 2015-16 season.

Washington, D.C. – Mosaic Theatre Company, led by Artistic Director Ari Roth and Producing Director Serge Seiden, will join the Equity family as a **Small Professional Theatre** effective in the fall with its 2015-16 season. The company will operate two performance spaces: the 260-seat Lang Theatre and the 160-seat Springer Theatre, located inside D.C.'s historic Atlas Theatre.

Washington, D.C. – After several years of negotiations, **Studio Theatre** will commit to producing Equity work in its experimental black box theater

space, known as Stage 4 (formerly 2ndStage). The upcoming summer production of ***Silence! The Musical*** will

mark the employment of an AEA stage manager and no less than three Equity actors on contract.

#EquityWorks: Tracking What You're Owed

Eastern Region staff determined that the Dance Captain duties for a **LORT production** were being performed by a non-Equity actor and made a claim with the theater to employ the actor on an Equity contract, retroactive to the first day of rehearsal. With this claim, Equity achieved one additional contract for the production, including the Dance Captain duties, and a compensation package of \$6,100.

After reviewing signed contracts under a **LORT agreement**, AEA staff contacted the theater regarding a change

of date rider and rehearsal delay of two days. The employer agreed to pay the actors for a full week of rehearsals in accordance with the original start date on the face of the contract, rather than a pro-rated salary at 4/6ths for that week.

Central Region staff collected over \$500 in missed payments for two members relating to **CAT productions**.

From February to April of this year, Equity collected over \$1,500 in missing payments from **Guest Artist and Special Appearance Contracts** on behalf of Equity Members in the Western Region.



Brent Wagner, University of Michigan Dept. of Musical Theatre Chair, with Eisenberg Award-winner Isabelle McCalla, former Equity Executive Director Alan Eisenberg and the University's Dean of Theatre & Dance, Christopher Kendall.

Isabelle McCalla earns this year's Equity/Alan Eisenberg Award Scholarship

Suffern, New York native Isabelle McCalla knew she wanted to be a performer after her mom took her to see a performance of *Cats* on Broadway.

"I was 5 years old," she said, "and I vividly remember petting one of the actors who crawled down the aisle. After that, my mom bought the VHS of the show, and I kid you not, I watched it every day for a year; I 'learned' each track by watching it over and over again. I was a singer in the making, I suppose."

Aside from recently completing her B.F.A. in Musical Theater from the University of Michigan, McCalla was named the recipient of Equity's Alan Eisenberg Award. The award, which was created by the union's former executive director — and an alumnus of the school — is a scholarship awarded to a graduating senior of Michigan's theater program.

So far, throughout the actor's career, she has performed in productions including *Legally Blonde*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *42nd Street* and *The Cherry Orchard*, among various others. McCalla even crossed off a bucket-list

character, Sally Bowles, when she performed in *Cabaret* with the university. Although, in addition to playing Anita from *West Side Story*, she would love to tackle Bowles once more.

Now the ninth winner of this annual scholarship, McCalla plans to move straight to New York City after graduation to continue to pursue her dream of working in this industry.

"It feels unbelievable to win this award," she said. "It's wonderful to be recognized not only by Alan Eisenberg, but also by Actors' Equity Association, which I have a huge respect for. I'm grateful that my hard work over the past four years has paid off."

For McCalla, she's also grateful to be a member of Actors' Equity.

"Being an Equity member means that I will be supported by a union that validates the arts as a viable career path. With the benefits and regulations provided by Equity, I know that I'll always be taken care of. Plus, it's an honor to be a part of a community of the most distinguished actors in the field."

Career Transition for Dancers to Host L.A. Summit

On July 23, 2015, Career Transition for Dancers will host the "L.A. Dancers Summit — Life Beyond the Spotlights."

This year, CTFD partnered with Sasha Anawalt, dance writer and Director of Arts Journalism at the University of Southern California Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. Anawalt has put together a survey that has been taken by over 900 Los Angeles dancers. If you are or have been a dancer in Los Angeles, be sure to take the survey and make your voice heard: DanceMapLA.com. The survey shows an interesting overview of dancers' needs and accomplishments; it is intended to reveal the concerns of working and aspiring dancers, and it is important to get all union dancers to have a voice in its results.

