



Twin Lakes Playhouse

Twin Lakes Playhouse, 600 W. Sixth Street, Mountain Home, Arkansas 72654 870-424-0444

www.twinlakesplayhouse.org

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The play was a great success, but
the audience was a disaster.

Oscar Wilde



Letter from Your Chairman

By Lloyd Lowery

At the August Board meeting, the directors discussed and adopted a description of the responsibilities and duties of a technical director. Those specifications are made a part of the Standing Rules for operation of the playhouse. Although it was not formally stated, it is intended that this be an appointed position and the incumbent serves at the pleasure of the Board.

To the best of my knowledge, there is only one person on our current membership roster who meets the listed qualifications. That person is W.W. McElrath (Bill) and he has been serving in this capacity on an unofficial basis for this year. I propose that Bill be officially appointed to this position for an unspecified length of time.

The critical part of all this is that selection of all technical chairpersons remains with the director/producer of each production. The technical director serves as a resource person and is available for consultation and assistance on any technical phase of the production at the request of the director/producer. In other words, he is there to help if you want it. However, any director/producer choosing to independently assume responsibility for the technical aspects of their production also assumes responsibility for the use, maintenance, and any possible damage to the light and sound equipment.

Excerpt from Standing Rules

SECTION V: Technical Director (TD)

The TD has the daily responsibility for the technical operations of the theater including lighting, sound, set design and construction, and coordinating necessary maintenance. TDs must be able to work with a great deal of independence and exercise independent judgment in performing a wide variety of duties. Because the TD may be called upon to deal with a wide range of technical issues, he/she benefits from a working knowledge of techniques, methods and procedures of theatrical productions including



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stage, set, lighting systems, stage carpentry, and appropriate safety precautions and procedures. Typically, a TD has some advanced training or

education and may hold a bachelor's degree in technical theater arts or a related field and/or can demonstrate responsible work experience in the technical aspects of theatrical productions.

In general, a TD:

- Offers consultation to the director/producer in determining the technical supports, such as lighting, sound, staging, and any special needs necessary.
- Assists with designing, setting up, maintaining, and operating lighting and sound systems for productions in cooperation with the show director.
- Assists with designing and constructing the set(s) in cooperation with the director and set design/set construction chairman.
- Oversees stage crews and volunteer workers as needed at the request of the director/producer.
- Trains volunteers in the operation of the light and sound system as necessary for each production.
- Monitors the condition of equipment including lighting, sound, and stage needs (flats, constraints); performs preventative maintenance on equipment.
- Establishes and maintains effective and harmonious working relationships with coworkers, vendors, volunteers, and others.
- Performs other duties as may be delegated by the Board of Directors.

Approved on August 10, 2009 by the Board of Directors as an addendum to Twin Lakes Playhouse Standing Rules as adopted May 14, 2008.

DIAL M for MURDER

September 4 - 20

Director's Notes

By *W.W. McElrath*

This note will be after the fact as we close on the 20th. Opening weekend was very good even though we had the small audiences that come with a long weekend. As always, the last minute things that put a show together were present, but none were too large of obstacles to hurt it at all. Margie LaFevers was my Assistant Director. A great cast consisting of Bill Simpson, Stacy Tiffin, Chrissy Carney, Lloyd Lowery, Mike Baker, and Don Julin. We also had a very hard working back stage crew lead by the ever present Barb Vosecek, Laural Tiffin, Linda Pestwood, Noelle King, Lizzie Rambosek, and Gretchen Sanders. We had the assistance of Jerry Sexton, from Bull Shoals, who did all of our hair styles and makeup. I would gladly have any of these people on any of my shows. I want to thank everyone who helped make this show a success from the car parkers, concessions folk, Lisa who acted as my house manager. My cast and crew worked extremely hard for the six weeks that it took to get it together. The first weekend feedback was very good and everyone who saw it had good things to say. I hope the rest of our run is as good as the first.



Singing the "Blue Hair" Blues?

From the AACT Knowledge Base

How theatre companies are working to attract younger audiences by Stephen Peithman

Theatre audiences are aging. According to a report by the National Endowment for the Arts, arts attendance has declined along generational lines due to a "massive shift in taste and tradition" as pop music and mass culture displace the traditional performing arts. This shift, while not uniform in all areas of the country, even has taken on a name: "Blue Hair Syndrome." This is not to suggest, of course, that there is something intrinsically wrong with older audiences. Rather it reflects the concern that if theatre is to thrive it must keep current audiences while pulling in younger patrons in increasing numbers. We asked performing arts organizations around the country what they are doing to broaden their audience appeal. Here's what we found.

