

Your Income Tax

So Many Regs... So Little Time

By Sandra Karas
VITA Program

Literally! On its way out of town, the 111th Congress left us with many last-minute Internal Revenue Code provisions, the regulations of which are still being written. And the IRS is reconfiguring its computers to accommodate these revisions and additions and has announced that the kinds of returns that our members file will not be accepted before February 15, 2011 and maybe later. This includes those taxpayers who itemize deductions, who claim tuition fees deduction, educators' expenses, first-time homebuyer credit and the 2008 repayment thereof, and a few other circumstances that cannot be processed until the IRS re-programs its systems. By the time you read this, we at the New York VITA office will be updated and ready for anything that comes in the door. We have some new volunteers and a new space to provide privacy to our member taxpayers and comfort to our volunteers.

The 2010 Tax Relief Act brings us some welcome extensions to provisions that were due to expire and other changes. Here are some of the highlights:

1. Those who received the first-time homebuyer credit in 2008 know that this was an interest-free loan – unlike the 2009 credit that was free money in your pocket. The 2008 loan begins its repayment period with the filing of your 2010 return, so

make sure you remind your preparer about it if this applies to you.

2. As of this writing, the \$2,400 tax-free exclusion on your unemployment benefits has not been extended and, therefore, you will have to pay tax on the entire amount you received in 2010.

3. The \$250 above-the-line deduction for qualifying expenses for primary and secondary teachers has been extended through 2011.

4. The above-the-line deduction for qualified tuition and related fees has also been extended this year.

5. The ceiling on which payments to the Social Security Administration are assessed remains the same as last year's - \$106,800. For 2010, the rates also remained unchanged, but this year, unless you are self-employed, you will also save on the rate that you pay social security tax. It's been reduced from 6.2% to 4.2%. There is no limit on the earnings amount for the 1.45% tax to Medicare in any tax year.

6. State and local sales taxes have also been extended as an itemized deduction category for those who live in states with no income tax or whose state/city withholdings are lower than the sales tax for that geographic area.

7. The standard deduction for real property taxes has *not* been extended for 2010. Those claiming these taxes must itemize to claim the deduction.

8. Mileage rates for 2010 are 50¢ for business miles, 16.5¢ for medical and moving miles and 14¢ for your charitable miles driven. These rates are for those who do *not* claim actual auto expenses. A reminder that business mileage consists of the driving you do in search of work, driving out of town on a job in your own vehicle and any miles you incur driving for your employer for which you are not reimbursed. It does not include commuting back and forth to work.

9. Estates of decedents who died in 2010 have been granted a special provision for calculating basis on the inherited assets. Beneficiaries may claim *either* the decedent's basis or the step-up (fair market value) basis, whichever is more advantageous to the filer. Whichever method is chosen, however, must be used consistently on all assets.

10. Tax-free donations from IRA proceeds up to \$100,000,

(continued on page 8)

Carol Waaser Retires From AEA After 28 Years

Acting Executive Director Carol Waaser has retired after a 28-year career at Actors' Equity Association.

Ms. Waaser joined the Equity staff in 1983 as Traveling Business Rep, visiting theatres throughout the U.S. and meeting with actors, producers, arts councils and private foundations. She administered the Dinner Theatre, Cabaret and Developing Theatres contracts in 1987 before being named Director of Membership Education and Communications until 1991. As Senior Business Representative, she was Chief Negotiator for various contracts, including Walt Disney World, and supervised contracts for Developing Theatres. In 1997, she was selected to be Equity's first Eastern Regional Director, a new position established by Council as part of the Union's National Representation plan. In that position she served as Chief Negotiator for the Off-Broadway contract and was co-Negotiator of the 2008 Production Contract negotiations. In November 2009, she was named Acting Executive Director.

Ms. Waaser, who has an MFA from Yale School of Drama, has been an Equity member since 1970. Prior to joining the AEA staff, she worked as a Stage Manager, Company Manager, Casting Director and Operations Manager for theatre, dance and opera companies.

In her final address at the Eastern Regional membership meeting on January 7, 2011, Ms. Waaser said she that she will miss the opportunity to interact with members, taking on producers or general managers in defense of actors, being involved in legislative issues, traveling around the country and visiting theatres, and sorting through Equity's unique brand of democracy. She will not miss the



Carol Waaser. (Photo: Stephanie Masucci)

hustle and bustle of Times Square. Calling herself "an ardent fan and passionate admirer of theatre" since her first show (*Li'l Abner*) at the age of ten, Ms. Waaser said it has been "a privilege to work for Equity."

McColl Takes the Reins

Equity's new Executive Director, Mary McColl, officially started work on Tuesday, January 18, 2011. Her day began with a welcome breakfast with the New York staff, Officers and Councillors. In the afternoon she attended the regular monthly Council meeting which, despite the cold and wet weather, was extremely well attended. Ms. McColl is the seventh Executive Director in Equity's almost-100 year history (there were also three Acting Executive Directors). (An interview with Ms. McColl will appear in the next issue of Equity News.)

She was recently interviewed for Equity News.

EN: Looking back, how has the theatrical industry changed since you started at AEA?

CW: There has been enormous growth in not-for-profit theatre, particularly in the '80s and '90s. There has also been a large increase in the number of colleges and universities offering theatre programs, spurring a growth in Equity membership. This has created challenges for Equity to create more contractual job opportunities while trying to maintain high standards of compensation and working conditions. In terms of how theatre is produced, we've seen directors and designers pushing the envelope to make ever more exciting productions. Equity is constantly monitoring the safety of our members and putting protocols in place to reduce risks.

EN: How has Equity changed?

CW: We've grown, in terms of both the number of members and our staffing. Theatre is no

(continued on page 3)

Equity to Hold National Conference

Councillors, Non-Councillor Central Regional Board members and Area Liaisons from around the country will gather in New York City for a National Conference in plenary session on March 13-15, 2011. The first such Conference since 2005, the plenary will provide an opportunity to discuss the major internal and external issues facing Equity and enable the leadership and

staff to identify and prioritize goals. The agenda for the Conference currently covers broad issues of job development, governance, finance and member outreach. "The Conference is particularly timely in light of Mary McColl's arrival as Executive Director," said President Nick Wyman. "We expect the candid exchange of views to be enormously productive for everyone involved."

Index

Waaser retires; McColl begins.....	1
Your income tax.....	1
Legislative corner.....	2
COST agreement ratified...3	
National news.....	4
Letters.....	8



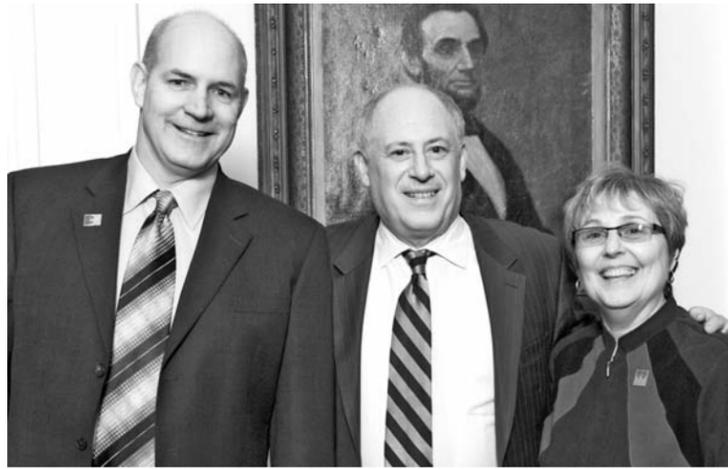


New York

• In late summer, Equity Senior Business Representative Kimberly Rimbold and Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg met with New York State Assemblyman Rory Lancman, who chairs the Workplace Safety Subcommittee. The result of that initial meeting was a roundtable forum, held by the Workplace Safety Subcommittee and the committees on Labor, Governmental Operations and Cities, on the need for stronger emergency evacuation plans for Broadway theatres. Equity, as well as other Broadway unions, theatre owners, the NYC Fire Department, OSHA and the NYC Office of Emergency Management all participated. The legislative team issued a report on their findings at the roundtable and made recommendations that include: OSHA will issue a clearer guidance on which theatres are required to establish Emergency Action Plans and will increase the number of inspections of theatres to ensure compliance with existing requirements is enforced; theatre owners and producers and those who work in the theatres will hold and attend compensated emergency preparedness training during regular work hours at least every six months and the NYC Fire Department will solicit the

participation of theatre workers, owners and producers in formulating the emergency preparedness standards in the NYC Fire Code.