The Summit's purpose is to bring together the many Los An-

geles dance communities to accomplish the following:

- Make known the results of the survey and create a picture of the challenges and needs of the L.A. dance community.
- Pull together five "Dancers Think Tanks," with opinion leaders, facilitators and dancers from the varied communities to find solutions to the concerns spotlighted in the survey.
- And finally, have all groups come together to share the solutions with the broader dance community. They will announce their findings and will have created goals/targets and devised action plans that will set the wheels in motion to create successful solutions for the future of the dance community.

More details will be forthcoming from CTFD at a later date. For more information regarding this event, call (323)-549-6660 or email ctfda@sagafta.org.

Julie Halston, Brad Oscar Receive Equity Foundation Award

Julie Halston (*You Can't Take It With You*) and Brad Oscar (*Something Rotten!*) are the recipients of the annual Richard Seff Award presented by the Actors' Equity Foundation to veteran female and male character actors for the best performance in a supporting role in a Broadway or Off-Broadway production.

The recipients will be presented with the award at Equity's Eastern Regional Board meeting at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2015, at the NYC Equity office.

Halston, a recipient of three Drama Desk, two Drama League and two Outer Critics' Circle nominations as well as an Off-Broadway Alliance Lifetime Achievement Award for her work,



Julie Halston

Brad Oscar

appeared in the Charles Busch comedies, *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, *The Lady in Question* and *Red Scare on Sunset*. Broadway credits include *Anything Goes*, *Hairspray*, *Gypsy* and *Twentieth Century*. Off-Broadway appearances include *The Tribute Artist* and *The Divine Sister*. She has won four MAC (Manhattan Association of Cabarets & Clubs) awards for her solo comedy performances and on TV she was on *Sex and the*

City and CBS' *The Class*.

Oscar received a Tony nomination for his work in *The Producers*, which he also played in London's West End. Broadway credits include *Big Fish*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *The Addams Family*, *Spamalot*, *Jekyll & Hyde* and *Aspects of Love*. He was in the national tours of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Young Frankenstein* and *Jekyll & Hyde*, and he has also appeared Off-Broadway, in *Encore!* productions and in regional theater, receiving a Carbonell Award as Best Actor in a Musical for *Barnum* at the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Florida.

The Judges' Panel includes Joe Dziemianowicz, *Daily News*; Adam Feldman, *Time Out New York*; Susan Haskins-Doloff, *Theater Talk*; Harry Haun, *Playbill* and David Rosenberg, *The Hour Newspapers*.

Two Membership Candidates are Recognized with the Roger Sturtevant Award

Equity Membership Candidates Amanda Hartley Urteaga and Nicholas Parker were awarded with the Equity Foundation's 11th annual Roger Sturtevant Musical Theatre Award. Named for the beloved casting director who passed away in 2003, this award is given to EMCs who have demonstrated outstanding abilities in the field of musical theater.

Urteaga is a recent Joseph Jefferson Award winner for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical in *The Robber Bridegroom* at the Griffin Theatre Company in Chicago, including being honored with having one of the top five best female performances by Chicago's Newcitystage.com. Parker, a six-foot-four baritone, was part of the apprenticeship program at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia — one of only four actors selected from over 500 applications — where he has been seen in productions such as *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; *A Christmas Carol*, and, upcoming, *Memphis*.

How does it feel to win the Roger Sturtevant Musical Theatre Award?

Urteaga: I am so happy to receive this award. I just played Grandma in a fabulous sit-down production of *The Addams Family* at the Mercury Theater in Chicago, and to win this honor right after we closed was very exciting indeed.

Parker: Quite unexpected to tell the truth. It was one of those things where you submit for something and, after a while, you think they forget about you or you'll forget you submitted. Then you get a call saying you got it and it's a pleasant surprise. I do feel very blessed for this opportunity.



Amanda Hartley Urteaga Nicholas Parker

What prompted you to be a performer?