Working with Schools

Bringing plays to the schools introduces youngsters to live theatre, and thus makes an important long-term contribution. However, a program that brings students to the theatre has greater potential for audience development. Why? Because young people see a play in a fully equipped theatre--*your* theatre. Since it's often their first experience their excitement and enthusiasm generates positive word of mouth about you. Their parents and teachers become familiar with you as well, including where you're located. Bringing the student to the play helps build the theatre-going habit. That's why the Asheville [NC] Community Theatre offers morning matinees to area high and junior high schools in February and April. ACT staff members provide teachers with study packets for use in the classroom prior to performance. ACT's offerings are not typical student fare, either, but plays such as *All My Sons* and *Marvin's Room*. Student admission for the daytime matinees are kept low, with free admission for teachers and chaperones. The Caldwell Theatre Company, in Boca Raton, Florida, has had a Theater for Schools program since 1987. Theater for Schools productions are performed without charge on weekday mornings each fall. After the performance, students participate in a question-and-answer period with the actors and production staff. (Caldwell actively solicits corporate and individual donors for the program.) A similar case is the Adopt-a-School Program of the Paper Mill Playhouse in Milburn, New Jersey, which has allowed 3,000 local students to see a season of six shows without charge. (Talk about building the theatre-going habit!) A discussion before the shows help the youngsters feel welcome and better understand what they are about to see. They also meet the directors, performers and set designers. Last year 12 schools were involved in the basic program, which runs in a three-year cycle. Youngsters begin as sophomores and

continue through their senior year. In their final year, participants are asked about their personal theatre interests, so that Paper Mill can bring in artists to teach master classes. The theatre has followed up with an artist-in-residency program that allows young people to write and produce their own theatre pieces.

Special Youth Programs

Paper Mill's move to its own program reflects the growing interest in efforts outside the classroom, actively involving young people in productions. "Our theatre has always been a welcoming place for kids who don't do sports," explains Pat Kight of Albany [OR] Civic Theater. "Drama teachers at both our local high schools feed their kids into our program, particularly the ones who are having trouble with motivation. They often start out working backstage, and we're not afraid to give them responsibility. We've had a 13 year-old running lights--and quite well, I might add. A recent assistant director was 16 and so competent she's scary. They bring in their friends, too." Recently the company has begun to offer tuition-based acting and stagecraft classes for elementary and secondary school students. Results have been good, not only for the schools, but for the theatre company. "Many of those kids have begun bringing their parents to see their shows," Kight reports. "Many of those parents will return on their own for our other productions." Another theatre company that gets youngsters involved is Connecticut's Crystal Opera, which offers a youth opera program. "Children, mostly teens, are introduced to opera," explains David Zack. "They perform, they tech, they sing in the choruses of major operas, and even produce student operas. This is the best way I've seen of introducing the next generation to the performing arts, and it also brings their parents to see the shows." The director holds discussions during which the youngsters deal with the history of the opera, the composer, the production, the context, and the period of the piece. The company's guest artists are invited to participate, and most are willing and eager to share their experience. "The kids are encouraged to do additional research," Zack reports, "and boy, do they! Every year we attract more kids and every year they are younger."

Out of the Rut

Working with young people is an investment in your company's future. So is broadening the audience base to include young adults, particularly those 25 to 40 years old. Pat Kight of Albany Civic Theater reports that when she first began working with the company, "the audience pretty much fit the blue-hair cliché--lots of loyal, longtime patrons who were getting old enough that they packed the matinees because they don't much want to go out at night. We used to have Thursday-night shows where there were more people on the stage than in the house." Such a situation leads to stagnation in many cases. As Douglas Langworthy notes in an article in *American Theatre*, "the harsher economic climate for the arts has caused theatres to become more reliant than ever on box office income and hence their audiences. A theatre's need to hold onto the audience at all costs--afraid of alienating anyone-- can amount to a form of self-censorship, preventing it from making risky or demanding choices."

The Albany theatre, however, began doing newer, more challenging plays, and making some effort to market them to new audiences--the nearby university community, for instance. "We do nine to ten productions each season," Pat Kight explains, "so there's still plenty of room for old standards. But what surprised us is that our older patrons turn out for the unusual stuff, too. I'm not saying we're wildly avant garde, but we do try to stretch ourselves--and our audiences--a little. We run in the black, by the way, with no government or grant support. In a town of 32,000 people we're filling 10-11,000 patron seats a year in a 160-seat house."