• The New York State Department of Labor has issued proposed regulations governing child performers. At press time, the proposed regulations are in the public hearing and comments phase during which time interested parties can submit testimony. The proposed regulations include new language that prohibits a child from working past 10 p.m. Equity has been working in concert with Tjhe Broadway League, SAG and AFTRA on this and other language that could adversely affect child performers in the theatre. Our sister unions have stated in their testimony that they recognize the difference in the work environment between film and television and the stage, and support language that is theatre-specific. Equity is scheduled to give testimony at the next public hearing and will



Illinois Governor Pat Quinn is flanked by Central Regional VP Dev Kennedy and Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey at the Governor's Inaugural. (Photo: 2011 © Nannette Bedway)

continue to monitor the proposed regulations.

Illinois

• Central Regional Vice President Dev Kennedy and Central Regional Director Kathryn Lamkey attended the inauguration of Illinois Governor Pat Quinn. They also attended the open-house reception following the swearing-in ceremony, and had time to speak

with the Governor about Actors' Equity and the arts. They also had the opportunity to speak with a number of other theatre producers and artistic directors as well as a number of theatrical labor leaders. Governor Quinn is a supporter of the arts and a huge fan of *Million Dollar Quartet*, the cast of which performed at the event.

• With the mayoral campaigns beginning to take shape in Chicago, a task force has been

formed to help educate the candidates in the 2011 election about the value of the arts and arts education in the Windy City. Actors' Equity (represented by Ms. Lamkey) joins Arts Alliance Illinois and the League of Chicago Theatres as well as the African American Arts Alliance, the Arts & Business Council, the Chicago Artists' Coalition, the Chicago Music Commission, the Chicago Arts Learning Initiative, the Chicago Public Art Group, the Chicago Cultural Alliance, Lawyers for the Creative Arts, Urban Gateways and others in these efforts. For more updates and information, visit www.artspowerchicago.com.

California

• Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield and Assistant to WRD Richard Ostlund have participated in focus groups and meetings hosted by The Actors Fund as that organization strives to create affordable housing for artists and others in the greater Los Angeles area.

Member Finds Satisfying Second Career Through The Actors Fund Work Program

An Interview with John Pasha, Equity Member And Actors Fund Work Program participant

The following is an interview with John Pasha, conducted by Kathy Schrier, Director of The Actors Fund Work Program (AWP), which supports participants in identifying and finding meaningful work to complement their industry career or finding a new career.

KS: Tell me about your acting experience right after you finished your BFA.

JP: I was lucky to get work at The Shakespeare Theatre in DC, which made me an Equity Membership Candidate. I then got an MFA from the University of Delaware. After graduation, I returned to New York, since I was still an EMC, and started to book non-union work. Big mistake.

KS: What do you mean "big mistake?"

JP: I honestly didn't understand what it meant to work non-union—but I learned. There were no rules—I sometimes worked 14 days straight or worked 12 hour days with no overtime pay, and, forget earning credits toward health insurance. I soon realized that I could not be a professional actor without being union. As a result, when I was offered my next job, I joined Equity. It was one of the best decisions I ever made, and I have been very busy working regional theatre and Off-Broadway.

KS: So if you were busy acting, why did you come to AWP?

JP: No surprise—I had some good years, and some not so good years. I realized that acting is a wonderful career, but I needed to find another career that was equally fulfilling to complement the acting. I had it with survival work. I didn't want to take work just to pay bills.

KS: How did AWP help you?

JP: The counseling services helped me to define my strengths and interests outside of theatre. I also came to realize that it didn't have to be an either/or—I could have more than one fulfilling career at the same time.

KS: Where did all this lead you?

JP: In January of 2009 I returned from an eight-month acting gig to a horrible labor market. The teaching work had dried up, and even survival work was hard to find. This was a real

wake-up call. I always thought about health care and with AWP's encouragement, I went to a nursing school open house. I began volunteering in a hospital, realized that I wanted to be a nurse, applied to school, and got accepted.

KS: Nursing? Will that allow you to continue acting?

JP: Actually, I spent my summer break performing at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. It was a fabulous summer, but I have to admit I missed school. I do know that after I finish my degree and get licensed I must spend time working in a hospital to build my clinical foundation. There will be no way I can act during this period. However, because the demand for nurses is expected to continue to rise, once I have a strong foundation, I believe I will be able to have a dual career.

For more information about *The Actors Fund* call (212) 221-7300 or visit www.actorsfund.org.

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

Correction

Member James Eiler died on July 20, 2010. We regret that his name was spelled incorrectly in

the October/ November 2010 issue of Equity News.

Also in the October/ November 2010 issue (page 7) an incorrect photo accompanied



the report on the October 25, 2010 membership meeting of the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Here is the photo that should have appeared of the members in attendance at Zeum Space for the meeting.



ACTORS' EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913

EQUITYNEWS

Editor: **DICK MOORE**

Associate Editor: **HELAINÉ FELDMAN**

Equity News Advisory Committee

- Christine Toy Johnson, Chair (Eastern)
- Nancy Daly (Western)
- Diane Dorsey (Central)
- Nicole Flender (Eastern)
- Bruce Alan Johnson (Eastern)
- Kevin McMahon (Western)
- Liz Pazik (Central)
- Barbara Roberts (Western)

EQUITY NEWS (ISSN: 00924520) is published monthly except for combined issues in Jan./Feb., July/Aug., Oct./Nov., by Actors' Equity Association, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036. Telephone: (212) 869-8530. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Copyright 2003, Actors' Equity Association. Subscription price for non-members of Actors' Equity Association: \$25 per year. Postmaster: Send address changes to Equity News, 165 West 46th St., New York, NY 10036.

Carol Waaser Retires

continued from page 1

longer a “Mom and Pop” business and neither is Equity. We’ve increased the services we provide our members; we’ve improved the way we administer contracts; we’ve created new means of communicating with our members; and we’ve tried to stay flexible in handling the ups and downs and changes in our industry.

EN: What accomplishments are you most proud of in terms of your work for the Association?

CW: I don’t think of anything as being my accomplishment because everything we do at Equity is a group effort. But I’m very proud of our organizing Walt Disney World and continuing to get good contracts there. I believe I helped bring a lot of small theatres onto Equity contracts. (And many years ago I was part of the group that created the Small Professional Theatre Contract.) I played an integral part in negotiating what was in some ways a groundbreaking Production Contract in 2008. And there have been several arbitrations I’ve been involved with that Equity has won—those have been particularly satisfying because they usually involved an individual member whose grievance was ultimately upheld.