Urteaga: I have been a stage performer since I was 16 in different varieties of performance, from a magician's assistant to a burlesque dancer. I hold a bachelor's in theater from Rhode Island College (my home state) and an MFA in acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. I've always wanted to be a performer. I blame my big family back home in Rhode Island; the Hartleys love to be entertained. I've always felt closest to God while onstage, so I figured that performing was a calling for me. I'm most at home singing and playing funny characters who are kind of crazy.

Parker: Since I was a kid, I've always loved to perform for my family. But honestly, I was torn between performing and playing football in middle school — I figured I would get back into football when I got to high school. I ended up going to an arts high school as a vocal major and haven't stopped performing since.

Tell us about the very first show with which you were involved.

Urteaga: The very first role I performed was Wendy in the musical *Peter Pan* in kindergarten back in Rhode Island.

Parker: In elementary school I was in *Guys and Dolls* and played Lt. Brannigan. I had so much fun that the next year I auditioned for *Fiddler on the Roof* and landed the role of Teyve.

What does becoming an Equity member mean to you?

Urteaga: My husband and I just had a baby last year, and I'm very excited about joining Equity so that I can earn a better living to support my little girl — and hopefully be an inspiration for her to follow her own dreams.

Parker: Being a part of this union gives me some sense of stability and support. In a profession where you're constantly motivating yourself and others, it's still nice to know that no matter what job you do, Equity is there.

If you had your druthers, what two dream roles would you play?

Urteaga: I have lots of dream roles. I'd love to play Martha in *The Secret Garden* and Sara Jane Moore in *Assassins* (to name a couple). I do plays as well as musicals, and I'd love to work at Steppenwolf someday. I'm very proud to be a Chicago actor; we have a fierce community of artists here!

Parker: I would have to say Porgy from *Porgy and Bess* and Franz Liebkind from *The Producers*.

What's next for you?

Urteaga: I'm up for a couple of roles right now; I'm auditioning and I also just started a new serving job so I can buy a car in a few months. That way I can work in theaters all over Chicagoland easily. It's all about the planning. I'm in this for the long haul.

Parker: I'm starting my second half of the co-production of *Memphis* with the Walnut Street Theatre. We just got back from Vero Beach, Florida for the first half.

The Roger Sturtevant Award consists of a certificate accompanied by a \$1,000 check.



BARRETT MARTIN
Side Show

RON TODOROWSKI
Finding Neverland

JENNIE FORD
An American In Paris

KATIE WEBBER
Honeymoon in Vegas

JEREMY DAVIS
The Last Ship

CAMERON ADAMS
Gigi

**THE
GYPSY ROBE
2014-2015
SEASON
CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE RECIPIENTS**

JOSEPH MEDEIROS
Doctor Zhivago

TRACEE BEAZER
Holler IfYa Hear Me

BAHIYAH HIBAH
On The 20th Century

JESS LEPROTTO
OnTheTown

MATT WALL
Something Rotten

LAINIE SAKAKURA
The King and I



NATIONAL NEWS

Photo: Pretty Instant Photography



Equity member Lea DeLaria accepts her award from President of the Boston Theater Critics Association Joyce Kulhawik.



Chicago

Chicago Hosts its Annual Stage Manager Speed Interview Event

On April 21, 2015, the Chicago Area Stage Manager Speed Interview event hosted

26 AEA stage managers located in and around the Chicago and Milwaukee

metropolitan areas. Stage managers had the opportunity to meet with 11 various Chicago area theaters.

The annual event, this year held at the Steppenwolf Garage Theatre, is an opportunity for Equity stage managers to meet with Chicago-area producers and production managers, exchange résumés, and gain a few minutes of face time with a potential employer as a precursor to a possible interview.

The event has a "speed interview" format: Stage managers sign-up for a "rotation hour" during which they meet for a few minutes with each of the employers in attendance. Some of the theaters participating at this year's interviews included Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre and Paramount Theatre, among others.

Since the event, members have reported getting calls and job offers.



Salt Lake City, Utah

Salt Lake City Members Support Fundraiser

The cast of *Mr. Perfect* recently attended "Strikes for Tikes," a fundraiser to support

the RiteCare of Utah. Proceeds from the annual event, now in its 5th year, go toward providing

cost-free therapy for underserved children who experience a variety of speech and language deficits/disorders. More information available at ritecareutah.org.