What the Oregon group discovered is mirrored in the research of Bob Johnson; a graduate student at the University of Maryland, whose research has found that to attract younger adults, a company must start with the selection process. "Young adults want to attend plays that have name recognition," he says. "Something that has been a pretty popular movie, for example, has a better chance at getting those younger audiences into the theatre. If they don't know the play, they want to know what it is about. A focus group I conducted asked for synopses--similar to those that appear on the back of video boxes--to be included on posters and other promotional material."

Other Strategies

David Hansen, who is 27, was brought to Dobama Theatre in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, in order, he says, "to get a new audience in the seats. Dobama Theater has a reputation for producing the newest plays by established and emerging playwrights and its productions are professionally executed. However, its audience is, for the most part, the very same people who started with it 35 years ago. Artistic Director Joyce Casey wanted to turn things around." Hansen's created a late-evening series called Dobama's Night Kitchen, whose mission is "to produce original works by today's younger artists that are socially relevant, entertaining to experience, and inexpensive to produce and attend," he explains. Curtain time is 11:00 p.m. following Friday and Saturday night main stage performances. The first production was *Bummer*, an original work detailing the real-life traumas of growing up in Cleveland during the late '70s and early '80s.

The production was co-written by an ensemble of young artists under Hansen's direction. This was followed by two editions of *The Realistic World*, a self-titled "experiment in improvisation."

In April Dobama's Night Kitchen produced two one-acts, one by George Bernard Shaw, the second a new play by Sarah Morton, two "complimentary pieces pertaining to public funding for the arts," Hansen says. All Night Kitchen performances cost \$6 or less to attend, and none are more than 90 minutes in length. Imagination and a good dose of marketing savvy can make a difference. In Allentown, Pennsylvania, for example, The Theatre Outlet offers a series called "Counter Culture" on Mondays in which different forms of staged productions are performed in a cafe-type atmosphere. Admission is usually around \$5 and attracts high school, college and young adults. Lower prices are a must if a theatre is to attract younger audiences, particularly families. A family of four or five will have a hard time going to the theatre if tickets are expensive. And young people, without much experience in theatre-going, are not likely to experiment if the price is high. Thus, many companies offer lower prices for at least one performance, as well as pay what-you-can nights, two-fers (two tickets for the price of one), and student rush (half price tickets 15 minutes before curtain). All these are excellent options to keep theatre affordable to younger audiences and thus build the theatre-going habit. And since the price of hiring a babysitter is enough to deter some parents, Center Stage in Baltimore, Maryland, offers a series called "Child's Play," which provides play-related activities for two to ten year-olds while their parents see the show. Ideas like this, and the others we've reported here, are only the tip of the iceberg. Every theatre company should examine its own efforts to encourage new audiences. After all, the future of theatre is what we make it.

AUDITIONS FOR STEEL MAGNOLIAS

September 25- 6:30 pm and September 26- noon at the playhouse.

Ellie Bast - In Memory



Earlier this month we lost another one of our treasured members, Ellie Bast. A wisp of a woman and burdened in her later years with an oxygen tank she had to cart around with her due to her emphysema, she attended TLP meetings, served as Play Reading Committee Chairman for one year, and was always available to work concessions for our productions. Ellie was a member of Mensa for many years with an IQ in the 150's. She loved quilting and making up her own designs for the quilts. Recently she was knitting a baby sweater for her great-grandson.

Not only was she a female engineer with advanced degrees in chemical and mechanical engineering, attended several universities, and had a distinguished career for many years, she evolved in a world usually dominated by men and was their superior when she

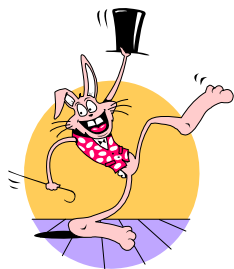
was only 17 years old. She also loved to read and share.

Another remarkable thing about Ellie was her spunk. In order to celebrate her 80th birthday, she went hot air ballooning with her friend Brenda Ferebee just 2 years ago! They had a great time together.

Ellie is survived by her husband Gordon Bast, and a son and daughter and a cat named Michael. She loved adventures and had wanted to go to Colorado where her son lived. Unfortunately, her dependence on oxygen made this impossible. Ellie was a great friend and enjoyed life to the end.

Setting the Stage

By John Eberhard



MORE ETIQUETTE

I stumbled across this "Director's Tempest List" and thought there

were some pretty good reminders in there for all of us.