EN: What was your most

memorable “moment” at AEA?

CW: Oh, well, that moment remains in the category of confidential, so I’m not at liberty to talk about it...but it was a beaut!

EN: What were some of your most difficult challenges?

CW: I think one of the most challenging aspects of working for Equity is working within our democracy and understanding our motto of “one for all and all for one.” This requires making decisions that will make some members unhappy in the immediate moment, but must be done for the ultimate good of the Association and the larger membership. It’s often difficult to explain to a member who’s negatively impacted by the decision.

EN: We know that you are an avid bicyclist and have literally biked around the world. What are your immediate plans following your retirement?

CW: Clean my apartment! Seriously. But then in March I’ll start training on the bike for my next adventure—a four-week cycling tour of Italy. We cycle across Sicily and then up Italy from the “toe” all the way to Turin to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Garibaldi’s march and the unification of Italy. It will be almost 1,500 miles in four weeks. And when I return I will finally have time to be a “tourist” in New York and see and do all the things that are wonderful here.

COST Agreement Ratified

Faced with claims by Council of Stock Theatres (COST) members that they were continuing to experience economic distress, and their determination to impose a financial freeze, Equity was equally steadfast in its goal of improving minimum salaries after a previous two-year freeze. Talks began in New York on September 27 and 28 with two member theatres—Olney Theatre Center in Olney, Maryland and Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey. Facing a stalemate, on October 19 the Equity negotiating team received strike authorization from Council. With both sides realizing the severity of the situation and each others’ strong-held convictions, on November 22 a tentative agreement was reached that included modest salary increases of 1% in the first year and 2% in the second year. Fortunately, previous negotiations had already achieved acceptable health rates, which carried forward. This Agreement was ratified by Council on December 21, avoiding the strike scheduled to start five days later.

As part of the negotiation, Equity was able to attain a sunset clause reducing the maximum non-Equity performers that may be employed for large chorus musicals in Tiers 1-4 as of the last day of this Agreement.

Also, building on the groundwork of the 2008 negotiation, strong improvements were introduced into the Agreement for equal employment language and requirements and access for performers with disabilities. Expanded media use was also negotiated into the Agreement to provide the theatres necessary marketing tools in order to survive in the current economy.

In addition to Olney Theatre Center and Paper Mill Playhouse, the COST contract is used by independent theatres: Casa Manana, Fort Worth, TX; La Mirada, Fullerton, CA; Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Minneapolis, MN; Cape Playhouse, Dennis, MA; Ogunquit Playhouse, Ogunquit, ME and North Shore Music Theatre, Beverly, MA. In this new Agreement, provisions were reintroduced for Tier Two theatres, realizing a longstanding goal for reunification with the theatres that broke off from the bargaining unit in the mid ’90s (Cape Playhouse and Ogunquit Playhouse).

Equity’s negotiating team included Wally Dunn, Chair; Bill Bateman, 1st Vice Chair; Linda Cameron, Christine Toy Johnson, Stas’ Kmiec’, Irma Rogers, and Jess W. Speaker III. Chief Negotiator was Senior Business Representative Russell Lehrer, assisted by Business Reps Jeffrey Bateman and Patrick Lee.



Three Requests

By Nick Wyman

I have three requests for you. First, log on to www.actorsequity.org and go to the “Members Only” part of the website. (If you don’t have a computer, I have four requests for you – the first being to buy a computer. Really. It’s here to stay.) On the Members Only site, click on the “Go Green/2011 AEA Vote” icon, and sign up to vote online – whether you plan on voting or not. It costs a bunch of money (your dues money) to print the ballots and candidate bios and more money to mail them to you and (if you actually vote) yet more money to mail the ballots to the ballot counters. I’d also really like you to read the bios and vote – but that’s not one of my requests.

Secondly, while you’re on the Members Only part of the AEA website, click on the “My Profile” link under my picture, and then click on “Contact Info.” Check to make sure that AEA has your current address, phone number and e-mail address. That way, if AEA gets a check for you or if someone wants to offer you a job, Equity knows where to find you. If you still haven’t bought a computer since the previous paragraph, you may write AEA or call membership with your contact information.

My third request is to make

sure that the Equity-League Pension, Health Funds and 401(k) Trust Funds have your correct contact information. This way, if you are fortunate enough to earn health coverage, the Fund can reach you before the deadline for accepting the \$100 premium. E-mail them at health@equityleague.org, pension@equityleague.org, or [401\(k\)@equityleague.org](mailto:401(k)@equityleague.org) or, once again, write the P&H office or call them at 212-869-9380. You’ll notice that is a different number from the AEA number; that’s because AEA and the Funds are two separate organizations: separate staffs and separate boards.

Speaking of P&H, here’s a little commercial: it’s easier to qualify for the Equity-League health plan than the SAG or AFTRA plan and our premiums are lower. As for our pension plan, it’s *much* easier to qualify (two weeks of work in a year makes it a qualifying year and five years makes you vested). When you get your annual statement from the Pension Fund, check out how your benefit accrues: not only do you get a percentage of your earnings added to your annual retirement benefit, but you have \$11 per month or \$132 per year added to your benefit for every year in which you have at least two weeks of covered

work. So if you start when you’re 25, and if you have at least two weeks of Equity work each year over the next 40 years, it will add \$5,280 to your annual pension. The moral is: whenever you can, make sure you work at least two weeks each year under an Equity contract that requires a contribution to the Pension Fund; it may not pay you much in the moment, but it will pay you handsomely later.

As long as I am in this mother-hen-mode, let me remind you of the three-legged stool theory of retirement planning. One leg is Social Security, one leg is your union pension plan(s), and the third is your personal savings – such as our 401(k) Plan, which you can use to grow your savings on a tax-deferred basis under most Equity contracts. Don’t be like your foolish President, who in his 30s disdained to set aside money from his Broadway salary for his children’s education because he was so sure that when it finally came time for college he would be pulling down a nifty six-figure salary on some sitcom. There was no sitcom; and the kids, with the aid of several loans, went to state schools. However, despite my terrible financial planning, I won’t spend my declining years eating cat food – all thanks to my union pensions.

2011 Annual Election Calendar

Tuesday, February 22, 2011	Deadline for Reports of all Nominating Committees
Friday, March 4, 2011	Deadline for Nominations by Independent Petition (Materials due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Time)
Wednesday, March 9, 2011	Deadline for Candidates’ Statements for Equity News, Equity Website and Ballot Brochure (Due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. Eastern Time) Lottery for Ballot Placement (National Office)
Thursday, March 24, 2011	Deadline for registration to vote electronically
Friday, April 8, 2011	Annual National Membership Meeting (All Regions via teleconference) Candidate Speeches
Monday, April 11, 2011	Distribution of ballots (from balloting company)
Friday, May 20, 2011	Deadline for receipt of ballots
Saturday, May 21, 2011	Tabulation Day

E-Voting: It’s The Way To Go

What’s green, fast and cheap? **E-Voting in AEA’s upcoming 2011 Council elections.** Why? Because it’s the fastest and most convenient way to get your ballot (especially for members working away from home). Plus it’s cost effective! Last year more than 70% of registered e-voters voted online—a much higher return rate than paper ballots. Here’s how it works: Once you’ve registered for E-Voting, you will no longer receive a paper ballot. Instead,

you will receive an email directly from Elections Services Solutions (Equity’s balloting firm) on April 11, 2011 with a link to vote online. It’s fast and secure. To register for E-Voting,

log on to Members Only on Equity’s website, www.actorsequity.org, and look for the green E-Voting icon. The deadline for E-Voting registration is March 24, 2011.