"Strikes for Tikes" was held over two days to accommodate all the bowling teams participating in the event. In the end, Equity member Darrin Doman came away with a total of 512 for his three games. A silent auction added to the festivities and proceeds of the fundraiser.

Mr. Perfect, by William Missouri Downs, had a world premiere at the Salt Lake Acting Company. The cast consisted of Doman, Stephanie Howell and Ryon Sharette, all AEA members, as well as Emilie Starr, an Equity Member Candidate, and was stage managed by member Janice Jensen.

Boston, Massachusetts

Equity Members Honored at the Annual Elliot Norton Awards Ceremony

The Annual Elliot Norton Awards Ceremony was held in Boston at the Citi Shubert Theatre on May 11, 2015, honoring area theater artists from the 2014 season. Sponsored by the Boston Theater Critics Association, the Norton awards have been a city staple for the past 33 years, highlighting, among others, Equity actors.

These awards were founded in honor of Boston drama critic Elliot Norton upon his retirement from his prolific 48-year career. Originated as the Norton Medal in 1982, the first award was given out in 1983 to an individual who had made a significant contribution to the theater industry in Boston during the prior season. Now, the ceremony includes a Lifetime Achievement Award, the Norton Prize for

Sustained Excellence and over a dozen awards that go to a variety of theater artists working in the city.

This year, Equity member Lea DeLaria was the Guest of Honor. In a press release, Joyce Kulhawik, president of the Boston Theater Critics Association, said "DeLaria's cutting-edge talent in so many formats, as a comedian, singer, writer, director, actress...are a testament to her versatility and outspokenness."

At the ceremony, countless Equity members were recognized with best actor/actress nominations — and, of course, wins.

Kulhawik added, "We have such talent in the Boston area and we're taking our place on the national stage. We are proud to honor the awardees, and applaud all who were nominated."



Las Vegas Area Members Meet

By Debbie Luce, Las Vegas Area Liaison Chair

There was a debate as to whether the Las Vegas Area Liaison Committee should hold its annual membership meeting as planned because Las Vegas was "the place to be" that night for "the fight of the century." Still, the committee decided to host its meeting, with a small turnout, on May 2, 2015.

As the committee typically holds its meetings in a small theater on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus, the number of guests was small

enough to allow them the opportunity to sit together on stage. The agenda included the Las Vegas liaison report as well as selection of new committee members. The meeting had three special guests in attendance: Gail Gabler, Western Regional Director; Alison Harma, Associate Senior Business Representative for the Western Region; and Flora Stamatiades, National Director, Organizing & Special Projects. For two hours, the group casually talked about a myriad of topics, asked questions and had lively discussions.



Photo: Stephanie Masucci

New York City, Chicago

Welcoming New Members in New York City & Chicago

"I knew I loved performing," said guest speaker Whitney Bashor during the New York City and Chicago New Member Reception on April 27, 2015. She had left New York, moved home to Iowa and taken a job working in a bank. "I felt called to suffer the business down to my bones, but no one was offering me a job and it felt crazy. After a day spent reviewing accounts for fraudulent activity and answering phones I asked the universe for a sign – anything."

Lying on her parent's living room floor she asked the universe what she should do with her life.

The very next day, the phone rang: a director (and friend), offered her a job as an immediate replacement at the Signature Theatre in Washington, D.C. "I quit my job at the bank, packed up my two suitcases and headed to D.C.," she said. "I'm happy to say I've been working ever since." In 2014, Bashor made her Broadway debut in *Bridges of Madison County*.

Offering advice to the packed houses in NYC and Chicago, the actor told new members that if she had the chance to give her younger self advice, she would say...

- Your career will ebb and flow. The sooner you accept the triumphs and disappointments the quicker you will find happiness in your career.

- Be inspired by other performers but don't emulate them. Being authentically you is exciting.

- Run your own race. Your career is a marathon, not a sprint.

- Create a community with supportive friends who will lift you up.