The Tempest: Some Notes from your Director's Anal Dimension

- Please, for dress rehearsals and of course performances, **ARRIVE BY THE CALL TIME!!!** This is essential if the whole cast is to be costumed, made up, and ready by curtain. To get through the rehearsals and not drive home at sunrise, starting promptly is necessary. It is also essential for the Stage Manager's peace of mind for performances. If you are not in the theatre at call time (door will be open for you at least half an hour before that), the Stage Manager will call you looking for you. The Director, a neurotic, arrives at the theatre on performance nights well before call—usually around 6:00—so if you come early you can get in.

- When you arrive, remember to inform the Stage Manager.

- On performance nights the cast and crew are expected to park in the upper lot. As you see, the space is limited. Car-pooling is encouraged!

- Each cast member, please be responsible for your own costume and personal props from the point at which you receive them until Strike day. This means making sure your costume (etc.) is safely and carefully stored in the dressing room where you can find it, keeping it presentable, and checking that all pieces are accounted for. If you want to take something home to clean, press, or mend, please do so at the END of the weekend, and bring it back at the BRUSH-UP rehearsal: Let's not run the risk of leaving it home on a performance night (which has been done). **DO NOT** wash a costume without checking with the Costumes mistress (or Director)!!! Some pieces **CANNOT** be washed. If your costume or prop is damaged, please mark the spot with a red stick-on dot and put it in the designated area.

- Make sure you have come to an understanding with the Stage Manager about the placement of your props. You are responsible for double-checking them before performances and for returning them to their place after use. No props or set pieces are to be moved except 1) as scheduled in the performance or 2) at the Stage Manager's request.

- Space in the dressing room is limited. Please be considerate with access to the make-up mirrors. (A second dressing area will be available downstairs but should be used only by those who have quick changes to make.) Please also remember to be QUIET in

dressing areas and backstage—on performance nights, from 6:30 on. (Walk softly, too—backstage, in the dressing room, and in the passageway.)

- During performances, please, **NO CONVERSATIONS BACKSTAGE**. If someone asks you to be quiet at any time, do so without question. If there is an emergency, alert the Stage Manager and she will deal with it.

- Although the Stage Manager will keep an eye on things, you are ultimately responsible for being on time for your entrances. There is a sound monitor in the dressing room. If you choose to spend between-scenes time in the parking lot or lobby instead of the dressing room, be sure to keep tabs on the action. Time your visits to the bathroom wisely.

- Please, no smoking anywhere in the building. And help keep the backstage area clean: don't leave cups, food wrappers, tissues, etc., sitting around; put them in the trash or appropriate recycling bin. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING FOOD OR BEVERAGES INTO THE DRESSING ROOM!!** (exception: water.) Please do not eat or drink ANYWHERE in costume.

- If you find a place backstage or onstage that needs to be marked with glow-tape, please tell the Stage Manager.

- Note the frequency of the term "Stage Manager." Before and during performances, the Stage Manager (or her Assistants) will be **IN CHARGE**. Any request or directive from said Stage Manager is to be complied with immediately, without discussion.

- The Director prefers that cast **NOT** appear in the lobby in costume! Your true fans will wait

- Brush-up rehearsals will be in costume but not make-up; they will be run-throughs and may involve fine-tuning or revisions.

- Please be sure that the Stage Manager has your cell phone number or the number where you can be reached before a performance. Also make note of the Stage Manager's and Director's cell phone numbers, in case of emergency.

Did you know we are selling gift certificates to our performances? If you are interested in purchasing some as gifts for your friends, please contact Shirley Spitzer to make the arrangements.



MEETINGS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, BOARD MEETING AT 6:00 P.M.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT 7:00 P.M.

It is requested and required that each member fill out a new application form when paying this year's membership dues. If you have not done so already, please update your membership. If you cannot attend a meeting, you can download a membership form off the website, fill it in, and submit it and your \$5.00 check to:

Twin Lakes Playhouse, P.O. Box 482, Mountain Home, AR 72654

Soliloquy

By Deb Smith

It is always a thrill when new members participate in one of our productions. Our latest production, *Dial M for Murder*, brought two stage virgins in and some newbies to the backstage crew. Not only did our actors do a great job but the capable crews made the show run smoothly.

As a director, I know how comforting it is when I reach the point in production where I can trust the Stage Manager and crew to take care of the actors, the set, and the props. I also know how relieved I am when I can turn over the play to the actors and know that they will succeed in portraying my vision for the characters while staying true to the playwright's intention.