Members Honored

Equity members Brian Dennehy, Linda Lavin, Fritz Weaver and, posthumously, Joseph Chaikin were inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame on January 24, 2011.

The 2010 Legacy Awards presented by Dancers Over 40 have gone to Equity members Fred Curt, Harvey Evans, Stuart Hodes, Richard Korthaze and Ken Urmston.



NATIONAL NEWS

Dallas

Dallas Theater Center Donates to Food Bank

Dallas Theater Center collected \$48,988.85 in donations for the North Texas Food Bank during its annual holiday production of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. In its three-year partnership with NTFB, Dallas Theater Center has contributed over \$130,686.38 to the non-profit hunger relief organization.

"We are deeply committed to giving back to the community that has given so much to us," says DTC Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty.

After each performance of *A Christmas Carol*, cast members invited audience members to make contributions to NTFB. On average, \$1,484.51 was collected per performance. This year's donations exceeded last year's by \$6,864.65.

In addition to collecting monetary donations, DTC staff, Brierley Resident Acting Company



Paige Phelps (c) and Lynn Hendricks (l) of the North Texas Food Bank accept a check from "Scrooge," Chamblee Ferguson.

members and *A Christmas Carol* cast donated their time by volunteering at the NTFB warehouse in October. After two days at the warehouse, DTC prepared 19 pallets of food for distribution—

the equivalent of 12,469 meals.

The North Texas Food Bank helps feed more than 53,000 families a month in 13 North Texas counties, with each dollar providing four meals.

Denver

Members Meet for Hot Bagels On A Chilly Morning

By Shelly Gaza
Chair, Denver Liaison Committee

The Denver Area membership met for its annual meeting at the Garner Galleria Theatre located within the Denver Center for the Performing Arts com-

plex. The hot bagels and coffee provided a warm welcome as members gathered on a chilly January morning to discuss local business as well as hear a National update from Western Regional Director Mary Lou Westerfield.

The following new members

were voted on to the Denver Liaison Committee: Rachel Fowler, Kitty Hilsabeck Skilman, Sharon Kay White and Anne Oberbroeckling. They join returning members Drew Frady, Paul Dwyer, Shelly Gaza, Lara Maerz, Chaz Grundy, and Betsey Cassell.



Attending the Denver Membership Meeting are: (front, l to r) Kitty Skillman Hilsabeck, Leslie O'Carroll, Sharon Kay White, Rachel Fowler, Valerie Hill, Deric McNish, Shelly Gaza; (middle) Annie Mackenzie, Jordan Leigh, Leigh Miller, Lindsey Hanahan, Lowell Noel, Anne Oberbroeckling, Andy Waldschmidt, Susan Long, Mary Lou Westerfield, Paul Dwyer; (back) Rosario Costanzo, Chaz Grundy, Jeff Roark, Paul Page, Lara Maerz, Craig Lundquist, Rod Fraid, Erin Joy Swank, Rob Reynolds, Jeremy Sortore, Bestey Cassell, Seth Rossman, Rob Westan.

New York

Triple-A's Offer Triple Opportunities to Audition for Franchised Agents

By Keith Howard
Director of Auditions

Equity members began enjoying a terrific new membership benefit late in 2009: an ongoing series of open auditions attended by NYC-area AEA-franchised agents. Over 30 sessions of Agent Access Auditions (AAAs or "Triple-A's"), all of them free of charge to members, were held in 2009-10. Seventy-four agencies — every active, local franchised firm — attended at least one session.

That's the good news. The better news? AAAs are already working. Several members have told us that they have signed or are freelancing with agents who saw them at these auditions. And Triple-A's are continuing, with three sessions in January 2011, three in February, and many more throughout the year.

Not surprisingly, Triple-A's have become very popular among Equity members, with a total of 1,046 members participating in 2009-10. During that year, the average participating member was seen by four agencies — agencies for which s/he might not have had the chance to audition, had it not been for this new Equity program.

Member Pearl Rhein, who has recently worked at La Jolla Playhouse and Alabama Shakespeare Festival, attended two sessions, auditioning for Abrams Artists Agency, Emerging Talent, Paradigm, Peggy Hadley Enterprises Ltd. and The Roster Agency. She sees AAAs as a career tool — one that complements her other efforts. "I attend EPAs. I also go to agent seminars and one-on-ones, which charge \$25 - \$50 to meet one agent at a time. AAAs are especially good, because you can be seen by as many as three agencies at once, all at no cost."

Triple-A's are the brainchild of Equity Councillor Bob Knapp. Mr. Knapp, along with Agency Committee Chair Judy Rice, Eastern EPA Committee Chair Linda Cameron and Equity staff, worked with members of the National Association of Talent Rep-

resentatives (NATR), the organization that represents many agencies, to give Equity members seeking representation this fantastic new chance to enhance their career opportunities. Mr. Knapp states, "I've been working on this for a decade, because I felt it was vital for all members to have access to the agents Equity franchises. I'm thrilled that AAAs have been such a success!"

To accommodate agents' schedules, Triple-A's are usually held on Monday evenings. Volunteer Equity monitors run the auditions with the same remarkable efficiency and supportive attitude that they bring to EPAs and ECCs.

While AAAs usually alternate between musical sessions (with members performing songs) and dramatic sessions (monologues), Equity has not hesitated to create special auditions when appropriate. For example, three agencies who work mostly with young people attended a special AAA held for members under 18. And Equity owes special thanks to Lucille DiCampli of McDonald/Selznick Associates for proposing a special Triple-A, just for dancers. In fact, not only did MSA propose the dancers' call, the agency also provided — free of charge — the services of a professional choreographer and assistant to work with auditioning dancers! MSA has offered to do this again in 2011.

Agencies have been very positive about the new program, several telling us how much they enjoy this chance to see actors they would not have been able to meet otherwise. As of January 2011, over half of NYC-area agencies have already planned their 2011 AAA attendance.

The program would not be possible without the contributions of dedicated staff members, including National Director of Membership John Fasulo and Agency Representative Calandra Hackney. Making AAAs work on a day-to-day basis are the Eastern Region Auditions Department staff, including Assistant Director Robin Welch and Associate Angel Wuellner.

New York, Los Angeles

Actors Fund Holds Seminars—East and West

It's a new year so don't forget to check out the special programs offered by The Actors Fund.

In **New York**, there is a Small Business & Entrepreneurship Forum on Wednesday, February 16, 2011 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Equity Council Room, 14th Floor, 165 West 46th Street. Email blevinson@actorsfund.org for information.

Also, there are networking opportunities; money management

sessions; job search, interview skills and resume writing workshops; seminars on getting and keeping health insurance; and meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and Debtors Anonymous. For information, visit the website actorsfund.org or call (212) 221-7300.

Similar seminars and group sessions are held in **Los Angeles**. Check them out at actorsfund.org or call (323) 933-9244.

New York

Annual Gypsy of the Year Competition Raises Over \$3.7 Million for BC/EFA

Photos: Peter James Ziefinski

Well, Hello, Dolly!... and a high-stepping bow to the 63 Broadway, Off-Broadway and national touring companies whose fundraising efforts raised \$3,776,720 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS in the six weeks leading up to the 22nd Annual Gypsy of the Year Competition on December 6 and 7, 2010.