- Develop who you are as a human being. The person with a full life will always be the most interesting person in the room.

Bashor ended with, "I got my Equity card in 2007. I remember feeling so excited. I called my mom and told her the great news. It was the first of many joyful phone calls in my career."

The career path we've chosen does not guarantee riches or fame, but committing to the work and being a person people want to work with will make your life rich in experience and relationships."

The reception, conducted via video hook-up between NYC and Chicago, provided a welcoming Q&A forum for Equity's newest members regarding the union's core function: to negotiate and administer contracts. Additionally, there was a discussion about the responsibilities of membership, Equity Franchised Agents and Equity-League health insurance and retirement benefits.

Atlanta EMCs meet for Annual Mixer

The Atlanta Area Liaison Committee hosted its annual EMC "mixer" on April 13, 2015. With Equity swag in hand, EMCs had the opportunity to chat with committee members about the theatrical community in Atlanta.

They focused much of the conversation on the Atlanta

theater market. EMCs were curious as to which theaters would provide them the opportunity to earn their weeks. Additionally, the attendees wanted to learn more about the benefits of joining the union, which committee members happily answered.



Photo: Ray Renati

San Francisco, California

Bay Area Members & EMCs Meet

By Michael Shipley and Colin Thomson

The San Francisco Bay Area Spring Membership Meeting was held April 27, 2015, at the Phoenix Theatre in downtown San Francisco. In addition to the regional officers and members, Western Regional Director Gail Gabler and National Director, Organizing & Special Projects Flora Stamatziades were in attendance. Lawrence Colding, who follows the distinguished service of Bethany Umbach, was introduced as the new Bay Area Business Representative. A food drive was once again part of the proceedings, this time supporting the Marin Food Bank.

The event began with the Equity Membership Candidates meeting. Gabler encouraged the candidates to engage with local theaters about the EMC program, about Equity in general and enlisted their help in publicizing the *Ask If It's Equity* campaign. When Gabler asked candidates to discuss why they joined the program, they mentioned their desire for the professional status membership implies, for the community and support Equity offers and for the recognition of their commitment to theater.

During the membership meeting, Safiya Fredericks read the list of deceased members from the past year. Selections for the San Francisco Bay Area Liaison Committee were held,

with members Brian Herndon, Kelly Ground, Aaron Wilton, Safiya Fredericks and



Jonathan Whitton, Associate General Manager & Company Manager of Second Stage Theatre, speaks with Equity stage manager Kara Kaufman.

New York City

Equity Stage Managers Participate in Networking Event

During the 9th Annual Off-Broadway Stage Manager Networking Event, Equity stage managers had the chance to participate in a sort of "speed date" with numerous Off-Broadway League members including producers, general managers, and company managers.

With 15 producing organizations and 45 stage managers at this year's event, Equity members took the time to network and learn about upcoming seasons, schedules and hiring practices, and had the opportunity to submit their résumés for future consideration. Traditionally, this event has led to a fair number of

Demetrius Martin selected for three-year terms; Michael Patrick Gaffney as a two-year alternate; and Bert van Aalsburg as a one-year alternate.

The national staff discussed an upcoming fundraiser for the Women's Subcommittee, as well as details of the new MBAT agreement, updates to the Member Project Code, contract development plans for fringe festivals, cruise lines and arena shows, an exchange program with UK Equity, and a reciprocity program with Canada. Members were encouraged to promote Equity on social media and in person.

job offers for Equity members.

"AEA's Off-Broadway Stage Manager Networking Event was a whirlwind," said Equity member Kara Kaufman. "I can't imagine any other way to meet so many people with the potential to further my career in one fell swoop. I've been jokingly referring to the event as 'stage manager speed dating,' and it did have some resemblance to that sort of event. I came away feeling as though I'd just had 14 first dates: There had been some laughs, a few awkward moments and plenty of hope for future relationships built on the introductions AEA facilitated for all of us."



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia EMC Gathering

On Monday, May 4, 2015, the Philadelphia Area Liaison Committee hosted an Equity Membership Candidate gathering at The Twisted Tail, located in Philadelphia's historic

Society Hill district. The casual atmosphere set the tone for a warm and hospitable evening of talking Philadelphia theater. The topic for the evening was the EMC program.