When I directed *A Christmas Carol*, I could not have been more pleased when John Eberhard took the role of Charles Dickens/Scrooge and made it his own. All my actors were incredible on that show and I never hesitated to sing their praises. I felt so blessed to be working with such a talented group of actors. I felt the same with *The Spitfire Grill* and *Big Bad*. And I'm sure I will be just as lucky to find a well-rounded and incredibly talented cast for *Steel Magnolias*.

The point I'm making is this: as a director, I have a vision and a purpose for choosing the plays I do. When that vision becomes a reality through the dedication and talent of my actors and the capabilities of my stage crew, I am overjoyed and humbled at the same time. Creativity is a powerful gift and we should never

take it for granted. I will continue to create as I have done and praise my future casts and crews for their

follow-through.

WE STILL COLLECT BEST CHOICE LABELS Please return them to Patty Kotlicky.

Twin Lakes Playhouse Members' Meeting August 17, 2009-09-03

Called to order @ 7:00 Lloyd Lowery

Welcome to members and guests.

Minutes of previous members' meeting approved as published.

Treasurer's report was approved as published.

Bill Simpson reports 81 members.

John Eberhard- maintenance- reports that the air conditioning system blew a capacitor but that was repaired today.

Lloyd Lowery reports that four board members will need to be replaced by November. The membership should be considering nominees.

Old Business: Projects committee- Carol Eberhard reports that cleaning up the upstairs must wait for cooler weather.

Cable-Butress wall- Lloyd Lowery announced that the Board has approved a bid from Briss Construction/Concrete for \$3,800. to remove cable from stage. The membership must vote on this decision. Motion make by Bill Simpson, seconded by W.W. McElrath to accept the bid as presented. Lloyd Lowery will contact the appropriate parties involved to begin project.

Lloyd Lowery was proud to report that the stage floor has been sanded and sealed. He strongly reminded each director/producer/stage crew to treat the floor with care when painting and moving furniture.

W.W. McElrath gave a report on current production now in rehearsal, "Dial M for Murder." He states that rehearsals are going well and that membership night will be Sept. 2, 2009.

Lisa Hammett is recruiting workers for concessions and car parking. Please let Lisa know when you would be available.

Lloyd Lowery reports that W.W. McElrath will be holding a technical directors workshop- date to be announced.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes taken by Denise Jones



That's Entertainment!

Carol Eberhard shared another wonderful 10-minute play with the membership at last month's meeting called "After." It's the story of a young journalist who, while on tour at Disney World with her finance', wanders off and discovers a field filled with discarded princes, princesses, horses, and other fairytale characters. Cindy (played by Denise Jones), already doubting her commitment to her upcoming marriage, is more confused than ever once she realizes these Disney characters have been discarded when their story ends. The fairy godmother, Glynda (played by Deb Smith), explains to Cindy that she has the ability to write her own "happily ever after." And so, Cindy returns to the bus renewed with her love for her finance' and excited

about her upcoming marriage and their life together.

Ten minute plays are a great way to showcase actors and directors. They are complete in themselves and usually have an easy set design. If you would like to participate in any sort of entertainment at our membership meetings, please contact Carol Eberhard at eteam@centurytel.net.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR: At the present time, we have four plays submitted for the 2010 season. One of them is the children's show. Perhaps this is a good time for some of our members interested in directing to try their hand at a one-act play. We need three plays to make it a night of one-acts. This is an incredible opportunity to stretch yourself and see if this would be something you'd be interested in doing. If you want to take a chance or learn more about this, please contact me directly as I am play reading committee chairperson. We have one-act plays at the theatre or we can order some for you. Carol Eberhard always has suggestions, too, so between all of us, I'm sure we could come up with something wonderful!

Deb Smith

If anyone has any announcements, articles of interest, would like to contribute an editorial or submit a picture, please let me know. This is the membership's newsletter, after all, and it is up to all of us to make it successful. Therefore, please contact me by phone at 870-421-6099 (cell), 870-467-5608 (home), or by e-mail at ozarktootsie@centurytel.net.

***** **Deadline for October 2009 Newsletter is October 1st*******

Board of Directors 2009: Lloyd Lowery, Chairman; Bill Simpson, Vice-Chairman; Mike Baker/Denise Jones, Recording Secretaries; Cindy Young, Treasurer; Yvonne Gehrke; Janet Lacefield; and John Eberhard.

Editor: Deb Smith (421-6099 or 467-5608 for suggestions or submissions); Copy Editor: Sally Mollenkopf; Consulting Editor: Carol Eberhard; Contributing Editors: John Eberhard and Marjorie Rock; Website-Webmaster: Bill Simpson.