Hosted by the "King of Deconstruction," Seth Rudetsky, two afternoons of standing ovations at the New Amsterdam Theatre kicked off with the entrance of the legendary (1) Carol Channing in "Carol for a Cure," directed and choreographed by Equity members Melissa Rae Mahon and Sean McKnight. The three-time Tony-winner sang a delightfully mischievous rendition of "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend," then, (2) backed up by many of the dancers who had appeared with her in the 1995 Broadway revival, brought the Harmonia Gardens back to life with the title song from *Hello, Dolly!*

With guest hosts Cherry Jones, T.R. Knight, Colin Quinn,



David Hyde Pierce, Billy Porter, Elizabeth Stanley and Hunter Ryan Herdlicka at the helm, audiences were treated to performances by the casts of 18 shows, including the touring companies of *Mary Poppins* and *Jersey Boys*, who came in from the road specifically for the event. Highlights of the show included (3) *Rock of Ages* cast member Julie Nelson and her

partner taking the Best Performance award with a heart-stopping, gravity-defying piece entitled, "The Puppet Master" and (4) *The Addams Family's* Adam Riegler, delivering an "It Gets Better"-themed monologue written and directed by co-star Nathan Lane on the challenges and dubious joys of being in *The Addams Family*, winning the Runner-up performance award.

Others in the show were the casts of *La Cage aux Folles*, *Mamma Mia!*, (5) *Chicago* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. There was also a special presentation (6) celebrating the 60th anniversary of Equity's Gypsy Robe, conceived and choreographed by Equity members Shea Sullivan and Pamela Remler. Dance numbers were presented by *Fela*, (7) *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and there was a moving performance by *The Lion King* in honor of young cast member Shannon Tavaréz. Also represented were the casts of *Promises*, *Promises*, *Wicked*, *Mary Poppins* and *Billy Elliot*. The show closed with (8) a reunion of past and present cast members of *In The Heights*, coming together for their final Gypsy of the Year appearance, led by the show's creator Lin-Manuel Mi-

randa, Javier Munoz and Kyle Beltran.

Amidst all the frolic and fun, (9) *Lombardi's* Judith Light led a moment of silence and brought many to tears, reminding all that "no one is alone."

A *Little Night Music* star Bernadette Peters and *Promises*, *Promises* co-stars Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth presented the fundraising awards and the judges' choices for the performance awards: Broadway Third Runner-Up/*The Addams Family* - \$150,000; Second Runner-Up/*Billy Elliot* - \$152,268; First Runner-Up/*Wicked* - \$181,609; and top donation raiser, (10) *Promises*, *Promises* - \$195,011. *Driving Miss Daisy* brought in the highest Broadway Play total with \$94,044 and *Avenue Q* took the top Off-Broadway spot with \$26,831, followed closely by *The Divine Sister* with \$24,444.

The national tour winners were *Jersey Boys*/\$285,398; *Wicked*-Emerald City Tour/\$247,571 and *Munchkinland Tour*/\$236,352, and *Shrek The Musical*/\$137,888.

A team of 14 Equity stage managers led by Jason Trubitt kept the show running, with a cast of more than 200 Equity members, scores of volunteers and the entire crew at the New Amsterdam.

New York

Three Receive Awards From AEA Foundation



Callaway Award recipients Lily Rabe and Matthew Rauch with Equity President Nick Wyman. (Photo: Stephanie Masucci)

It was a sweep for *The Merchant of Venice* when the Equity Foundation handed out its annual Joe A. Callaway and St. Clair Bayfield Awards at the Eastern Regional membership meeting on January 7, 2011.

Lily Rabe and Matthew Rauch received the Callaway Award, which was established by Equity member Joe A. Callaway to encourage participation in the classics and non-profit theatre and honors the best performance in a professional production of a classic play (one written prior to 1920) in the New York metropolitan area.

Ms. Rabe was recognized for her performance as Portia in *Merchant*, the Public Theatre production which originated in Central Park and then moved to Broadway. She said she "loved doing plays and being a part of this community" and it was "a great privilege" to play this role.

Mr. Rauch, also in *Merchant*, actually received the award for his performance earlier in the season as Bosola in the Red Bull Theater production of John Webster's 17th century play, *The Duchess of Malfi*, performed at the Theatre at St. Clement's. He echoed Ms.

Rabe's remarks, saying he was "delighted and proud to be a member of the theatre community." He also thanked his Dad for taking him to the theatre when he was a child.

Both awards were presented by Arne Gundersen, President of the Actors' Equity Foundation.

The St. Clair Bayfield Award honoring the best performance in a supporting role in a Shakespearean play in the New York metropolitan area, was presented by Equity President Nick Wyman. It went to Charles Kimbrough for his performance as the Prince of Arragon in the Broadway production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Mr. Kimbrough was ill and unable to attend the meeting so Matthew Rauch accepted on his behalf.

A \$1,000 check and a crystal plaque are given to all recipients.

The Judges Panel includes Joe Dziemianowicz, Daily News; Adam Feldman, Time Out NY; Susan Haskins, Theater Talk; Harry Haun, Playbill and David Rosenberg, Back Stage.

Office Closing

All Equity offices will be closed on Monday, February 21, 2012 in observance of Presidents' Day.

Save the Date

Area Liaison Meetings Set

The following dates have been confirmed for membership meetings in Area Liaison cities. Check the Equity website: www.actorsequity.org for further information.

Saturday, February 12, 2011
Austin/San Antonio
Membership Meeting
 10:30 a.m., Z Tejas Grill,
 1110 West 6th Street
 Austin, TX
 Brunch will be served.
Sunday, February 13
Dallas/Ft Worth Membership Meeting
 7:00 snacks and social
 7:30 meeting

Dallas Conservatory for the Arts
 7979 Inwood Road, Suite 201,
 Dallas, TX 75209
Tuesday, Feb 15, 2011
Central Florida Membership Meeting
 "Post Valentine's Love Offering"
 Snacks and drinks will be served starting at 6:30 p.m.
 10319 Orangewood Boulevard
 Orlando, FL 32821
 407-345-8600

Detroit

Liaison Committee Hosts Reception for EMCs

Equity members gathered for the annual Detroit Membership Meeting on November 22, 2010 at the Detroit Repertory Theatre. The evening began with the first-ever Detroit Equity Membership Candidate (EMC) reception. EMCs mingled with members while enjoying light refreshments provided by the Liaison Committee. There was also a short Q&A period with Equity Central Business Reps Luther Goins and Cynthia E. Hanks. Contract Associate Michael Cichon also attended.

Later at the membership

meeting, Mr. Goins reported on the selection of Mary McColl as the new Executive Director, the new Chicago Equity Building and the upcoming Equity Plenary. Members discussed topics ranging from educating new members, to changes in Equity agreements, specifically the revisions to the Small Professional Theatre Agreement. Members were welcomed by the Detroit Liaison Committee Members; Dana Gamarra (Liaison Chair) and Peggy Thorp (Committee member and Central Regional Board member).

Washington, DC

“Oklahoma!” Raises More Than Wheat

Arena Stage in the Nation's Capitol opened its 2010-2011 season by raising \$20,630 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS during its holiday run of *Oklahoma!* “We didn't know what to expect, but we raised \$2,000 in the first day of 12 in which we did appeals,” says cast member Nehal Joshi, who played Ali

er whispered to the cast member that he had just gotten that money the day before as a present for Thanksgiving.” Fellow cast member and co-chair of the Central Region Equal Employment Opportunity Committee E. Faye Butler, who played Aunt Eller, says, “You never know what people are going to do at that time of



Hakim and helped to organize the campaign. Money raised was split equally between BC/EFA and the DC Central Kitchen, a local charity providing over 4,500 meals daily to shelters, transitional homes and rehabilitation clinics in the DC area. “One of the best moments,” Nehal recalls, “was when a young boy put a \$20 bill into a bucket. His moth-

year, but the audience came through like champions, putting 10s, 20s, even the occasional \$50 in the buckets. We got applause every night when we said Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The cast was glad to know that people outside of New York know the organization and care about the good work still being done across the country.”