Philadelphia has a vibrant theater scene and community, which includes the historic Walnut Street Theatre, the Arden Theatre Co., The Wilma Theater, InterAct Theatre Co., 1812 Productions, Lantern Theater Co., Theatre Exile and many others.

Philadelphia Liaison Chair Tom Helmer and Committee Members Corbin Abernathy, Chris Sapienza and Ross Beschler shared information about the local theater community and answered questions concerning AEA contracts in use in Philly and how and when to make that leap to becoming an Equity member. Attendees affirmed that EMCs are seen and welcomed at local theater auditions.

52 Shows Propel Easter Bonnet Competition to New Heights



The generosity of the theater community shined brightly as six weeks of

spring fundraising for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS came to a close April 20 and 21, 2015, with a record-breaking grand total for the 29th Annual Easter Bonnet Competition. The fundraising efforts of 52 Broadway, Off-Broadway and national touring productions raised a remarkable \$4,711,386 (1), the third year in a row that the event set a fundraising record.

More than 200 of New York's most talented Equity actors, singers and dancers performed in this year's show and presented 18 ornate, handmade bonnets. Winning the best presentation award was the company of

The company of *Jersey Boys*, which won runner-up presentation honors, took top design honors for

its shimmering crystal-and LED-covered bonnet, created by Ricky Jay Yates.

Opting to skew younger in casting, *Les Misérables* set out to find a new



Jean Valjean and landed with a star-in-the-making performance by 13-year-old Joshua Colley, who stunned the audience in his vocal duel with Javert in his vocal duet with Javert under duology John Rapson (3). Other stellar performances



included a jazzy rendition of "April Showers" performed by NaTasha Yvette Williams and her *Chicago* castmates; the company of *Hand to God* with a parody of themselves and a skewering of veteran cast member Mark Kudisch; *On the Town's* adorably awkward

Lucy Schmeeler, expertly played by Allison Guinn, experiencing her own dream ballet; South African cast members of *The Lion King* sharing an inspiring traditional Zulu dance; Christine Pedi from

NEWSical the Musical; and a final *Easter Bonnet* performance by the cast and alumni of *Mamma Mia!*

This year's *Easter Bonnet Competition*, held again at the Minskoff Theater, home to Disney's *The Lion King*, was directed by Kristin Newhouse and made possible by an army of volunteers, including an outstanding Equity stage management team led by

Jason Trubitt.

The grand total and award winners were announced by four of this season's stars: Andy Karl, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Helen Mirren and Matthew Morrison (4). This year's top fundraiser among Broadway musicals was *The Book of Mormon*, which raised

\$325,556, followed by *Aladdin*, raising \$150,869. The top Broadway play was *Fish in the Dark*, raising \$140,374; followed by *It's Only a Play*, which raised \$120,720. The top national touring show fundraising award was presented to *Wicked – Munchkinland* (\$348,552) and the first runner-up was *The Book of Mormon – Latter Day Company* with \$347,943. The top Off-Broadway fundraiser was *Hamilton* with \$96,819, followed by *Into the Woods* with \$29,084.

Gavin Creel, who's currently starring in Broadway's *The Book of Mormon*, closed the show with a new arrangement of "Help is on the Way," BC/EFA's *Easter Bonnet* anthem written by David

Friedman. And Broadway favorite Tituss Burgess made a special appearance on behalf of Broadway Cares affiliate organization ASTEP (Artists Striving to End Poverty).

This year's *Easter Bonnet Competition* original opening number included a special appearance by *Hand to God* star Steven Boyer and "Tyrone," and featured Jason Kravits and Jen Perry. It was directed and choreographed by Rommy Sandhu with writing by Stacia Fernandez and James Hindman, and music direction and arrangements by Ben Cohn. A bright, upbeat celebration of the 17 national touring productions, which raised \$2.2 million this spring, was



choreographed by Charlie Williams and featured 16 of Broadway's best dancers (5).

For a full story, videos and more photos, visit broadwaycares.org.