Chanhassen, MN

43 Couples Say “I Do” at Big Whopping Wedding

As a special promotion for its production of *I Do!, I Do!* in November, 2010, 43 couples from across Minnesota “tied the knot” or renewed their marriage vows in a mass ceremony (a “Big Whopping Wedding”) at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres.

Chanhassen's original production of *I Do! I Do!* ran for 22.5 years (with the same cast—Equity members David Anders and Susan Goepfinger) and closed in 1993 having played to 697,004 guests in 7,645 performances. Mr. Anders and Ms. Goepfinger married in real-life after their 500th performance. They are still married, still performing, live in Arizona and were special guests at the November 6 performance. Asked what they were most looking forward to in coming back to see this new production of *I Do! I Do!*, they said, “We're thrilled to see our friends perform this



Current cast members Keith Rice and Norah Long.

piece we love so much, and to be in the audience this time, and not on the stage.”

New York

AFCU Meeting is February 25

The Annual Meeting of Actors Federal Credit Union will be held on Friday, February 25, 2011 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the Equity Council Room on the 14th Floor

at 165 West 46th Street. There will be elections, a State of the Union report from AFCU President Jeff Rodman, refreshments and door prizes.

New York

Actors Meet Agents: New York and LA Host Seminars

In November, Equity's Eastern Region Membership Education Committee and Agency Committee held a seminar with agents. The following month, the Western Regional Member Ed Committee in LA also hosted a seminar with agents. These two informative seminars gave actors the opportunity to ask questions that shed light on important topics such as the best way to find an agent. While there are no absolutes or rules in the process, agents continue to seek out new talent and are as happy as the client when the actor gets a job.

Here is the first installment of a two-part series about the seminars. This is about the New York seminar.

New York Panelists: Liz Rosier, Hartig Hilepo Agency; Mark Schlegel, Cornerstone Agency; and Ken Melamed, Bret Adams Agency. The moderator was Councillor Judy Rice, Chair of the Agency Committee.

Here are some highlights:

What is the best way to find an agent? “I don't know the best way. You can do your mailings, and your photos and other actors can refer you. I don't know if there's one set way,” said one agent. Call Sheet (formerly Ross Reports) is one way to go “so you're not sending yourself to the wrong people.” Also the agents said it was important for actors to do their homework—to address the agent by name when writing and to know what kind of clients the agent does or does not represent.

What does an agent look for in a new client? The answers emphasized that an actor should “Just be yourself...The best scenario is that somebody is going to see your work and they're going to feel passionately about you and you'll connect.” One agent answered: “You never know when someone's going to hit you and it's really going to work.” Another said: “We're nev-

er looking for new clients. But we're always looking for new clients. It's a dichotomy. There's not room for one more but all of a sudden, miraculously, there is, when you find that one. It's not an exact science, and it's very much on instinct, which is how we do what we do.”

What about photos? Two agents offered this advice: “It's got to be a picture that grabs you...as long as it's something that's going to interest us to the point of going to the next step” and “it should look like you.” Head shots and three-quarter shots are more popular in New York, whereas full body shots are more popular in Los Angeles. The agents said they preferred submissions by mail rather than email. Referrals are good and should be mentioned at the time.

What about out-of-town work? Agents agreed that it is important and one agent said: “Regional theatre is fantastic. You meet playwrights and upcoming directors; it's where you establish a lot of relationships. I think it can be a great experience.”

The agents also agreed that it is important that actors work—even at low paying jobs, showcases, or short films. “Work is work. Work is good.” “And work begets work and you're more confident auditioning.”

How should an actor respectfully inform his/her agent of roles for which he/she is hoping to be submitted? An agent responded: “I think you have to know who you are and what roles you can really play. I hope that you know that we are working for you and that we are submitting you.”

What about “paying” to meet casting directors and agents? “I think you have to look at what the class is, where it is, and sort of weigh it and decide what you're going to gain from that.”

Regarding personal man-

agers, Equity staff cautioned that the Union has no jurisdiction over personal managers. Rules apply only to Equity Franchised Agents. “Never pay anyone unless you have work,” stressed John Fasulo, Director of Equity's Membership Department. “Don't put your name on any piece of paper that involves an agency without checking with Equity if you have any doubts as to whether or not they hold an Equity Franchise. If you do sign with a manager and you're not happy, Equity has no jurisdiction whatsoever over that particular area of the business.”

“What are you most proud of as an agent?”

Liz Rosier: “I'm in love with actors. I've never wanted to be an actor. I've just always admired actors and think you guys are really brave people and I'm in awe of you. I'm really proud to be an agent, to advocate for people who I believe in and believe in art, and to have good relationships with my clients.”

Mark Schlegel: “I'm proud because recently I celebrated my 20th anniversary with four clients. I can't believe they've stayed with me and they still listen to me and they still talk to me. I don't do anything but sell people's skills. And, when people out in the world ask, how do you make a living, when do you make money, I say, when they get the job. So, I'm proud that I've stuck it out for 28 years in this crazy business.”

Ken Melamed: “More than proud, I would say what excites me is when my instincts are right about you and when you get that job, whether it's your first Broadway show, or whether it's an Off-Broadway show, or a big movie or something else that's fantastic. I'm also proud of my relationship with my clients. I love actors. I can't believe that you do what you do. I don't know how you do it.”

Somerville, MA

“Henry IV” Helps

“Shakespeare's words are urgently relevant to our times.” Those are the words The Actors' Shakespeare Project lives by. Besides a dedication to the Bard, the company also has a strong desire to help those in need. During the holidays, members of the company's production of *Henry IV* raised \$1,952 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Adele Nadine Traub, Manager of Artistic Operations at ASP, said: “The entire cast and crew joined forces to collect and had a blast doing it. Our Equity actors are excited to do it every year and the audiences respond in kind and were quite generous.” The company emphasized that Equity really



Robert Walsh from *Henry IV*.

does fight AIDS and cast members rotated the speech nightly, from founding members to new additions, including many of the cast's younger actors and most recent Equity members taking a turn. “Some in the cast,” said

Ms. Traub, “were young enough that they have never known a world without AIDS. We really tried to get across to them and the audience that this is still an issue and many people still need help.”

New York, Chicago

Eastern, Central Regions Celebrate Black History Month

In **New York**, Equity and the Roundabout Theatre Company have joined forces to present a one-night-only staged reading on Monday, February 28, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in celebration of Black History Month. *Trouble in Mind*, a play by Alice Childress that examines the reality of race issues in America, will be presented at the American Airlines Theatre, 227 West 42nd Street. It is directed by Charles Randolph-Wright, recipient of Equity's 2010 Paul Robeson Award. Tickets are free of charge, but seating is limited

so RSVPs are required. Email eeo@actorsequity.org or call Business Representative Pearl Brady, (212) 869-8530, ext. 346.

In **Chicago**, the 2011 Spirit Celebration and Award Presentation will take place on Monday, March 21, 2011 at both Hyde Park's Smart Museum and at the Court Theatre. Beginning at 6 p.m., there will be a reception at the Museum, with the Award presentation following at 7:30 p.m. at the Court Theatre. The evening concludes with dessert and coffee from 8:30-9:30 p.m. in

the Court Theatre Lobby. For more information, contact Luther Goins, EEO Business Representative, (312) 641-0393.