Seattle, Washington

Western Regional Staff Visits Seattle for Annual Meeting

By Aaron Shanks and Roger Curtis

On April 25, 2015, Seattle members met in the Center Theatre, under the shadow of the Space Needle, for their annual membership meeting. After a reception, which included EMCs, the group gathered to discuss matters of importance to Seattle members as well as of national interest.

Roger Curtis, Liaison Committee Chair, opened the discussion by outlining recent initiatives by Theatre Puget Sound (TPS), a service organization supporting the Northwest theater community). The discussion centered on a TPS proposal to enhance local opportunities by resurrecting Equity member-supported auditions that bring in producers from out of state. A couple of

"old-timers" attested that this worked well in the past. TPS is proposing to handle the logistics. As before, interested members would pool resources to cover transportation costs. The details need to be worked out, but there is interest from members.

Also discussed was the TPS survey of local AEA members and EMCs. While it seemed that the survey had some focus problems, it was well intentioned and will form the basis for further investigation. To enhance communication and understanding in the future, TPS is interested in having a liaison committee member on its board.

Selection of committee members took place. Stepping down were Laurie Bialik and Carol A. Roscoe; reselected for another three-year term were Andrew D. De Rycke, Therese J. Diekhans and Aaron Shanks.

Also selected were Jon Lutyens and Cristin J. Hubbard, with Richard Arum and Sylvie Mae Baldwin selected as alternates.

Special guest Flora Stamatiades, National Director, Organizing & Special Projects, spoke about the revised Members Project Code. She also spoke about *Ask If It's Equity*, saying Seattle was specifically chosen because of its large, tech-savvy population. Jimmie McDermott, Western Regional Councillor, said he was pleased to attend so that he could listen to and get to know Seattle members.

The committee was pleased to meet Gail Gabler, Western Regional Director. Her interest in reaching out to and fostering greater communication between L.A. and Western Region areas is welcome and appreciated. She also expressed a focus on work-weeks – one challenge being to move theaters from Special Agreements and Guest Artist to stable contracts. She will find a willing ally in the liaisons, who know the strengths and weaknesses of many of the theaters in question.

Among other topics: The region is going to get a new Equity theatre in Tacoma, Washington — the Tacoma Actors Repertory Theatre (TART). The group discussed the increased use of video auditions. Christopher Comte, Equity member and local SAG-AFTRA staff member, reminded the committee that the SAG-AFTRA office has a studio set

up for this purpose and is available for use.

During a congenial meeting that extended beyond the two hours scheduled, the membership and guests engaged in thoughtful and open discussion. It was a great time to

share some of the Seattle experience with guests and an opportunity to get to know Gabler, who is experienced in union operations, knowledgeable and proud of Equity's legacy — and willing to listen to regional members.

St. Louis Meets for Annual Membership Meeting

By Kari Ely, St. Louis Liaison Chair

The St. Louis Membership Meeting, held on April 27, 2015, came to order in the Gaslight Theater – home to the region's newest SPT theater, the St. Louis Actors' Studio. Producer and Artistic Director, and new Equity actor, William Roth accepted an Equity plaque on behalf of the theater from Central Business Representative David Kolen. Special guests were Senior Business Rep. Christian Hains, Central Regional Director Sean F. Taylor – and there was a surprise visit from Central Regional Vice President Dev Kennedy.

The "Central Region Four" filled attendees in on the organizing of new theaters, additional contracts being added to local theaters, the newest MPC/Fringe Contract being sculpted, the *Ask If It's Equity* campaign.

Actor Steve Isom was

selected to fill the liaison seat left open after the passing of actor, scenic carpenter and dear friend to all Jerome A. Russo. As member James Anthony so beautifully stated, "No one can replace Jerry Russo."

The supportive community of artists mixed and mingled, discussed the recent local GO Awards and the Circle Awards given by local critics. John P. Contini and his son Jason Contini were awarded Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor, respectively, for their performances in *Death of a Salesman* at Insight Theatre Company.

Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed Friday, July 3, 2015, in observance of Independence Day. All Equity offices will reopen on Monday, July 6.