Both the Eastern and Central Region celebrations of Black History Month have been coordinated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Committees. Co-Chairs of the Eastern Committee are Christine Toy Johnson and Julia Breanetta Simpson; in the Central Region, the Committee is Co-Chaired by E. Faye Butler and Cheryl Lynn Bruce.

Phoenix, Tucson

Arizona Members Join Adopt-A-Troop Project

To honor the men and women in the Armed Forces serving abroad, in December, for the second year in a row, the Phoenix-Tucson Liaison Committee assembled holiday care packages as part of an Adopt-a-Troop project. Arizona Equity members expressed their appreciation and gratitude to those in military service by sending much needed items such as toiletries and socks, as well as holiday cheer in the form of candy, jerky, paperback books, playing cards and games, ramen soup and hot chocolate. In 2009, donations filled four boxes for troops in Iraq. The 2010 donations more than doubled that total, with enough items to fill ten boxes destined for different locations in



AEA member Cathy Dresbach with Phoenix-Tucson Area Liaison Committee Chair Tony Hodges.

Afghanistan. Sent to addresses selected by a Phoenix-area Girl Scout troop, each box contained items

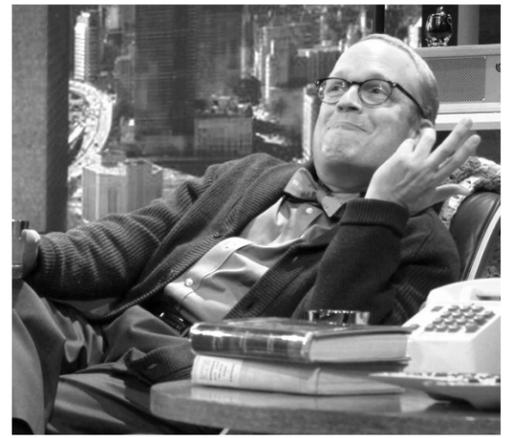
bagged together for distribution to as many as 20-30 individual servicemen and women. "As a veteran myself, I know from first-hand experience how meaningful and welcome boxes like this can be," said Phoenix-Tucson Liaison Tony Hodges. "Care packages like this are the only way many service members overseas know that their absence and sacrifice are acknowledged by people outside their military families, and I'm proud and

pleased that Arizona Equity members want to take part in this and show such generosity."

Boise, ID

A "Tru" Fundraiser in Idaho

Since 1997, the 230-seat Boise Contemporary Theatre has been entertaining audiences with vibrant and dynamic presentations. This past holiday season, veteran Equity actor Tom Ford performed as Truman Capote in the one-person play, *Tru*, and presented management with



Tom Ford as Truman Capote.

the idea of collecting for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. With no one but himself to appeal to the audiences, Tom asked everyone to reach into their hearts and their wallets over four performances and audiences responded with over \$1,400. "I joked with them that for \$20 they could have a poster signed by the cast—which was just me; for \$50 they could take

me out for a drink, and for \$500 I could come over to their house and read them *A Christmas Memory* as Capote. Nobody took me up on that one. We can feel very isolated from the rest of the theatre community in this part of the country," added Tom, "and the fundraising was a way for all of us at the theatre to feel more connected to Equity's membership across the country."

Detroit

Liaison Committee Sponsors Adopt-a-Child Event

Every year the Detroit Liaison Committee participates in the Adopt-A-Child at Christmas program that helps disadvantaged children in the Detroit metropolitan area, up to 12 years of age, receive warm clothes and toys for the holiday. This year was no exception. The event, held in early December, had food, entertainment and arts and crafts activities for the children—and pres-

ents. The Chicago AEA staff participated with the Detroit Liaison Committee in collecting funds to purchase clothes and gifts for an "adopted child." In a letter to the Chicago staffers, Detroit Liaison Chair Dana Gamarra said: "From all of us here in Detroit we want to thank you for bringing joy to someone you may never meet and yet you just know that you made their Christmas."



Jaylin King, "adopted" by the Detroit Liaison Committee, with Committee Chair Dana Gamarra and Committee and Central Regional Board member Peggy Thorp.

A Look Back@Equity Milestones

**75 Years Ago
January/February 1936**

- Equity dues are \$18 per year, to be paid semi-annually. An assessment of 25 cents a month is charged every delinquent member following the second month of delinquency.
- Equity's New York office is located at 45 West 47th Street; Chorus Equity is at 117 West 48th Street. Equity's Chicago office is at 1219-20 Capitol Building; the Los Angeles office is at 6636 Hollywood Boulevard; and there is an office at 200 Bush Street in San Francisco.
- Hallie Flanagan, Director of the Federal Theatre Project of the Works Progress Administration, addresses a meeting attended by 450 Equity members, to discuss the status and accomplishments of the Project.

**50 Years Ago
January/February 1961**

- Fifty-four Industrial Show producers are signatories to Equity's Industrial Shows Basic Agreement.
- Equity has an office in Toronto at 519 Jarvis Street.
- Equity has 12,004 members.

**25 Years Ago
January/February 1986**

- Nathan Lane receives the St. Clair Bayfield Award for his performance in *Measure for Measure* presented by the New York Shakespeare Festival.
- Arthur Mitchell, founder and director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, receives Equity's 12th annual Paul Robeson Award.

**10 Years Ago
January/February 2001**

- Council approves two new contracts: for one night/low guarantee tours and split-week tours. The agreements have been developed in response to the proliferation of non-Equity tours and declining work weeks on the road.
- Equity continues to protest the non-Equity tour of *The Sound of Music*, calling for a national boycott.
- Developing theatres are the subject of a two-day conference in New York. Fifty producers from Eastern Region developing theatres, Equity staff and Councillors attend.

Equity Foundation Awards Grants to 100 Theatres

The Actors' Equity Foundation awarded 100 Theatre Grants in 2010: 55 grants totaling \$43,000 in the Eastern Region; 24 grants totaling \$10,700 in the Central Region; and 21 grants totaling \$13,350 in the Western Region. Started in 1962, the Foundation has grown over the past 49 years as a result of estate bequests and individual donations. Would you like to be part of the

work of this lasting and tangible way to help fellow performers and live theatre? If so, and for further information on making a bequest or donation, contact Comptroller Joseph De Michele at Equity, (212) 869-8530 x 348. Or, you may send a donation by check to: The Actors' Equity Foundation, c/o Arne Gundersen, President, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Philadelphia

City Council Supports Professional Performers

In an extraordinary showing of "brotherly love," the Philadelphia City Council has passed a resolution supporting the hiring of professional union performing artists. Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg was in attendance with Philadelphia Area Liaison Tom Helmer at City Hall in Philadelphia on December 9, 2010 when

activity include not only economic factors but also the availability of top-tier talent;

"And whereas the stability and diversity of this talent depends upon employment opportunities that provide living wages, health care benefits, and retirement benefits;

"And whereas the city of



In Philadelphia's City Hall are: (l to r) Philadelphia AFTRA National Board Member Bill Shusta, AEA Philadelphia Area Liaison Tom Helmer, AEA Eastern Regional Director Rick Berg and Philadelphia AFTRA Executive Director Stephen Leshinski.

the resolution, sponsored by Council member Blondell Reynolds-Brown, was passed. The resolution recognizes the financial and cultural contributions to the city made possible by supporting local performers and production projects. Mr. Berg called it "inspiring." The full text follows.

"Whereas Philadelphia has a rich and vibrant arts community;

"And whereas Philadelphia corporations and advertising companies have the potential to create additional jobs through a commitment to producing their projects within our city because the benefits of generating local

Philadelphia benefits from a professional community of dedicated artists who can support and sustain themselves and their work;

"And whereas the presence of a professional community attracts and retains theatrical and commercial artistic endeavors;

"And whereas Actors' Equity Association, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and Screen Actors Guild, among other labor organizations, represent the interest of professional screen, stage, television, radio, sound recording and new media employees;

Your Income Tax

continued from page 1

have been extended to encourage charitable giving by those 70½ or older. This provision does not apply to other retirement plans such as SEP and SIMPLE plans or employer-sponsored plans.

11. The \$1,000 child tax credit has been extended through 2012.

12. The American Opportunity Tax Credit has also been extended through 2012.

13. If you converted a traditional IRA to a ROTH account in 2010, you may elect to pay tax on the rollover in 2010 or spread the income and tax payments over tax years 2011 and 2012. If you made the rollover and would like a do-over, you have until October, 2011 to re-characterize the transaction and roll it back into your traditional IRA.

14. For the higher-rollers, your itemized deductions and exemptions will no longer be subject to the phase-out ranges – they're gone!

The 2010 Tax Brackets are as follows:

Single		
\$0 - 8,375	10%	
\$8,376 - 34,000	15%	
\$34,001 - 82,400	25%	
\$82,401 - 171,850	28%	
\$171,851 - 373,650	33%	
over \$373,650	35%	

"And whereas Equity, AFTRA and SAG endeavor to create and expand job opportunities for their members;

"Therefore be it resolved by the Council of the City of Philadelphia that private and

Head of Household		
\$0 - 11,950	10%	
\$11,951 - 45,550	15%	
\$45,551 - 117,650	25%	
\$117,651 - 190,550	28%	
\$190,551 - 373,650	33%	
over \$373,650	35%	

Married Filing Jointly		
\$0 - 16,750	10%	
\$16,751 - 68,000	15%	
\$68,001 - 137,300	25%	
\$137,301 - 209,250	28%	
\$209,251 - 373,650	33%	
over \$373,650	35%	

Married Filing Separately		
\$0 - 8,375	10%	
\$8,376 - 34,000	15%	
\$34,001 - 68,650	25%	
\$68,651 - 104,625	28%	
\$104,626 - 186,825	33%	
over \$186,825	35%	

If you paid someone who does not work for a corporate entity, you will likely be required to file a 1099 form if you paid more than \$599 last year to that person. The 1099 must have been sent to the contractor by the end of January and to the government by the end of February along with a 1096 form. If you think this might apply to you, check with your tax expert to confirm.

If you worked in a state other than your home state, you might owe tax at home if you did not have enough withheld, did not pay estimated taxes or the other state's credit doesn't cover your

liability. Get your taxes prepared early so you'll have time to plan for any payment due on April 15th. This also applies to your unemployment insurance benefits which are taxable federally and at home.

The IRS has been examining the returns of our members and generally accepting the substantiation and other proof that is offered by them – but only after redundant submissions and appeals of the initial determinations. VITA has been helpful with "official" letters and an ongoing relationship with the Taxpayer Advocate's Office nationwide. Be aware that actors' returns are scrutinized, along with those of other taxpayers, on a periodic basis and/or whenever the income and expenses appear, at first blush, to be out of line by IRS standards. When you prepare your returns, be sure that you discuss with your tax expert what you must do to sustain an audit.

Sandra Karas is Site Coordinator of the VITA Program, the Secretary-Treasurer of Equity and a member of SAG and AFTRA. The New York VITA office is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (no Tuesdays) from 10:30 am until 4:00 pm on the 14th floor of the Equity Building, 165 West 46th Street. Telephone: (212) 921-2548.

public enterprises who employ screen, stage, television, radio, sound recording and new media employees should endeavor wherever possible to meet with and enter into agreements with Actors' Equity, AFTRA, SAG

and other unions and organizations that represent artists in Philadelphia, for the purpose of creating and maintaining a professional community within Philadelphia for the benefit of its citizenry."



AN INVITATION

Dear Colleagues:

As an AEA member, I would like to tell fellow members about the North American Actors' Association, based in London.

Ours is an organization set up 11 years ago to represent the interests of North American actors based in the United Kingdom. All our members must also belong to a theatrical union, and we have an excellent relationship with British Equity, with whom we meet regularly to discuss common interests. Until recently we limited membership to those living over here permanently and who have the right to work on an unrestricted basis. We are now opening our doors to actors coming to the UK to work for a limited period of time, with

membership dependent on individuals securing the proper work visa.

We welcome American and Canadian actors and can advise them on matters relating not only to work, but also to other problems.

You may contact me in writing at 80 Langton Way, London SE3 7JU, United Kingdom or email at jkaplow@btinternet.com or contact our Secretary, Ms. Kelly Jeffreys at Kelly_jeffreys@hotmail.com.

Jeffrey Kaplow

ELEGANT, NEVER TACKY

Dear Editor:

The "legendary Gypsy Robe" to which you refer in the October/November 2010 issue of Equity News was most definitely not my "tacky dressing gown," but was, instead, a very elegant white satin negligee, trimmed in

soft white marabou. When Bill [Bradley] and I decided to send it to Arthur [Partington] it was slightly stained with "grease-paint," but was otherwise in excellent condition. We would never have sent something "tacky" to Arthur nor would Bill or I have worn something "tacky."

Florence Baum Brooks
Dunay Weisgal

REMEMBERING ELLEN STEWART

Dear Editor:

At 4:30 in the morning on Thursday, January 13, 2011, a paradigm shift of tectonic proportions occurred in theatre communities around the globe: Ellen Stewart, founder, artistic director, producer and formidable sergeant-at-arms of La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, died. By the time Ellen's

transfiguration was officially newsworthy, a tsunami of emotion had washed over those of us who were her spirit children. I choose to write about Ellen in mythic terms because when in 1973 this worm arrived in New York to take a bite of The Big Apple, it was Ellen Stewart who invited me to make La MaMa my first artistic home.

As an artist, I grew measurably and cannily there; I established lifelong friendships there, and when receiving out-of-town guests, I placed a visit to La MaMa on my short list of destinations, along with Central Park, Harlem, Broadway and the martyred Twin Towers.

Ellen, thank you for your gifts of uncompromising vision. No actor may claim to have worked in New York theatre unless he has worked at LaMaMa.

André De Shields

(An article of remembrance by Mr. De Shields appears on Equity's website: www.actorsequity.org)

IN MEMORIAM

Dear Editor:

I wanted to let you know

about the death January 2, 2011 of Margot Stevenson, actor, activist, wife (of the late Val Avery), mother (of actor Margot Avery), and link to Equity history.

I met Margot in Spring 2006. By that time she was suffering the results of macular degeneration and could no longer read. I joined a crew of volunteers (old and new friends alike) who read to her. At Margot's request, the first thing many of us read was her father's unpublished memoir. Margot was the daughter of Charles A. Stevenson, an Irish actor who came to New York in the late 1800s and worked with, among others, Edwin Booth. Stevenson joined Equity in 1913, one of our first members.

Margot made her Broadway debut in 1932 in *Firebird*. She was in the original *Stage Door* in 1936 which she left to originate the role of Alice Sycamore in *You Can't Take It With You*. She was also Margot Lane in early radio's *The Shadow*. Hers is a legacy worth celebrating.

K. Kevyne Baar